

Monday, May 4, 2026

The Greatness of God

Genesis 1:24-25

As you enter your time with God today, take a moment to quiet your mind. Breathe this prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus, come. Fill me with your Spirit. Open my heart that you might share your words of life with me."

We read today from Genesis 1:24-25. Read the passage now or at the end of this devotion. What does this passage teach us about the greatness of God?

I have not gone hiking very much over the last year. Because of some things I've changed in my exercise habits, I don't "head to the mountains" as I once did at least one day a week to explore a favorite trail or discover a new one. I'm happy with how my new habits have helped me gain strength and feel better, but I miss the experiences of finding solitude on the trail, enjoying fresh air from a different altitude, and seeing views and vistas that move me the way that only beautiful, lonely places can. I might have to go for a hike soon.

One hike that I often did was to scale the 3,540 feet of Zanja (pronounced "Sankey" apparently by those in the know) Peak. The trailhead is only 15 minutes away from my house and the 8-mile roundtrip journey always promises to give a healthy mental reset. I've hiked that trail at least 30 times over the years and each time, in its own way, was memorable.

There was "the rattlesnake day" with 2 rattlers resting on the sunny trail. A couple of well-placed thrown sticks opened the trail before me. Then there was "the coyote walk" with three of the varmints walking behind me for a half a mile. I call it the coyote walk because I was moving backwards with my head on a pivot. There were days with soaring falcons and other raptors buffeting themselves on the wind. There were days with less wild and friendlier animals like dogs on the trail and one time even a cat in a stroller, something I will never understand.

Over 8 miles of walking, I see different views that inspire and move me to catch my breath. Seeing snow-capped Mt. Baldy in the distance on a clear day and comparing it to the organized grid of the cities of the Inland Empire laid out before me challenges me to see beauty in different ways. I can see soccer fields our kids played on, and neighborhoods where friends live. I can see the courthouse in downtown San Bernardino where I have been on juries for court cases, and Loma Linda Hospital where I have welcomed new life with folks in the community and joined them in lament in the death of their loved ones.

One trail. It's the same place every time, but each time it is radically different because of what there is to discover.

I attribute my experience on that trail to God's greatness. Only he could make a space where new beauty can be discovered on every trip.

"And God said, 'Let the land produce living creatures according to their kind: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.'" And it was so. God made

the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good."

This text comes from the 6th day of creation. This story of the creation of animals is the penultimate step of God's work; only humanity remains yet unrevealed. As we hear of God commanding the land to bring forth the bounty of life, we are struck by how the simple description of the text results in such disparate diversity.

The land brings forth grizzly bears that can weigh over 1,000 pounds and African pygmy mice that weigh 3-12 grams. A Texas Longhorn bull comes forth to join the herds of Kalahari Red Goat. The black-tailed Cribon snake moves on the same ground as the duck-billed platypus.

The earth brings forth new species and breeds of fauna one after the other by the thousands and even millions. Each one different. Each one distinct. Each one the handiwork of our creative and great God. Only he could make such diverse forms of life and put them in the exact spot where they can flourish for us to discover and stop and watch during our walk on the trail. This 6th day of his work shows us so many forms of incredible life that we could not comprehend in a hundred lifetimes let alone the one we have been given. And that does not consider the greatness of his other days of creation.

Creation proclaims the greatness of God. Each bird that sings us awake in the morning, and the barking dog in the night are reminders of God's work giving his world something that is beyond us to fully understand. He has given us life; an invention only he could come up with and give to the people he has made that he considers "very good".

Give God praise for this gift. Search for it in the new places promised every morning. See God's creativity in all forms of life as a sign of who he really is as Our Great God.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn his smile towards you and give you his peace.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I love you all. Blessings.

Feel free to share this devotion with others.

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