

God's Plan for Creation

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Bible Verse: Genesis 1:1-2:3
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Good morning. If you'd like to turn in your Bibles again to Genesis 1 we'll read our study passage, Genesis 1:1 through chapter 2, verse 3.

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. 6 And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." 7 And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. 8 And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. 9 And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. 10 God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. 11 And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. 12 The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. 14 And 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, 15 and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. 16 And God made the two great lights--the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night--and the stars. 17 And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. 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. 22 And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." 23 And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. 24 And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds--livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. 25 And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." 29 And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. 31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

Well, this morning we return to this foundational passage in God's word, and I need to remind you, of course, and the reason we're having the Q&A, off course, on Tuesday night is because there are lots of questions that we don't have time to answer this morning, and even after we answer those questions to the best of our ability, there's even more questions because the Genesis account is not exhaustive. There are so many details that are not provided and our inquisitive minds, which God gave us, naturally want to answer questions, but we need to understand that if God gave us the details that we think we need, well, first of all, we'd have too big a book to carry around and the details would be infinite in number because after all, no matter how much we know there's an infinite amount of more yet to know and that keeps us humble, or it should. And yet, number 2, even what we do know, we still can't fathom totally because we don't even understand the

details that we have, let alone the details we'd like to have. And lastly, how can the finite us comprehend the infinite God? After all, as we said last week, did the disciples of Jesus really understand when they saw Jesus turn water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana, or when he stilled the storm on the raging seas of Galilee in Mark 4:35 to 41? They should have understood that his miracles demonstrated his power as the Creator and the methods that he used as the Creator, but they didn't. They were slow of learning and if they were slow of learning in his presence, how much more are we when we're not able to see him do those miracles?

Now there's another aspect to this that we need to keep in mind. It's always easy to try and draw out details from the text, particularly a text like this in the book of Genesis, where we'd like to have more details, and so we try to insert extra details in between the text of scripture, and yet we have to be careful about the certainty and the dogmatism we place on some of those inferences. So I like to categorize three levels. First of all, where the text of scriptures, the scripture makes a clear statement then we can be absolutely certain and dogmatic. When God says, "There was evening and morning the first day, evening and morning, a second day," we can be absolutely dogmatic that those were literal 24-hour days as we understand them. But number 2, sometimes we draw inferences from the text and they're reasonable but when we do that, we have to recognize that they are our inferences, and so we have to be careful that we may not be as certain and we have to be less dogmatic. And then thirdly, you know, the scientists among us like to insert even more details and speculate about what the text might be saying and it's a danger, therefore, to be too certain about those speculations. We really can't be dogmatic when we speculate; we have to be honest that we're only inferring and speculating. And so I say that because some of you will have heard different things over the years and you might be clinging onto ideas that are not necessarily in the texts, and we have to be careful about that and guard against that, particularly if we try to use those things in our witness to others.

Well, last week we studied God's timetable in creation, and if you missed that don't forget it's archived on our church website and I encourage you to listen to that, but what we learned was three points. First of all, point number 1: time is a created entity. God lives in eternity and he created time and because he's in eternity he's separate from time and so he is transcendent over his creation, not to be confused like many false religions do, where they worship the creation rather than the Creator who is separate from his creation. And then number 2, we learned, as I said a minute ago, that the days of creation were six ordinary, literal 24-hour days similar to the days that we experience now. And then thirdly, we learned and established that the earth and the universe and everything in them are young having only been recently created when time began, when God created time back at the beginning of the creation week, which we saw from the text of scripture was only about 6 or so thousand years ago, not billions of years ago. Now I'm sure that's already raised a lot of questions, and don't forget we have our Q&A on Tuesday night, so don't forget to get your questions in by tomorrow night so that we can prepare for that.

Well, this week, we're going to study God's plan in creation. God's plan in creation and we have three points this morning. The first point is the order of creation. The order of

creation. There's a clear deliberate order in which God created everything. He could have chosen to create everything in an instant, but no, in his wise plan, he did things in a sequence because he had a purpose. So Genesis 1:2 which we established last week was a description of what the earth was like when God created in verse 1, in verse 2 we read that it was unformed and unfilled. It was in darkness and covered in water. What did God then do? In the following sequence of creation, he began to further form because it was unformed, so he had to do further formation, and then he had to fill. He established it when he created it. It was unformed and unfilled, and then in the subsequent actions he kept on forming, and then he kept on filling.

And so there's a pattern within the six days of creation, a general pattern, but we have to be careful not to impose too much on the text here, but in the first three days, days one to three, God was forming the basic physical spaces and structures that make up the universe, and then on days four through six, although a little bit at the end of the third day, as we'll see in a moment, God was filling those physical spaces and structures. So look at the text and follow with me. Okay, day one, verses 1 to 5. So God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was shrouded in darkness and the earth was covered in water, and so then God created light. So this was an initial formation but it wasn't totally formed and ready. It had to be further formed and it had to be filled. So on day two, verses 6 to 8, now God separated some of the water that was on the face of the earth because it was totally covered in water and he created an expanse between the waters to separate the waters that were still on the earth from the waters that were above the expanse. And then on day three in verses 9 and 10, God gathered the waters covering the earth into one place. He called the waters in one place seas, and he made the dry land appear. So now he has the basic structure in place. Now he's going to start filling it and we see that in the end of day three, verses 11 to 13. What does God do? He fills the land. He creates vegetation, seed-bearing plants and trees to cover and fill the land. He had a purpose, didn't he, because the purpose was to prepare the land, to prepare the food for the animals and man that he was soon going to create. So he was doing things in successive stages. Then on day four, verses 14 to 19, God's further filling. Now he fills the expanse which he calls the heavens. He created a sun, moon and stars in the expanse and their purpose was to rule the day and the night and to be time markers for signs and seasons. Now he's starting to develop the calendar and the seasons that would rule our lives. Then on day five, he continues filling. This time he fills the sea with sea creatures that swarm, and then he filled the skies, the atmosphere with the birds. And then on day six, verses 20 to 31, first of all, God creates all the land animals, the livestock, creeping things and birds of the earth to fill the land. Then only only when everything was ready, all the animals, all the plants, the land, everything, the sun, moon and stars, then did God create man at the very end as the pinnacle of his creation.

So that's a general pattern of these days in the order in which God did things, but let's dive in a little bit more and explore some of the details for each of these days and answer a few questions that you might have in your minds. So day one, again verses 1 to 5, it begins with God. "In the beginning God." There's no defense of God's existence, just a forthright statement that God exists. There's no attempt to approve or defend his existence. He dwells in eternity. He dwelt in eternity. Now by his sovereign decree he

creates time. He creates space, the heavens, and he creates matter, the earth,. The basic entities that make up the universe, three aspects, space, time and matter, make up the universe. Does that sound familiar? Three in one. But note that God is separate and distinct from his creation. He's not part of it. He's outside of time. He's transcendent. And by right of creation he owns what he creates, okay? We have no right to tell God what to do with his creation because he owns it, he made it, and he can do with the creation as he pleases.

We read that the heavens and the earth were in darkness and the earth was covered in water described in the text here as the deep, the deep, tehom in the Hebrew. Now some commentators have said, commented here that the Hebrew text could imply that the earth at this stage was just a ball of water but we know today that the earth has an internal structure. It has foundations. It has a core, a mantle, a rocky mantle, and an outer crust. And we explore the heavens as part of our dominion mandate, we find the moon also has a similar structure. Venus, Mercury and Mars have similar structures. So if God created them with those structures at the outset, there's every reason to believe that when God created the earth on day one, it already had that internal structure, a rocky internal structure. But we read in verse 2 that the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. So here we're introduced to the Holy Spirit as being active in creation and he is said to have been moving over the face of the waters. And so most commentators would argue that this description of the Holy Spirit being God's agent in creation, the Holy Spirit was here starting the rotation of the earth; as he was moving across the face of the waters, it was starting the rotation of the earth.

Why is that important? Well, next we read that God creates light by speaking it into existence by his word. "And God said." Remember, we pointed that out last week? We referred to John 1:1 to 3, "In the beginning was the Word," the Logos, "and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him and without him was anything made that was made." It was referring to Jesus Christ. And so when we read in the text in Genesis 1, "And God said," the agent of God's creating was Jesus, the Word, the Logos. And so here in verses 2 and 3 we are introduced to the Holy Spirit and Jesus being involved with the Father in creating.

And we read that God separated the light from the darkness. He called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. We read that in verse 4. And just as we do today, we call the light day and the darkness we call night. And so darkness or night or evening as it's described here, evening and morning, the evening followed by the light, the morning, thus defines the first literal earth rotation day just as we experience today. So isn't that how we get the light and darkness today? We have a light source and a rotating earth, that's all you need for a day, and that's what we have established here. The Holy Spirit had started the rotation of the earth where it had been dark, God created a light source, provided a light source, and so the earth rotated from darkness into light.

Now we're not told what the source of that light was, we mentioned that last week, but we can infer based on our experience today, that it may have been a source that was shining in one direction so that as the earth rotated we had night and light, daylight. But the light

source was not the sun. Why? Because we're told in the text that God didn't create the sun until day four. Well, what was the source of the light? Well, as we pointed out last week, we go to the book of Revelation when we go to the end of everything, when God is going to wrap up time and usher in eternity for us in the future, we read that God says that in the new heaven, Revelation 22:5, that in the new heaven and new earth night will be no more, "They will need no light of lamp or sun for the Lord God will be the light thereof, will be their light." So God is fully capable of providing light. He doesn't need the sun. In fact, I believe it was the deliberate act on God's part because so many people today worship the creation, worship the sun as the giver of light and life and God says, "No, I give light and I give life. Worship me." After all, the children of Israel had been in Egypt and who was the chief God in the Egyptian deity? Ra the sun god, and God was establishing here a polemic against the false religion of Egypt and the false religion of our day which says the sun came before the earth.

Day two beginning in verse 6, and it begins with God again speaking. Notice it's marked by God speaking and he says, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters and let it separate the waters from the waters," which raises the obvious question: what was this expanse? In verse 8 here God calls the expanse heaven. Now, unfortunately, those of you who grew up like I did with the King James version, the word used for expanse in that translation is the word firmament, and unfortunately that was a direct translation or transcription from the Latin Vulgate firmamentum, and it led and you'll see skeptics on blogs and all sorts of things accusing the scriptures of teaching that there was a solid dome. Firmament, firm, it sounds like it's firm. It's like a metal dome. You see this caricature that many skeptics use against the scriptures here, but no, God calls the expanse heaven and so expanse is a better translation here as we read in the ESV and in other modern translations as well.

Now many commentators once thought that the expanse was just the atmosphere, especially when there were some scientists who proposed that the waters above the expanse may have been watering clouds, and maybe there was a water vapor canopy that once encircled the earth above the atmosphere, and they say, "Well, that makes sense because at the time of the flood the windows of heaven opened, and maybe that water vapor canopy collapsed and that was the source of the torrential rain for 40 days and 40 nights in the flood." But first of all, scientifically that's untenable. It's been demonstrated that you can't sustain a water vapor canopy above the atmosphere. It's just physically impossible. But more importantly, there are two reasons in the scriptures which tell us that that idea is wrong. First in Psalm 148:4, you might want to turn there. Psalm 148 :4. This was written centuries after the flood and what does the psalmist say? "Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!" In other words, the waters were still above the heavens and this is after the flood. So the waters above the expanse could not have fallen down during the flood. And then secondly, we are specifically told in Genesis 1 that on day four we read it, we read it a moment ago, on day four God put the lights in the expanse of the heavens. Notice that in verse 14, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens." Again, in verse 15, "in the expanse of the heavens." Verse 17, "in the expanse of the heavens." So that means God put the sun moon and stars in the expanse so the expanse can't be just the atmosphere, it has to be interstellar space and that

means the waters above are at the extremity of the universe. By the way, that scientifically explains some interesting things, but that's another story. And then in verse 20 we're told that the earth, the birds were to fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens, or as the new King James renders it, across the face of the firmament of the heavens. Now so since the sun, moon and stars are in the expanse, as I said that must be interstellar space, but from our perspective looking up towards the sun, moon and stars in interstellar space, the birds are flying across that interstellar space in the atmosphere. The atmosphere is the face of interstellar space that goes way out beyond that.

So it's an interesting perspective but it's clearly there in the text, and so you see, as I pointed out before, we have to be careful about being dogmatic and certain about things we try to infer from the text. The water vapor canopy idea was inferred from the text but we've now realized that we shouldn't have been dogmatic about that at all because there are reasons from the text specifically that that idea is unsustainable. So we always have to examine all things against the text of scripture. Man's ideas are not infallible. God's word is infallible and authoritative.

Well, we move to day three and it begins again with God speaking, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together in one place and let the dry land appear." Well, it could be argued that if God gathered the waters into one place and called them seas, then the dry land must have been in one place also. That was the source of the idea. Actually it was a creation geologist in 1859 who proposed the idea that God created an original supercontinent that existed up until the time of the flood, and then it broke up at the time of the flood and catastrophically moved into the pieces of the continents we have today. And that makes sense, by the way, because if Noah lived on a supercontinent, it was so much easier for God to bring the animals to Noah to the ark because that's what the text says, God brought the animals. They didn't have to jump over the oceans to get to the ark. They're all on the one supercontinent. And by the way, geologically we can demonstrate that there was an original supercontinent.

Well, how did God form the dry land? We get a clue if on days one and two there was already rocky material underneath, what did God do on day three? He raised some of that rocky material so there were earth movements that raised a portion of what was underneath the waters to make the dry land, and so that material would have been contorted by heat and pressure as it was uplifted and as the material breached the water surface, what would happen? Water would drain off. Water would erode. Water would deposit sediments, sediment layers. But there wouldn't be any animals or plant fossils in those sedimentary layers because God hadn't yet created the animals and the plants. You know, that's exactly what we observe in the earth's deepest rocks, a contorted heated foundation with sediment layers that have no fossils in them. We see that at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, for example.

And then we move on in day three. God now speaks again in verse 11, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed and fruit trees bearing fruit." Now here's where we can infer again but on more solid ground, excuse the pun. No mention is made here of God creating soil, but we all know that plants grow in soil. So God didn't mention that

detail because he knew that we'd figure that out, but there's more here because a good saw not only requires nutrients, it also requires bacteria in the soil. So God was making everything that was needed for a very good soil, a perfect soil for the plants that he was planting there.

So we can infer those things and we're also told in verse 12 that the trees and the plants were bearing seeds and fruit straight right from the start. I mean, God just didn't plant the seeds and, you know, you have to wait for them to grow otherwise Adam and Eve would be hungry three days later. He created fully formed, fully functioning plants just as Jesus did when he turned the water into wine at the marriage feast in Cana. There was a need and he provided immediately for that need. He created fully, ready to drink wine from water. In that miracle, if you read it, I encourage you to read that, John 2:1 to 11, the Master of the feast wrongly interpreted the wine having come from grapes grown on vines that had been harvested and matured. In other words, he inferred that there was years involved with that wine. Or as some people like to say, he inferred an appearance of age. I don't like the term because the scriptures don't refer to that term. No. He made the mistake, by the way, because Jesus provided for him the eyewitnesses because he sent the servants with the wine for him to taste. Instead of asking the eyewitnesses, he asked the bridegroom who hadn't seen the miracle and he used his human reasoning to come to the wrong conclusion by not talking to the eyewitnesses. Doesn't that sound familiar? The scientists who ignore God's eyewitness testimony in Genesis 1 and use their human reasoning alone are going to come to the wrong conclusion about the age of the earth. What do they do? Their human reasoning looks at present day processes and extrapolates those backwards just as the master of the feast did.

When Jesus created, he didn't use the processes that we see today. When God created in Genesis 1, he made a fully functioning, fully mature universe and he tells us that's what he did because, you see, there are some Christians who say, "Oh, but the earth has an appearance of an age, a great age." No, it doesn't. They say, "God has deceived us because it looks old." No. God hasn't deceived us because he has told us what he did. We deceive ourselves if we use our human reasoning apart from God's eyewitness testimony. You see. the universe doesn't look old. We've put labels on the rocks as billions of years and billions of years. We've imposed that by our reasoning by not looking at God's word.

Well, if we go on to day four and again it begins in verse 14 with God speaking, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens." Notice there's a purpose given here, to separate the day from the night and for signs and for seasons. Now the Hebrew here implies that God created the sun and the moon to be light-bearers. Why? Because they were going to take over the role of bearing the light that God had already provided on the earth on day one.

Now based on what we read here in Genesis 1, we can totally reject the secular viewpoint for the origin of the universe and the origin of the earth. Why? Because the secular scientists claim that the earth came out of the sun, the protosun, the solar nebula, whatever you want to call it, as a hot molten blob that cooled over millions of years. Well, they're wrong on two counts. First of all, God created the earth three days before he

created the sun so the earth couldn't have come out of the sun. And secondly, when God created the earth it was covered in water. It was cool. It wasn't a hot molten blob. So see how we have to be careful to examine all things against what God's word tells us.

I love this in verse 16, by the way; it's almost a throwaway comment by God. Now he spent a verse or two elaborating on the sun and the moon and giving details about their function and purpose and then God says in verse 16, "and the stars," or paraphrase, he made the stars also. I mean, that's just mind-boggling. Trillions of stars in billions of galaxies and all I get is a mention, "and the stars." I mean, God's awesome power is just beyond our comprehension. No wonder the psalmist David said in Psalm 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims his handiwork." The psalmist says in Psalm 147:4 that God knows them. "He determines the number of the stars and he gives to all whom their names." So we can't even see all the stars and yet he knows the exact number and he's given a name to every one of them, and all I get to mention here in the text is, "and the stars." I think you get the point that God is understating his power. But you know, some skeptics look at this text and they still ask the question, "Well, wait a minute, the scientists say the stars are billions of light years away and so that must mean it takes billions of years for the light to reach us from those stars, and therefore the universe must be billions of years old." Well, no. First of all, light years are a measure of distance, not a measure of time. Okay, that's the first point. The second point is we do not know how fast light travels in interstellar space. We haven't been out beyond the solar system, beyond our galaxy, the Milky Way, how do we know how fast light travels out there? But then we read in the text, number 3, point number 3 here, that God created the sun, moon and stars to be for signs and seasons to measure time on the earth, okay? So if that was the case, on day four, it had to also be the case on day six otherwise why would Adam be there waiting and waiting and waiting for the light to come to be able to see signs and seasons? Adam had to see all the stars that we see today right there on day six. Well, what do we read? What did I say earlier? On day one God created light. The light already existed. It already permeated the universe. And then on day four, we read that he created the light-bearers to take over the role of shining the light that was already existent onto the earth and that included the stars also because they're mentioned there, "and the stars also."

So what do we conclude? There is no problem here at all because, you see, we cannot take today's processes and extrapolate them back into the creation week. The creation week was simply God's supernatural creative work and power on display. So all these speculations are merely human speculations. The processes today sustain the universe, they didn't create the universe. So this light travel time issue that often crops up is totally irrelevant, and it's a non-issue when we acknowledge God's power and absolute authority.

Day five, verses 20 to 23. Again, it begins with God speaking. Verse 20, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let the birds fly above the earth." The biblical descriptions here are of animal categories that are different from modern taxonomic classifications and designations. They're simple. They're broad. They're descriptive. Great sea creatures, and every living thing that moves which the waters swarm, and every winged bird, verse 21. So this designation of sea creatures would encompass whales,

seals, fish, animals with backbones of all kinds, but it also incorporates squids and octopi, octopuses that are invertebrates that have backbones, but they swim in the waters, they swarm in the waters. But it also includes things like starfish and corals and trilobites that move on the sea floor. So these were just uncovered. God didn't have to name every individual thing. He used expansive terms. And then also birds and every winged bird would encompass all winged and flying creatures, or in the King James Version, fowl. And so that would not only refer to birds but also to bats. Okay, even though we classify bats differently to birds, in God's terminology they are winged creatures. And notice that God didn't simply take two of each kind, he made swarms. There was an abundance of creatures created to inhabit every ecological niche, in integrated interdependent ecosystems. And yet God still commanded, verse 22, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."

Well, we come to day six. It begins with God speaking, "Let the earth bring forth the living creatures, livestock and creeping things, and beasts of the earth." Again, these biblical descriptions of animal categories are different from our modern taxonomic designations. But as I said before, they're simple. They're broad. They're comprehensive. So livestock or cattle in the King James Version refers to domesticated animals. Creeping things, okay, animals like lizards and frogs, and perhaps insects, although some of them have wings. And then beasts of the earth, wild animals. So these creatures are mixtures of animals with backbones and animals without backbones according to our classification system.

And then day six continues with again God speaking in verse 26, "Let us make man in our image after our likeness." So here we have the first clear reference to all three members of the Triune Godhead being active in creation together. They're talking. They're in perfect relationship. They're communicating, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Although of course we introduced the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit was introduced in verse 2 and Jesus was introduced as the Word, the Logos in verse 3, but here in verse 26 there's perfect relationship, fellowship and communication and unity of purpose in the Triune Godhead.

"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Note that no other creature was created in God's image, after his likeness, not even the angels. Man was to be the pinnacle of God's creation. He was designed, "Let us make man in our image," to have fellowship and communion with God just as the Godhead had fellowship and communication and relationship, then man was designed by God in his image to have that same relationship, fellowship, communication.

Now theologians have tried to define these terms, and I'm not going to go into any great depth here. What does it mean to be made in God's image and after his likeness? Well, throughout the scriptures there's repeated references to the nature of man as body, soul, and spirit. For example, in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Or in 1 Corinthians 7:34, "And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and

spirit." And then in Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit." But there are also other terms used in scripture such as heart, the heart, which is the seat of life, strength and the emotions and the mind, the seat of rational thought. So for example in Matthew 22:37, Mark 10:30 and Luke 10:27, Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." And again in Hebrews 4:12 we read before, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." So there's just a few thoughts there about the image and likeness of God, but it is clear in Genesis 2:7 we read that God formed man's body of the dust of the earth, the ground, adam, the dirt, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life so that he became a living creature or a living soul.

So note next that when God created man in his own image, what do we read in verse 27? "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Notice two genders, only two genders. And we have a further elaboration on this in Genesis 2 when God formed Eve. He put Adam to sleep, took one of his ribs, closed up the flesh to make a woman whom Adam called Eve, which we read this morning, chapter 3, verse 20, because she would be the mother of all living. So God having created only a man and only a woman, okay, he then blesses them in verse 28, chapter 1 here, "And God bless them and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.'" Now when the creation of Eve is repeated in chapter 2, what do we read? Verse 23, Eve. Verse 24, God says, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." God ordains marriage only on the basis that there is one woman and one man, period. And of course, we all know that Jesus took up the same theme when he was asked a question on divorce in Matthew 19:4 to 6 and Mark 10:6 to 8. I love the sarcasm. Here's the Pharisees, and Jesus says, "Have you not read who created them from the beginning, made them male and female, and said therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become flesh, one flesh." Where was he is quoting from? He was creating from both Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 in the same breath and therefore they can't be conflicting accounts. They're complementary. Genesis 1 is the big picture, the sequential order. Genesis 2, God dives into details that are not in any necessarily a chronological order but teasing out extra details adding to what we learned from Genesis 1.

Well, we move on very quickly. We've looked at the order in creation, now we want to look at the order of creation, now we want to look at the order in God's creation and we want to discuss briefly three subpoints here. Point number 2: the order in his creation. Subpoint A, the obvious one: God's incredible designs. Of course, we read in Romans 1:20, "For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse." You see, on judgment day God only has to point to his creation and say, "Why didn't you believe," because the evidence of his design is all around us both in the earth and in the creatures he created. After all, the earth is in what they call the Goldilocks zone. Now they're trying to find these planets out there around

other suns and they're looking for that. What do they mean by the Goldilocks zone? It's exactly the right place for liquid water to support life, and just the right distance from the sun, just, just, with an axis tilted so that we'd have seasons, and the moon to control the tides. Do you realize if we didn't have the moon the ocean would be stagnant and dirty because that's what the tides do, they move the waters. God's purposeful design in every minute detail, and the plants and animals are interwoven and interdependent in their relationships in the ecosystems in with which they live.

So the incredible design all around us doesn't need any elaboration but let me just give you one example this morning. I read this and I thought this was a great example to give to you. Pretend for a moment that you are responsible for producing a miniaturized navigation system for a tiny spy drone. You know what a drone is. These unmanned vehicles. And it's got to have the following requirements. The lens system to see in this spy drone must be able to see in all directions at the same time. You must be able to see the colors of the rainbow plus ultraviolet light. It must be able to perceive objects as small as the width of a hair from 20 feet away. It must convert images into electronic signals and send them to a central computer for instant processing decisions, and this system must work in semi-darkness. Now that that's the lens system but then there's the navigation system. The navigation system has to be able to detect the earth's magnetic field. It has to detect and navigate changes based on the sun's current position. And it has to navigate to a new location as far as 3,000 miles away. And then the other requirements of the system, the system has to weigh less than a grain of rice, has to be smaller than a pea, and it has to be built in fewer than seven days by one person in total darkness. Do you think that's possible, humanly speaking? Well, it's possible with God because it's all there in the monarch butterfly. The monarch butterfly, that's what it's capable of. Incredible.

Well, subpoint B. A detail that we skipped over that's repeated many times, God created after their kinds, after their kinds. In Genesis 1, 10 times God says that the animals were specifically created each according to its kind, and then were all commanded to reproduce after their kinds. So on day three in verse 11, the vegetation, the seed bearing plants and trees were created according to their kinds and were commanded to reproduce after their kinds, or according to their kinds. Chapter 1, verse 21, the sea creatures and birds were each created according to their kinds and commanded to reproduce after their kinds. And then in verses 24 and 25, livestock, creeping things and birds of the earth were each created according to their kinds and commanded to reproduce according to their kinds. So if God repeated it 10 times, don't you think God is trying to make a point here? As I often say to people, you know, the Holy Spirit said, 'These people in the 21st century are going to be dumb so I need to be able to repeat it so they get the point. Dogs will always breed dogs and cats will always breed cats.' Do you notice that? It's observational. Now, of course, the word here in the Hebrew is different from the English word "species" which we used to classify. So a fox and a fox is a different species to a wolf, but biblically they are the same kind, min, m-i-n. Min. How do we know that? Because wolves, foxes, ferrets, coyotes, dingoes, domestic dogs can all interbreed. They can reproduce after the same kind so they're part of the dog kind. Not species, dogs. Horses, donkeys and zebras, zebras for Rachel's benefit, are classified as separate species,

but we can produce zorses and zonkeys. They can interbreed so they're all part of the horse kind.

So interbreeding determines the boundaries of these created kinds, and in the man-made classification system it's generally at the level of family. Family, genus, species, are the last three steps in that classification system that every good biology student learns in high school. So there's the dog kind. There's the cat kind which includes the lions and the tigers because you can get like ligers and tions. The horse kind. The camel kind which includes the llamas and alpacas because they can interbreed with camels. The bear kind. In fact, it would surprise you to learn that all the ducks and geese can interbreed so that ducks and geese are all part of the one created kind, even though there's many many varieties. Isn't that wonderful? God loves variety. He made so many of us, didn't he? And by the way, this means the variety was designed for diversity so that all the different varieties could fit into different locations, different relationships, and different ecological systems. By the way, this emphatically means that dinosaurs did not evolve into birds which, of course, is the current secular scientific consensus. Not only do dinosaurs and birds belong to different, radically different kinds, we're told that God created the birds on day five and the dinosaurs on day six. Oh, wait a minute, dinosaurs aren't mentioned here in verse 6, no, but the beasts of the earth are and dinosaurs were beasts of the earth that lived on the land. So how could dinosaurs evolve into birds if God created the birds before the dinosaurs? End of story.

So nowhere in the text when God says they were to reproduce after their kinds 10 times is there any room for suggesting that one kind of creature evolved into another kind of creature. It's totally ruled out, and when it comes to humankind in Acts 17:26 what does Paul say on Mars Hill? "I see you I have over here an idol to the unknown God. This is the God I want to preach to you about, the one who created the world and he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on the face of the Earth." So you realize that all of you are relatives because you're all descended from Noah and from Adam. So this is a family gathering this morning, literally. It doesn't matter what the shade of our skin is, the shape of our eyes or the language we speak, we're all the one human family, mankind. Boy, aren't you glad we're different from one another, though? Wouldn't it be a boring world if we were all the same, looked the same? Indeed, we read in Psalm 139:13, the psalmist says for you, "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb." But try to grasp this, by the way: that means that if you and I are all descended from Adam and Eve, and we're all different from one another, that means God put, and there's probably been... well, I just saw this week we've passed 8 billion people alive today but imagine all the people that have lived and died. Do you realize that God put the genetic information in Adam and Eve for billions of people so they would all be different. Let that sink in for a minute. Can we comprehend God's awesome power and majesty to be able to do that?

Well, that brings us to put subpoint 3 here, C: God made man or he gave man dominion over all of creation. In verse 26 of chapter 1 when God said he was going to make man in his image and likeness, he also foreshadowed that he'd give man dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the heavens, over the livestock, over all the earth and over

every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. And then in verse 28 after he created man, he commands man, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea, of the birds of the heavens, over every living thing that moves on the earth." Note that man's dominion or rule was to be over all the earth to subdue it, and over every living thing. Now that word "subdue" has been twisted because it doesn't mean that we're supposed to exploit. No, we have to use wise, balanced use and management for the good of all creation. Why do I say that? We are still accountable to God for how we treat animals and how we treat the land and we'll be judged for it. How do we know that? Exodus 20 in the fourth commandment to the Sabbath. Read it, verse 10 of chapter 20, "but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates." Even the animals were supposed to have a Sabbath rest and we're accountable, therefore, for how we treat the animals. But of course, Jesus in Matthew 12:11 tempered that by saying, "Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out?" Again, wise care for our animals even on the Sabbath. But even the land was supposed to have a Sabbath year of rest. You may not realize that but at Leviticus 25:1 to 7, God commanded the children of Israel that the plants and the land would be given a rest one year in every seventh. And in Leviticus 26, God goes on to promise Israel that if they walked in his statutes and observed his commandments, including the Sabbath rest, including the Sabbath rest for the land, he would bless their land and its produce, but if they were disobedient, then he would bring disease on their land and their land productivity will fail. In fact, we often miss that. The reason for the 70 years of exile in Babylon God said was specifically because, one of the reasons was because they hadn't given the land its Sabbath rest. We read in 2 Chronicles 36:21, "to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years."

So God is serious about how we treat animals and how we treat the land, so that means wise management and use of all creation has to be for the benefit of creation as well. So rotate the land use, just as the children Israel were told to do. Reduce pollution and waste. And for geologists, that means proper rehabilitation of mined out land. And so the list goes on. But this does not mean that man controls the climate. God alone controls the thermostat. In Genesis 8:22 God promises, "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." And Jesus declared in Matthew 5:45 that God makes his Son, it's his not ours, his Son rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust. God is in absolute sovereign control of what happens with the climate.

Well, that brings us to our third and last point this morning and we hasten on. Point number 3: the perfection of his creation. We read six times that God saw what he created and declared it was good and at the end of day six he declared everything that he created as very good. We read that in Genesis 1:4, "And God saw that the light was good." Genesis 1:10, "And God saw that it," the dry land and the seas, "was good." Verse 12, "And God saw that it," the vegetation and seed-bearing plants and the trees created and reproducing after their kind, "was good." Verse 18, "And God saw that," the sun, moon

and stars set in their places for signs and seasons to measure days and years, "was good." Verse 21, "And God saw that," the sea creatures and birds, "was good." Verse 25, "And God saw," the livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth reproducing after their kinds, "was good." And then in verse 31, "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." By the way, by what standard does God measure goodness? Interesting question, isn't it? Well, Jesus answered that when he spoke to the rich young ruler who said, "Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" What did Jesus say in Mark 10:18? "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone." So God measures goodness based on his own perfect character and holiness.

So when God pronounced all of his creation as very good, everything he'd made means what? At the end of day six when he declared everything was very good, first, there was no sin and by implication there was no death and there was no bloodshed because we're specifically told, we read it this morning in chapter 3 that sin and death only entered God's originally very good creation when Adam and Eve sinned and God pronounced the curse. Ah, but some protest and say, "Wait a minute. Whoa, whoa, whoa, hold on a minute. Don't the plants die when we eat them? After all, God specifically said to Adam and Eve and all the animals, 'I want you to eat the plants.' But God declared the eating of the plants as very good. Why?" Because only animals have the breath of life. Only animals are described as living creatures as well as man, living creature. God breathed into his body the breath of life and he became a living creature. Furthermore, permission to eat meat was only given after the flood. In Genesis 9:3, we read, "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything." And in the next verse 4 of chapter 9 of Genesis we are told that the life of the flesh is in the blood. Plants do not have blood and thus they don't die in the biblical sense. You see, Abel's sacrifice of a lamb, shed its blood for sin offering, was acceptable to God in Genesis 4, but Cain's sacrifice of vegetables wasn't because vegetables didn't shed blood so it couldn't be an offering for sin.

So by implication, there were no deaths of living creatures by the end of day six. That means there are absolutely no fossils in the garden of Eden beneath Adam and Eve's feet on day six because the fossils are the remains of dead animals. Not only evidence of death, but there's evidence of disease. There's cancer in the fossil record. There's carnivory in the fossil record. Most scientists, and even some Christians, say that there were billions of animals that lived and died over millions of years before man evolved and therefore they claim that there had to be fossils under Adam and Eve's feet. So who is correct? God who was there who knows everything and has told us specifically that everything he created was very good and that the original the animals of man were commanded to only eat plants, or is God correct or a fallible scientist who wasn't there and who doesn't know everything? No, Paul says in Romans 3:4, "Let God be true though everyone were a liar." Thus the fossils could only have formed after sin and death entered the world in Genesis 3. So Genesis 1 and 2, a perfect world. Genesis 3, man's rebellion, the curse. What event could produce all the fossils, billions of dead things buried in rock layers laid down by water over the earth? The flood in Genesis 6 through 9.

So we've seen the order of creation, the order that God put into his creation, and we've seen the perfect order of his creation. Well, as we close, why do these issues matter? You know, are some of these things just a scientific argument? Well, to put it simply, if God cannot be trusted to tell us accurately and truthfully about our origins at the beginning of time, how can we trust him throughout the rest of scripture? How could we trust him concerning our salvation through the gospel? How can we trust him about our eternal destiny? Now Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:12, "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" And what did Jesus say to Nicodemus four verses later? "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." So Jesus said to Nicodemus, "If you don't believe the earthly things I tell you," and he not only referred to Adam, he referred to the flood, "If you don't believe those earthly things, how are you going to believe the heavenly things I tell you?"

The heart of the gospel's good news is that Jesus' substitutionary death on our behalf and we appropriate and accept this good news, those of us who do that will not perish but have eternal life as we read there in John 3:16. But why did Jesus have to die? Well, because God had created a perfect world in which there was no sin, suffering or death but we chose in Adam to rebel, and that rebellion is sin and it brought suffering and death into the world. So as Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 15:21 and 22, "For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."

So Genesis matters. Genesis 1 matters because it's not only a polemic against the false origin stories of false religions, but it's a description of the perfection of everything that God created, it's a description of everything that God will restore in the book of Revelation because when God comes to create a new and heaven a new earth, there will be no more sin, suffering and death. So if there were fossils in the garden of Eden there was already death and suffering in the garden of Eden, what's God going to restore the earth to in Revelation? No, we're specifically told there will be no more sin, suffering, or death in the new heavens and new earth.

So are you ready for eternity in God's presence forever? Paul declares in Romans 10:9, "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Amen.

Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for the absolute certainty of your word. Thank you, Father, you've given us enough both in your word and the world that you created around us that we can accept by faith that by your word you created all things, and by your own declaration it was very good and then we messed it up and we continue to mess it up. But we thank you again this morning that you promised a way of escape. You promised the Redeemer Jesus, who would come who would crush the serpent, who would die in our stead, shed his blood so that we could be clothed in his righteousness. Thank you, Father, for these wonderful truths from your word this morning. May they be imprinted on our hearts.

May they gladden our hearts to know that you are sovereign and in control of all things, that no matter what lies ahead this week, we are safe in your hands now and for eternity. And it's in Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

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