

### LESSON THREE - CREATION

The origins of this universe are fundamental to how we understand life and God. If we cannot trust what God's Word reveals about creation then how can we trust what it says about salvation (John 5:46-47). For the same God who created us as humans also made us new creatures in Christ Jesus. None of the events that led up to creation are observable or repeatable by man. It is beyond the scope of the science laboratory or the philosopher's musings. We have to receive the Genesis account by faith, "*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*" (Heb. 11:3; Col. 1:16; Acts 17:24) Men reject the Biblical account of creation not for lack of facts or proof (Rom. 1:18-19) but because of a lack of faith. It is because of man's unbelief in the Bible's revelation of creation that the world is in such chaos.



The Bible begins with a simple declaration of the origins of this universe, "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*" (Gen. 1:1) We must see everything through this fundamental verse. The fear of God is always the beginning of wisdom in studying creation (Prov. 1:7). Kidner is right to point out,

"It is no accident that *God* is the subject of the first sentence of the Bible, for this word dominates the whole chapter and catches the eye at every point of the page: it is used some thirty-five times in as many verses of the story."

Genesis 1:1 is the infallible answer to the burning question, "Where did all this come from?" Receive and believe this and the universe makes sense. There should be nothing in the Bible that presents any difficulty in believing if a Christian can believe the truth of Genesis 1:1.

This declaration, "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*" means that nothing in this entire material universe is eternal. Time is not eternal, space is not eternal, and matter is not eternal. By His own sovereign will, the eternal self-existent "*I AM THAT I AM*" (Exod. 3:14) acted to create *Ex Nihilo* (Latin meaning "out of nothing")

the material universe without prior existing matter and prior existing energy. Alan Cairns is right to note, "From this, it is evident that the entire material universe, in all of its parts, is neither uncaused nor self-caused nor accidentally caused. It is God caused." The Lord is not subject to His creation or part of it, but He is intimately related to it. He is the Eternal One who, "*Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*" (Psa. 90:2)

**HOW DID GOD CREATE EX NIHILO?** Genesis reveals He simply spoke the universe into existence by His Word. The chapter repeats the phrase for every phase of creation, "*and God said*" ... "*and God said*" ... "*and God said.*" It ALL appeared out of nothing by His power. We do know that the universe was created with the appearance of age. All the creatures were made mature, including man, with the ability to reproduce. The plants and trees were fully grown and developed. The creatures could see the light from the furthest planets. Nothing evolved but suddenly appeared that way in the twinkling of an eye.

There had to be an Uncaused Cause of the universe of the time, space, and matter continuum. That is a rationally necessary belief. Atheists basically believe that nothing by nothing for the purpose of nothing created everything. You don't need a PhD to understand that you cannot get something from nothing. Nothing cannot produce time, space, and matter! Indeed, there has never been a single experiment that has even hinted at providing evidence of such an irrational and illogical theory. RC Sproul notes,

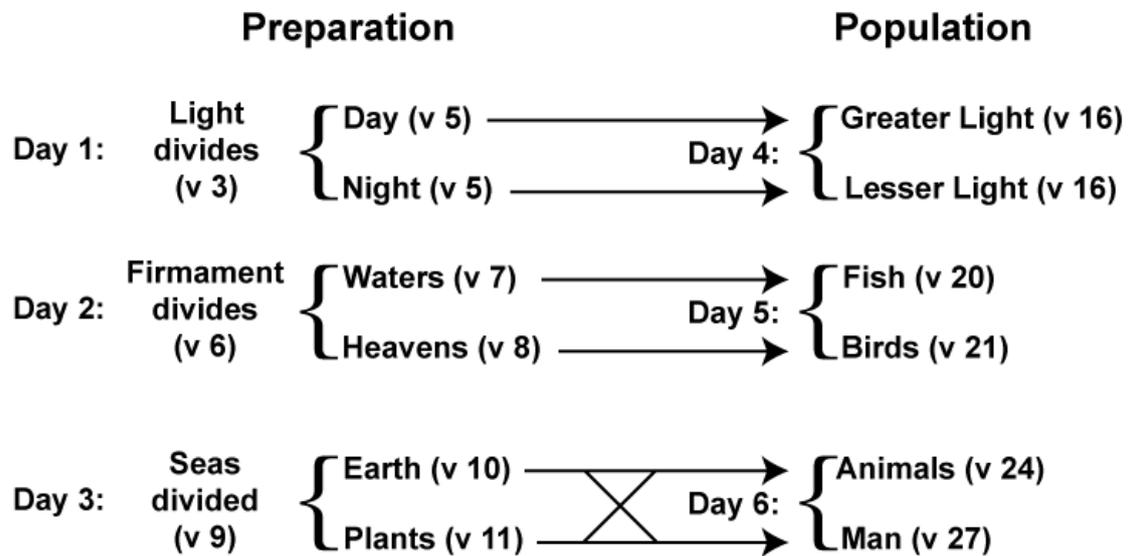
"Nothing cannot produce anything. Nothing can't laugh, sing, cry, work, dance, or breathe. It certainly can't create. Nothing can't do anything because it isn't anything. It doesn't exist. It has no power whatsoever because it has no being. For something to come out of nothing it would have to possess the power of self-creation. It would have to be able to create itself or bring itself into existence. But that is a manifest absurdity. For something to create or produce itself it would have to *be* before it *is*. But if something already is, it doesn't need to be created. To create itself, something would have to be and not be, exist and not exist, at the same time and in the same respect. That is a contradiction. It violates the most fundamental of all rational and scientific laws, the law of noncontradiction."

Man knows so little yet thinks he knows so much. The famous scientist, Einstein was once dismayed to hear the scepticism about God's existence by a group of agnostic students. He asked them how much knowledge they had of this world between them. They decided they had 5% of all human knowledge among themselves. Although Einstein knew their estimate was far too generous, he simply replied, "Is it possible God exists in the 95% you don't know?"

## **SIX DAYS**

The Lord sovereignly planned and executed that the creation of this universe would take place over 6 days, "*For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is...*" (Exod. 20:11a) This was not by coincidence. It reveals that He is a God of order (1 Cor. 14:32-33, 40). God first prepared the world for living creatures and then He populated the world with the living creatures, "*He hath made every thing beautiful in His*

time.” (Eccl. 3:11a) This order had significance. It would also teach the principle of the Sabbath rest (Exodus 20:11).



### SUSTAINER OF ALL THINGS

A child often asks the question: *Why don't the stars fall down?* The greatest Astronomers also ponder this question. The Bible reveals that God not only created all things but He upholds all things, “*And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.*” (Col. 1:17) The expression “*all things consist*” is in the perfect tense, which refers to an action in the past that has continuing effect in the present. In other words, the Lord brought all these forces together in creation and has sustained them every since right up to this moment.



Every atom of creation is under the total control of the Creator. The Electromagnetic Force, the Gravitational Force, the Strong and Weak Nuclear Forces have been identified as forces that work to hold the protons, neutrons and electrons together. But *where* they come from and the *how* and *why* they do so is a profound mystery to physicists but they are not a mystery to the discerning Christian. These atomic forces are sustained by the

power of God. He does this simply, “*upholding all things by the word of his power.*” (Heb. 1:3) If God simply withdrew His hand from sustaining this universe for one moment it would immediately fall apart. Wiersbe gives an insightful illustration in his commentary,

“A guide took a group of people through an atomic laboratory and explained how all matter was composed of rapidly moving electric particles. The tourists studied models of molecules and were amazed to learn that matter is made up primarily of space. During the question period, one visitor asked, “If this is the way matter works, what holds it all together?” For that, the guide had no answer. But the Christian has an answer: Jesus Christ! Because “He is before all things,” He can hold all things together. Again, this is another affirmation that Jesus Christ is God. Only God exists before all of Creation, and only God can make Creation cohere. To make Jesus Christ less than God is to dethrone Him.”

The Lord also sustains our lives on earth, “*For in Him we live, and move, and have our being*” (Acts 17:28). The very oxygen that passes into our lungs is controlled by, “*the God in whose hand thy breath is...*” (Daniel 5:23; cf. Job 12:10; Prov. 20:24; 2 Peter 3:7) This has important implications. The God who created all things is also sustaining all things. No part of our lives is beyond His care or control. We can trust Him to care for all the details of our lives. We must also submit to the fact that if God sovereignly chooses not to do what we expect it is because He has a better plan. From our limited perspective we must rest in the wisdom of the One who has the whole world in His hands!

**GOD'S ATTRIBUTES**  
observable in nature

<b>Self-Existence</b> Rom. 1:19-20, Acts 17:23-29, Heb. 11:3	<b>KNOWLEDGE</b> Psalm 19:2, Isa. 40:12-26, 55:9
<b>Self-Sufficiency</b> Isa. 66:1-2, Acts 17:24-25	<b>HOLINESS</b> Exo. 15:11 Job 22:12-16, 25:4-6
<b>Faithfulness</b> Psalm 36:5-6, 85:11, 89:8-12, Psalm 119:90, Lam 3:21-23	<b>MAJESTY</b> Psalm 8:1-4, 111:1-4, Psalm 113 Neh. 9:6, Rev. 14:7
<b>Omni<b>presence</b> science</b> Job 38-42, Psalm 139	<b>Justice</b> Gen. 3:17-19 Job 9, Ps 96
<b>RIGHTEOUSNESS</b> Psalm 50:3-6, 85:10-13; Psalm 97, 111	<b>Grace</b> Gen. 9:8-17 Psalm 121 Matt. 6:25-34
<b>POWER</b> omnipotence Psalm 145:10-13, Hab. 3 Romans 1:19-20	<b>TRUTH</b> Psalm 57:9-11, 85:10-13 Psalm 108:4, 2 Pet 3:3-7
<b>Goodness</b> Psalm 65, 67, 85, 103, 104 Acts 14:15-17	<b>Glory</b> Psalm 19 Isaiah 6:3
<b>Mercy</b> Psalm 145:8-10 Psalm 113	<b>WRATH</b> Gen. 6-9 II Pet. 3:3-13
<b>Trinity</b> Prov. 8:22-31 Prov. 30:4 Heb. 1:1-3	<b>Ruler-Lawgiver</b> Job 38:31-33, Psalm 33:6-9 Psalm 135, 147
	<b>Lovingkindness</b> Psalm 33:4-7, 107, 119:64, Psalm 136

**WHY DID GOD CREATE THE UNIVERSE?**

The Westminster Confession states He did so “for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness.” That is a good biblical summary. God made this world to display more fully His glory. This was to the angels and to mankind, “*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*” (Psa. 19:1; cf. Jer. 10:12; Romans 1:20; Rev. 4:11)

The more we study the material universe the more we are in awe of the wisdom, the power, the order, and the beauty of God. So God’s purposes in creating this universe were inherently good and not evil. Everything we see in the universe is here because God wanted it to be here, including mankind. We all belong to Him and are for His glory.

## CREATION OF MAN

The first record of man in Genesis is in chapter one. He will be created at the end of the list of God’s creatures on the sixth day. Man will be the finishing touch in creation. God will pronounce now that everything He has made as “*very good*” (v31) at the end of man’s creation.

Man is also the object of God’s redemptive purpose. All of the rest of creation will be obliterated in the future, but man will inhabit eternity. The universe is like a kind of house created for man by God. This is the “theatre” where God will play out the drama of His redemptive purposes on man. The curtain will rise on the performance when God breathes life into man.



Man is important but the object or purpose of man’s life is not man. As our Catechism aptly summarises, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever.” Sadly, we live in a world that is consumed with elevating man over God. All too many professing believers get caught up in this movement. So it is important to note that

man is not introduced as the great subject of this Genesis 1, but merely the incidental and passive recipient of the creative power of God. It is the sovereign creating God that is the great subject of this first chapter dealing with the creation of all the physical things in this universe. It is no coincidence that the universe is vast and man so small in comparison. God is revealing to man in this that He is infinitely great in comparison to man (Psa. 8:3-4).

The point of note is that the creation of man was not man's idea or the product of some evolutionary process but the direct and purposeful action of a sovereign God, "*And God said, Let us make man.*" (Genesis 1:26) Malachi asks rhetorically "*hath not one God created us?*" (Mal. 2:10) As we consider the wonder of the design of man, with the Psalmist we can declare, "*I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*" (Psalm 139:14).

We should observe the hint of Trinitarian language here, "*Let us.*" In the rest of creation, we just read "*Let there be.*" but now we have a new phrase, "*Let us make man.*" It is almost as if we see all the Persons of the Godhead taking great interest in the creation of this creature. So we are God's creatures and wholly dependent on Him, "*For in Him we live, and move, and have our being*" (Acts 17:28). Even today, God controls our very breath, "*In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind*" (Job 12:10). This sovereignty extends not only to mankind's creation but the type of creation man was to be. He uniquely was to be "*in the image of God*" and "*male and female.*" Man was never intended to be like the animal creation. He is not a highly developed animal but very different. Moses goes to great lengths to emphasise this with the Hebrew synonyms "*image*" and "*likeness.*"

We must also note that mankind was not meant to be uniform, for they were made, "*male and female.*" This implies that the male and female species were to be distinct from the beginning. Men are not women and women are not men. This would be not just physically but in the roles they would play. That means that homosexuality is a direct assault on that distinction. For this is an attempt to undermine the fact that male and female were given to be the compliment and completion of one another.

God's creation reveals how great He is and how insignificant we are. We can truly sing "How Great Thou Art." In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Novation summed God up in the classic statement,

"What could you possibly say, then, that would be worthy of Him? He is more sublime than all sublimity, higher than all heights, deeper than all depth, clearer than all light, brighter than all brilliance, more splendid than all splendor, stronger than all strength, mightier than all might, more beautiful than all beauty, truer than all truth, more enduring than all endurance, greater than all majesty, more powerful than all power, richer than all riches, wiser than all wisdom, kinder than all kindness, better than all goodness, juster than all justice, more merciful than all mercy. Every kind of virtue must of necessity be less than He, who is the God and source of everything."