

God's Good Design - Genesis (low quality audio)

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[0 : 00] In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

And God said, let there be light. And there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.

God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And there was evening, and there was morning the first day. Then go to verse 26, which comes to the last part of the creation account. Verse 26, then God said, let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves on the ground.

[1 : 23] Then God said, I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth, and every tree that has fruit with seed in it, they will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth, and all the birds of the air, and all the creatures that move on the ground, everything that has breath of life in it, I give every green plant for food.

And it was so. And God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

By the seventh day, God had finished the work he had been doing, and so on the seventh day, he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day, and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating, that he had done.

So, Michael is going to come and speak, from us, from this passage. So, I'm going to pray for him, before he comes.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word to us. We thank you for this amazing account of the beginning, of your creation, of you speaking your word, and bringing life into existence.

[2 : 48] And so we pray right now, that by that same word, and by the power of your Holy Spirit, you would speak life to us.

that these words would shape us, and transform us to live life, according to your good design.

We pray for Michael, that you would fill him with your spirit, and us also, that we may hear your word to us. We pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen. We read about creation here, and over six days, God creating the world.

I've got to condense it into 30 minutes, so I've got to work hard this morning. But what are we looking at today? We're looking at the wonder of God's creation.

[4 : 05] Very different to the world in which we live today. What can we expect in 2014? That's a good question to ask ourselves at the beginning.

I've been hearing from the various hundreds, and the government expects there could be growth in the economy up to 2%. And that, of course, will benefit employment, the building trade, and immigration may not be quite as necessary.

Hopefully, things will be better as the economy grows once more. But we can't be certain billions are still owed outside influences, pressures that we know not of at the present time.

But what we do know is that as government meets, laws will undoubtedly be passed that are contrary to God's law. In other words, we can say that in 2014, sinners will continue to be sinners.

What can we expect internationally? Well, nothing changes, does it? way back in Matthew 24, the Lord Jesus speaks of wars and rumours of wars, of famines and earthquakes, of the persecution of believers.

[5 : 29] wars. This will continue on an international level. This, I can say, with certainty. Because that's the way that things are.

Of course, there will be scientific advancements. But things will be much the same because the world doesn't seem, on the surface, to becoming a better place.

So we can look nationally, we can look internationally, and things are so much chaos. How about on the personal level?

Well, we simply don't know what lies ahead for any one of us. We will all make decisions. Some of them will be good. Some of them will be bad. We will have good and bad experiences during the year.

On the health front, none of us knows whether we're the youngest here this morning or the oldest. We don't know. Young people die, as well as old people.

[6 : 32] So we don't know what will happen on the health front. We look around and we see the difficulties that others have experienced and maybe we've experienced during this past year.

And they may, I'm not saying they will, but they may get worse in the year that lies ahead. But it wasn't always like that, was it?

From the beginning, we see that God is a God of order. So we go back to Genesis, to the very seed plot of the Bible, the seed plot of Scripture.

and we're introduced and we're introduced immediately to God's revelation of himself and we see a perfect world. We see God, the perfect creator.

And as we continue through Genesis, we see sin spoiling that creation and we're brought face to face with God's judgment upon sin.

[7 : 41] and yet, we also see that there is grace, a plan to redeem a people to himself through the seed of a woman.

But let's get back to basics this morning. Let's go back to Genesis chapter 1 and God's order. to see God's order, to see his blueprint for our individual lives, to see his blueprint for our families, to see his blueprint for the nations.

Let's go back to a world that is untainted by sin. Let's see, then, the God of order. And in Genesis chapter 1 and verse 1, we are introduced to him.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And we're straight away told with something of who this God is that created.

We're introduced to the God of order. The word for God there is Elohim. It's a plural word. And some people think that it speaks of a plurality of majesty.

[9 : 06] But that's an incorrect view. We're introduced, if you like, in seed form to the triune God who's brought before us in verse 26 where we read of him saying, let us make man in our own image.

it's the first reference to Trinity, the Elohim God. In Genesis, we have the basic truth. But further revelation shows us that Elohim is none other than the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who were active in the creation of the world.

Genesis doesn't go into all the details of who God is. We need further revelation. But it lays a foundation, an Elohim, a God of power, a creator who is triune, the one who created the world.

Let us put it like this. God, the Father, is the architect. God, the Son, is the builder. And God, the Holy Spirit, is the animator.

There's no disharmony within the Godhead. And a triune God worked in unity to prepare the world and was able to declare it is very good.

[10 : 37] There's no chaos within the triune God. no disharmony in the created order. So we see God, the Father, is the architect.

He is absolutely perfect. And all that he does is perfect. We mustn't think of a creation as a random plan. We mustn't think as the evolutionists do, of God working in time plus chance plus time plus chance.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And we have this phrase repeated again and again in Genesis chapter 1.

God made the light and it was good. Verse 10, God saw that it was good. And in verse 12 17 and 21 and 25 and 31, God saw all that he had made and it was very good.

How different to the created things we see around about us today. We all know about the Celtic tiger. We all know things went up and developers got their way in doing things as they wanted to.

[12 : 07] We all saw the architects and the engineers and the planners and the builders. And we saw buildings that were signed on as being good.

Everything went according to man's plans and then everything collapsed. In many cases it was far from good.

Why? Because sin had entered into the world. And we have seen the disorder of these last years. In the beginning it was so different.

The totality of creation was good. But as we look around the world and we see the beauty of creation we can still see order.

It still shines forth in all its wonder because of the architect because he made it very good. And Paul writing to the Romans in chapter 1 and verse 20 says for since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities his eternal power and divine nature are clearly seen.

[13 : 26] being understood from what has been made so that men are without excuse. How many of us have looked up at the stars at night and wondered at the magnificence of them?

God. I remember talking to a young lad who was going through a time of trial and wondered if he could go on believing in God.

In our particular situation at a camp we were out in the countryside not distracted by street lights. And I told him to look up at the stars and they were beautiful that night.

you can see the Milky Way our own constellation in all his grandeur. And there was God before us if you like in all his grandeur.

His invisible qualities, his eternal power, his divine nature are seen in what he has made. The divine architect is seen in his creation.

[14 : 36] creation. But as we think of the God of order we also think of the sun as the builder. And we have that recurring phrase in Genesis chapter 1 and verse 3 and then again in verse 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, and God said.

And God says and it is done. And by faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

Hebrews 11 and verse 3. God it was who spoke creation into existence. Who was this one who spoke?

Well it was none other than the eternal sound of God, the eternal word. In the beginning, as we heard at the beginning of our service this morning, was the word.

And the word was with God and the word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made. Without him was nothing made that has been made.

[15 : 59] So John is making it very clear that the Lord Jesus is the one who built the world as it were, who spoke creation. He is the eternal word who said in the beginning let there be light and there was light.

I didn't know all the things that were going to be said, obviously, during the service, but didn't we hear from Colossians 1 and verse 16. For by him, that is by the Lord Jesus, the eternal word, all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And it seems in the Bible it's a place to show us the absolute perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And in his absolute perfection, he could not demonstrate anything that was shoddy. There is no shoddy workmanship in the creation of the world, no dodgy materials.

In his life here upon earth, his perfection remained. He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.

[17 : 28] And it's the absolute perfect one who called creation into existence, a perfect creation. He is the second person of the Elohim, the God of creation.

So we have the Father as the architect, the Son as the builder, but we have the Holy Spirit as the animator, the one who gives life. And if we go to Genesis chapter 1 and verse 2, the latter part of it, we find the Spirit of God hovering over the waters.

The Spirit was active in creation. The third person of the Trinity active there, hovering over the deep.

deep. As John Carvin puts it, hovering over the indigested mass, the disorderly deep, the chaos. How could there be order? Only through the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. perfect. But when God sends his Spirit, things are created, and he renews the face of the earth. [18 : 54] So says Psalm 104 and verse 30. And we see the activity of the Spirit in the creation of man himself, made perfect.

The Lord God, we read in chapter 2 and verse 7, formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

And man became a living spirit. What was his breath? There was none other than the Spirit of the living God. For he is made in the image, man is made in the image of God.

So as we look around at creation, there at the beginning, we have a perfect creation because it comes from a God who worked in triune unity to bring about a perfect creation.

But if we move on in our story, we see something of the order of his creation. In chapter 1 and verse 2 of Genesis, we read these words, Now the earth was formless and empty.

[20 : 11] Darkness was over the surface of the deep. There are two words for formless and empty in the original, abohu and tohu.

And it has the idea of a confused nothingness. Again, to quote John Carman, a rude and unpunished or shapeless chaos.

Speaking of those waters at the beginning, nothing solid or stable, nothing distinct, a surging, a raging.

It needed a stability that only the triune God could bring about. And Moses is showing us the opposite of what was going to be an ordered creation.

So we have day one, and we have light and darkness, and there's an order, a separation between the one and the other.

[21 : 16] And day two, the separations of the water, the creation of the sky. Those waters overwaves the Spirit at hover. Again, there was separation, there was order.

Day three, verses nine to thirteen, we have the sea, the dry land, and vegetation, and trees, and plants. The sea and the land become separate, and there was order.

God set boundaries upon them. And when we see God making the stars in all their constellations, in verses fourteen to nineteen on day four, there's nothing haphazard about it.

It's not God flinging the stars into space. But is God placing them in order? Each in their orbit, each working, constellations not colliding, because there is order in the universe that he made, and there's a beauty in it.

and the variety of the birds and the fish on day five, and all their beauty and magnificence. And then on day six, the animals and the reptiles from verses twenty-four to thirty-one.

[22 : 45] And after all this was done, God created men and women, made in the image of God. And the psalmist refers to this, of man being fearfully and wonderfully made.

Absolutely perfect. And all of creation was given God's approval. It was not just good, but in its totality, it was very good.

Thus, the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. So says Genesis chapter two and verse one.

So I repeat again, nothing haphazard in God's creation, all absolutely perfect. God created a total transformation of that which was warmness and empty.

and as C.S. Lewis puts it, the universe naturally bears the mark of God's personality and it does.

[24 : 02] Louis Armstrong used to sing a song, and I know I'm dating myself now, I think to myself, what a wonderful world.

I think the psalmist put it much better than Louis Armstrong when he writes in Psalm 19, the heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands, day after day they pour forth speech, night after night they display knowledge, there is no speech or language where their voice is not heard, their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world, in the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run its course, a great creation, created by an almighty God, who created a perfect order, as the astronauts and those that are in the science world, make their journeys into space, they can make calculations, because they know that there is an orderliness in the universe, they put it down in figures, we can look at the scriptures and say,

God created this world, we shouldn't be surprised at the orderliness of the creation order, for we see it in the hand of a not-triune God, who not only made the world, but continues to uphold it, the God of order, who orders creation, an old hymn put it like this, heaven above is softer blue, and earth beneath is sweeter green, that something lives in every hue, that Christless eyes have never seen.

We move on to our third point, and that is this, that there's not only God who created, who was perfect, there's not only an order to creation, creation, but there is a creation order, and we have it brought before us, don't we, in these verses.

We have a God who rules, we have a God who speaks, a God who commands, a God who commanded man to take care of the garden, to refrain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, a God who commanded man to be fruitful and to multiply.

[27 : 09] That was a world as it was, with God in control, with God stating what had to happen. It is his order that he has set in place, that God rules, the triune God, Lord over all.

And man and woman were to be in subjection to God. They were to obey the commands of God. And they were to enjoy God. They were to eat of the fruit that God had provided. They were to care for God's creation in the beginning.

That was how it was. Man in submission to God in an ordered world that God had made.

And man was to live in harmony with God. Harmony existed between God and man and the rest of creation.

[28 : 20] salvation. In Genesis chapter 3 and verse 8 we read, The man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

Idyllic. A garden with no weeds or thorns. A garden man being surrounded in that garden by the abundance of God's provision.

But I ask the question, how did the man and the woman know that it was God who was walking with them? I would suggest to you that they recognized his footfall.

They recognized his footsteps. Why? Because there was fellowship. There was harmony between God and the man and the woman. It's a beautiful picture of what it was at the beginning of time.

A God who ordered the world. Where the authority of God was recognized and there was this harmony between the one and the other in a perfect world.

[29 : 38] What are the applications of what we've been looking at this morning briefly? Well let me make a number of applications. And the first is this.

That when we look at the world in which we live, it's a call surely to worship. That's often what happens if you look through scripture.

You find the various writers speaking the word of the Lord as they look at creation, they draw us out to look at the God of creation.

For example, in Isaiah 40 and verses 12 to 18, there the writer says, who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand?

who has weighed out the earth in a balance and weighed the mountains on scales? Who is it that regards the nations, not an individual, but the very nations, as a drop in the bucket?

[30 : 53] And then he asks, to whom can you compare God? creation should call us out in worship and praise to our great and glorious God who made the world in all its perfection.

What will the song of eternity be? In Revelation 4 and verse 11, we have these words, you are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and had their being.

You see the worship of eternity? A great creator God should cause us all to worship, to bow the knee.

The second word of application is this, we should ask ourselves, what has gone wrong? Why is the world in such chaos?

Why are there tsunamis? Why typhoons and winds and mudslides? Why are there wars and famines? Why are there the breakup of marriages?

[32 : 20] Why are there interracial tensions? Why disease these and death? What has happened to this perfect world that God created? did? And the answer surely is this, that man has rebelled against God.

The man has said, no, I will not have you to run over me. The order has been reversed. And because the order has been reversed, there is chaos.

There is chaos in the nations. There is chaos internationally. Chaos nationally. And chaos so often personally.

Sin has entered into this world. And as a result, we have problems ourselves and creation groans. And weeds and thorns became part of our first parents' life and they are part of our lives. and we find Cain killing his brother.

[33 : 32] And this wonderful world that God made is a wicked world because it rejected God. In this so-called Christian country, we could ask the simple question, why do we bother to lock up our cars?

God's love? It's as simple as that, isn't it? The third word of application is this, that only the Elohim, the Triune God, can put the situation right.

Only the Lord God Almighty can bring order out of the chaos as he did at the beginning. And thank God that we read in the scriptures again and again of a God of grace.

God, the Father, loved the world, that he sent his only son. How do we know about these things? Through the power of God, the Holy Spirit. God, the God, the God, the God, it is the God of order that can bring order out of the chaos of individual lives.

[35 : 02] And there is evidence that he's already putting things right in individual lives. The very fact that we are here this morning is evidence of that.

although we're not perfect, we're not what we once were. And God is recreating us into the likeness of his son, into a perfectness that was lost as a result of the fall.

And if that work has begun in us, it is because of the Father who is the architect. it is because of the son who built that relationship with the Father through his death upon the cross of the Calvary.

And it is by the Holy Spirit that gives us new life so that we can say if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

All things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new. And my final word of application is found in Revelation chapter 21.

[36 : 23] And here I find great hope. Why? Because I read that this new creation will be accomplished.

There's no doubt about it. it will happen. Turn with me to Revelation 21. And verse 1 reads it thus. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

I saw the holy city. The new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared a bride, beautifully dressed for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them, and be their God.

[37 : 34] He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, or mourning, or crying, or pain, for the old order of things have passed away.

He who was seated on the throne said, I am making everything new. Then he said, Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.

Order from a triune God, and it will happen. These words are trustworthy.

These words are true. Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for your goodness and your grace. We thank you that as we look around we see your majesty, your power, and the things that you have made.

But we also see the chaos that comes as a result of sin entering into that perfect world. But thank you, gracious and eternal God, you have not left us in our muddle, you have not left us in our chaos, you have not left us, O Lord, to destroy ourselves, but you have sent your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into this world to redeem this world, to redeem us as individuals, to redeem us as a people of God, as your church.

[39 : 21] And we thank you that you are making everything new. We thank you that we can look forward to a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. We can look forward to the dispatching of death and disease and famine because, O Lord, of your mighty work.

And we want to give you all the glory and praise of our hearts this morning. We pray, O Lord, that as we enter this world, as we enter this new year, that you will enable us to live with you, that you will remind us, O Lord, of the creative order, that we are here, O Lord, to give honour and praise unto your holy name, and to enjoy fellowship with you, the eternal all-wise God.

Help us to this end, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you, Michael.