

## **Digging Deeper March 3, 2024**

Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2; John 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Psalm 33:6

Don't Call It A Comeback: Jesus the Creator

Rick Schaffner

### **Intro: Read Genesis 1:1-31**

"How did it all begin?" has been a subject of debate between people of faith and people who have no faith at all. Creation questions need answers. Answers that go well beyond what can be written in these brief devotionals but hopefully, some of the things written here will cause us to look at God's word and see God's hand at work. Please keep in mind that this is written from the viewpoint that God is the Creator and his creation is all for his glory! Also, it is written from the viewpoint that the Creator is a loving God who has our best interests in his heart and always has. The garden was the first signal of his love for us, a place of peace, provision and promise.

### **Day One: The Beginning**

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The first words of God's Word to men – "God created" are presented clearly and forthrightly. God's desire is for men and women to understand that God is responsible for the creation of the world and all that is in it.

He begins revealing himself to us through his creation. Paul forcefully reminds us of this in Romans 1. " 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world" (Romans 1:18-20)

What can we know about God? Of course we have his word, scripture, but before his written word he has shown himself through his creation. The heavens reveal his wonder, his attributes, his power and his nature.

The blessings of God exist not only in the garden where he originally positioned mankind as Paul reminds us in Ephesians 1:3-4. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him." The ultimate piece of God's creation, as spectacular as it is, is what he chose to do even as he creates the heavens and the earth and all that is in it, his masterpiece of creation.

Today as you pray, give thanks for what he has made. Look at the heavens and thank him for his marvelous handiwork. Look in a mirror and begin to begin to see the masterpiece of God's creation. Can you thank him for how he has made you? Perhaps as we move through this Digging Deeper you may be able to thank him for more than you ever dreamed!

### **Day Two: The Image (imago Dei)**

Today read Psalm 139. Concentrate on verses 13 – 16 and begin to pray for God to show you his handiwork in you. Reflect today on the major title of this edition of Digging Deeper "Jesus, the Creator."

As we begin let's look at another passage we read early this week: Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." Do you notice the words God uses when he speaks of the creation of man? Let us and our image and our likeness are the words. God tells us He is not acting in isolation but in cooperation. Who is involved in this cooperative creative act?

A disciple gives the answer, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. John 1:1-3. Who is the Word? None other than Jesus! The creation is complete once man is made and man is made in his image. Genesis 1:31. Note that on this day God changed his wording about the "goodness" of his creation. This day he says, "God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good."

God has made man, the culmination of creation, pronounces his work "very good", so we ask this question, where did God get the idea (if you will allow me to use the term idea) for how he will make man? He models man after himself, in his own image, the term used by theologians is imago Dei.

Being made in the image of God does not mean that God possesses human-like features, but rather man has God modeled features. We have the ability to make moral decisions, we have capacity to rationalize and evaluate, we have abilities beyond any other pieces of creation. We also have 'eternity in our hearts."

Paul tells us "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10 It is only man (and women of course) that can fulfill the tasks which God has prepared for

us. Not only are we in his image, not only masterpieces of creation, but active partners in God's divine purposes. Solomon knew this and wrote, "10 I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. " He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; (Ecclesiastes 3:10-12)

Doctrine associated with God's image provides important grounding for the development of human rights and the dignity of each human life regardless of class, race, gender, or disability, and it is also related to conversations about the human body. No wonder the followers of Christ are appalled at the supposed confusion over gender or sexual mores. The culture clashes that come about due to the rejection of the creation of Christ are to be expected as man loses his connection to his creator. Morality, dignity, respect for our neighbors, all have no meaning. It is no wonder the clashes are so violent and without any restraint. If we do not have a common image (the image of God) each of us are no better than any other creation, only concerned with our good and our rights. Paul's words in Philippians then fall on deaf ears when he calls us to "...in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3-4)

"A craftsman in medieval times would work for months on a special piece that displayed his finest artistic skill. Finally, when the work was finished, he would present it to the craftsmen's guild in hopes of achieving the rank of master. The work was called his masterpiece." **SELF-ESTEEM - Seeing Ourselves as God Sees Us**  
Intervarsity Press

Finally, in two other passages in Genesis 5:1-3 and 9:6 the writer reminds us God created us in his image. Read both texts before you pray.  
As you pray today, first thank God for how he made you and then ask him for guidance as you pursue his will for your life.

### **Day Three: The Creation**

Throughout scripture we are reminded of Christ's work in creation. Let's just look at a few of these passages. Here are a few.

Colossians 1:16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

1 Corinthians 8:6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

Psalm 33:6 By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

By the word of God all of creation came into existence. While we were not there, the witness of all of scripture presents God the Father, Jesus the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit as the agents of creation. The world and the universes beyond its reaches are all the product of a loving, divine personality. A God who is represented as one-in-three – Father, Son and Spirit!

Men have tried and continue to try to deny God's hand in creation, yet God's Word stands without contrast. Theories abound about the beginning of creation, yet God's word unapologetically declare Hebrews 1:10 " And, You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands;"

Will we rely on God's word as the final word in creation? It becomes a matter of faith. We have to recognize if God would be untruthful concerning creation, can He be trusted in the matter of salvation? Again, the writer of Hebrews tells us "For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Hebrews 9:24-26)

It is a matter of faith. We can be like Joshua when confronted with which gods the people of Israel would serve, he declared, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15) As you pray today you can reaffirm your trust in God. As you recognize the truth of God's trustworthy Word, reaffirm his claim over all of God's creation, including you.

#### **Day Four: The Word**

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Hebrews 1:2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

1 John 1:1-3 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands,

concerning the word of life — the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

All three of these passages point to Jesus as The Word. And each reveal Jesus as being “in the beginning.” In truth the Bible gives us no room to exclude Jesus from the creation story. In fact, the Bible puts Jesus right in the center of the process. John puts it straightforwardly, “All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” John 1:3

The Savior, Jesus, is also the creator! He has chosen to redeem his creation even after his creation has rejected him. “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8) and further in Romans, “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.” (5:6)

The songwriter Marvin P. Dalton in 1948 wrote these words:

Once I was straying in sin's dark valley,  
No hope within could I see,  
He searched through Heaven, and found a Savior  
To save a poor lost soul like me.

He left the Father with all His riches,  
With calmness sweet and serene,  
Came down from Heaven and gave His life-blood,  
To make the vilest sinner clean.

Death's chilly waters I'll soon be crossing,  
His hand will lead me safe o're,  
I'll join the chorus in that bright city,  
And sing up there forever more.

O what a Savior, O hallelujah!  
His heart was broken on Calvary,  
His hands were nail scarred,  
His side was riven,  
He gave His life-blood for even me.

As Paul wrote in Philippians 2:5-11 (read this passage today) Christ emptied himself, laid aside all that was his and came to his creation and gave his life. No wonder Dalton would say, "O what a Savior, O hallelujah!"

As you pray today will you thank him for giving his life blood for his creation? Will you praise him?

### **Day Five: The Promise**

As Jesus prayed near the end of his earthy life his prayer was that those who have been given to him (his followers) would be united with him to see the glory that is his! John 17:24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

It is no vain request. It is the request of a Creator-Savior to enable His followers to see Him as He truly is. While we see the many images presented in the New Testament of a caring, compassionate, crucified and resurrected Lord, there is an even more glorious image of Him – the glorious only begotten Son of God!

Read how John the Revelator speaks of Jesus. "And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. (Revelation 21:22-26)

John is writing of the eternal future and which Titus reminds us, "in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began. (Titus 1:2) What a great reminder of God's eternal plan – His people with Him in His city FOREVER! As you pray today, give him praise for his gracious promises. Amen and Amen.