

In the Beginning God Created! (Part 2)
Genesis 1
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Well, we continue our study tonight about God's great act of creation. We turn back to the first chapter of Genesis. If you weren't here last Sunday night, I encourage you to make sure you get the tape because I really laid a foundation last Sunday evening for why we embrace the first chapters of Genesis as historical record. There are those who embrace this portion in some sort of a metaphorical way, they look at it and say well it is poetry. And we looked at all of those issues and concluded that in the end, when you look at the evidence, when you look at how the Old Testament authors as well as the New Testament writers viewed these first chapters of Genesis, it is unequivocally historical record of the earliest happenings of the world. Scripture is God's own eyewitness account of creation.

A number of years ago when I was at Grace Church, we had Ken Ham of Answers in Genesis. If you are not familiar with his ministry, it is a very helpful one, along with the Creation Research Institute and the Institute for Creation Research, a couple of wonderful organizations that you can benefit from. But Ken Ham, when he was teaching the kids, he would ask them, he would say, "How do you respond when someone says to you, 'Well, it was millions of years ago and this is how it happened.'" And he would have them respond out loud with the question, "Were you there?"

You know that is simple in one sense and yet it is profound in another. No one was there to observe it. Evolutionary theory is based on uniformitarianism, that is, that everything has always been the same since the very beginning. And so the only true reliable testimony of what happened in the beginning is God Himself. The only eyewitness account of creation comes to us from God, and it is recorded here in Genesis 1. Either, as I mentioned last time, either explained to Moses via direct revelation on the mountain, or perhaps included from a number of written documents. Some even suggest, I think it is Henry Morris who suggests, that this first document, which ends in chapter 2 verse 4, this is the account, or this is the generations of the heaven and the earth when they were created. Henry Morris maintains that these words may have been written by God Himself and given, passed down through generations, until Moses received them, and of course had them explained to him further in his interaction with God.

But regardless, what you have in this first chapter is an eyewitness account of creation. As I mentioned, it begins in chapter 1 verse 1 and it goes to chapter 2 verse 4, where you have that familiar punctuation that "these are the generations of" until you pass to a new section which is a more detailed description in chapter 2 of the creation of man. It is not a separate account. It is simply a more detailed account, specifically, of the creation of man.

So in chapter 1 through the first four verses of chapter 2, you have a complete record of God's creative work. Tonight and next Sunday night, I want us to work our way through this

remarkable record of the creation of the universe. I have thoroughly enjoyed myself getting even a deeper grip on these passages, and they just have opened up for me as I hope they will for you. What you have here is a record of the seven days of creation, or technically six days of creation and one day of rest.

But the first and most obvious question that comes to mind is, what do you mean by days? You see, almost everyone who has any interest in the Bible agrees that the text teaches that God created everything in six days. But by far, the most hotly debated aspect of Genesis 1 is the nature of those days. What do you mean by days? Let me just give you a summary, an overview of the views, and then we will go back and look at each one a little more in detail. What do we mean by days? Well, first of all, there is the gap theory, and we will talk about what that is, there is the pictorial day theory, there is the day age theory, the framework hypothesis, and finally the literal, the view of the fact that they were literal 24 hour days.

Now let's take a look at each of these. These are the primary views of how to look at and account for what is recorded in Genesis 1. It is important that you understand these and can defend them, to defend the proper one and answer the false ones. First of all, the gap theory. This is an old and outdated theory. It was made popular by the Schofield Reference Bible. Essentially it says that there were six literal days in which God restored from chaos the original creation, very important that you understand that those who hold to the gap theory see a huge period of time between verse 1 and verse 2.

In verse 1 you have the original creation, thousands, maybe millions, in some cases millions of years ago. Then you have this gap between 1 and 2, a period of chaos. It is long enough to accommodate the millions of years required by evolution, and it is somewhere during that time according to those who hold to this theory, that Satan fell and he ruins the earth. And therefore, in verse 2, you have the earth being formless and void. And God needs, according to their view, to restore the original creation that over those millions of years between verses 1 and 2 have been sent into chaos.

Their argument is essentially twofold. The two strongest points they try to make is that in verse 2, you see the word "the earth *was* formless and void." They say, well you know that Hebrew word can mean became. So perhaps it means the earth *became* formless and void. And their other argument is this phrase, this Hebrew phrase, "without form and void," which we will look at in more detail in a few minutes, they say that phrase is used in Isaiah 45:18, and it says the Lord did not make the earth to be that way. Therefore, something must have happened to account for verse 2.

Now I will answer this theory when we get there, I am going to answer it when we get to verses 1 and 2 themselves, but the key problem here, there are a number of problems, but the key problem with this theory is it has, as we talked out before, the problem with the fossil record. It has death, which is what the fossil record is all about, preceding the fall. And yet the Scripture's

clear, that death followed the fall. First there is sin and then there is death. Well, they obviously, in between verses 1 and 2 here, haven't gotten to the fall yet and yet they have millions of years where there is death and decay and animals dying and that recorded in the fossil record. That is one of the key issues, but frankly there is very little exegetical basis for this and this view has gone out of style. There may be a few people here and there who hold it.

Then there is the pictorial day theory. In this view a day is a day of revelation. That is, a day on which God revealed to Moses a certain aspect of His creative activity. The activity itself took vast amounts of time, but telling it to Moses took seven days. This also has really passed from popularity. And you know, when I look at this view, I am thinking I can read this passage in about three minutes. You know, either Moses had a learning disability or God spoke very slowly for this view to make any sense. So again, it has passed from the scene.

Now we come to the views that have become much more popular today. The first is the day age theory. The day age theory, as you can pick up from the title, says that each day is a vast period of time during which natural evolution progressed to approximately the state assigned to that day. So you have a huge period of time, an age, during which evolution progressed, about according to what is described and allocated to that day in the biblical text.

This is really the most popular view, even today. Those who hold to this view argue that Scripture uses the word day in various ways. Sometimes it uses it for indefinite periods of time. You can see this right here in the very text, look at chapter 2 verse 4, "This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD made earth and heaven." Obviously there, there is a sort of metaphorical use of the word, or at least some believe that there is a metaphorical use of the word. There are other texts where absolutely that is true. The people who hold to this are theistic evolutionists. That is, they believe in evolution, but they believe that God initiated the process and that at various points along the way, God intervened and/or guided the process to accomplish this great feat of evolution, that is, without His help, impossible.

Hugh Ross, the leading evangelical proponent of this view, likes to call this view instead of theistic evolution the progressive creation view. I am not sure exactly what that means, but I understand what he is trying to do. Now this view is relatively new to the church. There is an interesting book that was written back in 1896 about the battle, the long war between the Bible and science. Remember now, this is 1896. And Andrew Dixon White wrote this in that book, "Down to a period almost within living memory," in other words near 1900, "it was held virtually always, everywhere, and by all, that the universe as now we see it was created literally and directly in an instant or in six days." So at that point, around 1900, he is saying until just the last few years, until just recently, this has been universally accepted, that God created either in six literal days or, as we will see in a moment, they are some who hold to it happening in an instant. But long ages? No, it wasn't there.

In spite of this, those who support this view try to use church history. Perhaps you have read some of their writings. Hugh Ross, for example, has written this, “Many of the early church fathers and other biblical scholars interpreted the creation days of Genesis 1 as long periods of time. The list includes Augustine and later Aquinas to name a few.” Well, I don’t think he intentionally misrepresented these two men in the history of the church, but he did misrepresent them. Take Augustine for example. Did Augustine hold to literal six days? No, he didn’t. But he taught that God created *ex nihilo* and that the days were stages in the angels’ knowledge of creation, but that creation occurred in an indivisible instant or absolutely in a moment. Long periods of time? No, he didn’t believe that at all.

What about Aquinas? Aquinas never anywhere says that the days are ages. In fact, in his great work, *Summa Theologica*, he describes them as 24 hour days. So this view is new, it is new on the scene. We are going to take a look at this when we look at the 24 hour position in a moment. I think, hopefully, I will put this to bed.

One that has recently become popular, held by Christians who believe in an old earth, is the framework hypothesis. Essentially this view says that the days are not even distinct eras, but they are overlapping stages of the long evolutionary process. It is not chronological at all when you look at Genesis 1, according to this view; the days are a metaphorical tool to describe the creative process to our finite minds.

The leading advocate of this view today is Dr. Meredith Kline of Westminster Theological Seminary. In this view, God’s providence supervised the process of evolution, and Genesis 1 is just sort of a creative retelling that has no chronological references whatsoever. Just ignore day, it doesn’t really mean anything at all. The serious problem with this view, and it is frightening actually, is that it undermines all legitimate interpretation of the Bible. MacArthur, in his book *The Battle for the Beginning*, says, “Where does this metaphorical framework stop? After Genesis 1? After Genesis 3? After the Flood? After the Tower of Babel? What about the resurrection?” You see, there is no place where this ends. If the Bible can’t be trusted to record history when it says it is recording history, then why believe any of its history? It absolutely undermines the integrity of the entire Bible.

That brings us to the view that we hold, and let me give you some defense for it, and that is, literal 24 hour days. And folks, the evidence is overwhelming. From a linguistic research standpoint, if you weren’t coming to Genesis 1 with an evolutionary bias, you would never arrive at the views they hold on the basis of the language of Hebrew, on the basis of what the text says.

Let me just take you through it. First of all, the literal meaning of the word day, it is the Hebrew word *yom*, the most common use of the Hebrew word is for the literal meaning, and there is no reason in the context of Genesis 1 to change it. For example, this word *yom* that is translated

day in Genesis 1, it occurs 2,225 times in the Old Testament, and it is overwhelmingly used for an ordinary day, like you and I, the way we use the word.

Secondly, if you were to look at Exodus 20:11, in Exodus 20:11, in fact, let's turn there. Of course, this is in the middle of the Ten Commandments. And notice what God says, "For in six days." Now He is obviously talking here about the Sabbath and the keeping of the Sabbath, and here is the reasoning behind it. He says, "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." Now, what I want you to see is the word day is here plural, "in six days" God made the earth. God created in six days. Six hundred eight times in the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *yom* occurs in the plural, as it does here. Every other time, guess what? It always refers to literal days, 608 times, always days.

Take a look at the phrase in Genesis 1, morning and evening. That phrase indicates a literal day night cycle. This expression, morning and evening, occurs outside of Genesis in 37 verses. Every time they are used, they are used to describe an ordinary day. You get the picture? I mean, however you look at this, it still stacks up the same.

Take the word *yom*, our Hebrew word, the word for day, and put it with a cardinal number. In other words, first day, second day, third day and so forth. It occurs in the Old Testament with a cardinal number hundreds of times, and it never refers, when it is with a cardinal number, to anything but a literal day.

Notice, when you look at the word day in Genesis 1, that the same word and the same expressions, the same language, is used for days 1 through 3 and days 4 through 6. The sun was created on day 4, so days 4 through 7 were obviously literal days. There is no reason to assume since the same language is used in the same context, that the first 3 days weren't literal days.

Some say, well, you know, the word day can refer to an indefinite period of time, and that is true, but it usually doesn't, as we have seen. But the truth is, Hebrew has a word for age or an indeterminate period of time, and Moses chooses not to use it. If he had wanted to say that there were seven ages or seven indeterminate periods of time, he could have done that, and yet he chose to use the word that is characteristically, throughout the Old Testament, in all of these ways I have shown you, used for literal days.

And then finally, God uses the creative week as a pattern for man's cycle of work and rest. Next week, when we talk about the seventh day, you know it is just fascinating to think of why is it that our lives are broken up into weeks, sevens. It makes no sense in a variety of ways, except for creation. Our week is based on God's first creative acts.

Let me ask you this way, if God wanted to tell us that He created in six literal days, what else could He say? Did God need six 24 hour days to create? No, so why did He take six 24 hour

days? He could have done just like Augustine thought He did, and that was, speak it all into existence in a moment of time, instantaneous with a thought, with a word. So why did God take six 24 hour days? I believe, as we will see next time, it is as a pattern for the cycle of our lives.

So when you put all this evidence together, you are left with the conclusion that the literal 24 hour day or the literal day, you know I am not going to argue that it might not have been 23 hours or 25 hours, but you get the point. It was a literal day as you and I know it, and I will hopefully make that point even more as we go along. It is the clear teaching of this passage, so why have the other views arisen? You know what, if we could step back and look at them genuinely and honestly, we would realize that all of these other views arose as an accommodation to the supposed findings of science. They didn't exist before the evolutionary scientific theory began to explode. And all of them have arisen as a way to reconcile the Bible and supposedly the discoveries of science. We need, in faith, to believe, as Hebrews 11 says, "that the things which are seen were made from the things which aren't visible," and we receive that by faith, confidence in God.

Now, what I would like for us to do now is go to Genesis itself, and this is really exciting for me and I hope it will be for you as well, because I want us to just sort of go through this text and see it unfold. As God takes each step, I would like to take it with Him. And we are not going to get through it all tonight, in fact we are just going to get through a few days, but I want you to see the magnificence of the work of God in creation.

Now, when you come to day 1, essentially day 1 is covered from verse 1 through verse 5. Verse 1 says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Some see this verse, verse 1, as a summary of the entire creation. In other words, this is saying God created everything and now I am going to tell you exactly how He did it in verses 2 and following. I don't believe that is the best way to see this. First of all, in the Hebrew text, verse 2 begins with something that in the King James was translated and, it is called a *waw-consecutive*. Essentially, it is a Hebrew tool that tells you you are hearing something in consecutive order, you are hearing something in sequential order.

And the summary, if you want a summary, it occurs in chapter 2 verse 4. And in chapter 2 verse 1, notice that you have a reference to the work of the previous six days, and he says, "Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts." And notice that part of that summary of creation includes the phrase, "the heavens." The only mention of the heavens back in chapter 1 is in verse 1. That means that Genesis 1:1 is not a summary of creation; it is instead the first act of the first of six days of creation. It is the primeval creation of the heavens and the earth or the physical universe.

But let's begin where Moses begins, with the phrase, "In the beginning." The question that immediately comes to my mind should come to yours is, the beginning of what? The beginning of what? This is the beginning of time. Before this, there was no space, there was no time, and

there was no matter. There was no physical universe. There was only God and eternity. That is hard for us to imagine. Where was God before He created everything? He wasn't anywhere. There was no space. There was no matter. He simply was; He existed. You see the beauty of God's name, "I am," I exist, by definition. God is not confined, as we learned in our study of the character of God, He is not confined to space and time. One writer says, "With God's first creative activity, time emerged from eternity."

So when exactly did this happen? When was the beginning? When did God create the world? Well, you may have heard of Archbishop James Ussher's famous computations. He lived back in the late 1500's, early 1600's, and he computed the date of creation, using the biblical account, as 4004 B.C. Have you ever heard that date?

John Lightfoot, Bible exegete and commentator, he did Ussher one better. He calculated that creation occurred during the week of October 18 to 24, 4004 B.C. Which meant, he said, if you do all the rest of the math, that God created Adam on October 23rd at 9 a.m., four fifths meridian time. I don't think you can be that specific; however, when you look at the overall figure of 4,000 years, secular historical records seem, that is 4000 B.C., secular historical records seem to support a date similar to this.

For example, Colin Renfrew writes, "Until the discovery of radiocarbon dating, there was really only one reliable way of dating events in European pre-history. This was by the early records of the great civilizations, which extended in some cases as far back as 3000 B.C. The Egyptian king lists go back to the first dynasty of Egypt, a little before 3000 B.C. Before that, there were no written records anywhere."

Of course, the evolutionary answer for this is, well, they were so stupid, they couldn't write. And so they just figured how to do it about then. We know that the absolute opposite is true. The Bible tells us that man was created perfect, and he has only declined since.

There is no reason not to accept the basic biblical chronology; however, and this is important, that is not as simple as just embracing Ussher's 4000 B.C. date. The reason is because of Genesis 5 and Genesis 11. You see, Genesis 5 and Genesis 11 are both crucial to determining when God created, because Genesis 5 is a genealogy that goes from Adam to the flood, and then Genesis 11 is a genealogy that goes from the flood to Abraham. We know about when Abraham lived. Abraham was born about 2166 B.C. That is fairly well established based on the rest of the Old Testament in figuring back to Abraham's birth.

But the two genealogies of Genesis 5 and Genesis 11 may well have some gaps. If you take them exactly as they read, then take James Ussher's date, 4000, approximately 4000 B.C. But those genealogies may have some gaps, just as we know that there are gaps in other biblical genealogies. However, there can only be so many gaps for the record to be credible. So it can only go back so far.

Henry Morris wrote this, “At the outside, it would seem impossible to insert gaps totaling more than about 5,000 years in these chapters without rendering the record irrelevant and absurd. Consequently, the Bible will not support a date for the creation of man earlier than about 10000 B.C.” I think he is right. So somewhere between 4000, that would be the earliest, B.C. and 10000 B.C. is probably the creation of the universe.

In today’s world, I am just being anachronistic all over the place today, in today’s world, that sounds absolutely counterculture; that is contrary to the billions of years required for evolution. But remember, we have looked at evolution, we have looked at the disintegrating theory that it is. The evidence, if you do away with uniformitarianism, which is the foundation for all their dating, if you do away with uniformitarianism and you allow for a universal flood, the evidence weights far more towards a young earth than it does toward an old earth.

So, with the beginning of time, God created. Notice the word, “In the beginning God *created*.” It is an interesting Hebrew word. It is always used in the Old Testament of God and never of anyone else. You see, men make things, but God creates in this sense. This is clearly an expression of what theologians call, using the Latin phrase *ex nihilo*, that is, out of nothing, with no pre-existing materials. You see this in several texts, but the one that is most direct is Hebrews, turn there for a moment just to remind you. Hebrews 11:3, “By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.” God created without the use of pre-existent materials. It was created by His word, spoken into existence. God created, and this is unbelievable, by speaking into existence.

Now notice back in Genesis 1, “In the beginning,” the beginning of time, somewhere between probably 4000 and 10000 B.C., God did what no man could do, He created. And notice, He created “the heavens.” This word probably corresponds to our English word space. We will see a little more detail about that in a moment. And Moses adds, “and the earth.” That probably refers to matter, of course specifically, the matter of the earth itself, the planet on which we live.

Henry Morris, in his excellent commentary on Genesis called *The Genesis Record*, writes this, “Genesis 1:1 can legitimately and incisively be paraphrased as follows: The transcendent, omnipotent Godhead called into existence the space-mass-time universe.” That is exactly what happens in Genesis 1:1. So on the first day, God created time, space, and matter. And He is not even finished yet, because this universe that He has spoken into existence without the use of any pre-existing materials, He spoke and it happened, it needs to be formed and filled.

Notice verse 2, “The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was” hovering or “moving over the surface of the waters.” As I said in Hebrew, this verse begins with a construction that shows sequential action. This is what happened next. God spoke the universe, space and matter, into existence. But when He did, the earth and the entire universe existed in a formless, barren darkness. Notice there are several

phrases he uses in verse 2 to describe the earth at this point. He says it is “formless and void.” This is a Hebrew expression, *tohuwabohu* or *tohuwabohu*. It means desolate and empty. The raw materials were present, but the creation was incomplete. It was yet without form and it was uninhabited.

And notice the second phrase, “darkness was over the surface of the deep.” It was engulfed in the blackest darkness. Deep is often used of the sea, and since the next phrase, notice the end of verse 2 talks about water, Moses is saying this, that the entire planet was covered by a vast primordial ocean. And this formless, empty global ocean was shrouded in absolute total darkness. And in that situation we are told, verse 2, “the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters,” or “over the face of the waters.”

Creation, you remember, is the work of the triune God. The Father is attributed as Creator. The Son, of course, as we looked at a number of months ago, is the key actor in creation, but here the Spirit of God is involved as well. Look at the word moving. That is a fascinating word, moving. It is used two other times in the Old Testament. There, in those other passages, it is translated as hovering and shaking. Morris suggests the translation vibrated. It appears to be the transmission of energy from the Creator to the creation. He is instilling it with the energy that is a part of our world.

Verse 3, we are introduced to the mechanism of most of creation, and that is what theologians call the divine fiat. Fiat is simply a spoken command. God merely speaks and it happens. Notice verse 3, “Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.” By the way, God speaks like this in most of creation. The only exceptions, when God does use pre-existing material, is in the creation of Adam and Eve. Notice chapter 2 verse 7, “Then the LORD God formed man of the dust from the ground.” And notice verse 21 of chapter 2,

So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. And He fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man.

The only exceptions to God speaking creation into existence out of nothing are Adam and Eve.

Here He speaks into existence in verse 3 not the light holders that we look up in the sky now and see, but light itself. This means visible light, obviously, and probably the entire electromagnetic spectrum from short waves to long waves. We use those waves in for so many purposes in our world. That energy that can’t really even be fully understood, is spoken into existence. ““Let there be light.””

Now, Moses doesn’t tell us if the light came from a location or was simply a sort of formless, ethereal glow; we don’t really know. But there is light, and God separates, notice verse 4, “God saw the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.” How exactly did He

separate the light from the darkness? Well verse 5 explains, “God called the light day, and the darkness He called night.” That is how He separated light and darkness. He assigned each of them to a different part of the day.

What I want you to notice is, here in verse 5, we are still during the first day of creation. Light dark cycles begin to mark day and night. And this cycle begins on the very first day. We still don’t have the sun. We still don’t have the moon. We still don’t have the stars. Those are coming later. But on the very first day, God is already separating the light from the darkness in the sense that, He is assigning the light to a period He calls the day, and He is assigning the dark to a period He calls the night. So then He concludes, verse 5, “And there was evening and there was morning, one day.”

It is possible that at this point the earth was already rotating on its axis. In fact, I think it is probable. And that a sort of formless light illuminated one side of the earth and darkness covered the other. But on the very first day, there is the cycle of light and dark marking day and night. So on day one, God created time, matter, space, and light. Pretty remarkable first day of the universe.

That brings us to day two, day two described in verses 6 through 8. As the second day dawns, remember now the situation and the circumstance, let me describe it for you. As the second day dawns, the earth is still covered with water, with no dry land to be seen anywhere, and with no breathable atmosphere. It is formless and uninhabited, covered in darkness. There is already, I should say half of the time it is covered in darkness, there is already day and night. But the entire earth is one great ocean.

Now notice verse 6, “Then God said,” day two, ““Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.”” Now I grew up in a church where we used the King James; in fact, the New American Standard hadn’t come around yet. And some of you will remember, the King James says something about the firmament. You ever wonder what a firmament was? It is a strange word. Well, the New American Standard doesn’t do much better, “expanse.” What is this? Well the Hebrew word speaks of something spread out. In the verb form of this word it is used to refer to thin plates of metal beaten thin to overlay wood. For example, it is used that way in the building of the tabernacle, the construction of the vessels there in Exodus 39:3. So thin, a thin layer, if you will. So verses 6 and 7 describe a vast thin protective layer that covers the entire earth.

Now notice a little more about this layer, this protective layer. ““Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters,”” in the middle of the waters, ““let it separate the waters from the waters.”” What does that mean? Well verse 7, he explains, “God made the expanse,” or this thin protective layer, “and He separated the waters which were below from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so.”

Now what are these two bodies of water that are described here? Apparently, this thin protective layer divided the waters below, that is, the waters of the sea, this global ocean, from the waters above, that is, water vapor, atmospheric water. It may have been a vapor canopy that sort of encapsulated the entire earth, we don't know for sure. But between the waters below, the sea, and the waters above, whatever that has reference to, God created "the expanse," this thin protective layer, probably best understood as the earth's breathable atmosphere. So God now takes this world that He has made, which as yet has no land and no breathable atmosphere and on day two, He creates a breathable atmosphere to sustain life.

Verse 8, "He called this expanse heaven." He called this thin protective layer, heaven. Scripture uses the word heaven to refer to three different realities. In Jeremiah 4:25, it refers to the atmosphere, it talks about the birds of heaven. So it is talking about that area in which the birds fly, the atmosphere. Here in chapter 1 of Genesis, verse 14, notice he says, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens," and he is talking, of course, about the sun and the moon. So here the word heaven is used not of the atmosphere, but of the stellar heavens, where the stars and the sun and all of the planets of heaven are. The third use of the word heaven, the third reality the word heaven describes in Scripture, is the place of God's throne. In Hebrews 9, for example, and it is throughout the Scripture, but in Hebrews 9:24, there we are told that Jesus entered into heaven to the throne of God.

So when you see the word heaven, realize that it might be referring to any one of those three realities: the atmosphere, the place where birds fly; the stellar heavens, the place where the stars are; and the heaven of heavens, the place of God's abode. That is why in 1 Corinthians 12 Paul talks about being caught up into "the third heaven," excuse me, 2 Corinthians 12, into "the third heaven," into the very presence of God. So God called this expanse, this thin, protective layer that He has created, heaven. And it is best to understand the reference here to the sky, the earth's atmosphere.

So on the second day, God made an expanse of breathable gases between the water below and the water above. Now some believe that God completely enveloped the earth in a canopy of water, creating a sort of hothouse effect, which provided a year round subtropical climate on the earth. And that is certainly possible. We know that the weather patterns were vastly different then than now because chapter 2 verse 5, notice, says, "Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground." It may be that there wasn't rain. We know that rain came after the flood. We are told that there was no rain until the time of the flood.

And so it may be that this canopy, this water canopy that some believe that God created around the earth, was there until the time of the flood. And part of what created the flood was the breaking up of this great water canopy, as well as the waters under the earth bursting through as

well. We don't know. If that is true, this water canopy that is, it may explain several things about the people who existed before the flood. It may explain why they had such long lifespans. They were protected from the sun's debilitating rays. Also may explain why there were such large animals, because also long lifespans for them and plenty of foliage. And of course, it created a universal climate, if in fact it existed. This water canopy may have remained until the flood, as I said, when it dissolved as part of that cataclysm.

So with the work of the earth's atmosphere, God ceases the work of day two. Evening and night pass, and day two is done with the next morning. I want us to stop with day two this week, but I want us to already begin looking at, so what? What should it matter to us that God created the way we are seeing Him magnificently unfold this universe by speaking it into existence?

The amazing knowledge of creation provides us with a constant reason to worship. First of all, because creation itself worships God. Let me show you a couple of these references. Turn to Psalm 19, Psalm 19:1. This is a great ode to God's creation as well as to His Word, two parts of Psalm 19. But notice how Psalm 19 begins.

Right after we were married, my wife hated the fact that I had had Hebrew because to learn a language you often, particularly a language like Hebrew, you often have to memorize a portion of it as kind of a group of pigeonholes for the language you are learning, and so I had to learn Psalm 19:1. And so I was often quoting it to Sheila around the house, but it is a magnificent verse.

Look at what it says, "The heavens," all of God's creation that we can look up and see, "are telling," are constantly preaching, literally, "the glory of God." The word glory is *kavod*. The Hebrew word is a word for weighty. The heavens are constantly communicating the weight, the impressiveness is another way to translate it, of God. You look up at the sky and they are, by their existence, bringing worship to God. They are constantly telling of the weight, the impressiveness of God.

And their expanse, [*there is our word,*] is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech and night to night reveals knowledge. [*So it is a constant, constant communication; it never stops. And yet*] There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. [*In other words, it is not like you literally hear them, but their communication is profound nonetheless.*] Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the earth.

Even though they don't use a language, everybody gets the message. Isn't that what Romans 1 says? Nobody misses it. "He has placed as a tent for the sun." God has called creation to bring Him worship and praise, and when we look at them, when we see them, they are constantly preaching and telling what makes God impressive, "His eternal power and divine nature," as Romans 1 says.

But turn to Psalm 148. There are other references here as well, but in the interest of time, turn to Psalm 138, I am sorry, 148. Here in this psalm, it is fascinating because the whole creation is invoked to bring praise to God. Obviously, the psalmist is using a figure, a poetic figure of speech, to animate all of creation as if it could raise its voice in praise, but it does. Just as we saw in Psalm 119, not with speech, but by its mere existence, it brings praise to God. Notice what he says here,

Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise Him in the heights!
Praise Him, all His angels [*all the armies of heaven*]; all His hosts! [*Now watch this, verse 3,*] Praise Him, sun and moon.

We sing those great songs that call all of creation to praise God, and here, this is right out of the psalm,

Praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all stars of light! Praise Him, highest heavens, and the waters that are above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created. He has also established them forever and ever; He has made a decree which will not pass away.

Listen, you and I can depend that the sun will also rise tomorrow because God has made an eternal decree that it will stand until He is done, until He recreates this world.

Praise the LORD from the earth, sea monsters [*probably a reference to the kinds of huge animals that were a part of the sea during the days of the dinosaurs and undoubtedly some of them lived even into the period of Biblical history*], and all the deeps; fire and hail, snow and clouds; stormy wind, fulfilling His word; mountains and all hills; fruit trees and all cedars; beasts and all cattle; creeping things and winged fowl; kings of the earth and all peoples; princes and all judges of the earth, both young men and virgins; old men and children. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for His name alone is exalted; His glory is above earth and heaven.

Listen, without question, God intended that creation bring Him praise and glory by its mere existence. That means that you and I ought to respond with worship. We too are called to worship God for a number of reasons in Scripture, certainly as our Redeemer, but also as our Creator.

Notice Nehemiah 9. Nehemiah 9, as the people confess this sin, I pointed this verse out to you a number of weeks ago, the Levites now are crying out in praise, “Arise, bless the LORD your God forever and ever!” Verse 5, “O may Your Glorious name be blessed and exalted above all blessing and praise!” Now, where do they start with their praise? It is God’s creative power. Verse 6, “You alone are Yahweh, You have made the heavens, the heaven of heavens

with all their armies, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them and the heavenly host bows down before you.” The praise begins with the recitation of God’s amazing creative power exhibited in the world around us, from heaven and its heights and the armies of the angels in His presence, to the world, the dry land, and to the sea and everything in the sea. We praise God for His great creation.

But I think nowhere is this made more profound or clear than in Job. I want you to turn to Job 38. I am just going to cite a couple of references, but let me encourage you to do something this week. Put down on your calendar, make a mark to do this sometime this week. Read Job 38 through the end of the book. If you want a picture for how important the creation is to God Himself, read Job 38 through the end of the book.

You remember the story of Job, of course. And all of his friends give their advice, and then finally one of his friends, who actually has some decent advice and is not criticized by God, Elihu, speaks. But on the heels of that, God enters the scene. Job has cried out, oh, that, you know, I might, that God would bring the heavens and come down, that I might let him know my case. God says, okay, you want a chance at me? Here is your chance. Verse 1 of chapter 38, “So the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, ‘Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?’” Now if you are the other three friends, you know this is not going to be good when those are the first thing that God says.

But He is speaking to Job, verse 3, “Now gird up your loins like a man, I will ask you, and you instruct Me!” Now where does God go? Here is Job, he has been through this terrible suffering. He has lost everything, his family, he wishes he had lost his wife, I mean it has been awful. And so what counsel does God give him? Does God come and warmly put His arm around him? No, God gets to the heart of the issue and He says, let me tell you who I am. I am the Creator and Sustainer of the world in which you live, and who are you to question Me. Watch where God begins, “you instruct Me!” He says, verse 3.

“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who set its measurements? Since you know. Who stretched the line on it? On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

“Who enclosed the sea with doors [*we will find about that next week*] when, bursting forth, it went out from the womb; when I made a cloud its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, and I placed boundaries on it and set a bolt and doors, and I said, ‘Thus far you shall come, but no further; And here shall your proud waves stop?’”

God says where were you when I did all of this? You see what God is doing? He is using the truth of His creative power to say, you ought to be bowing down before Me in worship and you ought to be trusting Me with your life.

And He goes on and on and on. Verse 12, “Have you ever in your life commanded the morning.” Remember, on the very first day He separated the light and the darkness and He made there morning and evening. He says,

“Have you ever in your life commanded the morning, and caused the dawn to know its place, that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it?”

Have you ever done that? Verse 16,

“Have you ever entered into the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? Have you understood the expanse of the earth [*literally, the width of the earth*]? Tell Me, if you know all this.”

And then He comes to the issue of light. Verse 19, “Where is the way to the dwelling of light? And darkness, where is its place?” You understand what is true about light? Light is one of the most complex things on earth, the visible light spectrum and the waves that extend on either end. It is almost incomprehensible. And so God says, do you really understand that? And on and on He goes. He talks about the stars and His creation of the stars. He talks about His supervision, in chapter 39, of all of the animals.

Job is beginning to get it in chapter 40. He says, “Then the Lord said to Job, ‘Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it.’” So Job says,

“Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to you? I lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; even twice, and I will add nothing.”

In other words, I have said too much already. And the Lord responds to him with, you tell Me if you can instruct Me, if you can do what I do. And He goes on to talk about other creatures, probably dinosaur-type creatures, incredibly strong, incredibly powerful, unimaginably so. We know nothing like these on earth today.

How does Job respond? Chapter 42, “Job answered the Lord and said, ‘I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.’” Listen folks, if you don’t get any other lesson from the creative power of God, this is the lesson God wants you to get. It is the lesson Job got when God taught him about His creative ability. It is, “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.”

In other words, God, you are God and I am not. This is sort of forced worship if you will. He is acknowledging the greatness and the power of God.

“I declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ‘Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.’ I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You; therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes.”

You and I are called to join the creation itself to worship God for His great creative power. Of course, as we saw a couple of weeks ago, unregenerate men refuse to do this. They look at the creation, they look at the clear signs of God’s eternal power and deity in creation, and they refuse to worship Him, “nor do they give thanks.” Instead, they take and they worship the creature instead of the Creator. But in eternity, those of us who know God through Jesus Christ, I want you to understand this, in heaven right now, and I believe for eternity, we will continue to praise God not only for His redemption, but for His power as Creator.

Let me just show you a couple of glimpses into heaven. Turn to Revelation, Revelation 4. You remember John, in the late 90’s A.D., is taken into the presence of God in a vision. And in verse 11 of Revelation 4, he hears those in heaven, “the twenty-four elders,” which represent the redeemed church, they are “falling down before Him who sits on the throne, and they are worshipping Him who lives forever and ever.” So how are we worshipping? How were they worshipping and how will we worship? Notice verse 11, “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.” You see it again over in Revelation 14 with the three angels calling God Creator and therefore worthy of praise.

Let me just ask you, directly, a very pointed applicational question. Do you ever look around at the creation? Do you ever really pay attention? Do you study the work of God in creation? I must admit my own heart has been convicted of this this week. Sometimes we get so busy, we get so caught up in what we have got going that we fail to look around at the very thing God meant to scream His glory. I think sometimes we allow evolutionary theory and the talk of nature to rob us of that as well, of nature. It is the amazing creation of Almighty God and it is intended to be a constant reminder of Him and His power.

It might be tonight that we get some storms; if not tonight, we certainly will in these two months. God intends these things to be a reminder of Him. And when you see them, and when you hear them, and when you experience the beauty of a sunset, when you see the dawn, when you see the spring burst forth in all of its magnificence, when you see the color of fall, when you feel the chill of the winter, God intends that all of those things would cause you to immediately turn to give Him glory, to bring Him praise. And to whatever extent we fail to do that, we have dishonored Him.

Let me challenge you tonight that as you leave this place, as you experience the evening and the stars and perhaps a thunderstorm, let it remind you of what God intended it to remind you of, of Him. Let's pray together.

Father, we do worship You and praise You for Your greatness in creation. Lord, it staggers our minds to think that in a moment of time, You spoke time and space and matter into existence. Lord, it is unfathomable to us. Lord, help us to worship You as Creator as well as Redeemer. Forgive us, Father, for getting so busy and so distracted and so caught up in our lives in our list of to-dos that we fail to do what You intended us to do when we saw Your creation, and that is to bring You worship and praise.

And Lord, help us to sing out the words that we will sing for all eternity, "You are worthy of glory and honor and praise because You created all things, and by Your will they exist and are created." We pray it in Jesus' name, amen.