

Creation of the Material World

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[0 : 0 0] So if you have your Bibles, you can turn to Genesis chapter 1. We're in a new series that I'm calling Encountering God. And last week I gave sort of the overview of this series in five words.

I think I still have the slide available. These five words will help us to get from the very beginning all the way through to the point or the fulfillment of the story, and that is in Christ.

And so you can look at it, creation, sin, covenant, kingdom, and fulfillment. And it's interesting to me that the first three words will take up the entirety of the book of Genesis.

Now, we're not going to do all 50 chapters one at a time. We're just going to, we're flying at like 30,000 feet over this. So you're not going to see every single detail, and we're not going to take time with every single verse to explain every little detail.

What we're doing is giving that high view of the story and the plot of the Bible. And I think it's important for us to see that. So today, last week, we dealt with creation, that of the spirit beings or the spiritual realm.

[1 : 1 0] And today we're going to look at the material world and that God is the creator of the material world. So beginning in Genesis chapter one, I'm going to read the entirety of Genesis chapter one.

So do your best to follow along. It's only 31 verses. We should make it through okay. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep. And the spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, let there be light.

And there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God 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 one day. Then God said, let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters and let it separate the waters from the waters.

[2 : 1 1] God made the expanse and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse. And it was so. And God called the expanse heaven.

And there was evening and there was morning a second day. Then God said, let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place and let the dry land appear.

And it was so. God called the dry land earth and the gathering of the waters. He called seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them.

And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them after their kind. And God saw it was good.

And there was evening and there was morning a third day. Then God said, let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years.

[3 : 19] And let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth. And it was so. And God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night.

He made the stars also. And God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth and to govern the day and the night and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw it was good.

And there was evening and there was morning a fourth day. Then God said, let the waters team with swarms of living creatures and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.

God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind and every winged bird after its kind. And God saw that it was good.

God blessed them, saying, be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters and the seas and let the birds multiply on the earth. And there was evening and there was morning a fifth day.

[4 : 21] Then God said, let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind. And it was so. God made the beasts of the earth after their kind and the cattle after their kind and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind.

And God saw that it was good. Then he said, let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

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 he said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

Then God said, behold, I've given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth and every tree which has fruit yielding seed. It shall be food for you and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every living thing that moves on the earth, which has life.

[5 : 38] I have given every green plant for food. And it was so. God saw all that he had made. And behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning the sixth day.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word. Lord, we thank you for all that you've given to us in your word. And Lord, we pray that our hearts and our minds would be fixed upon you and would trust you.

And we would not doubt you and who you are. But we would come to love you more than we did when we first came in.

Help us to see your glory. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players upon it.

Anybody know who said that? Shakespeare wrote this in a monologue in his play As You Like It. As he wrote those words and the words in the monologue go on, it carries out the seven stages of human existence, at least in their mindset.

[6 : 53] And it was that the world is a stage on which the drama of human existence plays out. And to some degree, that's pretty true. I would say that the world and the universe is a stage on which the story of God is played out.

But he's close. But he's close. And in Genesis chapter 1, we could dive into the minutiae. But what we want to do is we want to see the big picture of who God is. Because we need to love the Lord.

We need to trust him. We need to know him. We need to know what he is like. And I think we can do that by looking here at Genesis 2, at two big ideas. And the first is that of the God of creation.

And the second thing is God's creation. So the first point then is that we want to look at the God of creation. We want to look at who he is. And we want to look at three things. We want to look at his existence, his name, and then how he created.

When you look at Genesis chapter 1, verse 1, it begins this way. In the beginning, God. In the beginning, God.

[7 : 59] There's no qualifier. There's no back story. There's no movie prequel that's an origin story or anything like that. There is the assumption that God is.

The biblical author makes the assumption that the God that is being written about here was already in the beginning. And when the beginning came about, God was doing something there in the beginning.

You get the feel that this beginning wouldn't even happen if it weren't for this God. Moses, who I think wrote the first five books of the Bible, he is writing to a group of people who are coming out of Egypt.

They've been in bondage. They've been in slavery. They've begun to worship the idols and the gods of the Egyptians. And as God has set them free by a mighty hand and ten plagues and death through the Red Sea, he is writing to these people so that they might understand who they are and why they are in existence and who it is that saved them.

And so he's writing to them so that they might know this God who just delivered them. And he's assuming that they are going to understand exactly what he's saying when he says, in the beginning, God.

[9 : 15] Without qualifier, without adjective, without anything else. Because they could have thought to themselves that maybe this is Osiris or Ra or Bel or an Astaroth or some god from some other nation that they've heard about.

But no, this is the God of the Hebrews. His existence is assumed. Never proven. And what I mean by that is this.

The burden of proof lies upon those who would deny the existence of God. Because the Bible assumes it. This God has always existed.

He's always been. There's never been a time when he was not. And I'm going to just tell you something. If that were not true, then throw it all away.

Because we can't build our lives on someone who had a beginning. We can't build our hope for the future and what's going to happen in eternity on someone who had a beginning. On someone who even lies to us.

[10 : 24] So we have to take him at his word. This is God's existence. Secondly, we want to look at God's name. The name here for God is the Hebrew word El. El. It's a masculine word.

And we don't have this in English so much, but other languages have the masculine and feminine words in their language. And in Hebrew, to make the word plural, you don't add an S. You add a him.

If it's a masculine word. So it's Elohim, which means that it's God, but plural. Now that's a little strange, knowing what we know.

If you have any Christian background at all, that's going to feel a little weird to you for just a second, but I'll explain it. This word is particularly, when it's speaking of the God of the Bible, is always brought together and coupled with verbs that are singular.

And that should make you a little bit more weirded out. If we were to give it a wooden translation, we might say something like, in the beginning, God's, plural, created, singular.

[11 : 36] Except, when we speak of God, you see what's going on here? It's a little strange, right? It's almost like bad grammar. And it's like, what is the bad grammar here for?

For a reason, for a purpose. Because what the author is getting at, is that there's something about God, there's something about God that is so great, his magnitude is so awesome, his person has such great splendor, that to use a singular to describe him, is disrespectful.

So what we see then, in the very first verse of the Bible, is that this God, who created, is of such magnitude, that there's some kind of, plurality, and singularity, at the same time.

Now, we can't go any further than that, we won't say anything further than that, because the scripture doesn't say anything further than that, but it does give us this sense, that says, that this is a different kind of God, than all the nations.

All the nations create their gods, after their image, but this is a God, who's unlike us, in whose image, we are then made. But this name, the actual name itself, L, it has this concept, of this sum total, of divinity.

[12 : 59] Anything that could be divine, anything that is divine, is the sum total, of L. L is God, in the most, largest sense, of the word.

But, this abstract concept, becomes concrete, because, Moses, is applying this word, to the God, who just delivered them, out of Egypt.

This is the one, who is God. Not another, not from this nation, not from that nation, not from that pantheon, this God, and this God, alone.

In other words, when he writes, Elohim, he is counting out, any deistic idea, or any just, vaguely theistic, sort of, mentality.

There is one God, and he is the God, of the Bible. There is no, other. But then we also see, that this God, who exists, and who is, powerful creator, let's talk about, his creation, for just a second.

[14 : 05] It says, in the beginning, God created, this word, created, is this idea, of something, coming, from, nothing.

Now here's the thing, there are a lot of, creation deniers, out there. Do you hear that? I'm just taking it over. There are a lot of, creation deniers, out there. And, they want to deny, that creation happened, as God said, because, they have all kinds of things, that they dig up, from the earth, and things that they look at, through telescopes, and they gather data, and they draw conclusions, from that data, and say, well this is how, things took place.

But the fact of the matter is, you can go through, and you can look, at the scientific studies, and find, that there's so much done, in the area of evolution, evolution, but in terms of the origin, of life, how did life arise, there's hardly anything, at all, in the scientific studies, on that.

But, but my point, is this, no one, was there, except God. No one was there, except God.

You, me, none of us, know, because we weren't, there, but God does. And he says, that he created it.

[15 : 29] Now, as a Christian, we certainly, would believe, and agree with, what some would call, micro evolution. That is, that there's changes, within a species. I have two dogs, both of them have, schnauzer background, but they are not, at all the same.

They are different. Those changes, come about, because of the way, things change, in creation. There are, those changes, that are there. We do not deny that. What we deny, is that you can change, from one species, to another, completely different.

That you can be, this, the best way, I'm going to describe it, because I'm not a scientist, is, you know, a cat, to a dog, or, an ape, to a human.

These are things, that we would deny. God is the one, who created, and when he created, he created, something, out of, nothing. If I hold, my hands, right here, okay, what do I have, right here?

No, I have air, so there's still, something, there, right? So, when we say, that God created, something, out of nothing, it's hard for us, to conceive, because we cannot, conceive of nothing, because if we conceive, of nothing, then we have nothing, in our minds.

[16 : 44] You see what I'm saying? It is such a difficult, concept for us, to even talk about, that to, to say, something, from nothing, this is what theologians, have called, that God created, ex nihilo, ex nihilo, out, of nothing.

If you're going to, bake some bread, or, actually, cookies, I would prefer, and you're going to do it, from scratch, you don't think, to yourself, oh, well let me get, some wheat, and plant it, in my field first.

You think, let me grab the flour, out of the cabinet. But even if we were to say, well no, no, no, from scratch, no, you really got to do it, from scratch, and you begin to think, to yourself, planting wheat, or, you know, raising cows, having some chickens, it's like, no, no, no, no, to create something, out of nothing, you need to create, the cow.

Right? But we do not have, this possibility, as a matter of fact, if we were to say, what is it that God did, it would be this, cookie. And there it is.

I wish. But none of us have, that ability. We might be able, to be creative, but we are taking, things that exist, and we're giving shape, to them, perhaps a different shape, than someone else.

[18 : 19] But we are not, creators, as God is. He is the eternal, powerful, all glorious, always existed, plural, singular, creator, of all things, who by his divine, fiat, by his command, all things, came into existence, that have come, into existence.

this is the God, of creation. And I pray, that he, stirs our hearts. Let's take then, a look, at God's creation.

If he is the creator, what has he created? Two big thoughts. Number one, is that he created, in the span, of six days.

The Bible teaches us, that this was done, in the span, of normal, operating hours, 24 hour period.

Now, a lot of people, can try to argue things, and maybe we'll get into, some of that in a second, maybe we won't, I might just skip it. Listen, I'm a theologian, I'm not a scientist, so there's some of these, science things, that like I will get, all backwards and confused, but I may say, a few things.

[19 : 31] But here's why, why would I say, that it's 24 hours? Because in Exodus, chapter 20, verse 11, as God is giving, the commandments, to his people, the fourth commandment, is that you have, six days, in which to work, and on the seventh day, that is to be remembered, as a Sabbath day, to the Lord.

That commandment, makes no sense, because, if you don't understand, verse 11, 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.

If those days, were not considered to be, by the writer of this work, to be 24 hour days, then what he's saying here, makes no sense. You see, when we come to the Bible, and we say, well what does a day mean, because, you know, all these outside sources, and all these other people, and things that I see, with my own eyes, tell me that it can't be a day, and I say to you, all men are liars, and God is the only truth, that there is.

We understand, what he has said, by what he has said. Scripture, interprets, scripture. And obviously, the only objection, that many people raise to this, is the age of the earth.

But you understand, that trying to figure out, the age of the earth, there's so many problems, and so many things, we don't know, about the age of the earth. You know, one of the things, that I think about most, is the fact that, that all the science, that's behind, trying to figure out, the age of the earth, is so fraught, with all kinds of debate, and humans.

[21 : 16] I mean, like it or not, we as humans, are terrible, at interpretation, of data. All you've got to do, to prove this to yourself, is, watch a group of people, that showed up to church, earlier to you, earlier than you did, watch them, begin to talk, and as soon as you come, through the back door, they stop talking, and don't talk anymore.

You just saw data, but how do you interpret it? Oh, they're talking about me. But how do you know? You see, the problem is, is that we as humans, there's this expectation, that those who live, in scientific communities, are robots, and are immune, to some sort of bias.

But that is not true. We have no idea, how long things took, between chapter 2, and chapter 3 of Genesis. We have no idea, where the trees created, with growth rings, already in them.

I mean, we just don't know. But what we do know, is that God told us, that he did it, in six days. What were these, six days of creation?

Now, I'm not going to, take a deep dive, on these things, but you can read it, and you can see, but I just want to give you, about four or five things, about the days of creation, for you to kind of, chew on a little bit.

[22 : 34] Number one, the days of creation, I think is pretty obvious, come in two sets. Days one, two, and three, end up being, something kind of like, stages, or theaters, upon which, the last three days of creation, fill with actors, if you will.

So, in other words, you have things like, the heavens, you have the waters, you have the land, and you have these things, being populated, and filled, with what takes place, on the last three days.

You have, this idea, that each day of creation, is said to be, evening, and then morning. That's just such a strange, way of talking. That's not the way, we talk in our culture.

You know, for us, a day starts, at midnight, to midnight, but most of us, don't even feel that, and think that, kind of practically. You know, your day starts at, you know, for some of you, like at nine, because you're, I don't know, why you're not up already, you know, six o'clock, because that's what time, I get up.

Six, 15. Anyway, so, so we don't think this way, we think, we think day, then night, as a day. But the Bible, is telling us, that there was evening, and there was morning, the first day.

[23 : 43] Why is that? Because it's a, it's a template, for how revival works, it's a template, for how salvation works, it's a template, for how any kind of, reformation works, is that after darkness, comes light.

After darkness, comes light. Even, the Jewish, counting for the Sabbath, Sabbath started, Friday night, and ended, Saturday night.

Right? There was evening, and there was morning. The third thing about this, is that there's a rhythm, that flows, through these six days. And I know there's, a few variances in here, but basically, you get this sort of, this sort of rhythm, this cadence.

God spoke, it came about, God saw it was good, there was evening, there was morning, the first day. God spoke, it came about, God saw it was good, there was evening, morning, the first day, second day, third day, you get the idea, he speaks, it comes about, he gives a declaration, that it's good, and that's the end of it.

Next day. God spoke these things, into existence. That's the whole point, of the rhythm, is to get at the fact, that it is by his word, that he created.

[24 : 53] And I know, a lot of people, look at Genesis chapter 1, and like to throw it aside, and says, it sounds very poetic, that's fine, but Hebrews chapter 11, verse 3, says this, that 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.

In other words, God spoke into existence, all things. The last thing, is that this rhythm, that's going, it's going, going, going, going, and stops, at the creation of man.

It stops, at the capstone, capstone, of creation, that man, male, and female, are made, in the image, of God.

They were made, to be bearers, of God's image, to reflect, God's glory, to the rest, of creation. They were there, to reflect, to the trees, and the rocks, and the birds, and the animals.

They were there, to reflect, even to the spiritual realm, that's out there, the glory of God. That was man, being made, as the highest, of God's creation. So we've seen then, the God of creation, and God's creation.

[26 : 11] I just want to spend, the last few minutes together, talking about, so what? What does this mean for us? What kind of application, can we pull from this? What thoughts, do we need to think, from these things? And let me just give you a few.

Number one, we are not accidents. We're not products, of random mutations. We are not just, thinking animals. God is our creator, and he has made us, for a purpose.

He has made us, for a purpose. No other, worldview out there, can give to us, what we get, from the word of God. What do you mean, by that Brady?

What I mean by that, is there are some people, out there, that their worldview, states that the only thing, that really exists, is matter. Right? That the only thing, that exists is matter.

The only thing we can know, is matter. And so for them, there is no God, there is no morality. If you're just matter, if it's just matter, if it's just stuff, if there's not, something else, going on inside of me, or in this world, then really, nothing else matters.

[27 : 14] And I've often, perhaps I need to, repent of this, but I've often, thought to myself, I would love, to meet someone like that, and just slap them, in the face once. Not because I want to be mean, but because I want to watch them, feel the indignation, and the injustice.

Because then I want to ask them, what does it matter, if a bag of matter, and a bag of matter collide? It doesn't, in your worldview. But in the Christian worldview, it matters.

Because every single human being, even if they hate my guts, is created in the image of God, and worthy of respect, and dignity.

Number two, we are his creatures. And because we are his creatures, he can do with us, as he pleases. He can tell us, what's high, what's low.

He can tell us, what's wrong, what's right. He can tell us, what is holy, what is unholy. He can tell us, what is the law, and what is sin. He is the one, who gets to decide, all of these things, because he is our creator.

[28 : 35] We do not get to decide, our own morality. We are not, the creator. We are the creature. But it also means, that he can bring upon us, anything that he so chooses.

He can bring into our life, whatever suffering, he decides. Because we belong to him. Can you imagine, that moment, that you take that loaf of bread, and you open up the oven, and you're about to bake this thing off, and as you start to put it in, the loaf cries out, no, no, no, don't put me in the oven, that's too hot.

After you, you know, get over the shock, of something strange like that. Do you see, how ridiculous that is, even to contemplate?

And yet, what do we do? That every time, suffering comes our way, we say, no, no God, why are you doing this to me? He's your creator.

How dare we question him? We belong to him. He can do with us as he pleases, but here's the other side of this, that you've got to hear and know.

[29 : 48] He is not only creator, but he is good. He is compassionate. He is kind. He is patient.

He is long-suffering. He never does wrong. He never does evil. He never acts unjustly. So even though he can do with us as he pleases, we can trust him to do with us well.

Third thing, our purpose in life is then bound up in our creation. I won't hit this a lot because we'll come back to it next week, but if we're made in the image of God, we're meant to be bearers and reflections of his glory, then how are we doing in reflecting who he is?

Everything we do, every way we think, everything we say, everything we feel, all reflects his glory. Let me ask you something. Would you take and use your mother's name as a curse word?

No. Because why? Because you love and respect. Yet, every time we look at another creation of God and we do not reflect God's glory to them, we are taking the name of the Lord God in vain.

[31 : 21] So husbands, we are called to be reflections of the glory of God to our wives, but when we act selfishly towards our wives, we're not reflecting God's glory and we're taking his name in vain.

And wives, you're meant to reflect God's glory to your husband, but when you are ill-tempered or snarky, you are not reflecting the glory of God as an image bearer to your husband.

Parents, we're supposed to reflect the glory of God to our kids, but when we focus more on the physical, the academic, or the social to the exclusion of the spiritual well-being of our kids, we are not reflecting the glory of God in our parentings, and so we're taking his name in vain.

All screaming and hitting and biting and sarcasm and condescension, all sloth and slander and greed and lust and disrespect and jealousy and strife and purity and morality are bad reflections of God.

They're taking his name in vain. So what happens when we don't live out our purpose? God does not hold us innocent, but instead, we are guilty of violating his glory.

[32 : 32] We are falling short of the glory of God, and because of that, we're guilty, deserving death and hell. But the good news is that the Father has sent his Son into this world to take on flesh and to take the guilt that our sin, our violation of his glory, deserves, and Christ has paid the price that our sins deserve so that we might go free.

God is for his glory, which reminds me of one final thing. In Genesis 1, verse 31, I want you to notice something.

God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good. You know, I've made a lot of furniture in my life, and most of the time when I step back and I look at it and I point at it, I go like, I should have done this to it.

It's just never been good. I never thought it was. Part of that is because I'm afraid to say it's good because that sounds like I'm bragging.

because I'm really not that great. Like, you know, I'm not, I'm not a craftsman. Like, I just know how to hold two pieces of wood together and make them stick.

[34 : 08] Here's God sitting on the horizon of the universe, looking at everything he made, and he says, very good.

Why is that? Because God is about promoting his own glory, and his perfections are seen in creation.

What's happened? Something's happened. It's not like it was. It's not like it was meant to be. So we're going to have to figure that out.

But today, you have the creator before you, and you have his greatness and his glory. And so my challenge to you is to make yourself happy, glad, in God.

You do that by seeing him in his word and relishing on that. Let's pray.

[35 : 16]