

God's majestic creation week (1)

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[0 : 00] It's great to think of creation showing forth God's glory, rightly understood, rightly perceived.! Of course, the exception being the human race which pretty much struggles and resists glorifying God as he ought to be glorified.

But it's great to sing these songs which give glory to our great God, the creator of all things. We're going to now turn to Genesis chapter 1 and look at God's majestic week.

We're going to give some time to studying Genesis 1 to 3. I rather suspect I haven't allowed myself enough time on the timetable to do justice to this.

But nevertheless, we'll do what we can. Let's pray. Oh, help us, Lord, to hear your word.

Lord, speak to us as we are in this world which in so many ways suppresses the truth about you and doesn't want to honour the creator.

[1 : 15] May that not be so in our hearts. Open our ears to hear rightly what you are saying. Open our hearts and our lives that we may be worshippers of the one who is almighty.

The one who gives us all things, our creator. So help me to rightly divide the word of truth and help us to hear this morning in the power of your spirit.

For Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. We're going to look at Genesis chapters 1 to 3 as best we can.

There are a number of reasons why we might not choose to do this.

These chapters contain many mysteries. There are unanswered questions. And I'll just be honest, I won't be able to answer all the questions.

For example, why did God make Adam capable of sin? Why didn't God just make Adam bulletproof, as it were, and then everything would be fine? I don't know why that's the case.

[2 : 18] And what is a rakkia? Rakkia. We've come across a rakkia several times. I don't really know what a rakkia is. You'll find out more about that in a minute. Genesis 1 to 3 is faith-joltingly counter-cultural.

And it always has been. It's one of those chapters, one of those parts of the Bible, which asserts who God is in a way which contradicts what human beings would like to think God is.

It isn't a new thing. It isn't just in the last sort of hundred years that it's been counter-cultural. When these chapters were written, and we presume by Moses, to the people who'd come out of Egypt.

Egypt was a sort of polytheistic. They had many gods. And this says, no, there aren't many gods.

There is one God. And even at that point, it was a counter-cultural document.

And calls for faith. It is by faith that we believe that God made the world out of nothing. It's the sort of faith-jolting cross-cultural conflict that the exiles in Babylon would have encountered when they had their psalms which said, Jerusalem is the joy of the whole earth.

[3 : 43] Jerusalem is the best city in the world. And they get transported to Babylon. And they see the skyscrapers and the plushness and the luxury. And they think, actually, Jerusalem was a very tiny little tin pot city.

Look at this. And by faith, they had to believe that when God says, Jerusalem is the joy of the whole earth, the greatest city, God's headquarters, they had to believe sort of by faith and not by sight.

The philosophers of the early church had to believe that Christ the maker truly suffered at the hands of the creatures he had made.

And they would have found that a real faith-jolting thing. Can God suffer? Well, of course he can't. Well, yes, he can. The Bible says Christ suffered. They would have had to work their way through that.

And, of course, in the New Testament, we know that when the resurrection of Jesus Christ was preached, the Greek culture said, well, you can't have resurrection.

[4 : 46] Resurrection doesn't happen. And the New Testament witnesses had to say, it did happen. We saw it. So it's not new to have things that are faith-joltingly countercultural.

But this is one of them, I would guess, in our culture. When it comes to details, believing Christians disagree over interpretation. Over the issue, how is God using words to tell us his truth?

So it's not in Genesis, but it says the trees of the field clap their hands. Are we to understand that God is teaching us that trees have hands? I think not.

He's using words in a certain way. And, of course, we have to be quite careful about how God speaks when he speaks. So there are a number of reasons why not. But I think there are more reasons to say why we should study Genesis 1 to 3.

It is God's word. And we cannot live without God's word. Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. We need to feed on God's word.

[5 : 51] All scripture is useful for edification instruction. All scripture is useful. There aren't some bits that aren't particularly useful.

And all scripture is ultimately about Jesus Christ. When the first disciples met Jesus, it was said of him, we've met the one about whom Moses and all the prophets have spoken.

And the ultimate reference point of all the Bible is Jesus. And we should understand that that includes the first chapters of Genesis.

It tells us things we really need to know and without which the world limps and struggles morally and spiritually and intellectually.

What is human? Now, you see, that's a very important question. But scientists and social workers and anthropologists and everything else don't know the answer to that question.

[7 : 02] They think we're just machines or very sophisticated monkeys or something like that. And then you say, well, why do people matter?

Why does it matter that there are wars? Why do we help the homeless? We do help the homeless, don't we? Why do we care about them? They're just machines. It's the Bible who tells us what.

It's the Bible that tells us what is human. Why are people valuable? It's the Bible that tells us what this world is for. What is the aim of it?

What's life all about? What's the Bible that tells us what this world is for? What's the Bible that tells us what this world is for?

And in our current world, there's huge confusion about sexuality. Where does human sexuality come from? What are the things that give it meaning?

[8 : 04] Well, we have to go back to God who made us in a certain way in order to answer that question. And what does Jesus save us for?

Because to say for the forgiveness of our sins is actually only a partial answer. Jesus' salvation has as its scope the remaking of the whole cosmos and the repopulating of the cosmos, the heavens and the earth, with new created people.

And this time, God is making the people first and the environment second. But what did Jesus come to do? To make a new heaven and a new earth where there will be no more sorrow or sighing or mourning or death.

Those things will be gone and it will be a new heaven and a new earth. And that is really to say what God designed in the first place which went wrong, he's bringing back on stream through Jesus Christ.

So, these are important things that the Bible teaches and I think they outweigh the why nots. So, we're going to have a look at Genesis 1-3.

[9 : 25] And how are we going to do it? Well, I'm going to aim to do God the honour of just listening to his word to the text.

And you might be thinking, well, hold on, what about modern science? Shouldn't we be taking that into account? Shouldn't we be thinking about what people say about cosmology, which is the study of how the cosmos originated?

So, our previous one or two pianist was a cosmologist, a Christian cosmologist. And he had a very interesting understanding of relating his faith to his studies.

What about genetics and DNA and biology and all of that? And what about this whole thing of evolution? The myth, I'm going to call it a myth in the sense that it's a big picture, which it claims to understand and explain everything.

And it is a myth because it is a claim that people believe. Where's the evidence? I mean, it seems an extraordinary leap of faith to me to believe, broiling it very down to its very basics.

[10 : 44] This is what Dr. Francis Schaeffer said. To believe that time plus chance equals people. Because that's what evolution says, isn't it?

That evolutionary myth says, for no apparent reason, you just give things a lot of time. They come into existence for no particular reason. You give it a lot of time and let it just take its chance and you end up with beauty, stars, planets, people, Mozart, Bach.

And I think to believe that just requires an enormous leap of faith. I wish I had that sort of faith. This is a good answer to people. I wish I had your faith. I'm not going to try and deal with those things. I'm not an expert in them. I don't really know a lot about cosmology. I certainly don't know very much about DNA and all of that. And I don't think it's my job to try and tell you about those things as if I were an expert in them.

What my job is is to tell you what the Bible says. And that's what I'm going to try and do this morning. What the Bible says is what God says. And what God says is true truth.

[12 : 05] It is absolutely true. It is absolutely dependable. So that's what we're going to try and do. Just before we leave science, I don't want us to be anti-scientific.

Doing science in a humble way is a Christian thing to do. And in fact, many of the people who have advanced scientific knowledge did so because they were believers.

Because they believed that this world had order and meaning. And it was capable of investigation. And it was not an irreverent thing to investigate the world.

So you have to do the history on that. There's a book by, I can't remember his name now. If you ask me afterwards, I'll see if I've got it.

And his thesis is that the scientific advance that took place in the 15th, 16th, 17th century was propelled by a Christian understanding of the world.

[13 : 15] So I don't want us to be anti-scientific. But I do want to say that the way that science normally proceeds is by getting things wrong. So there would have been a day when every respectable scientist said it was completely obvious that the Earth was the centre of the universe.

And then all of a sudden people realised, actually, that's not right. The planets go around the sun. So it was all wrong and it all had to be readjusted.

If you look in the literature, I don't know, more than 100 years ago, the scientists thought we've more or less solved everything. We've got steam and electricity and iron and steel.

We've more or less solved everything. And then suddenly they realised they had got most of it wrong. And relativity came in and quantum theory. And that basically said was all the things you thought you got exactly right, it's all wrong.

You need to look at it all over again. So I would say let's not be too intimidated by science. What people say, oh, everybody knows, guaranteed to be sure.

[14 : 27] You can be sure, actually, that in such and such 50 years' time, people say, do you know what they believed in those days? Total nonsense, wasn't it? So don't be too intimidated by science.

Anyway, let's look at God's majestic week. And I'm going to try and do it in a brief outline. We've got some time this evening, depending on how we get on this morning.

And we're going to carry on next week. We're going to look at these days. Days 1 to 6 and 7. You'll see that 7 is a little bit different to days 1 to 6.

And let's look at the text, the way the text begins and ends. It says, Genesis 1 verse 1, In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

That's a majestic statement. What happened in the beginning? God created the heavens and the earth.

[15 : 31] That's the whole lot. It's a way of saying everything. Heavens and the earth. And at the end of the section, it says, chapter 2 verse 1, Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

So, again, the same thing. It's sort of beginning and end. At the end of the description there, the heavens and the earth were completed.

And literally all their host, all the multitudes of things, creatures that were within the heavens and the earth.

And it teaches us that it's not matter and stuff that is the eternal thing, but God.

We are told to lift our thoughts from the solidity, as it seems, of this world to the one who existed before this world and who made this world.

[16:41] The psalm says, Before the mountains were born, or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

And we need to hear that great statement. Before the mountains were brought forth, you, O God, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

And that psalm, it's Psalm 90, says, Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Our home is not in the stuff that's been made, but our home is in you.

The world that God has made is real. It's good. But the God who made it is more fundamental.

There's a sin of rejecting the good things in creation. Paul refers to this in Timothy when he says, when he says.

[18:06] Talks about people who forbid to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

For everything God created is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. The world God has made is good.

The trees, the flowers, the birds, the fish, the mountains. It's not a Christian thing to withdraw from that.

It's a Christian thing to thank God for those things and to glorify them in them. And then again, it is an appalling sin to make too much of the created world.

To worship created things rather than the creator. And that's Paul's whole statement in Romans chapter 1 verse 25 where he says, humankind exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served created things rather than the creator who is forever praised.

[19:26] Amen. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. He is the one whom we find our ultimate security.

The things he has made are good but what we worship is the creator, not his creation. So let's look at the text.

So we looked at the sort of bookends, top and bottom of it. Let's look at the text itself. Now there are, there is a, these, the text has a certain resonance and majesty and a pattern in the way that it's written down for us.

So the seven days have a certain pattern. There are six of them with one at the end which is a little bit different. They all end with, except the last one which is a bit different, there was evening, there was morning, day, X.

You can look that through while I'm speaking. They do all end with, there was evening, there was morning. They all begin with, and God said, with the possible exception of the first one, each day contains a particular speech and or action of God.

[20:55] So in the, in the text that was read to us, God speaks, it says, and God says, ten times. It says, God created something or other, four times.

It said, God made something, six times. It says, God separated something twice, and he gathered together, it looks as though I didn't finish doing the computation of that, I think it's twice.

And he calls things, he doesn't, as if to name things, four times. He doesn't name everything, he names some things. And he sees, seven times, and each time he sees, he says it's good.

He blesses, three times. So we have, actually, a whole catalogue of what God is doing. God does this, God does this, God does this.

And you build up, even at that point, a picture of what sort of God he is. He's a speaking God. He's a creating God.

[21:59] He's a making God. He's a God that brings order by separating. He's a God who names things. He's a God who sees things.

He's a God who blesses things. Let's look at these a day at a time. So, first day. Now, where does the first day start?

I'm going to start it in verse two. Now the earth, now notice that we've already got, by verse two, we've already got the earth. So it's an interesting perspective.

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.

[22:59] God called the light day. The darkness he called night. And there was evening and there was morning. Day one, the first day.

So I'm not sure I understand, I mean, I understand the words, but I'm not sure that any of us grasp what God is saying with all of that. Let's look at it.

It says, the earth was formless and empty. So let me draw a formless and empty earth. So, there's a Hebrew, it says it's tohu and bohu, which means, well, what does it mean?

It's formless. It's sort of, I mean, think of a, I better be careful what I say here. I was going to say, think of a teenager's bedroom, but I thought, I'm probably on dangerous ground there.

lots of stuff. It's not saying that there's no stuff, but it doesn't have any shape. It's formless. It's chaotic. And it says it's empty.

[24 : 09] So there's stuff there, but there's also a sense in which it's empty. So what does it say? Formless and empty. So, so I think probably that's a good drawing of it, actually.

It's sort of, the sort of stuff that looks like water in there, but it's all, all over the place. And, uh, the spirit of God was, what does it say?

Hovering over the waters. I don't know where to put the waters in my drawing, so, but the idea of hovering is a bird-like idea.

So, for the sake of simplicity, think of bird-like, the spirit of God hovering over this formless, tohu and bohu earth.

And, and sort of in every place where there is this formlessness and emptiness, the spirit of God is, is ready, as it were, to do something, but it doesn't happen just yet.

[25 : 14] That's what I think the text is saying. And it says that God speaks into this. Let there be light, and there was light.

So God speaks, and it happens. And there is, so there is the introduction of light, and there is a separating. He separated the light from the darkness.

Whoops. So there we are. Okay. So we've now got light and darkness separated. So I'd like you to notice this, this becomes a pattern, that God takes something, it's all sort of muddled up, and separates the light and the darkness.

A little bit like what you might do in a teenager's room. You might go around, forgive me if you're a teenager and this is very unfair on you, but you might go around and take all the empty crisp packets and put them all over in the bin, and you might take all the coffee cups that have got all bits of coffee sitting and green stuff as well, and put them in the washing machine and separate.

And it becomes, it begins to have order, and God separates the light from the darkness and he does some naming. Now if you had done this, you would say, if you don't look at your Bible and it says, God called the light, you would expect it to say light, wouldn't you?

[26 : 42] And he called the darkness, darkness. darkness. But actually, it says, he called the, he separates, there's a separating line, and he calls the day, I'm sorry, he calls the light day, and the darkness he calls night.

So those two things get named, although it's not the names I would have thought you would give to them, because these, these names are to do with time. Because day and night are, are not the absolutes, it's not sort of light and darkness, it's time.

A day and night is, as we understand it, a time reference. So I said I didn't know all the answers, but I'm just telling you what it says. And he says, there we are, day one, evening and morning, day one. So I presume that this is inviting us to think of a, a day, and then the evening, and then we come around to the morning, and that's the total thing. Day one, that's what God says, just think of it like that.

That's your best way of understanding what I'm telling you. Okay, that was day one. Let's do day two. And God said, let's get, put the day in place, there's the day, we're going to put, do that.

[28 : 03] And God said, let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water. So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it, and it was so.

And God called the expanse sky, and there was evening, and there was morning, the second day. Now this is, let there be a rakia.

So if anybody has got an authorised version, it will say firmament. Has anybody got a firmament? Let there be a firmament. The Hebrew word is rakia, and I don't really know what a rakia is.

It's mentioned several times. It gets called sky, but I have a feeling that there's a, that's only part of it. Let's put a rakia in there. And the rakia separates the water, water from water.

It separates the water under the rakia from the water above it. So let's put some water above it, and let's put some water below it. Just, I think there's a little play on words here, because water is mayim, and sky, or heaven, is shamayim.

[29 : 22] So we're separating the mayim from the shamayim, and probably works better in Hebrew than it does in English. And what gets named here?

Let's just see. The thing that gets named is the shamayim up there. So what we do notice is that where God separated light from darkness, he now separates like that, the waters above and the waters underneath, and he puts a rakia in the middle to do it.

So it's a separating exercise, and he calls the, maybe I'm telling you the right thing, he called the expanse sky.

Well, I put the arrow up here. Perhaps I'm wrong to do that. Perhaps I should put the arrow pointing to this thing, which is whatever a rakia is. And that is day two.

And what we see is God has separated this way, and he's separated this way, and he's bringing form into this formless and empty world that he's made.

[30 : 35] Okay, let's do day three. Day three is a little bit longer and more things happen. Verse nine, And God said, Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place and let dry ground appear, and it was so.

And God called the dry ground land, and the gathered water he called seas, and God saw that it was good. Now, there's more going to happen, but let's do this separation.

So he gathers this way. He gathers the dry land from the water, and he calls the dry ground land. Now, I'll tell you another complication, which is, it doesn't notice in English, but the word for land is eretz, which is the same as for earth, and the land of Israel.

So it's a little bit difficult to tell when he's talking about the land as in dry land, or the land as in the land of Israel, or the earth as in the whole thing. But anyway, this is what it's called.

[31 : 47] So where have we got to? Let the water be gathered, let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let the dry ground appear, and it was so.

And God called the dry ground land. So I ought to put an arrow there, that gets called something. And the gathered waters he called seas, so they're called something.

And God saw that it was good. So I ought to put a tick for that. So this is good. This is good. Now, we get a second thing happening on this day. So this is verse 11. And God said, let the land produce vegetation, seed bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it according to their various kinds.

So he says it, and it happens, and it was so. The land produced vegetation, plants bearing seeds according to their kinds, trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds, and God saw that it was good.

So let's put some trees there. They produce fruit, and then we put vegetation in there as well. So we've now got a space that is filled with greenery and vegetation, and God sees that this was good.

[33 : 05] I wonder if I've got another tick there. No, I haven't. And there was evening, there was morning, the third day. So we're halfway through the week, and God has gone, perhaps I'm oversimplifying it, but it seems to me helpful.

He's gone like that, and he's gone like that, and he's gone like that, and produced order into the chaos that was there before.

Okay, are you with me so far? It's gone very quiet. Yes, okay. Right, now let's go to day four, and I'm going to use the picture I had for day one.

And God said, let there be lights in the rakhia of the sky, the expanse, I think that's the word expanse there, to separate, there's another separating going on, the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.

And it was so. And God made two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.

[34 : 22] It's very interesting, isn't it? Because if you're asked a cosmologist to tell the story, the first thing you say is the production of stars. But God says, I want you to understand it this way. Just as a little aside, on day four, I did make stars, but that wasn't particularly important.

It was just a little aside. It's very interesting the way God tells us this story. So here is the separation of day and night. light. And there's another separation taking place.

And we're told that these lights, the sun, which is presumably what's referred to the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night would be the moon, we presume.

He also made the stars. And somewhere I've got some stars coming in there, these mark seasons and days and years.

So again, here in day four, we've got a reference to time being marked. That corresponds to day one, you remember? That was where we had day and night. So here's day four with markers for time.

[35 : 33] And they're set in the expanse of the sky, verse 17, and they govern the day and the night and separate light from darkness.

And this also, there's the stars being made, God giving them, putting them in place, and this too is seen and is good.

And there's morning and evening, day four. So there's day four. Let's look at day five. Click.

Right. I'm going to use the same picture that I used for day two because now it says, this is now day five, God said, let water team with living creatures, let birds fly across the earth, across the expanse of the sky.

So God created the great creatures of the sea. So I couldn't draw any great creatures, but I put some fish in the sea. And every living and moving thing with which the water teams according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to their kinds.

[36 : 49] So there's the birds. And God saw that it was good. And here God blesses, verse 22, God blesses them and says, be fruitful, increase in number, fill the water in the seas, let the birds increase on earth.

So this blessing is to do with multiplication. So he wants the earth filled with fish and birds.

and this is evening and morning day five. Let's come to day six. So I'm going to use the picture I had for day three, which as you remember had produced waters separated, land separated, and vegetation on the land.

And in this day, this is another long day with more things happening in it. This is verse 24, let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds.

Now the description of living creatures is three things, and it's not what botanists might have said, mammals, amphibians, and something or other, reptiles or something, but God tells it this way.

[38 : 07] He says, it's animals that you can farm with, animals that creep along the ground, and animals that you can't farm with.

So it's livestock, see if I've got any livestock. So there's some livestock, creatures that move along the ground, well I think that would include insects, but it probably includes more than insects, maybe little rabbits and things like that, and wild animals, where have I got that, and wild animals, so I put an elephant for a wild animal.

That's the threefold division that God says here. And it was so, verse 25, God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds, and it was so.

The threefold distinction is told in a way which would make sense to the first people who read it.

They'd say, what sort of animals did God make? Well, what sort of animals have you got? Well, we've got livestock, we've got things that aren't livestock, and we've got things that we try to avoid because they're creeping around on the ground.

And God says, okay, I made those. That's what I made. Those things. You would understand that. That's the way he tells it to them. And he saw that it was good.

[39 : 32] God. So, that is first part of day six. And then the second part of day six includes a lot of stuff which deserves looking at in more detail.

But for the sake of time, I will sort of rush through it. And this is what it says. Sort of final stroke of what God is making. Final phase.

Verse 26. Then God said, at this time God sort of deliberates with himself about this. Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the livestock, the creatures that move over the ground.

And then we get a little poem here. And God created man, Adam would be the word for man, in his own image. In the image of God, he created him.

Male and female, he created them. And then we get a blessing, like we got a blessing before. This is a blessing for humankind. Be fruitful and increase in number.

[40 : 43] Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and every living creature that moves on the ground. So, God says, let's make man.

in our image, like God, in this beautiful world, which was formless and void, but has been made into order, and filled with stuff, filled with beautiful things.

And God says, now let's put two people, we'll find out it's two in a minute, or in the next chapter, but at the moment we're told male and female.

And in this wonderful world, these people will be like me, they'll be in the image of God, and they will rule this world, and they will govern it, and they will take care of it, and tend it, and bring it to its full potential.

And what a wonderful thing we have described to us. Humankind are made in the image of God, male and female, because if you've left blokes to run this world, they'd make a terrible mess of it.

[42 : 09] They need women there to make sure they do it properly. They need that help. And God gives this blessing, and the, so there's Mr and Mrs Adam ruling this beautiful, ordered world full of potential and goodness, because God's seen it's all good, and he blesses them and says, I want you to multiply, I want you to rule, and the final thing that we have on that day is the gift of the vegetation as food, God specifically gives all of that stuff for food, and it's given to the beasts of the earth, the birds of the air, and all creatures that move on the ground.

I give every green plant for food, and it was so. And God saw all that he had made, verse 31, and he says it's very good. This is just top notch, so I think I've tried to put two ticks.

This is very good. And there was evening, there was morning, day six. Did I write that? Yes. Okay, so that's the sixth day.

Let's put the days all together. So I think you'll notice there is a pattern to the days. Now, the world when it was tohu, vabohu, when it was formless and empty, I think is part of perhaps the introduction to day one or part of day one.

I'm not quite sure about that. It's difficult to tell. But this is the day that was formless and empty and God has added form and order.

[43 : 58] And he separated to produce the form. And it was empty and he's added fullness by populating this world with stars and birds and fish and animals and people.

And his final stroke was to make Adam in his image to rule that world. I was going to say there's a little bit of a pattern isn't there?

Because in this day one, it's day and night and then one, two, three, day four is the things that lives in the day and night or rules the day and night, the sun and the moon.

That's right, there is a pattern, that's why he could use the same picture. And here day two and day one, two, three, four, five, he'd separated out the waters above and the waters underneath and on this day he fills those spaces with the things that live in them.

So the waters above there in the sky, there's the birds, so the birds live there and in the waters underneath the fish, so he puts the fish in there. So he's made the spaces and then he fills those spaces.

[45 : 11] And then on this last day the emphasis was on this green bit which had been made full of vegetation so that people could eat it and live there.

And he fills this with the animals and in the end with human beings. So I would say there's a correspondence between day one and day four, day two and day five, and day three and day six. It seems to me that that's what's there. So we've been through the text apart from the last day which I'll come to in a moment.

But let's make some observations. How wonderful are the works of God? That's the Bible reaction. How wonderful are the works of God? We have a song that says, when I look down, oh dear, how does it go?

Lofty mountain grandeur. How great thou art. How great thou art. I think that's the right Christian response to say all the wonderful things that God made.

[46 : 35] I should point out that this is the world before it was fallen. We don't see it quite as beautiful as it was then. Sort of the colour's been drained out of it for us now.

But it's still a wonderful world. And we should say how wonderful are the works of God. In wisdom you made them all. How great thou art.

What a wonderful God to make this world in the first place and then form it so carefully and fill it with these creatures. And it's an amazing thing, is it not, that in the vastness of what God has made, you

could have said, day one I made stars, day two I also made some more stars, day three I made loads of other stars, day four I did loads of other stars too.

You wouldn't believe the stars I made, God could be just saying that would be perfectly true, wouldn't it? But what he actually says, well I did make stars, but what I did make was sky and earth and the sort of animals that you can understand and trees and things that you can feed on.

He tells this story to us because he had human beings in mind. He's made it for us. That's what Psalm 8 says, isn't it?

[47 : 56] When I consider the works of your hands, when I look into the sky, I think, isn't it amazing that you've thought about us? What is man that you're mindful of him? Isn't it amazing that God cares about us and made us in his image?

Science would try to say to us, look at the stars and be absolutely flattened and think that you're just nothing. But what the Bible says is, look at what God has made, all of that space, and he cares about you.

Isn't that a mind blowing thing? He tells us this story in a way that we can understand. Still not quite sure what a rakkia is, but those other things, sky, waters, yeah, we get all that.

It's a focus on the world he made for us. How favoured we are. He made the world for us to live in and rule. So when you're doing your gardening or you're sowing or cleaning your car, just think God has made the world for us to do those things.

We're doing what God has given us to do. He's made the world for us to enjoy, to rule, to form, to be artistic in, to be creative in, like he is an artist, like he is a creator.

[49 : 31] And then think that when this world all went wrong, he came into this world world, to save it, to save us.

God sent his son into this world, not to condemn the world, but the world through him might be saved. Isn't it amazing grace that the God who can make all this chooses to say, I care about you. the maker of all things. Here's some more thoughts and observations. Every good created gift comes from him.

How much we owe him. Acts 17 Paul says to his pagan hearers, this God gives us life, breath, everything. Your next heartbeat is in the hand of God.

Your next breath is in the hand of God. God, you are surrounded by God, you are upheld by God at every point, every atomic oscillation is in the hands of God.

[50 : 41] He gives us everything. How much we should praise him, how much we should thank him. He is the wise maker of all things.

Sometimes I make little projects and I like to sit and think, the dimensions of them and whether this will fit and whether I have got enough screws to do that.

It takes me ages thinking about it. If you think how God just has made everything, how much planning did God do?

Did he use an Excel spreadsheet? Did he work it out on SketchUp? Did he do three-dimensional drawings of it beforehand? you just think of the wisdom involved in making this vast and extremely detailed universe.

God says, the Bible reflects on God as creator and it says to people who think, oh God's forgotten me, God doesn't know what it's like in my situation and they say, and God says, why do you complain, oh Jacob?

[51 : 56] Why do you say, oh Israel, my way is hidden from the Lord, my cause is disregarded by my God? Do you not know, have you not heard, the Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not grow tired or weary. His understanding no one can fathom. That's who God is. He's so wise. He gives strength to the weary.

He's good. He is the author of all that is beautiful and pleasing and harmonious and orderly. He saw it was good. This world has got moral, aesthetic goodness in it.

And we see this every day. And science has got no way at all of explaining that. And he's the personal God who made the world and rules the world for a personal relationship with his creatures for us.

things. So, I think I'm getting towards the end. There is another place in the Bible where there is a week and it starts off by saying in the beginning and it talks about light and it talks about the word.

[53 : 24] Anybody know which part of the Bible that is? John. Yeah, John's Gospel. John is referring us from the creator who made everything in the beginning to the new creation that he is making.

The old one, as we shall see, was spoiled by sin. But there is a new creation and it starts with one person, Jesus of Nazareth.

he is the beginning of the new creation and in his resurrection he implements and guarantees a remaking of all things.

And that's what we look forward to. I have a feeling one of my slides disappeared, but we'll go with the ones that we've got and continue next time.

we're going to