

Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:1-5; John 1:1-4

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The 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. 3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good; & God divided the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.”

[and from the Gospel according to John]

“1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

"God Said, 'Let There Be Light'"

“And then God said, let there be light, and there was light!” These words are certainly among the most famous found in the Scriptures...

- **They have often been abused, but they should be rightly loved.**

They are certainly at the center of the first day of creation which is why we will focus on them this morning. So you know my plan, Lord willing, I want to take the next five weeks to consider the first five days of creation. After these sermons, Mike will bring his next two installments from the book of Philippians while Linda and I are in Oregon and then we will dig into Day six and the creation of man in God's image, and we might be there for the rest of the year!

So this morning I want to spend a bit of time talking about Genesis and science & consider the significance of light! First we must remember where we are, even though we are still in the first five verses of this Book of Beginnings! In our first sermon we talked about how we would study the Book of Genesis and the importance seeing Jesus which our reading from John should make very clear today. Next we considered who existed before the beginning: As Dr. Schaeffer would say the personal God who is there and who has communicated with the men and women made in His image. Last week we considered the importance of remembering the Creator/Creature distinction and how only God could create the actual material or energy that make up heaven and earth.

On this first day, God brings forth heaven and earth and we are then told three things about the earth:

- **It begins in a formless state of darkness**
- **The Spirit of God hovers over the earth.**
- **God brings light into the darkness.**

Before we consider these details, we must also remember that this account is being written for men who dwell on the earth... Heaven was created as well as earth and we are given no details here in the creation account about heaven or angels, so we are limited in our understand of them!

We know that heaven is where Jesus is now enthroned at the Father's right hand and we are given a pretty detailed description by some of the Prophets and certainly in Revelation chapters 4 and 5. We also know from chapters twenty-one and twenty-two of Revelation that when the Kingdom of Jesus has filled the earth and He has given it to the Father, that God will provide the light rather than the sun & moon, just as He does now in heaven. We will discuss this more when we get to the fourth day of Creation, but for this morning we need to remember that heaven was not in darkness but had God as its light from the very beginning of time and history.

Some may argue that heaven existed before the earth was created but there is no justification for holding such a position other than the fact that we know so little about the history of heaven. While we cannot be too dogmatic, I would agree with Jim Jordan and early church fathers who believe that God brought forth heaven and earth with heaven as a completed glorious place and the earth as a place that would mature and grow up into the glorious state God wanted it to have and share with heaven: Including a glorious bride for His son!.

This does not mean that the earth was in some sort of evil condition... It was just immature or incomplete. For example, a tiny infant is no less human though we will see him or her become much more mature and even change in many ways as they grow.

So we have stuff of the earth, without form and void. Again, not evil, just unformed and lacking design.

However, this stuff is not left to fend for itself...

- **We immediately see the Spirit of God moving on the face of the waters.**

We will see as we move through these first three days that there is a lot of attention paid to the water!

If fact I think one could argue that all of the stuff created outside of heaven was water at the beginning but that would be speculating just a bit! However, it is no surprise to see water here early when you think about how big a role it plays throughout the Scriptures in terms of blessing and even judgment. We may talk a bit more about that next week! So what is the first thing that God brings to this formless matter?

- **Light!**
- **A good first step toward becoming like heaven!**

But it does not come like the light of heaven at the beginning. God separates the light and the darkness so that we have days and nights, so we have history and progress. We see here the first of several pronouncements by God that what is taking place is good, just like we do with each step in the growth of a child.

- **God says that what we have so far is good, but the world today would sadly say it is ridiculous!**

We talk of God existing from everlasting, from before the beginning, we talk about everything being created in an instance, we talk of God ordering everything in just six ordinary days, and now we have light appearing three days before the sun & stars.

The militant atheists of today think they have us right where they want us when we say we believe such things: They are very happy to give people this type of choice...

- **They would say to young people, you can be with us and science:**
- **Or you can be with them and the Bible and all this nonsense!**

They are confident they will bring over many converts, and sadly it is all too true on many university campuses, in the popular media and even in churches.

- I would argue their success is mostly because we no longer have Christians who understand how to defend the faith in this modern world.

First and foremost we must remember the importance of where we begin as we saw two weeks ago: We believe what we do because God has told us that He has always existed as the Triune God who created heaven and earth. We believe the account He has given us about how He did so because He was there! Modern man, and fallen man throughout the ages for that matter, does not want to have to deal with the living God...

- So, just as the Apostle Paul explains in Romans chapter one, they suppress these truths in unrighteousness and become fools, believing just about anything.

This certainly accounts for the many myths and idols that have dominated human civilizations down through the ages... But our modern atheists will insist that they have left all of this behind:

- Today they have SCIENCE!

Of course what they really have now is a mere shadow of the science borrowed from the early Christian scientists who developed it because they believed the very things we find in the Bible, but that will be a sermon for another day. Christians have no problem with the truth and utility of good science!

- So why have believers become so afraid of scientific discussions today?

I believe it is mostly because we have actually accepted the presuppositions of the world...

- And thus have become ashamed of the very truths we should be defending.
- What do I mean by that?

They argue that matter is eternal and that the TRUTH of evolution is the foundation for all good science.

We don't want to be against 'good science' so we begin to doubt that God created everything in an instant and then formed what we see around us today in six ordinary days as the Bible clearly tells us.

Having accommodated our skeptics so that we can have a discussion with them about God, they simple turn on us and say, why do you believe in God? We say because He tells us about Himself in the Bible...

- And they then say HOW can anyone believe a Bible full of such nonsense as six-day creation.

These militant atheists are having a field day with our young people with such discussions because we have for the most part left them defenseless. I want to take a moment to consider a recent article about the famous atheist Stephen Hawking to illustrate what I mean and suggest how we should be responding.

Space.com reported that Mr. Hawking gave a lecture recently on the origin of the universe at the California Institute of Technology. Having someone argue that 'our universe didn't need any divine help to burst into being' was quite popular with the line for tickets stretching over a quarter mile and one person rumored to have offered a \$1,000 for a ticket to no avail. Mr. Hawking began with an African creation myth which I am sure was a great red herring and then moved 'rapidly,' the article tells us, to the big questions like why are we here? Of course there is no hint in the article that he actually offered an answer to this question: Instead he ridiculed those who argue the need for a divine solution by quipping: "What was God doing before the divine creation? Was he preparing hell for people who asked such questions?" Of course he then gets into the science that everyone came to hear about.

It was interesting that he first had to debunk several theories that were popular in the 20th century because of recent observations by space telescopes. Always good to remember that much of the speculative science about origins is shifting sand even among the most skeptical scientists.

He then insisted that "time began at the moment of singularity, and this has likely occurred only once."

➤ Does that sound familiar?

Of course it does and just so no one in the room would think he might be looking to the Bible, he noted that Pope John Paul II in the 1980's admonished the scientific establishment against studying the moment of creation as it was holy."

He is likely quoting the Pope out of context but Mr. Hawking still has the problem that Genesis one does in fact present true history AND science! Mr. Hawking closed with a defense of the M-theory which he said posits that multiple universes are created out of nothing: And of course he was happy to be living in one of the few that generated life.

IF we stand our ground, the evidence brought by true science will not be in conflict with the Scriptures: Even as they try to destroy what we believe, we come instead to what is taught in the Bible, especially when it comes to light! Consider the "universe overview" that is linked to this article to arm these modern atheists in their battle with Bible-believing Christians. "The universe was born with the Big Bang as an unimaginable hot, dense point."

[first, I am not sure that 'unimaginable' is a scientific term, but more importantly why would the evidence they claim to have which points to a 'big bang' not be the same we would expect to see after God creates heaven and earth by His Word?]

But it gets better: "When the universe was just 10^{-34} or so old – that is a hundredth of a billionth of a trillionth of a trillionth of a second in age – it experienced an incredible burst of expansion known as inflation, in which space itself expanded faster than the speed of light."

[funny how they laugh at Christians astronomers and physicists who talk about the possibility of things traveling faster than the speed of light but it is OK in the first Nano-second of history.]

In that nano second, "the universe doubled in size at least 90 times, going from subatomic-sized to golf-ball sized almost instantly!"

[I am really not making this up and it gets better!]

"After inflation, the growth of the universe continued, but at a slower rate. As space expanded, the universe cooled and matter formed. One second after the Big Bang, the universe was filled with neutrons, protons, electrons, anti-electrons protons and neutrinos."

[WOW, and they say they don't have the faith to believe that an all-powerful God could do all of creation in six ordinary days!]

➤ Now as I read this final paragraph, I want you to keep the verse at the center of our text in mind: "God said let there be light and there was light!"

"During the first three minutes of the universe, the light elements were born during a process known as Big Bang nucleosynthesis. Temperatures cooled from 10^{32} degrees K to 10^9 degrees K, and protons and neutrons collided to make deuterium, an isotope of hydrogen. Most of the deuterium combined to make helium, and trace amounts of lithium were also generated.

[they don't tell us who any of the witnesses were for all of these events]

"For the first 380,000 years or so, the universe was essentially too hot for light to shine. The heat of creation *[did they really use that word???*] "The heat of creation smashed atoms together with enough force to break them up into a dense plasma, an opaque soup of protons, neutrons and electrons that scattered light like a fog. "Roughly 380,000 years after the Big Bang matter cooled enough for atoms to form during the era of recombination, resulting in a transparent, electrically neutral gas. This set loose the initial flash of light created during the Big Bang, which is detectable today as cosmic microwave background radiation. However, after this point the universe was plunged into darkness since no stars or any other bright objects had formed."

So Mr. Hawking believes that the Big Bang created light... Famous science fiction writer Isaac Asimov posited that it could have been a super computer from a prior age that said 'let there be light.

- **And once again I must ask, why could not the cosmic microwave background radiation we have detected be evidence of God's creation of light?**

More importantly, I want to return to the big question that Mr. Hawking had to avoid:

- **Why are we here?**

Are we here because a big bang brought forth all matter in an instance and a burst of light, matter which then was formed and molded over billions of years into the earth and man we know today with the addition of nothing but time and chance?

IF that is why we are here then Mr. Hawking and those who follow him must face the reality that honest skeptics like Bertrand Russell or Friedrich Nietzsche were willing to face: If God is dead [or never existed] then morality is dead and there is no ultimate meaning for the lives of men or women, individually or collectively.

Or as the Book of Ecclesiastes teaches so clearly: ALL is vanity under the sun! by which the author means trying to live without God.

- **Of course these words in Genesis are precious to us because we have been called out from the darkness into the light!**

Jesus has called us into the light of His Kingdom not so that we can cower before so-called scientific skeptics, but so that we can confront them with the truth...

- **The truth that Jesus is the creator and sustainer of all there is as we have seen in Colossians chapter one.**

We must see that as the Apostle continues on in Colossians he wants the Saints to stand strong in this truth: Colossians 2: "6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. 8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power."

We are to be established in the faith: Not a blind faith, but a faith that believes the one who brought everything into being, and the one who has saved us from our sins, and who will come to judge the world!

We must be ready to answer the skeptics of today like Stephen Hawking with the truth:

Jesus is the creator and sustainer of all there is so all of the creation and especially man have meaning.

- **Jesus brought forth all that is visible from nothing just like their honest evidence now reveals.**

Jesus said, let there be light and there was light in this universe three days before He set the sun, moon and stars in the sky...

Just as their honest scientific evidence is now revealing as well.

- **It has been rightly said that the Bible is not a science textbook, like one you would have while doing your schoolwork.**

However, it is important to remember that we still have much more detail about the first moments and days of this universe in the Bible, then the scientists will ever be able to amass because we have the one Who was there telling us what happened.

King David tells us in Psalm 27 how we are to view our battles with the enemies of God and I will close this morning with the words of that Psalm:

“Jehovah is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? Jehovah is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? 2 When the wicked came against me to eat up my flesh, my enemies and foes, they stumbled and fell. 3 Though an army may encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; Though war should rise against me, In this I will be confident. 4 One thing I have desired of Jehovah, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of Jehovah All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of Jehovah, And to inquire in His temple. 5 For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock. 6 And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me; Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to Jehovah.”

Communion Meditation: I John 1

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full. 5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, & the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”