

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

The Beginning and The End Genesis 1:1 and Revelation 21:1

Keywords: Truth, Creation, New Creation, Hope, Salvation

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: Too often we find ourselves looking at a specific passage that may be troublesome to us due to the pressures and thinking of the day and forgetting that the bible is a single book by a single Author. It has a message that is bound up in space and time. It is a message set in history. Real history rather than imagined history that serves to show the glory of God as He interacts actively with His creation. When considering Genesis 1-2 it can be tempting to acquiesce to the loud voices of alternative creation views but in doing so it necessarily affects the rest of the bible and most certainly the hope of every Christian—the new creation for which we all await.

I. Introduction.

- A. We come again to the first book of the bible and again we must make a decision. Actually several decisions.
- B. The series I am preaching on through Genesis 1-11 is overtly polemic. I am making an argument and I am pressing it upon you to hear and then make those decisions.
 1. My first sermon simply argued that the Church in America needs to wake up to the incredible slide into oblivion it is in.
 - a. We drink far too much from the broken wells of this culture and not from the pure spring water of God's Word.
 - b. The result is that church after church keeps looking for the bare minimum that they must believe and still be considered "Christian."
 - c. We are in love with exegeting cultures and having conversations but not too interested in understanding the nature of the God we claim to love and worship.
 - d. Theology bores us. Precision offends us. And absolutes are absolutely not for us.
 - e. My argument was that we can see this in how the Church and individual Christians view Genesis 1-11.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- (1) Ignore it. Rework it. Laugh at it. But too often not believe it as it is written.
 - (2) Yet it is the framework from which everything we know as humans is built.
- f. My final point in that sermon was that the bible will not let you ignore it. For from the beginning to the end it is filled with stories and statements that cannot be ignored.
 - g. Most importantly is the death, resurrection and return of Jesus Christ. And connected to that is the promise of Jesus making all things new.
2. My second sermon focused on how Christians ought to view the Bible itself.
 - a. We either accept its self-claims or we don't. There really is no middle ground, though many try to do so.
 - b. This was evident from a survey recently done where those who would claim to be conservative, evangelical Christians consistently failed the most basic theology questions. They made good cult members and heretics, but not biblically sound Christians.
 - c. Jesus says that the Word of God is truth. Nothing more and nothing less.
 - d. The Apostle Paul says it is all inspired by God and therefore it is all necessary to lead us to salvation and to make us mature.
 - e. The Apostle Peter says that we are to yearn for it so that by it we can grow as Christians.
 - f. Jude says that we must earnestly fight for it as truth.
 - g. I ended with the three legged stool regarding the bible: Inerrancy, Infallibility and Authority. All must stand or all will fall in time.
 - C. Today I want to show you how Genesis 1:1 and the idea of God as creator is foundational to the gospel in its fullest sense. I want you to remember those last few words. . . . "the gospel in its fullest sense."

II. In The Beginning.

- A. In the beginning God created

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

1. The first verse is not merely an introduction.
 2. It is a statement that serves as the foundation of everything else that follows. It is the bed rock of the Christian faith.
 3. It says so much if you will only spend time dwelling and meditating upon it.
- B. *This statement means there was a time when time did not exist.*
1. There was a point where time began and it is called “the beginning.” Before that there was God.
 2. The one, true God. The triune God. Which is why John 1:1 was so radical in its statement.
 3. It means that time is a created thing.
 - a. It is subservient to God for it was made by Him. It means that time is not a series of endless cycles, but a tool used by God to move all things toward the “End.”
 - b. It means that we should be wise to number our days and as Solomon wrote, “Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no delight in them"; (Ecclesiastes 12:1).
 - c. “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15-16).
- C. *This statement also says that nothing exists apart from the creative will of God.*
1. Much mystery in that but it is also a reality that brings a lot of comfort.
 2. A common perception around the world is that the universe has always gone through countless cycles of rising and dying. Either there was a time of creation where nothing became something on its own, or creation itself is endless.
 3. Consider the Chinese idea of *yin* and *yang*. Opposites are necessary and part of the universe. Where there is positive there is also negative. This dualism lies at the heart of much eastern medicine where there is the idea of harmony. Good and evil are not truly real, they are only perceived to be good and evil from our perspective. The result of this is that there is

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

nothing that is actually right, good or just. It just is and we can only try to make the best of it.

4. In evolutionary thought the core doctrine is that everything is merely the result of chance. There is no such thing as good or bad, right or wrong, and life or death. We exist because that is how it worked out and there is no real meaning behind it.
5. But if God has created all things then there was purpose and meaning. We live not as merely accidents of nature but because of God who made us. This gives us a point of reference from which we can live. It is the idea of what is called *Coram Deo*, which means to live in the presence and purpose of God to His honor and His glory.
6. And this is where what you believe about creation again matters. Hear again the oft-spoken words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 1:18ff.

D. *The statement also means that God is sovereign and you are not.*

1. Every time you hear an argument about free will you are watching created beings argue if they are somehow able to be something more than created.
2. This is not a sermon on the nature of our will or our freedom, but it must be considered by us nonetheless.
3. To be sure mankind has a freedom of sorts. But it is a freedom defined by God and not by each of us.
 - a. None can will themselves to be something other than a human for God made them a man or a woman. None can will themselves out of existence for God has made them immortal.
 - b. No blind man can see by simply opening his eyes. The lame cannot will their limbs to stand and run. And one does not simply will cancer away.
 - c. More importantly we cannot change our nature for by nature we are under the dominion of sin and the fruit of that dominion is death.
 - d. And none can will themselves forgiven for that belongs to God alone to forgive.
 - e. And none can resolve their guilt before their Maker by exerting their will. Only the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ can do this.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

4. To learn and love the sovereignty of God is to find rest for your soul.
 - a. It is not fatalism, which is the idea that things just happen and there is no purpose or meaning behind it.
 - b. Rather, it is the joy of knowing that behind all things is God and what is driving all things is His character, His nature, and His glory. It means we can “cease striving and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted on the earth.” (Psalm 46:10).
 5. The sovereignty of God teaches us that we should not be quick to assume we understand what God is doing, for who really knows the mind of God but God Himself? Once again Solomon is helpful here when he wrote, “As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything.” (Ecclesiastes 11:5).
 6. God’s sovereignty is something that often is made too simplistic or minimalistic.
 - a. It extends, by its very nature, to all things. It means that God alone has the right to do what He wants, when He wants, how He wants and to whom He wants and no one has the right to question Him.
 - b. He makes the rules for all of creation. And we live by those rules.
- E. *This statement means that all things have a purpose.*
1. A popular topic in evolutionary science is that of junk DNA. Essentially junk DNA is the garbage dump of evolution. It was thought that as DNA mutated over billions of years a lot of the DNA simply was not of any use anymore and was merely just piled up like the off cuts at a construction site. It is a common argument to prove evolution even today by writers like Richard Dawkins.
 2. But scientists now find that it is not junk at all but an important part of how genetics actually work.
 - a. Instead of merely sitting there doing nothing, this type of DNA functions as a trigger that turns on and off genes which results in how and what is developed.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- b. Questions related to cancer and deformities are likely found in understanding this material. But like all things science, each new discovery opens up a plethora of new questions because though the scientists now know what is happening they have no idea how it works.
 3. That illustration on a micro level is true on all levels.
 - a. There are not accidents in nature. Creation is a gift of God to His creatures, specifically humanity. We will see in another sermon that creation exists for us to enjoy, to develop, to explore and to use to the glory of God.
 - b. Even under the presence of sin, which twists things the reality of purpose is present in all things.
 4. This means we look at our world with respect and we seek to pursue the purposes behind and within everything.
 - a. We look at each created thing with wonder and with curiosity. We recognize that all things were made by God and we ought never assume we understand anything fully.
 - b. This sense of exploration of purpose extends down to the tiniest of things, seen or unseen and upward to the depths of our universe.
 - c. Even in unbelief mankind proves this over and over as it says with one voice that all things are simply the blind process of chance and with another voice that there must be a purpose or meaning behind all of this.
 5. But this idea of all things having a purpose also reminds us that nothing in creation is to be rejected in itself. Humans love to revile certain things. Reject things as bad or not worthy of us. But the bible calls us to enjoy all things as they are designed by God (1 Timothy 4:1-5)
- F. *In this statement we see the sustaining power of God.*
1. I will speak more on this next message but try to grasp the vastness of the exertion of power to cause what was not to exist. Think of the various ways you see this creation we dwell in express its latent power.
 2. Have you experienced a massive storm in the middle of an ocean? Have you felt the very earth beneath you roll like an ocean wave? Have you been

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

terrified in the midst of a violent electric storm? Or mildly annoyed because of solar flares erupting from our sun that is 92.96 million miles away is disrupting your electronics? Have you not wondered at the power necessary to launch a space ship or the crushing power of water in the depths of the sea? When did you last watch the inexorable march of fire as it destroys building and trees in moments?

3. These are tiny ways we can glimpse the power of God. What power is it that holds all things together and maintain the continuity of physical laws of nature?
 4. When we see these things they are designed to make us small before our Creator. But they are to also cause us to turn to Him who holds all things in His hands and find our refuge and hope in Him alone. “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, And to *him who* lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up *with* wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary” (Isaiah 40:28-31).
 5. And it is here that the bible speaks of the glory of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:15-17).
 6. And it is here that the bible speaks of the hope of the rest of creation that sits under the curse of our sin (Romans 8:19-22). His power that made all things will also rescue this creation from its curse.
- G. *Finally, this statement gives us hope or fear, for if God made the first universe then He can most certainly unmake it.*
1. 2 Peter 3:1-7.
 2. 1 Peter 4:14-19. Notice how we are to entrust ourselves not to God as Savior but as our faithful Creator. He made us and He alone will keep us.

III. Conclusion.

- A. So near the beginning I said that this whole thing involves the gospel, the good news, in its fullest sense. What do I mean by this?

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- B. We must not make the gospel merely something of the past—the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sins.
- C. This is only part of the gospel.
 - 1. The promise to return.
 - 2. The promise to judge all humanity.
 - 3. The promise to make all things right.
- D. But the most important part is in Revelation 21:1-6.
 - 1. If we cannot accept the Word of God on the first creation then we cannot really trust it on the new creation.
 - 2. Shall the New Creation be some multi-billion year project of chance?
 - 3. Or shall it be as the Word declares it, “I saw a new heaven and earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away.”
- E. Beloved Genesis 1-3 is no harder to believe than blind men suddenly seeing, lame men walking, water suddenly becoming still, or a crucified savior rising from the grave.
- F. But believing it as written does take a commitment that it is God’s very words to us.

Small Group Questions

- Can the group come up with other implications to Genesis 1:1?
- What implication drawn out in this sermon was most convicting or helpful? Why?
- What are the thoughts of the group regarding the connecting of Genesis 1:1 with Revelation 21:1-4?