

Let There Be Light

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Genesis 1:2-5
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Well, recently, I came across an article that was published by the BBC that was titled What Existed Before the Big Bang? What Existed Before the Big Bang? And one of the quotes from that article said this: "The most we can say with confidence at this stage is that physics has so far found no confirmed instances of something arising from nothing." How profound.

But even more interesting than that was the article's final conclusion, and that conclusion was that the universe itself may be eternal. That the universe may be that entity which has always existed. In other words, the physicists and cosmologists quoted in this article, "We're comfortable with the idea that the entire universe is potentially eternal. That a mindless, inanimate entity could actually be the origin of everything."

So this should really cause us to stop, think, and ask the question: why would these extremely intelligent, well-educated individuals be content to believe something like that, but simultaneously reject the idea of an all-powerful, all-wise, just, holy, and loving God existing eternally? Why would they do that?

Well, I will submit to you today that I think the reason is actually quite simple. You see, by believing in a creator who has existed for all of eternity, these scientists recognize that it would necessitate their own accountability. In other words, if they were to surrender to the reality that this all-powerful God is indeed majestic, eternal, and sovereign as Genesis 1:1 clearly teaches, then that means that they are surrendering to the idea that they must give an account to this God for their sins.

And so as Romans Chapter 1 tells us, these people, along with so many others, do exactly what we did before we came to faith in Jesus Christ: they suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Even though God's existence is obvious and quite clear through creation, they refuse to submit their lives to Him. The reality, of course, is that God is indeed the creator of the cosmos. Therefore, whether we acknowledge Him as Lord or not, each of us will one day stand before Him and give an account.

And so today, as we continue in our journey through Genesis, we're going to see how scripture begins to expound upon its introduction of the one true and living God from verse one. And as we do, the first thing I want us to notice from our text is that ***The Spirit of God Prepares to Create. The Spirit of God Prepares to Create.***

Look with me, if you will, at verse two. The introduction of scripture continues there saying, "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." So the Word of God here brings us into the

earliest moments of creation. It gives us a glimpse of the Earth's condition as God first brought it into existence. And what we notice is that the Lord did not initially create a world flourishing with flowers and trees. We don't see any animals galloping or grazing, no human beings interacting. There's no moon reflecting the brilliant light of the sun. There are no blazing stars or celestial planets. But rather, in the stillness of those earliest moments of creation, there was God.

As the only Psalm written by Moses declares, and perhaps the earliest of all the Psalms, Psalm 90, Verse 2, says, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God." And perhaps with God in those earliest moments was also the angelic host, for as Job 38:7 tells us, when He laid the earth's foundation, quote, "The morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

C.S. Lewis, the 20th-century author and theologian picks up this imagery in His book, *The Magician's Nephew*, from the *Chronicles of Narnia* series, as Aslan creates a Narnia. And in that book, Lewis describes the breathtaking scene. They're saying, "In the darkness, something was happening at last. A voice had begun to sing. It seemed to come from all directions at once. There were no words, there was hardly even a tune, but it was beyond comparison. The most beautiful noise Digory had ever heard. It was so beautiful; He could hardly bear it."

And so in a multitude of ways, like Lewis, our minds wonder in speculation at what those initial moments of creation must have been like in all of their splendor and beauty and creativity. And so much of it remains to us a mystery. But what we do know for certain is that God initially created the sphere upon which we now live in a state of absence from form and substance. Our text specifically says without form and void.

And in the original language, these are actually two rhyming words, *tohu* and *bohu*. Together, they provide us with this picture of a world yet to be formed or filled. And we will see, as we work our way through the Creation Week, that that is exactly what God begins to do. He begins to fill and form His world.

At the same time, we notice from our text at this point that there is darkness. A darkness that sits like a blanket enveloping the depths of the earth. And notice with me, that when God created the heavens and the earth, in the midst of this dark, formless void, we see here that there is water. In fact, it seems that the entire earth was simply covered by the depth of what we now know as the ocean.

And this corresponds to what the Apostle Peter wrote in His second epistle in Chapter 3, Verse 5, when He said, "The heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the Word of God." And so it's there, hovering as it were over the dark ocean waters, that we find the Spirit of God, once again presenting us with the presence of the triune God in creation: the Father, and the Word, and the Spirit together in perfect unity.

And it's interesting, because the Word here, translated hovering, is only used two other times in all of scripture. In one instance, the word is used to describe an eagle who is fluttering over her young, stirring them up as if to teach them to fly, yet all the while protecting them from harm. In

the other instance, the word is used to describe a man, which scripture says, "His bones are trembling at the holiness of God's Word."

And so from those usages, we gather this vivid picture of the Spirit of God hovering over the dark depths of the unformed and unfilled ocean in perfect harmony with both the father and the son, preparing both reverence and love according to the plans and purposes of God to exercise creativity and to bring forth life. And it's upon this stage that the sovereign God is preparing to create the beauty and the complexity of the world in which we now live.

As the fourth-century pastor and theologian, Ambrose, once wrote very simply, "The good architect lays the foundation first, and then various parts of the building, and then adds to it the ornamentation." And so it's here that we indeed see the foundation of the world.

But as we see the foundation being laid, one of the questions that we should be asking ourselves today is why? Why did God choose to create the heavens and the earth and all that is within them in this way? Why this sequential order of days and this process that we see unfolding in Genesis describing the Creation Week? Couldn't He have simply created all things in an instant with just a spoken word, and everything comes into being?

In fact, for men like Ambrose and Augustine, that was the type of skeptical argumentation they received from the biblical critics of their day. Long before the days of Darwin or the dawning of evolutionary theory, skeptics attacked the Bible's account of creation because they stated if God were really all-powerful, if He were really omnipotent, then it would not take Him a week to create all things. He should be able to do it in an instant.

How interesting it is to recognize today that the attack on scripture comes from the exact opposite side of the spectrum? Yet scripture remains unapologetically unwavering in its steadfast position on God's creation.

We see it in Psalm 33, as the psalmist declares in verses 6-9 saying, "By the Word of the Lord, the heavens were made. And by the breath of His mouth, all their host, He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap, he puts the deep in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants of the world," as we sang earlier today, "Stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it came to be he commanded, and it stood firm."

And so what I want us to recognize today is that in everything that God does, He does it with perfect precision and purpose. There is no aspect in what God does that is left to happenstance, or chance, or any such thing. God accomplishes His perfect will with infinite intentionality every time at every step.

And remember, the Book of Genesis itself, which we have opened before us today, was not breathed out by God for His benefit. God knows in far more detail than He has revealed to us in the pages of scripture how He created all things. This book is God's self-revelation to us. This is God graciously stooping down as it were and revealing Himself to us. And therefore, even in

creation, He has acted in a way that will point us as His image-bearers to something far beyond just the horizon of what He has made.

By creating the world in this way, God points us to the very purpose of our human existence. It is the answer to the question, "Why am I here? What is my purpose? What is all of this?" And therefore, it is against the backdrop of this formless, empty deep pitch-black darkness that God speaks His creation into existence. And as we're going to see today, not only did He do that in creation, as we find the Spirit of God hovering over the waters and loving reverent anticipation, but God also does that very same thing in our salvation as well.

So that leads us then to verse 3 of our text, and it's there that I want us to notice that ***The Word of God brings forth light. The Word of God brings forth light.*** Our text continues if you look there with me saying, "And God said, let there be light," and there was light. And so it's here for the first time in all of scripture that we realize that the God of all creation is a speaking God. The one true and living God is not a silent God. And when God speaks, He always speaks truth. In fact, scripture says, "This God cannot lie. He cannot utter anything that is dishonest or deceptive."

God proclaims promises through His Word. God reveals mysteries through His Word. God refutes error through His Word. God brings forth judgment through His Word. God creates life through His Word. And everything that God speaks always, without fail, comes to pass.

The prophet Isaiah said this very thing in the 55th chapter of the book bearing His name, specifically in verses 10 and 11, God speaking through the prophet declaring, "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bred to the eater, so shall my Word be that goes out from my mouth. It shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose; and it shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

So my friends, how is it that this God can make such a declaration? How can He declare that every Word that proceeds from His mouth accomplishes the very thing for which He sent it? The answer is that He is a sovereign God. He is in control of all things. And therefore, when He speaks, His Word accomplishes the exact thing that He set out to accomplish.

And of course, at the introduction to John's gospel, which we're all very familiar with, like a reverberation or an echo from the opening verses of Genesis, we learn that in the beginning was the what? 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.

And so upon this stage and against this backdrop, God pierces the pitch-black darkness with His Word. And that Word who is Christ brings forth the creation of light by the power of His Holy Spirit. And it's important for us to recognize here that this light that we're seeing created on day one is distinct from the sun, the moon, and the stars which God would later create on day four. Those entities would be created to utilize the light that God has created on day one.

But here, what we're seeing is one of the most fundamental aspects of our human existence. It's like the building blocks of human experience, and we could spend days and days and days mining the depths of all that He created on this first day. But to give you some examples, by speaking light into existence, God was creating a form of energy. He's creating photons and a portion of the electromagnetic spectrum. He's creating waves with frequency and wavelength. He's creating a constant for time as we know it, since light is not static, but as we know, travels in a vacuum. It's been measured to travel at a constant speed of approximately 186,000 miles per second. And in just a few days from the creation of this light, God will go on to create His image-bearers, who will have eyes that are able to see and perceive those wavelengths of light and the color that you and I all enjoy this very moment.

Not long from this moment in scripture, He will also be creating the sun, as I mentioned earlier, which will be heated by nuclear fusion reactions that will radiate visible light, and ultraviolet light, and infrared radiation, all in order to provide us with the warmth and the light and the energy that we need and that we enjoy on a daily basis.

The photosynthesis of plants were made possible by this light, which provides us with the oxygen that we need to breathe. So my friends, every moment that you inhale oxygen into your lungs, you are inhaling and experience the grace of God. And we could go on, and on, and on. All of this, so that we as human beings, the image-bearers of God, will be able to live and thrive and flourish on this planet, all for the exaltation and glory of God's great name.

So bursting forth out of the darkness, that His sovereign command is light and all that it entails. And when we realize all that God has done by speaking the multifaceted aspects of light into existence, it should bring greater appreciation from both a physical and a spiritual perspective, to the words we find in the Gospel of John.

As he speaks of the Word, he says, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. This is certainly the case in the physical realm, as we know. Light shines and causes the darkness to disappear. You know this when you walk into a dark room and flip the light switch on, what happens? Darkness seems to dissipate, and there before you is a well-lit room. But my friends, how much more is this the case? And how much more significantly is this true in the spiritual realm?

Once again, God is intentional and He is purposeful in all that He does. Infinitely more does the light of God's glory overwhelm the spiritual darkness in the hearts of sinful humanity. And you and I, if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, and you've been brought to saving faith in Christ, can attest to that reality today.

So as we consider the result of God's powerful creative Word, the third thing I want us to notice today is that ***The Creation of God obeys His voice. The Creation of God obeys His voice.*** So not only do we notice that when God said, "Let there be light," the existence of light appeared in all of its complexity, but our text goes on to say, "And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness."

So it's here that we see that God begins to sovereignly separate light from darkness. He begins to make a distinction, and He has declared that the light is good. And friends, this is what God does. Our God is the sovereign creator and sustainer of the entire universe, but He is also a God of sanctification. And since the beginning of time, as we see here in our text, He has been sanctifying, dividing, and ordering His creation according to His sovereign will and purpose. Later, we will see Him divide the waters above from the waters below. We'll see Him create and divide the land from those waters. And of course, He calls His people to be sanctified, separate, and holy, as He is holy. Again and again, God is dividing and setting apart for His purposes.

And this is once again an example of creation obeying the voice of its creator. But then we also see this in the final verse of our text as well. Scripture goes on to say "God called the light day, and the darkness, He called night. And there was evening and there was morning the first day."

So what I want to make sure we don't just gloss over and fail to recognize here is not only that God has created and then that God is sanctified for His purposes, but also that He has named that which He has set apart. He's giving a name to the light. It is not insignificant that God calls the light day. He's given a name as well to the darkness, and the name he's given to it is night. And in scripture, anytime we see God naming something or someone, the principle we find is that He's exercising authority, and He is defining or redefining in many instances their purpose.

So when it comes to the definition of a day, here in the opening chapter of Genesis, what we must understand as human beings is that we do not have the authority on our own accord to define what a day is. God, in His Word, has already done that for us. And that definition is a 24-hour period constituted by, as we see, an evening and a morning in that order.

So the picture we see for the culmination of a day, if you'll notice with me, is when the darkness of the evening has been dispelled by the brightness of the morning light, when light shines and the darkness is no more. And it's upon that very thought, as we prepare to conclude our time today in God's Word, that I want to ask you to turn with me to 2 Corinthians 4.

2 Corinthians 4, beginning in verse 1. The Apostle Paul in this chapter is providing a defense for the ministry He has been given and the confidence He has placed in nothing but the pure undefiled truth of God's Word. And beginning in verse one of 2 Corinthians 4, here's what He says: "Therefore, having this ministry," that is, the gospel ministry, "By the mercy of God, we do not lose heart, but we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's Word. But by the open statement of the truth, we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God."

In other words, Paul says, "We're going to declare the Word of God faithfully without fail, because we know that the Word of God does the creative life-giving work. In other words, God works through His Word and nothing else.

And then He goes on to say this: "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing." In their case, the god, lowercase G, of this world, has blinded the minds of the

unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

So there is a double blindness for those who exist in spiritual darkness. Not only are they spiritually blind, and dead, and trespasses in sins, but the devil has also put spiritual blindfolds, as it were, over their spiritual eyes, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel as the life-giving message of salvation and the glory of Christ.

So what is Paul's conclusion to all of that? He says, "For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus's sake." In other words, Jesus Christ is Lord of all. We are His servants, and so we have to just keep proclaiming the Word. We are to continue being faithful and sharing the gospel.

Why? Because that is the God-ordained means by which God works. That is the only message we have been given. That is the only name under heaven by which man must be saved, and Christ, the Lord, exercises dominion through no other message but the gospel. Paul sums all of this up in verse six, saying this: "For God who said, let light shine out of darkness, has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." So what is Paul doing here?

He is anchoring his confidence, every ounce of his being, to the sovereign creativity of God. Why? Because he's saying that the only way that we are brought to saving faith in Jesus Christ is by God doing what God did at creation... against the pitch-black backdrop of our totally depraved sinful hearts, empty and void of any goodness or righteousness of our own. God looks graciously upon our lost condition, and He powerfully declares, "Let there be light," and there is light.

And the light we receive is the experiential knowledge, the faith that Christ is glorious, that He is the all-sufficient savior who has died on a cross for our sins, sins which we know we desperately must have forgiven and cleansed, and that he is the only one who can do it. And when that happens, all of the sudden, like the light of creation bursting forth from the darkness, day one of our new life in Christ begins. Our sovereign God saves us and sustains us, but He also sanctifies us. He sets us apart for His plans and for His purposes.

And although we do not deserve it, and our lives do not merit such a declaration, because of the new creation, He causes us to be in Christ. God looks upon us and He declares, "It is good. It is good, my son. It is good, my daughter." And therefore, just as creation obeyed the voice of its creator, we too, as the sons and daughters of the living God, are called to obey our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

My friends, wherever you find yourself today, and whatever the situation, whatever your life has looked like up to these very moments, the command of the gospel, the offer of salvation is repent, turn from that life of sin and your own self-sufficiency, and believe upon the perfect person and the perfect work of Jesus Christ on your behalf. Because the same Word who

powerfully brought forth light from the darkness is the very one who will graciously bring spiritual life to your soul. Let's pray.

Father, you are a good and kind, amazing Father. Your creation screams forth and sings your creativity and your power and your beauty and your love. But even more so, Lord, your Word and your son proclaim the excellencies of your great name. So thank you, oh God, for your grace and revealing yourself to us. Thank you for shining the supernatural light of your Spirit into our hearts and blessing us with the miraculous gift of faith.

I pray for every person here in this room and those who are watching online. Lord, may each and every one of us bow the knee to Christ. May we surrender our lives, every aspect of our being to Your lordship, and may we receive the grace to believe upon Your beautiful name. And it is in that powerful and precious name of Christ that we pray. Amen.