

Genesis 1:9-25

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[0 : 01] Well, let's turn together now to Genesis and chapter 1. We're going to look at this passage today from verse 6 down as far as verse 25, actually.

Although we didn't read the whole of the passage. From verse 6 down to verse 25. Let's just recap on what we've seen from the early part of Genesis 1, where we saw, first of all, God's work of creation, where we noticed that God brought into being those things which did not exist until he ordered them into being by his own power.

Then we saw that God set about bringing order to what he had created, and that there was also further work of creation, along with the bringing of order to what he had created.

So we saw creation and then formation in the way that that is set out for us there in the early part of the chapter. And then we also saw last time that we find separation in the work of God, where God separates the light from the darkness.

And we looked very briefly at how that also is something which indicates to us a spiritual emphasis in the Bible, how there isn't just this to do with the creation itself in physical terms, but there's a parallel in the spiritual world as well, if you like, in the spiritual creation that God brings about in our lives spiritually, in redemption, that there is a separation of light from darkness, darkness and light and darkness in spiritual terms have their own qualities, and they're very opposite qualities.

[1 : 49] And we saw that in the natural sense, while light in its nature scatters the darkness, it's also true in the spiritual sense. What we didn't go into, and what we don't have time to go into today as well, is that both of these properties, light and darkness, both of these concepts, both of these things have opposite attributes.

In other words, it's not just that light scatters darkness, and darkness is the opposite of light. In spiritual terms, in the spiritual world, they are actually opposed to each other.

Light is something that is contrary to darkness, and darkness is contrary to light. And indeed, there's such an opposition, as you well know for yourselves from Scripture, an opposition that light and darkness are in conflict, in a kind of spiritual warfare with each other.

So that while darkness is always seeking to outdo the light, we find that the light that God creates spiritually always ultimately overcomes the darkness.

And today we're going on to look at something else that we find, in this account of the creation. There's separation also continuing to be mentioned, in terms of the waters being separated from the earth, the land.

[3 : 19] But there's also multiplication. And there's multiplication because God brings into what he has created, life in different forms.

And as he brings out life in different forms, it really brings us along gradually, and definitely, and inevitably, to the pinnacle of life on earth, which is the creation of human beings.

All of that, you see, is part of the pattern, part of the order, that God is establishing, as you read about it here, in Genesis 1. Now look at the separation, first of all, that continues.

God said, let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters. And God made the expanse, and he called that heaven, and there was evening, and there was morning the second day.

And God said, let the waters under the heavens be gathered together, and let the dry land appear. In other words, he's separating the dry land from the waters that he came to call the seas, and God called the dry land earth, and God saw that it was good.

[4 : 31] And all the way along there, you're still reading about God actually speaking and acting creatively. Even when it's something that already exists, that he then brings into a different order or formation, such as the dry land and the seas, it is still God who's bringing that about.

It is still God who's actually arranging that order. It is not something that happens of its own accord. It is not something that was built into the creation, if you like.

It's something that God spoke into being. God said, let there be an expanse. And God said, let the waters under the heavens be gathered together.

It's at his command. It's actually under his direction. It's by his authority, and by his power, and by his will, that that order in the creation is established.

And that itself is an important point. But then he comes to speak about the way in which we have life brought about in this order that he's creating and bringing about.

[5 : 39] There's the emphasis on the trees, emphasis on vegetation, trees bearing fruit, and God saw that it was good. Now that just, again, is by God's command, by God's order.

Then verse 14, we're going through it fairly quickly. 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 lights, and for days, and for years.

And then we read that God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He's already said, let there be light in verse 3, but now you see, it's becoming more specific to earth, to planet earth, where he's bringing about this order, and this vegetation, and this growth, and this life, and where he's going to ultimately place mankind, as he will create them, and plant them in the earth, and put them on this earth.

That's where he's going to have their, that's where their environment is going to be. That's where their life is going to be set. And in order to prepare for that, God brings these two great lights to rule the day and the night.

And of course he means by that, the light of the sun and of the moon. It's interesting, isn't it, that mankind, human beings, didn't actually invent time.

[7 : 09] Time's a very mysterious thing in many ways. It's a puzzling thing, isn't it? I've always got a problem if I'm going from this country to America, or the other way across to Korea, or wherever. It's always difficult to work out your time zones, and the effect of those time zones, and your body clock, and the way it goes, all the disruption that's caused to your body clock.

So time's a fascinating thing, as you look at it, in terms of the different time zones, even, in the world. But time itself, is really something, that is set in accordance with this planet.

Because God's concentration here, is on planet earth. And when he's talking about days and years, they are set in terms of the way that God has arranged the movement of this world, around the sun and on its own axis.

He set these two great lights, the one to rule the day, the other to rule the night and the stars. But he set them specifically for days, and for seasons, and for years.

God's arrangement of the universe, and God's arrangement of this planet, in relation to its sun, and in relation to its own revolving, is what set time for us.

[8 : 29] Human beings didn't invent it, it came from God's arrangement of the universe. And there's something else that's very interesting here, and it's very significant.

And that is that God doesn't name the sun to be the sun, and he doesn't name the moon as the moon, though it's obvious that that's what he's actually talking about.

Why is that? All it says is, he made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night, and he also made the stars. Well, because this ultimately, Genesis chapter 1, is what is often called a polemic.

In other words, it's an argued treatment, it's an argued discourse, if you like, against paganism. Because Israel, for whom this was firstly going to be so important, their understanding of their God, their understanding of who he was, and what he had done, and where they were in relation to him, they had to begin with this understanding of the world they lived in, where it came from, who had arranged it, who had actually placed the sun where it was, and the moon where it was, and why they were there.

Because Israel, in Egypt even, remember it was Moses, that God led to write these first five books of the Bible. And Israel, when you think about Israel and Egypt, they're surrounded there by paganism, they're surrounded by, they're living in a culture that worships the moon, that has deified the sun, that has actually caused these things to be set in their thinking as gods.

[10 : 12] And then all the way through their journeys, when they left Egypt, when they went through the desert, when they came to the land of Canaan, what were they being confronted with along the way? What were they confronted with when they came to the land of Egypt, the land of Canaan?

The same thing as they had in Egypt in a different form, the paganistic religions, that actually worshipped the likes of the sun and the moon, and other created objects, even creatures, as we read in Romans chapter 1.

In other words, the downgrading, if you like, of human thought, that's dealt with in Genesis 3, is something that's anticipated here in Genesis 1, is a polemic against paganism, against idolatry, against taking things that God has created, and actually putting them in his place.

And that's why God doesn't actually name them as the sun and the moon. And isn't it interesting too, that the stars really are mentioned almost in the passing.

God made the two great lights, and the stars also. And when you think of the vastness of the universe, when you think of the galaxies that we now know about, beyond our own galaxy, and the billions and billions of stars that we're told about exist in those galaxies, here really, in three words, God is saying, I made these also.

[11 : 51] Why is it like that? Because human beings, in Moses' day and since then, have tended not only to worship the stars, but to arrange their lives by the movement of the stars, by the movement of the planets, and you find it to this day.

We actually still have people consulting, consulting horoscopes and mediums, and people who claim that they can actually give you some idea of what your future may be, if you actually just listen to what they're saying, and if they look into the arrangement of the planets, and what they are at any particular time of year, what does God say about that in his word?

Does he regard it with a sort of stoical neutrality? Is it something that he says is not really all that harmful? It's just a very innocent, innocuous pastime?

No, he says it's idolatry. It's an actual, it's a substitute for trusting in him, for looking to his word, for depending upon his spirit.

It's an alternative to the creator being in charge of your life. That's what it is. You see, in the Bible, we'll come back to this tonight, actually, as we look at our final study in terms of conversion from what Paul says in regard to the Thessalonians, as he wrote to them in chapter 1, where he said, this is really what your experience is, how you received this word of God, and in receiving this word as the word of God, you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.

[13 : 39] We'll say more of that this evening, but idolatry is not neutral. It's not something that's a valid alternative to the Bible and to trusting in God all the way through.

And if you go to Isaiah, you don't have to read very far into the prophecy of Isaiah, for example, to come across how deeply serious idolatry is to God. Idolatry of whatever kind.

It's not just something where you fashion a little idol for yourself out of wood or metal or stone, like they used to in those days, perhaps, or still. Idolatry in our present form is the idolatry of human self, human practices.

The idolatry of money, of entertainment, of sex, of all the kinds of things that you see in our society that are deified rather than actually looking to God.

And right at the very start of your Bible, you've got something there that screams out at you, idolatry is sinful. God made all of these great planets and the stars and he set them in the expanse of heaven to give light on the earth to rule over the day and over the night.

[15 : 03] And every time we sing the psalm, we sing our anti-idolatry convictions. And that's important. God doesn't just mention in the Bible how serious idolatry is.

But he gives us psalms in which idolatry is mentioned. In which we read, for example, all the gods are idols, dumb which blinded nations fear.

But our God is the Lord, by whom the heavens created were. In other words, your anti-idolity is sung out in praise to God. How important is that?

You don't just hold it in your mind. You sing it out from your heart because you're convinced that this idolatry, whatever kind it is and wherever it is found, and it doesn't have to be anything other than something we worship ourselves and place instead of God in our lives.

Well, what God is saying about that is that it's really, to him, deeply offensive. Why? Because it robs him of his glory. That's why.

[16 : 11] And anything that takes glory away from God is bad because only he has the right to be worshipped and praised in that way.

So here is a polemic, really, against idolatry. We're not going to see more of it just now. There's too much else to look at this morning. But we'll come back, perhaps, and see more of that as we look at what Paul says to the Thessalonians in terms of conversion and what it is.

So here is separation again all the way through until you come to this focus upon the earth and upon God establishing these lights for the benefit of the earth and especially for the benefit of life on earth.

And now it comes to multiplication which also involves procreation because animals and humans are going to procreate, are going to produce after their own kind just like the vegetation through seed and so on.

So, when you come to verse 11 there you can see the earth brought forth vegetation. Verses 20 to 25 have to do with that how all the different kinds of animals and fish in the seas and on land are actually brought about and multiplied and God gives them the command to multiply.

[17 : 30] He said, be fruitful and multiply. You see, by God's enabling that that comes about and that itself carries so many ethical questions for us in today's society as to how we think of those things and those issues in human life particularly.

But, you notice what it says here that the origin and development of all of these things all the way down through to verse 25. Living creatures, livestock, the beasts of the earth, all that creeps on the ground and God saw that it was good.

And you see, it's building up the picture for us, isn't it? Because by now you have absolutely no doubt about this that this God, this Creator is concerned with life.

Life. And He's not just concerned with life, He's concerned with life in its abundance. Let the waters bring forth, let the earth bring forth.

Let them multiply. Let there be an abundance of life on this planet that I've created is what God is saying. He is the God of life and of abundant life.

[18 : 42] And you carry that with you into the spiritual world as well and you go to the likes of John and his gospel and the account you have of Christ's ministry where you find Him contrasting Himself to people who had gone before Him who claimed to be Messiahs but were not.

I am the Good Shepherd He says, I have come that they might have life and have it in all its abundance.

Reflection of Genesis 1, isn't it? That's what Jesus said. Why did Jesus come into the world? so that we might have life, spiritual life, the life we lost in Genesis 3 in the account of our fall.

Christ, God in Christ, brings it back to us and in Christ it's restored to us and it's what we receive when we receive Himself life abundantly.

Life is fullness. And of course this really is a contradiction, isn't it, to the classic evolutionary account of the creation of human life, of other life, where you find in classic evolutionism a very simple beginning and then a development over billions of years to a more complex form of life until you end up with different species and then you find the apex of that coming in the creation and in the formation of human beings after a long, long line of development.

[20 : 23] What a contrast you have in Genesis 1 where God is in charge of each and every kind of life. And of course there is development within each species.

And remember when I was involved in farming you find down through the years that certain breeds of cattle, for example, have been developed so as to maximize milk yield or perhaps as to maximize the amount of meat available on the carcass.

That's all worked within that particular breed so that you come to a specialist form of breeding and that's very much part of what you find within each species and it happens even naturally.

I understand that in examining those who lived on St. Kilda at one time that St. Kildan's apparently had much larger toes than most people in Scotland and that had developed over many, many years because their life was a struggle constantly climbing cliffs and climbing rocks and making their livelihood from what they could catch from the sea and from the cliffs and this development took place over many years.

But that's different to one species developing into another, an ape becoming human or a chimpanzee becoming human or life in a pond eventually struggling out of the pond and developing into four-legged or two-legged life on earth.

[21 : 59] When you read Genesis 1, it does not in any way discount development within species but it most emphatically rejects classic evolution from a simple form to a present-day complex one.

God created each of those forms of life in its own place and you see all the way through the chapter you've got it emphasized again and again and again just to make the point even within plant life after its kind.

After its kind. And when you come to human beings, they are the only ones of their kind and they are created specially by God as the pinnacle of his creation as we'll see.

The pinnacle of his creation of life on earth. The second thing in this multiplication is that while it contradicts classic evolution, it also prepares the way for human life.

This is really building the passage, the chapter, is building up to a climax where you find God coming to create human life from verse 26 onwards.

[23 : 23] And there's a whole section of that given to the creation of human life and all that God gave to the first human beings as he created them. And as we'll see next time, God willing, that's something that holds so, so much important teaching for us, especially nowadays.

When we think about what human beings are and how they differ from other forms of life. But look at how it's being prepared for. this environment is being prepared for Adam and Eve, for the first human couple.

It's going to be the best and it's going to be befitting them because they're going to be the pinnacle of God's creation, because they're going to be the very summit of life on earth as God created it.

It has to be that they have the best possible environment, that they have the best conditions, that they have the most fitting place to live, that they have a paradise to live in in this world.

And that's what God is setting about doing. That's what God is preparing. It's moving inexorably and definitely towards that great moment when God said, let us make man in our image.

[24 : 35] Nowhere better could God have placed him than in the earth that he had created and formed and fashioned, and in which there's been separation and multiplication and the creation of light, all for man's benefit particularly.

By the time Adam was created and then Eve, his wife, everything was ready for them. Nothing needed to be done by God in order to accommodate human life to the best of its advantage.

It was already there before he said, let us make man in our image. And doesn't that really remind us of the value that God places on human life?

And how that enters into the moral and ethical sphere of our thinking and our practice as well in terms of life pre-birth and life when it's come to life at the end of its course, when there are certain human traits that begin to fail physically or mentally, and the value that God places on human life, even when that human life is not exactly like the majority of other human beings, when there are certain faculties that are not as developed.

God's not saying that's less valuable life. God's not saying that's not really something that deserves to live in this world.

[26 : 21] God said, let us make man in our image. Every human life is of value to God.

And that's why we never despise any human being, whoever they may be, whatever they may be like, whatever others may think of them, whatever we may be tempted to think of them, when they are of value to God, they must be of value to ourselves.

and this is one of the things we're reminded of in God so carefully creating a perfect environment for human life in this world as it was before the fall that you have in Genesis 3.

Now there's a parallel with redemption in that as well. We've seen some of these parallels all the way, but here's another parallel, because when you go to the likes of John 14 and verse 1 and 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 3 to 5, you find that God is saying that here's what I've done and here's what you now are as believers in Jesus Christ, as born again, as within the kingdom, but there's something else waiting for you.

There's an environment in a better place for you. What did Jesus say? I am going to prepare a place for you.

[27 : 56] don't be anxious. You believe in God, believe also in me. If this were not so, I would have told you, would I not have told you about it?

In other words, as Peter puts it, the Lord's people in this world, as a Christian, as Christians together, what are we today in terms of this preparation and environment that God has for us spiritually?

We're on a journey, we're on a journey towards our paradise, towards that resting place that God has for his people. As Peter puts it, this is kept for you, this inheritance, this inheritance that is undefiled, this inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled.

it's kept in heaven for you, he says, to these people of God who are there scattered, as he says, throughout all of these regions, persecuted for what they believe, facing real trial and affliction in this world, but he says, remember, you are the people of God, people with an inheritance, and it's an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that fades not away, that doesn't become old, or in need of renewal.

And who's it kept for? For you, he says, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto that salvation, in the ultimate sense.

[29 : 30] You see, the wonderful way he puts it, this inheritance, this environment that awaits God's people in heaven, that corresponds to what God prepared for Adam and Eve before the fall, what he's saying is, it's kept for you, it's reserved for you, it's got your name on it, but you are kept for it.

You are kept by the power of God through faith. Both of these elements are important, not by the power of God only, and not by faith without the power of God, it's by both, by the power of God through faith, you are being kept for this inheritance that's being kept for you.

There's the parallel with the creation of this environment for Adam and Eve. And it's really no accident at all that you find the final book of the Bible, Revelation, really bringing the imagery of Genesis back to us, of Genesis 1 and 2, where it describes that final part of the redemption of God's people, in that final glory of the new heavens and the new earth.

And it reflects Genesis 1, think for example of chapter 21 of Revelation, the first five verses there, I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea was no more.

And I saw the holy city new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

[31 : 10] He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain for the former things are passed away.

And he who was seated on the throne said, Behold, I am making all things new. And God said, Let it be, and it was so.

And behold, God saw everything he had made, that it was very good. And then you find chapter 22, similar beginning of the chapter.

This throne of God from which flows this river of life, and where it says, they will see his face. And the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and the servants will worship him.

And as you read these two chapters, you see very emphatically said in verse 22 of chapter 21, I saw no temple in the city, and the city had no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, light, and the Lamb is the light of it.

[32 : 35] There's a correspondence with Genesis 1, but there's also a contrast. Because the sun and the moon, while they are symbols of spiritual light, there's no longer any need for them in the new world, in the new heavens and the new earth.

Everything is there in the glory of God that gives it light. And the Lamb is that light, that's Jesus Christ.

If you're of a certain age like me, you'll remember some songs that were current in my younger days. One of them is a song by the Carpenters. Maybe you've heard of them if you're a certain age.

And there's one of them that is entitled On Top of the World. And although it's not a spiritual song, you can still take certain aspects of it and apply it to what we're thinking of spiritually.

I'm on the top of the world, looking down on creation. And what is it then going to say? It's your love that's put me on the top of the world.

[33 : 54] love that's the love I'm on the top of the world, looking down on creation, and the only explanation I can find is the love that I found ever since you've been around.

Your love's put me at the top of the world. That's what every Christian can say of Jesus Christ. Is it your song today?

Let's pray. Lord, our God, we thank you as our creator that you created us but also created life for us.

Having forfeited that life with which you created us, we bless you today that through Jesus Christ, your Son, you have come to give us life anew.

We thank you that you continue to care for us. We bless you, Lord, for the offer of the gospel. We find that invitation to partake of that life. We pray today that each of us will come ourselves to drink of that water of life freely.

[35 : 03] Hear us, Lord, and accept our worship, we pray for your name's sake. Amen. Well, let's conclude our service this morning singing in Psalm 26.

Psalm 26 and sing Psalms, that's at verse 7. page 31 of the Psalm books, Psalm 26 at verse 7, I'll tell of all your awesome deeds, proclaiming loud your praise, your glory fills your dwelling place, I love your house always, my feet will stand with confidence upon the level place, and in the people's gathering, I'll praise the Lord of grace.

These four verses, let's stand to sing. Amen. Amen. Amen. I'll tell of all your thoughts and peace, proclaiming love your praise, your Your glory fills your dwelling place.

I love your house always. Sleep not away, my soul.

With those who endure pain, nor take away my life.

[36 : 53] With those who walk to womb and slain, for their right arms are full of pride.

They walk in liberty, but I believe how painless I in mercy set me free.

My feet will stand with confidence upon our ever list, and in the people's gathering.

I'll praise the Lord all grace. I'll go to the main door after the benediction. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and always.

Amen.