

Genesis & A Biblical Worldview

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, May 27, 2012

Introduction

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God

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Creation

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Man

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Sin

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Grace

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Culture

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Purpose

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The Orderly Handiwork of God

In our last two lessons, we considered what the first three verses of Genesis 1 tell us about the nature of God our Creator. In doing so, we began laying the most basic foundation for our worldview (because the most decisive thing about us is what we believe about God Himself). And now, having established what we believe about the Creator, we turn our thoughts to that which He created.

In Genesis 1:3-31, we're told God's own story of His work of creation. Our view of creation is based directly upon our view of the Creator. As Psalm 111:2-3 puts it, "The works of the LORD are great, studied by all who have pleasure in them. His work is honorable and glorious, and His righteousness endures forever."¹ From the first chapter of the first book of the Bible, we learn that . . .

I. THE WORK OF CREATION WAS PERFORMED BY GOD'S WORD.

- A. As Genesis 1:2 tells us, "The earth was without form, and void" on the day of its creation. And the verses that follow tell us how God brought form and order to it by His spoken word. In fact, every significant stage in God's creative work was specifically declared to have been brought about by the act of God 'speaking': "Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (v. 3). "Then God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters'" (v. 6). "Then God said, 'Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear'" (v. 9). "Then God said, 'Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth'" (v. 11). "Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night'" (v. 14). "Then God said, 'Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens'" (v. 20). "Then God said, 'Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind'" (v. 24). "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness . . .'" (v. 27).
- B. Note that each "Then God said . . ." statement marks a "day" in the six-day work of Creation (with two such statements being made on the third day and the sixth day), for a total of eight creation utterances. Though the Hebrew word for "day" can--in some instances--be interpreted as a long period of time, the context of Genesis 1 makes it clear that a "day" is to be understood as divided by "the evening and the morning" (see vv. 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31)--which division became meaningful on the first day, when God created "light" (vv. 3-5). The Sabbath commandment in Exodus 20:11--to rest on the seventh day of one week--is based on the six days of creation being literal twenty-four hour days. Note that the process of creation on each "day" is not presented as a long process, but as something that happened immediately--as shown by the phrase "and it was so" (vv. 7, 9, 11, 15, 24) after God's spoken "Let there be . . ."
- C. As Dr. Morris has written, "If the reader asks himself this question: 'Suppose the writer of Genesis wished to teach his readers that all things were created and made in six literal days, then what words would he use to best convey this thought?' he would have to answer that the writer would have used the actual words of Genesis 1. If he wished to convey the idea of

long geological ages, however, he could surely have done it far more clearly and effectively in other words than in those which he selected. It was clearly his intent to teach creation in six literal days.”²² Whether a reader accepts a six-day creation or not is somewhat beside the point. A six-day creation is clearly what the writer *meant* for the reader to understand by the words that were used; and it cannot be made to mean anything else without importing meanings to those words that are either strained or contrary to their clear context. If the reader begins with a full, whole-hearted acceptance of Genesis 1:1--and then accepts that God brought about all that was made by His spoken word--then a literal six-day creation is not at all difficult or unreasonable to embrace.

II. THE WORK OF CREATION WAS DONE IN AN ORDERLY AND LOGICAL MANNER.

- A. Note that there is a marvelous order to God’s work of creation. On the first day, God created and energized the universe as the arena of His creative and purposeful activity--creating the property of light, and making a division between light and darkness. Three days later, He created the “lights”--that is, the luminaries that contain and exhibit the light that He created on the first day. On the second day, He made a division between “the waters from the waters”--separating the waters below (the sea) from the waters above (the cloud covering), with an expanse (the firmament; called “Heaven” in verse 8) between the two. Three days later, He created the marine life to inhabit the waters below, and the bird life to inhabit the firmament above. On the third day, He caused dry land to appear; and the grass, herbs (bushes) and trees to cover the dry land. Three days later, He created the land animals to dwell on the dry land, and the man Adam to rule over them all. The marvelous symmetry of God’s created order can be shown as follows:

Day 1: Heaven and earth, light and darknessDay 4: Sun, moon and stars
Day 2: Separation of the waters and firmamentDay 5: Marine and bird life
Day 3: Dry land and plant lifeDay 6: Land animals and Man

- B. This also shows us the reasonableness and wisdom of God’s creative work. Certain things were not created until after the conditions were first made that would be necessary for their existence. The luminaries (the sun, moon and stars) were not created until after the property of light had been created first. The sea creatures and the birds were not created until after the division of the waters and the expanse between them had been created first. Land animals, and Man himself, were not created until after dry land appeared and plant life for food was provided first. In addition, an orderliness was preserved in God’s work of creation so that all things were not confused and did not degenerate again into the formlessness and voidness of the first day. Animal life was made “according to its kind” (v. 21, 24); in which context they are blessed of God and commanded to “be fruitful and multiply” (v. 22, 28). They did not become something else; but each classification continued to reproduce “according to its kind”. Note as well that plant life also reproduced “according to its kind”--existing on the day of its creation, with apparent “age”, as “the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth” (v. 11; see also v. 29).
- C. In all of this, our Creator God shows Himself to us to be powerful and wise in His work of creation; and His creation to be orderly and reasonable. This puts our worldview in sharp contrast to all other worldviews that see the

universe as meaningless, confused, chaotic and without purpose. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” (Psalm 19:1). He “formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited” (Isaiah 45:18). “. . . His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead . . .” (Romans 1:20). In fact, as Christians we can affirm that true scientific inquiry and logical reasoning are possible because--and *only* because--the Creator and His creation are orderly and reasonable.

¹All Scripture readings are taken from *the Holy Bible, New King James Version*; copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

²Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 54.