

Creation

What we NEED to know

Introduction:

- What this sermon will not be...
 - A physics lesson
 - An AIG presentation
 - Extensively Thorough
- What this sermon will be...
 - a delving into God's word to see what He has to say to us regarding the creation of the world
 - It will be an overview and not a thorough investigation

Genesis 1:

How do we approach the creation narrative?

In a broad sense, Christians read Genesis one of two ways;

- **Not History but Fable:**
 - **Literary Analysis:** proponents of the "fable" view will usually argue that since the creation narrative is told in poetic form, the creation narrative should not be considered a historical account. It is true that the Creation narrative is poetry, however we cannot think of Hebraic poetry the same way we think of modern western poetry. Modern poetry is often written for the purpose of expressing some kind of aesthetic, emotion, or idea. It rarely if ever purposes to record true accurate details of a particular event. However, Hebraic poetry found in the Bible is significantly different. It rarely if ever purposes to express some kind of aesthetic or emotion and most often purposes to accurately record events in a way that ensures the fidelity of it's transmission.
 - For Example, Exodus 15:1-18
- **Not Fable but History:**
 - As stated above, poetic devices are often used in Hebrew culture to preserve the accuracy and fidelity of historical events as they are transmitted from one generation to the next. In fact, the presence of poetic form in the creation story should give us a great deal of confidence in the historical accuracy of this text.
 - Furthermore, the vast majority of Genesis is clearly written as historical narrative. Thus the book as a whole purposes not to tell fables but rather to report historical facts.

The message of the creation narrative

1. God made everything from nothing

a. *bara* vs. *yatsar*

- Genesis 1:1--*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*
- The word translated created is *bara* H1254, which means to create.

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- Genesis 1:26--*Then God said, "Let us **make** man in our image, after our likeness.*
- The word translated make is *yatsar H3335*, which means to form or fashion out of something.

b. Other Scriptures:

- Hebrews 11:3--*By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.*
- Psalm 33:6--*By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.*

c. Significance

- Creation displays God's infinite power
- The immense vastness of the universe and the inability for man to comprehend all of creation should leave us with a sense of awe knowing that to God all this is simply the product of a few spoken words
- "To be so occupied in the investigation of the secrets of nature, as to never turn the eyes to its author, is a most perverted study; and to enjoy everything in nature without acknowledging the Author, is the basest of ingratitude."¹

2. Creation is a Triune Activity:

- Though many think of creation as being the work of the Father only. Scripture reveals to us that creation is a work of the Triune God.
- Genesis 1:2--*The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*
- 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."*
- John 1:3--*All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

Created in Six Days?:

- Was the world created in six literal days? Are the days of creation long periods of time?
- All comes down to one word: **yom h3117**
- **Definition & Uses:**
 - daytime (as opposed to nighttime)

Genesis 1:5--*God called the light **Day**, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.*

Genesis 1:16--*And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the **day** and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.*

¹ John Calvin, *Commentary on the book of Genesis*.

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Genesis 29:7--*He said, "Behold, it is still high **day**; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered together. Water the sheep and go, pasture them."*

- a general period of time

Genesis 4:3--*In the course of **time** Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground,*

Genesis 26:8--*When he had been there a long **time**, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out of a window and saw Isaac laughing with Rebekah his wife.*

Genesis 30:33--*So my honesty will answer for me **later**, when you come to look into my wages with you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, shall be counted stolen."*

- A Day. A 24 hour period

Genesis 7:11--*In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth **day** of the month, on that **day** all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened.*

Genesis 40:18-20--*And Joseph answered and said, "This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three **days**. In three **days** Pharaoh will lift up your head—from you!—and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat the flesh from you."*

*On the third **day**, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants.*

- **How do I know which meaning is intended of the six days?**
 - **Context!**

Created in His Image:

- Genesis 1:26-27--*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." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*
- **What does this mean?**
 - Many will try to nail this down to a specific and narrow definition. However, image and likeness simply informed the original readers that man was *like* God and in many ways would *represent* God.²
 - I think we could spend a significant amount of time compiling a list of how we are like God but I believe it would be something of a waste of time. I think doing so would cause us to miss the obvious and beautiful truth sitting right under our noses. It is the ultimate rabbit trail, if you will.
 - That obvious truth is that God has spent the past 25 verses creating the immensely vast universe and forming all things by the mere word of his power. He has dazzled us with His incredible power. We find ourselves awe stricken and helpless before such a God and yet the next thing He does is bestow the honor of his image and likeness upon us.

² Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology

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- We should feel just like the Psalmist who says *“When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?”* (Psalm 8:3-4)
- **Cool thing to note*** This is the first act of election we see in scripture. There truly was nothing about man that made God bestow such an honor upon him because man wasn't even created yet. Yet, because it pleased God to do so, He decided to bestow His very image and likeness upon one of His creatures that He may be glorified in doing so and we might rejoice and delight in His glory.

Creation was good:

- Genesis 1:31--*And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*
- There is a sense in which God is pronouncing the sinless status of this world. However, it is irresponsible exegesis if we look at this verse and ignore God's sovereignty and His omniscience. He knows full well that things won't stay sinless and perfect and yet He chooses to make this declaration. He knows man will fall and the world will not remain in its current sinless state and yet he declares, *“It is very good.”*
- Understand that God is not saying that the sin that man would choose is good. Rather, He is revealing to us that He chose to make a world that He would redeem and display His marvelous grace. He wanted to display the depths of his love that he would love something unworthy of love by sacrificing his son. We can be confident that God did not make this declaration mistakenly. He didn't lose control and then formulate a plan “B” to restore what He hoped He never would have lost. To call Christ's work on the cross a plan “B” is to fully misunderstand the love of God.

Teaser:

- Tonight, we will dig into issues regarding creation that can be somewhat controversial. We will discuss the age of the earth, Gap theory, theistic evolution, and have a Q&A time as well.