

“Our Biblical Worldview”

(3) God the Creator, the foundation of our worldview

The first two messages of this new sermon series gave emphasis to the biblical teaching that God is the Creator of all that exists. On the first Sunday we saw from Romans 1 that God has displayed through His creation the indisputable truth that He exists and that certain aspects of His nature are clearly witnessed by His creation. All humanity who live upon this earth have been exposed to this witness of creation to God its Creator. Romans 1:18ff which read,

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. ²⁰*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen*, being understood by the things that are made, *even His eternal power and Godhead*, so that they are without excuse... (Rom. 1:18-20)

Then last Lord’s Day we also gave attention to God as the Creator when we considered the nature of biblical faith that is set forth in Hebrews 11. There we read, “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (Heb. 11:3). That the first two Sundays brought our attention to God as the Creator of all things should not be surprising to us, for the entire Bible is based upon the truth that the one true God is the Creator. Yes, God is also known through His work of the redemption of His people, but creation is the foundation for all that follows in the history of His creation that God had purposed in creating all things. It is our starting point for a biblical worldview. **Herman Bavinck** (1854-1921) once wrote,

The purpose and goal of creation is to be found solely in God’s will and glory. It is especially in the Reformed tradition that the honor and glory of God was made the fundamental principle of all doctrine and conduct. *A doctrine of creation is one of the fundamental building blocks of a biblical and Christian worldview*. Creation is neither to be deified nor despoiled, but as the “theater of God’s glory” it is to be delighted in and used in a stewardly manner. It is God’s *good* creation.¹

The doctrine of God creating all that exists is instructive and assuring for the Lord’s people. Again, Bavinck wrote:

From the very first moment, true religion distinguishes itself from all other religions by the fact that it construes the relation between the Creator and His creature. The idea of an existence apart from and independent of God occurs nowhere in Scripture. God is the sole, unique, and absolute cause of all that exists. He has created all things by His word and Spirit (Gen. 1:2-3; Psa. 33:6; 104:29-30; 148:5; Job 26:13; 33:4; Isa. 40:13; 48:13; Zech. 12:1; John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2; etc.) There was no substance or principle of any kind to oppose Him; no material to tie Him down; no force to circumscribe His freedom. He speaks and things spring into being (Gen. 1:3; Psa. 33:9; Rom. 4:17). He is the unrestricted owner of heaven and earth (Gen. 14:19, 22; Psa. 24:1-2; 89:11; 95:4-5). There are no limits to His power; He does all He sees fit to do (Isa. 14:24, 27; 46:10; 55:10-11; Psa. 115:3; 135:6). “From Him and through Him and to Him are all things” (Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb. 11:3). The world is the product of His will (Psa. 33:6; Rev. 4:11); it is the revelation of His perfections (Prov. 8:22f; Job 28:23f; Psa. 104:1; 136:5ff; Jer. 10:12) and finds its goal in His glory (Isa. 16ff; Prov. 16:4; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6).²

¹ Herman Bavinck, **Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. 2: God and Creation** (Baker Academic, 2004), p. 406.

² Ibid, p. 407.

It is in the record of God's act of creation in which we see the elements and the nature of a biblical world view. In Genesis 1 and 2 we learn first and chiefly what God is like and how He relates to His creation, but we also see how His creation, particularly the pinnacle of His creation—mankind-- is to regard and know Him and how He would have them relate to His creation and to one another as His creatures. And so, these matters are central to a biblical worldview: (1) how we understand the nature of God and how we are to relate to Him as our Creator; (2) how we are to regard and relate to His creation itself in which He has placed us; (3) and how we are to understand who we are His human beings and how we are to regard and treat one another as His creatures. Let us begin to wade into some of these matters by first reading Genesis 1 through 2:7, from which we will set forth a number of truths regarding God, human beings, and His world in which He placed us.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.

⁶Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." ⁷Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. ⁸And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

⁹Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. ¹⁰And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

¹¹Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. ¹²And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³So the evening and the morning were the third day.

¹⁴Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; ¹⁵and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. ¹⁶Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. ¹⁷God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

²⁰Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the ¹⁰firmament of the heavens." ²¹So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." ²³So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

²⁴Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind"; and it was so. ²⁵And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸Then God blessed them, and God said to them,

“Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

²⁹And God said, “See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. ³⁰Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food”; and it was so. ³¹Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. (Gen. 1:1-31)

^{2:1}Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. ²And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

⁴This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; ⁶but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

⁷And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

We confess as true the statement of the Bible, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). This is a faith statement. It is where we begin our consideration and analysis of all things. This is in accordance with the first place of the first statement of the ancient Apostles’ Creed:

“I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.”

We begin with the truth that God “is” (exists) and that He created all things (Heb. 11:6). We understand that God created all that exists out of nothing. This is commonly known as *creatio ex nihilo* (“creation out of nothing”). God called all matter and all life into existence through His creative and all-powerful Word. We assert that there was a beginning of all that physically exists. Prior to creation the blessed Triune God alone existed. He brought all things into existence when He issued His decree to create. The things that we see were not made from previous things that were visible. We have faith in God who spoke all into existence. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1).

Evolutionists confess a faith statement also. They would say, “In the beginning God did *not* create the heavens and the earth.” Their faith rests in the idea that the physical universe itself is eternal. There was no beginning in their understanding. Granted, they try to push back history to what they refer to as a “big bang”; they call that a beginning. But if pressed, they admit that must go back further. Throughout eternity they claim that there have been an infinite number of big bangs, resulting in an expanding and then contracting universe, a cycle repeating itself eternally. This faith claim of theirs is both philosophically and scientifically untenable. It is nonsense. Known science repudiates the notion that matter could be eternal in nature.

And so, although we readily admit that our belief in creationism by a strict definition is not based on science for it is born of faith, but similarly is evolution. Having said that, we certainly recognize that the faith claims of creation and the faith claims of materialist evolutionists can be examined scientifically. That is, through observation and consideration of what exists, scientific evidence may be gathered that will lend itself to either support or repudiate both creationism and evolution. We believe in creationism, and we also happen to believe that our world and the universe, when examined fully and honestly, give ample evidence to support creationism. Science cannot and should not be the ground of our faith, but it may affirm our faith. Certainly faith is not grounded on science; faith is grounded on the Word of God. Faith is not opposed to science, and some matters of faith can be affirmed by science. Creationism is one of them.

This morning we will consider the creation account of Genesis 1 and the beginning of chapter 2 from three perspectives. First, we will consider what the creation account reveals about God the Creator. Second,

we will consider what the creation account reveals about nature (created things). And then third, we will examine what the creation account reveals about mankind.

I. What does the creation account reveal about God the Creator?

The first act recorded in the Bible is God creating the world. In the first and second chapters of Genesis we read of God creating all that exists. When we consider the teaching of the Bible respecting God as the Creator of all that is, we may conclude certainties about His nature and His purposes in history. The record of creation was not given merely to explain how things came into existence. The primary role of the creation account in Genesis is to tell us about the God who brought these things into being. It is appropriate for us to ask what the creation story tells us about our God. Consider the following doctrines suggested by the Bible's teaching that God is our Creator.

1. God is pre-eminent. From an examination of the creation in Genesis 1 and 2 we could say of God: "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created" (Rev. 4:11). Clearly, the Genesis account of creation describes God in these terms. The central figure of the creation narrative is God: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). Here the Bible begins with God and He remains the chief character throughout the biblical story even unto the end of the book of Revelation. In those portions of Scripture where direct reference to Him is not present (as in Esther), God's existence and control of the affairs on earth is assumed and depicted. It has often been said that the "history" recorded in Scripture is "His Story." History is the record of His dealings among the creatures of His making. But it is important to stress that God is outside and above the created order. God alone is eternal; everything else had a beginning in time. We believe as the psalmist confessed,

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. (Psa. 90:2)

The Bible presents God as one who is different than all created things and who of His own volition brought all things into existence. He is the One who initiates action. He acts upon things outside of Himself; He is not acted upon by anything. God is the sole active actor on the stage as things are brought into being. All other things are passive. Consider in Genesis 1 and 2 the dominance of God as the main subject and give attention to the verbs that depict Him as acting. We read that "God created" (1:1, 21, 27--3 times, 2:3); "God said" (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29; 2:18); "God saw" (1:4, 10, 12, 18, 25, 31); "God separated" (1:4, 7); "God called" (1:5 --twice, 8, 10); "God made" (1:7, 16, 25, 31; 2:3, 4); "God placed" (1:17,); "God blessed" (1:22, 28; 2:2); "God completed" (2:2), "God rested" (2:2, 3); "God sanctified" (2:3); "God formed" (2:7, 19), "God breathed (into Adam)" (2:7); "God planted" (2:8); "He placed" (2:8); "the Lord God caused to grow" (2:9); "the Lord God took (the man) and put" (2:15); "the Lord God commanded" (2:16); "the Lord God brought" (2:19, 22); "the Lord God caused" (2:21), "He took" (2:21); "He closed up" (2:21); and "the Lord God fashioned" (2:22). In these first two chapters of the Bible God is the subject of active verbs 61 times. In addition to these, the direct discourse of God in these chapters contain 24 imperatives (commands) in the form of decrees which God declares should transpire. In contrast to God's activity, Adam is the subject of one active verb in which he "gave names" to the animals (2:20). The point is this: the Bible is chiefly a book about God and His dealings with mankind. It records how God brought man into existence and it tells of God's purpose for him. The Bible records God as taking the initiative to bring mankind into covenant relationship with Himself. The Bible does not chiefly center on man and his pursuit to know God, but it declares that God comes to man, reveals Himself, and brings His salvation to him. God as Creator reveals that He is pre-eminent.

Let the Bible's point of view of a theocentric world be considered by those who advocate new methods for reaching modern man by assuming and treating man (even unsaved man) as though the world were anthropocentric, as though man was the primary actor on the stage around which and for which all things exist, even God Himself. It is not man's felt needs that need to be identified and met; rather God's

revealed will must be declared and man must be shown that he must believe and submit to it. Those who place man in the center do view life 180 degrees out of synchronization with the biblical perspective. Those who think that they are bringing people into the kingdom by allowing those people to continue on the throne are not serving our Lord well. All pretenders and usurpers to God's throne must be brought low and made to submit to His rule.

2. God is all-powerful. Creation was by fiat--an authoritative verbal decree. God issued the words, and the results were immediate and complete. As we view the creation as it now stands, and consider the ease by which worlds were brought into existence, as well as the brevity of time in which creation was recorded to have taken place, we recognize an all-powerful God. Clearly, the writer of Genesis 1 and 2 was attempting to show the power of God in the manner in which He brought creation about--through His spoken Word the expansive world and universe came into existence in a relatively brief period of time.³ It seems quite clear that for worlds to appear immediately by the word spoken, the degree of God's power is portrayed as limitless.

"To create requires infinite power.

All the world cannot create one fly" (Thomas Watson).

God's power is evident, because He needs no instruments to work with. He can work without tools. Because He needs no matter to work upon, He creates matter, and then works upon it; and because He works without labor, "He spoke, and it was done" (Psa. 33:9).⁴ God as Creator reveals He is infinite in power.⁵

3. God is all-wise. The Genesis account of creation assumes a cosmos ordered in wisdom. As the wise man would later pen, the writer of Genesis would affirm, "O Lord, how many are thy works! In wisdom Thou hast made them all: the earth is full of thy possessions. There is the sea, great and broad, in which are swarms without number, animals both small and great" (Psa. 104:24f).

Here are the words of Psalm 139:10-13:

¹¹Thus you shall say to them: "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens."

¹²*He has made the earth by His power,
He has established the world by His wisdom,
And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion.*

¹³When He utters His voice,

There is a multitude of waters in the heavens:

"And He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth.

He makes lightning for the rain,

He brings the wind out of His treasures."

That God is the Creator reveals that He has infinite wisdom.

4. God is good and gracious. Clearly, God is portrayed as an all good and gracious God in His work of creation. "The whole earth is filled with the goodness of the Lord" (Psa. 33:5). With the utmost care God wrought His work and observed and pronounced its goodness (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). How can these things be good if a good God had not created them? Can good fruit come forth from a corrupt tree? Neither can good works come forth from anything but a good God. That He *could* create all things good

³ Cf. Rom. 1:20; Jer. 32:17.

⁴ Thomas Watson, **A Body of Divinity** (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1992), p. 78.

⁵ For a full description of God's power in creation see Stephen Charnock's **The Existence and Attributes of God** (Grand Rapids: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1971), pp. 357ff.

shows His power; that He *would* create all things good shows His goodness. God would not have His creation in a state of chaos (Gen. 1:2); rather, He would have all of His creation to be good, for He Himself is good.

The writer of Genesis 1 and 2 shows God's goodness as having been directed in wondrous ways to mankind. All things were made were made for man, even the "lights in the expanse of the heavens" were for "signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years" (1:14).⁶ All that God created He gave to man freely. "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" (1:28). He said to man, "I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree that has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you" (1:29). A good God, who made all things good, graciously gave to man all that He had made.

God has shown goodness and graciousness toward man in that He made for man a garden paradise filled with every good thing that could make man happy, for "out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food" (2:9). He showed His goodness in that He created a woman because He saw it was not good for man be alone. Woman is the last thing mentioned which God gave to Adam, making his existence perfect and complete. A good God would have all things good for His creatures. That God is Creator reveals that He is infinitely good and gracious.

5. God is infinite and unsearchable. This is implicit in the opening two chapters of Genesis. Although God created and gave all things to mankind, it is apparent that man knew relatively little of God Himself. For God, whose attributes are infinite, cannot be known except to the measure by which His works reveal Him. And, we might say, since the creation of all things was an easy thing for God, the act of creation does not reveal the nature of God fully or who He is essentially. A wise man would later say, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain Thee" (1 Kings 8:27). That God is the Creator reveals that His nature is infinite and unsearchable.

6. God has the inalienable right to rule. This is God's world. It exists because He brought into existence. He has a right as Creator to rule over it as its Lord. Here in Genesis 1 and 2 this right to rule is not asserted; it is assumed. Because all things were created by God, He is free to dispose of them as He pleases. Because God made man, He has the right to govern him. As a potter fashions clay, God fashioned Adam from the earth. As a potter has the right to do what He wills with the product of his hands, so God has the right to determine the fate of man whom He made. God is "the Sovereign of all He had made, with the right to govern all things according to His will."⁷ Because God owns all things, He may dispose or distribute them as He wills. He may give all things freely to man, if He chooses to do so. He may place man in a garden, if He chooses to do so. He may give him freely all things to eat and enjoy freely, if He so chooses. But He can also place a limitation or prohibition on His creatures, if He so chooses. God said to Adam, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (2:16, 17). God is also free to impose a penalty upon the violation of His rule, "for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die." That God is the Creator reveals that He has the inalienable right to rule.

7. God is the sovereign Ruler (King) over His creation. It is one thing to say that God has the right to rule, it is another to say that in fact He is the Sovereign Ruler over all that He created. This, too, is implicit in the creation account. God rules over all absolutely. He is the Lord, the supreme King of kings and Lord of lords. He determines what exists, what lives, and where they live. He "has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined the times before appointed, and the

⁶ This should not be understood as "signs" in the sense of astrology which is everywhere condemned in Scripture; rather, they signal the establishment and measurement of time and seasons.

⁷ Ernest F. Kevan, **The Grace of Law** (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965), p. 47. This assertion was foundational for Puritan theology. For a study of law and grace, I cannot recommend this book too highly. I had thought that I had understood the subject pretty well until I read this work.

bounds of their habitation” (Acts 17:26).⁸ Throughout Scripture God is set forth as the King over all the world because He was the Creator of the world. Here are the words of Psalm 95:1-7:

Oh come, let us sing to the LORD!
Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.
²Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving;
Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.
³*For the LORD is the great God,
And the great King above all gods.*
⁴In His hand are the deep places of the earth;
The heights of the hills are His also.
⁵The sea is His, *for He made it*;
And His hands formed the dry land.

⁶Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.
⁷For He is our God,
And we are the people of His pasture,
And the sheep of His hand.

Yes, God the Creator has the right to rule over all, and, in fact, He does rule as King over all. The one fact that He is the Creator assures the second, that He is king over His creation. All should recognize this and acknowledge it, even earthly kings (cf. Dan. 4). Those who fail or refuse to acknowledge Him as their Maker, He will judge. He holds all men accountable as to how they live before Him and how they behave toward one another (cf. Gen 9:6). One of the functions of a good king is to act as a judge punishing sin and avenging injustice. Since God is God of all the earth, He is judge of all the earth. Because God is a good, holy, and just judge, He will judge fully and rightly: “shall not the judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen. 18:25). God sees all the wickedness of all men and will call each one to account for his actions. His eye is on all within His creation. God watches with concern over those who are poor and helpless and He views it as His responsibility to avenge them. His people, who are in covenant relationship with Himself, are under His protective eye. He will bring retribution upon all who would do them harm. Furthermore, since God is the Creator of the heavens and all the earth, there is no escape from Him (cf. Psa. 139:7-10).

8. God has a purpose in all He does and for all He has created. God gave every detail of creation a valuable role to fill in His order of things. The “lights in the heavens” have a purpose in that they are to be for “signs, for seasons, and for days and for years” (1:14). The sun and moon were to govern the day and night. The dry land was to “sprout vegetables”, “plants yielding seed.” Fruit trees were to bear fruit. The waters were to provide a place so that all manner of living sea creatures may live (1:20). Man also had a role to fill. He was to “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 everything that moves upon the earth” (1:28). It is within the purpose, or will of God, for His creatures to move and function freely. That God is the Creator reveals that there is a role and purpose for all things that exist.

9. God is a God of righteousness and justice. We see this exclusively in respect to man. Man alone is given a warning of accountability. “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die’” (2:17). The Lord said, “This far and no more.” He established a law which was to govern man’s conscience and limit his actions. The consequence of transgression was clearly indicated. God is a good God, infinitely so, but He is also a just God, and we might assume,

⁸The issue as to whether or not God rule’s to the same degree after the fall will be taken up later. Of course, the Bible affirms that God is sovereign in spite of man’s sin and refusal to submit to Him.

infinitely so. It is an aspect of God's goodness that He is just in all of His dealings. When God gave His law to Adam respecting the one tree, no provision for pardon of consequence for transgression was suggested. That God is the Creator reveals that He is a God of justice.

10. God is a holy God. Holiness is an attribute of God which describes His "otherness" from His creatures, that is, He is distinct and unique from all that He created. That God is holy means that He is of a completely different kind of essence than that which He created. There is an inherent idea in the creation account that God is apart and wholly different from His creation. His essence is completely different from that which He created. Moreover, it is implied in this holiness, or "otherness" of God that He is infinitely pure and therefore the consequences of violating His commands are certain and severe. That God is the Creator reveals that He is a holy God.

Similarly, we may say that the creation account reveals that

11. God is a transcendent Spirit Being. It is clear that God is apart from and different from all created things that He has made. God is spirit and transcendent in nature. There is the biblical truth of a great distinction between the Creator and all things that He has created. The Creator/creature distinction must always be held in our understanding of God and His relationship to the physical universe.

The Lord Jesus told the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, "God is Spirit" (John 4:24). Although God is fully personal, God does not exist as a physical being and is not subject to space and time as are all His creatures. God is everywhere in His fullness continually. God is infinite in His being and is infinite in all of His attributes. God is outside His physical creation. He is also immutable (unchangeable) in His nature and purposes.

The Lord Jesus declared that God who is Spirit must be worshipped in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Worship "in spirit" means worship from a heart renewed by the Holy Spirit. God is not worshipped through man-made rituals or ceremonies. He is to be worshipped "in truth" in that God Himself has prescribed how He is to be approached and worshipped. Ultimately there is only one way which God has ordained that mankind worship Him and that is through the mediation of His Son, Jesus Christ. Through faith in Jesus Christ God invites finite, sinful creatures to come to Him in repentance and faith and live before Him as His people.

12. God delights in His creation and desires it's good. God pronounced everything that He created to be good. This is not merely an assessment of quality after a day's work; rather, a note of God's satisfaction is conveyed in His observance of what He had created. "And God saw that it was good" (1:4, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). His Sabbath rest after the week of creation should not be regarded as a day of rest in which God could recuperate from His labor, which is an absurd idea. God's infinite power was not strained in His work of creation. His Sabbath was a time of reflection to contemplate and enjoy the work which He had performed. God delights in His creation and it may be assumed that He delights supremely in man, when he lives in a manner which is in accord with God's will for him. That God is the Creator reveals that God delights in His creation and desires it's good.

13. God works and communicates His will by His Word. We considered the role of God's Word above in that it suggested the power of God. Here, our point of emphasis is the Word as the means of God's working. Apart from the creation of man and woman, God spoke all things into existence. It was His Word which He used as His instrument to affect His work. We see in our creation account that God's Word is presented as absolutely authoritative and powerful, all of His words are effectual. Moreover, God's Word is presented before man as absolutely authoritative and binding.

14. God's goal or purpose for all that He has created is for His own glory. God's ultimate desire and design through all that He has made and all that He brings to pass in history are the display of His glory. The creation is the stage on which God's nature and works are displayed before people and before angels. He reveals Who He is and what He is like through bringing His justice in the overthrow and punishment of evil and through the bringing of His chosen people out of their state of sin to enjoy eternal life in His presence.

His people, who come to understand and experience His love, mercy, grace, wisdom, justice and power in His salvation that He brings to them, respond to Him with adoration, giving Him glory with thanksgiving for all that they have seen and received. Those who are the objects of His judgment and wrath also serve to show forth His power, wisdom, and justice, in their overthrow and unending punishment. Because the Bible sets forth the glory of God as the central goal of God in history, the Protestant Reformers were insistent to maintain as a foundational principle of Reformation theology *solī deo Gloria*, “Glory to God alone.”

II. What the creation account reveals about nature (created things)

The second major subject of the creation account is the created things themselves, “Of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things” (Rom. 11:36). What does the creation account tell us about the world in which we live?

1. All things belong to God. “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” is a reality which is unquestionable in the light of Genesis 1 and 2. As owner of all things God is free to do with them as He pleases. He may freely give all things, or He may deny things; they are His to give or withhold. As creatures we should recognize our stewardship of His creation and, although we are granted the permission to use things for our good, we have a responsibility to manage what is His as good stewards. This would suggest that good, sane, conservation is in order. We should continually acknowledge His ownership and continually feel gratefulness and express thankfulness for any and all that He has given to us.

2. All things find fulfilment in the purpose God has for them. All things were designed to be used for man’s well-being and to be used by him in service to God. When the proper role of created things is perverted, man ceases to be served by things but rather begins to serve them. Rather than man having dominion over created things, due to sin created things have dominion him in that they consume his attention and affection. Idolatry is a great sin in several respects. First, it replaces God as supreme ruler with a substitute “god.” Second, idolatry is a failure to live in accordance with God’s order. He would have us rule things, but idolatry is things ruling us.

3. All things are witness of the glory of God. The signature of God is upon everything that exists. Everything betrays His ownership and reflects His craftsmanship and greatness; therefore, nature should be a source of understanding about God who made them. The Psalmist wrote of the testimony of God’s greatness in nature: “The heavens declare the glory of God, and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge” (Psalm 19:1, 2). We may see all of nature as a source of revelation about God. The Puritans used to speak of the creation as a “volume” which stood alongside the Bible and testified of God.

The creation is glorious to behold, and it is pleasant and profitable study. Some think that when Isaac went abroad into the fields to meditate, it was in the book of the creatures. The creation is the ploughman’s primer, and the traveler’s perspective glass, through which he receives a representation of the infinite excellencies which are in God. The creation is a large volume, in which God’s works are bound up; and this volume has three great leaves in it, heaven, earth, and sea.⁹

4. All Things should be enjoyed and appreciated. God reflected on the works of creation and saw that they were good. So too, we should reflect upon His works and enjoy them. There should be thankfulness for the goodness of God in having given us such a wonderful world to live in. When my family lived in Germany for a time, we had occasion to see some of the world’s renowned works of art first hand. No artist has produced a painting to compare to what God displays before our eyes day by day. In Munich where we lived, there was the world-renown Deutches Museum which specializes in science and industrial exhibits. On display are wondrous, awe-inspiring productions of human ingenuity and industry. No human inventor

⁹ Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1992), p. 113.

or manufacturer could devise and produce a mechanism as intricate and complex as the universe which we have to explore and examine. We should affirm, even voice an “Amen” to the Lord’s own assessment of His creation as we reflect upon it: “And God saw that all that He had made, and behold, it was very good” (1:31).

III. What the creation account reveals about mankind

The third subject which the creation account addresses is that of man--his identity, purpose, and relationship to his Maker. A number of points may be made.

1. Man is the most valuable and important of God’s creatures. Four things signify man’s important place in God’s order: *First, man was created on the sixth day*; he was the last of God’s creative works (1:26, 31):

All creatures were made for his sake, to possess, enjoy, and have dominion over, and therefore he was made last of all: and herein appear the wisdom and goodness of God to him, that all the accommodations were ready provided for him when made; the earth for his habitation, all creatures for his use; the fruits of the earth for his profit and pleasure; light, heat, and air for his delight, comfort, and refreshment; with everything that could be wished for and desired to make his life happy.¹⁰

Second, man alone was created as a result of a divine deliberation: “Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule” (1:26). “When He approaches the most excellent of all his works, He enters into consultation.”¹¹ This sets apart the creation of man as significant even above all the other things God had previously created.

Third, man was made the “image of God” (1:26). What does this mean? This expression has been a matter discussed and debated a great deal over the centuries.¹² It is my opinion that it essentially signifies man’s unique ability to know God and recognize and reflect the glory of God in his existence. Linked with this is the idea that man is God’s representative on earth to rule over His creation on His behalf.

God set man in the world as the sign of His own sovereign authority, in order that man should uphold and enforce His--God’s--claims as Lord. Earthly monarchs too have the habit of setting up images of themselves in their kingdom as signs of their sovereign authority--it was in that sense that Israel thought of man as the representative of God.¹³

This necessitates that man was created originally “like” God in that he was pure and rational, capable of thinking intelligently and rationally, and living in a manner consistent with God’s holiness. When God was about to create man, we have recorded His speech, “Let us make man in Our image, according to our likeness.”

Fourth, man’s importance in the creation is shown in that all things were submitted to his rule (1:28). Man was to reign over God’s creation on His behalf. These four points suggest God’s regard for man and the graciousness which He had toward him.

2. Man is a living soul. The record of God making man in Genesis 2 records that into a lifeless figure, God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.” The result of this divine infusion of breath into a body was that Adam became a living soul (2:7).

¹⁰ John Gill, **Body of Divinity** (Atlanta, Georgia: Turner Lassetter, 1965), p. 269.

¹¹ John Calvin, **Commentaries on the First Book of Moses called Genesis**, trans. John King (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), p. 91.

¹² For a discussion of the issues involved, see the article by C. F. H. Henry, “The Image of God” in **Evangelical Dictionary of Theology**, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), pp 545-48.

¹³ Gerhard von Rad, **Old Testament Theology**, vol. 1, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1957), p. 146f.

The nature of the soul is another issue which has been discussed and debated by philosophers and theologians through the centuries. Questions are asked, what is the essence of a soul? Is it created by God on each occasion that a body is formed in the womb? Or, is the soul derived from the parents? The Genesis creation account is not concerned with such issues. The point is this: man owes his existence and his nature to God who has infused life into him. When God breathed into man's nostrils, He imparted His spirit to man so that he might live: "The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (Job 33:4).¹⁴

That man is a living soul suggests his personhood. Not only is man a creature as are all living things that God created (and thereby dependent of God), but everyone is also an individual person.¹⁵ This means that a human being may think and act independently of God; hence man has the capability of co-operating with God or acting independently of God, that is, he can sin against God. Personhood, therefore, involves responsibility to act, react, and respond to God. Adam and Eve had a free will before they sinned in that they could choose to do good or evil.¹⁶

3. Man is dependent on God. The life that man enjoys continues to be a gift of God which He may withdraw at His pleasure. God chooses to do so when man rebels against Him and His Word. This is implied in the warning given by God in 2:16,17, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (2:16,17). God is also free to impose a penalty upon the violation of His rule, "for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die." The continuance of man's life is dependent on the favor of God.

4. Man owes allegiance and obedience to God. Man's faithfulness to his Maker should be unwavering. Absolute fidelity, allegiance, and submission should be rendered to his Maker. He owes his existence to God. He should render his life in service to his Creator.

5. Man owes praise and thanksgiving to God. When we consider all that we are and all that God has freely given to us to enjoy, praise and thanksgiving to God should result. When another person does something kind for us, we take great effort to express thanksgiving. How much more should our expressions of gratefulness be offered to our Creator! One of the great sins committed by people are their failure to give thanksgiving to God (cf. Rom. 1:21).

6. Man's purpose is to know God and do His will. If we desire to experience fullness of life here and eternal life hereafter, let us by God's grace discover His purpose for our lives and be diligent in doing it. We should always be mindful of God and His desires for our lives. Let us seek to know to what end God created us and purpose to fulfill that end in our lives.

7. Man should recognize his accountability to God. "The conclusion, when all has been heard, is fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). God did not establish us in His world to usurp His authority and set up our own little dominions wherein we pretend ourselves to be gods. We are not free to order our own lives to suit us irrespective of God who made us; rather, God

¹⁴ The same Hebrew word is used for both breath and spirit (as well as for wind).

¹⁵ I would suggest that the idea of personhood involves several matters. *First*, man as a person has a personal *identity, or self-consciousness of his individuality*. Every person is aware of his uniqueness and independence of all things and persons about him. *Second*, personhood involves *an awareness of the presence of God and there is a natural sense of accountability to Him*. The modernist may say this is nothing more than the result of sociological influences upon man; but from where did these sociological tendencies arise which are common to all societies everywhere? People are born religious, they have to be "educated" to be otherwise; they have to be "brainwashed" of that which is natural to them. *Third, there is a capability of thinking and acting independently of others, including God*, and there may even be a preference to do so.

¹⁶ For a good discussion of man as a "creature" who is dependent on God and man as a "person" who is independent of God, see Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, pp. 5ff.

created us with a design for a purpose. We should aspire and purpose to fulfil the will of God for our lives. One day we will render an account to God as to how we have lived in His world.

8. Man was created without sin. Adam and Eve had no propensity to sin; they had no sin nature. God had created them innocent and sinless. They were holy persons, having been created in the image of God. They possessed a free will. They were free moral agents whom God had blessed with every good thing. They could choose to obey God or choose to disobey God. No inward compulsion to sin was present. But also there was unique to them no inward principle of grace to keep them from sinning. There was, however, an inward knowledge of God and righteousness. They knew intuitively (and only) what was true, right, and good.¹⁷ They were innocent, but not ignorant.¹⁸

From the creation account we have seen much that reveals the nature of God, of the things He has created, and of man's place in His creation. However, it is in the record of God working in history, speaking to His people through His prophets, and through His Son, Jesus Christ, that we may fully see the will of God respecting these things. The creation account is the beginning of history for God's people.

In the Bible the story of creation does not stand by itself as though it were a prescientific attempt to explain the origin or evolution of nature. Rather, as indicated by the position of the creation stories at the very beginning of the Bible, creation is the starting point of history. It sets the stage for the unfolding of the divine purpose and inaugurates a historical drama within which first Israel and, in the fulness of time, the church were destined to play a key role. Thus the Creation stands in an inseparable historical relation to the narratives that follow.¹⁹

Next Lord's Day, Lord willing, we will give more specific attention to the creation of mankind and how we are to live according to a worldview set forth in the Word of God.

¹⁷ One could say that in creation God had "written His Law upon their hearts"; See Ernest F. Kevan, **The Grace of Law** (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965), pp. 58ff, 69ff.

¹⁸ They knew full well the will of God and should have recognized any tempter who would lead them from their holy state. In the case of Eve, she did not recognize the serpent's ploy; in the case of Adam, he knew full well what he was doing when he sinned. Eve was deceived into committing transgression, Adam transgressed with eyes open (1 Tim. 2:14.)

¹⁹ B. W. Anderson, "Creation," in **The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible**, vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 727.