



## Part 6 – The Days of Creation (1)

### Genesis 1:3-2:3

The Bible's creation account is remarkably brief and spare of details. Its purpose is not to present an exhaustive account of the making of the cosmos. Such an account would be massive and beyond our ability to fully comprehend. Therefore, we should not expect to have all of our questions answered about "the how" of all God's works in creation. For instance, we are not told whether

God employed any secondary means in creating the world. Was everything brought about by supernatural fiat or did God also employ ordinary providences as well? We should also not try to force contemporary scientific canons on the Genesis account as though the inspired writer was addressing only 21<sup>st</sup> century readers.

That said, what we are told in the Genesis account is to be understood as a record of actual events. The creation account is not poetry but history written in what many commentators have called "elevated prose." We are intended to understand that the origins of the universe are supernatural. What is more, God structured the days of creation such that they are filled with meaning. It is hard to imagine that the riches of truth mined from the account of God's ordering of and acts within the creation days would be merely a literary technique untethered from actual facts.

While Bible believing Christians may not always agree on every interpretive detail concerning the creation days, we must agree on those points which Scripture makes clear. Affirming the historical reliability of God's supernatural creation of the universe, the special creation of mankind, a real paradise, a real fall, and death as the result of sin are fully affirmed throughout the Scriptures. Indeed, the Biblical meta-narrative of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and New Creation rests in part upon our affirmation of the reliability of the Genesis account.

### ***The Bible or Science? A False Dilemma***

- There is no conflict between the Bible and science. There is no conflict between a firm belief in the inerrancy and authority of Scripture and a life in the sciences. Any study of Genesis must affirm this reality. Too often – either because of the statements of zealous unbelievers or the flawed interpretations of believers – people are left believing that a choice must be made between confidence in Scripture and appreciation for scientific discovery. We must understand two things when thinking about science and Genesis: 1) The creation account is a true historical account and 2) The Bible does not speak in the language of contemporary scientific canons and was not intended to answer every question contemporary readers might raise.
- While much about God's creation may be known by careful observation and experimentation, apart from the light of Scripture our knowledge of the created world will be hampered. This is why many otherwise intelligent scientists embrace the outlandish ideas that the universe came from nothing, that chaos ordered itself, that emptiness filled itself, that self-consciousness, love, and beauty are nothing more than the accidents of unguided physical processes. Apart from the light of Scripture we will accept as "settled science," what we know is impossible.

### ***Supernatural Creation***

- Christians are unapologetic supernaturalists. That is, we believe that the physical realities we see and experience everyday are not the only realities. We believe in God. We believe God revealed himself to us through a written record. We believe that men and women are sinners but that God has provided a gracious salvation through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ who is, himself, God. If you struggle to believe the simple affirmation of Genesis, "And God said, 'let there be light,' and there was light," then the miraculous conception, atoning death, and resurrection of Jesus are going to be real problems for you.

## **6 truths which must not be sacrificed in an effort to harmonize the creation account with contemporary scientific paradigms:**

- 1) The origins of the universe are supernatural and it is upheld by God's providence.
  - God structured the days of creation in such a way that their very order is filled with theological meaning. It is hard to imagine that the riches of truth mined from the account of the creation days would be merely a literary technique untethered from actual facts.
- 2) The creation of the man and woman was direct and supernatural.
- 3) Adam and Eve were the progenitors of the human race.
- 4) Our first parents "fell" as a result of their rebellion against God.
- 5) By God's own design the fall into sin radically impacted the entire created order (Rom. 8:20).
- 6) As our representative head, Adam's sin has been imputed to all of his progeny (Rom. 5:12ff).
- If our attempts to accommodate the Bible to current scientific paradigms undermines these truths then we undermine the rest of what the Bible affirms including the gospel itself. Indeed, the Biblical meta-narrative of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and New Creation rests in part upon our affirmation of the reliability of the Genesis account. The Apostle Paul demonstrates this in Romans chapter five:
 

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come (Vv. 12-14).

### **1. God replaces chaos with order.**

Vv. 1-2

- The first book of the Bible represents a firm break from the creation myths of Israel's pagan neighbors. In the pagan myths creation was not simply the result of God's sovereign command. Rather those stories were of multiple gods both warring with one another and engaging in amorous behavior. From that chaos the world spilled forth, often unintentionally. The biblical account is radically different. It represents a firm departure from the metaphysical and cultural presuppositions of the pagan nations.
- Far from chaos, the Bible presents the generation of the universe as orderly. God created the universe *ex nihilo* or "out of nothing." He had no need of pre-existing materials. God then shaped the formless raw materials according to his own design. This orderliness is reflected in the literary structure of the account. The first three days record the creation of the forms. The second three days record the filling of those forms. For instance, on day one God called forth light and separates it from the darkness. On the corresponding fourth day, God created the luminaries (sun, moon, and stars).
- In his grace, God maintains order in the universe even though sin has caused a return to so much chaos. Nevertheless, because of God's maintaining of order, we are still able to live and even flourish. Ultimately the perfect order of a sinless world will be restored in the age to come. All chaos, decay, and death will be banished once and for all.

### **2. God replaces emptiness with fullness.**

Vv. 20-21

- [20] And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." [21] So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.
- On days four, five, and six God fills the forms which he spoke into being. For example, on the fifth day (Vv. 20-23) he fills the sea and sky with a great diversity of living creatures. "That a creation with form and fullness should be better than formlessness and emptiness structures a whole set of values around being and nonbeing. In the biblical view, death, decay, and dissolution of form are not simply...a reality to be embraced along with order and regeneration in the great circle of life" (Watkin, 63).
  - Generations after Augustine made a similar observation, the philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal wrote that there is an abyss within the human life that "can only be filled by an infinite and immutable object, which is to say only by God himself." (Ps. 107:9; Rom. 15:13; Eph. 1:22-23; 3:19; Col. 2:10)