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Sermon Notes

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God Creates the Universe Genesis 1

I. Series Overview

- A. Essential role of the Old Testament
- B. Many Christians uncomfortable with the world of the Old Testament
- C. Every key doctrine finds roots in OT... most of them in first 12 chapters of Genesis
Creation, Doctrine of humanity, Sin, Redemption
- D. Book of origins:
Origin of the universe, the solar system, the atmosphere, life itself, man, work, marriage, evil, crime & punishment, language, government, science, culture, nations, religion, the chosen people

II. The Genesis Controversy

- A. Twentieth Century Debate: Genesis a Battleground
- B. The Conflict with Science
 - 1. Cosmology: Origins & Age of the Universe
 - a. Physicists & the Hubble telescope
 - b. Big bang... light shifts, expanding universe...etc.

Illus.: Science can give us much to marvel at

In 1930, Clyde Tombough discovered Planet X, which eventually came to be called "Pluto," for the Greek God of outer darkness... Pluto is on average 3.6 billion miles away from the sun; its orbit around the sun takes 248 years;

Psalm 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

2. Origins of Species & Origins of Man
3. Age of the Earth: the fossil record and dating techniques
4. The Historicity of the Flood Account
5. The Origins of Languages & the Tower of Babel

C. The Conflict with Theologians

1. After Darwin's book, modernists began to reinterpreting Genesis to fit science
2. German theologians also began to question authorship of Genesis... JEDP
3. SBC rocked with controversy in 1961: Dr. Ralph H. Elliot, professor of OT at Midwestern Seminary in KC wrote a book called *The Message of Genesis*

Elliot wrote: "We must learn to think of the stories of Genesis—the creation, the fall, Noah's Ark, the Tower of Babel—in the same way as we think of the parables of Jesus; they are profoundly symbolical (though not allegorical) stories, which aren't to be taken as literally true (like the words of the textbooks of geology), but which yet bear a meaning that cannot be paraphrased or stated in any other way without losing something of their quality of existential truth."

5. The Biggest Danger: maybe we should read the whole Bible that way!

1 Corinthians 15:17 "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins."

My convictions: every truth is God's truth... if science observes something that is true about the physical world, my Bible says God made it that way!

- If astronomy discovers a star bigger than our solar system, God made it that way
- If physics shows that the speed of light is constant in a vacuum, God made it that way
- If chemistry tells us that there are 108 elements in the periodic chart, God made each one

True Christians need never fear a single truth from the scientific world...

BUT if the Bible presents a narrative like this one as narrative, it must be taken as word for word true; when Jesus wanted to tell a parable, He let us know it was by the way He told it... historical narrative like this must be taken as true

III. Overview of Genesis 1

A. Chronological account

1. Simplest reading is that the events in the first day preceded the events in the second
2. Day 4 came after Day 3, but before Day 5
3. We see God step by step preparing the world for man... getting everything ready
4. DAY-AGE THEORY??
 - a. Hebrew is “YOM”: no clear example in which it cannot mean a “24 hour period”
 - b. regular repetition of phrase: “And there was evening and there was morning; the first day...”... clear indication of six 24-hour periods
 - c. even clearer is statement in 10 Commandments

Exodus 20:8-11 Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy; do all your work in six days, and rest on the seventh; for God made heaven and earth, the seas and all that is in them in six days, and rested on the seventh.

B. Yet, a logical framework

1. Day 1, 2 & 3 can be seen as the preparation of the regions or realms in which what is created in Day 4, 5 & 6 are to move
2. **Preparation by Separation**, then Inhabitants... or Kingdoms & Kings
3. Day 1: Light & Dark... Day 4: Sun governs the day, moon governs the night
4. Day 2: Water above (sky), water below (sea)... Day 5: birds for the sky, fish for the sea
5. Day 3: Dry land... Day 6: Beasts & man

IV. The Days of Creation

A. Prologue: (1:1-2)

vs. 1-2 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

1. Immediate focus on God... the central figure in all of Scripture

- a. God is the Author and Perfecter of the Universe
 - b. God is the central actor in all history
 - c. God speaks, and worlds are created
2. “In the beginning”... creation out of nothing
- a. God used no raw materials... He spoke, and it was created
 - b. Eternity before universe was made
 - c. Trinity in fellowship before the universe was created

John 17:5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

- d. Salvation plan worked out before the universe was created

1 Corinthians 2:7 No, we speak of God’s secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

Revelation 13:8 “...the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world.”

3. “the heavens and the earth...”
- a. the universe, visible and invisible
 - b. spiritual beings: living creatures in Revelation; all the angels; even Satan
4. The earth was formless & void
- a. Hebrew = “tohu wavohu”... like a desert, a trackless waste
 - b. a universe waiting for God’s further commands... raw material there

IMAGE: like a potter who slaps the raw clay down onto the wheel, then begins to form it and arrange it, making it ready for use

5. Darkness on the surface of the deep
- a. the Hebrew word “deep” refers to the ocean
 - b. tremendous sense of immensity, also foreboding... the depths of the ocean
 - c. darkness symbolizes ignorance of God... preparation for God’s revelation

6. The Spirit of God hovering over the waters
 - a. amazing! Second verse of the Bible, Spirit of God mentioned
 - b. same Hebrew word for “wind”, but winds don’t “hover”

Deuteronomy 32:11 “...like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young”

- c. Spirit of God... ready to execute God’s perfect design

Trinity active in creation: Father active, Son active, the Spirit active

Colossians 1:15-16 ¹⁵ *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*
¹⁶ *For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.*

The Six Days of Creation occur for one major purpose: to get everything ready for human habitation; someday, there will be a new heavens & a new earth

John 14:2 “In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so I would have told you, for I am going there to prepare a place for you.”

B. The First Day

vs. 3 *And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.* ⁴ *God saw that the light was good, and he 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.*

1. The beginning of the organization of the universe is creation of light
2. Light is a form of communication... also light is the basis of life on earth (photosynthesis)
3. No problem that the sun hadn’t been created yet... God doesn’t need the sun

Revelation 22:5 “There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light.”

4. First separation: light from darkness; day from night
5. “And there was evening and there was morning...”
 - a. regular refrain through these six days
 - b. clear indication of flow marking time in words we can understand

C. The Second Day

vs. 6-8 *“And God said, ‘Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water.’ ⁷ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸ God called the expanse ‘sky.’ And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.”*

1. The word “expanse” or “firmament” in KJV comes from Hebrew word meaning to beat or stamp, as with beaten metal

Job 37:18 *“Can you, with Him, spread out the skies, strong as a molten mirror?”*

2. Something thin, spread out, yet firm and strong... METEOR PROTECTION
3. Second separation: waters above from waters below

D. The Third Day

vs. 9-13 *⁹ And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. ¹² The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.*

1. The third great separation: dry land from sea
2. Step by step, God preparing the earth for the appearance of humanity
3. God has total control over the seas... is able to say to the ocean, “This far, and no further!”
4. Now, vegetation comes forth from the land... “Let the land produce...”

The ground can't produce the order found in the **seeds**; the seeds have all the genetic code necessary for producing each fruit “after it's kind”

Plant a tomato seed, and you get a tomato, not an eggplant... that came from careful planning and ordering by God; not from the accidental arrangement of minerals from the soil

The dwelling places are ready, Now come the inhabitants...

E. The Fourth Day:

vs. 14-19 *And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years,¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so.¹⁶ God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.¹⁷ God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth,¹⁸ to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.¹⁹ And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.*

1. Sun, moon, and stars given to mark time: seasons, days, and years
2. NOTE: how earth-focused are these purposes... sun created for earthly purpose “To give light to the earth”; moon created for earthly purpose “to give light to the earth”
3. NOTE ALSO: word is “govern”... they rule over day and night, the way man will rule over the earth
4. All our time systems tied to rotation of earth on its axis, and around the sun
5. See how nonchalantly the stars are mentioned: “He also made the stars”
 - a. ancient religions almost always worshipped the starry host
 - b. Genesis 1 barely mentions them
 - c. Isaiah 40... calls the stars BY NAME

Illus: Billions and billions of galaxies, each containing billions and billions of stars

- d. NOTE: again, earth-bound focus... when history on earth ends, the stars fall from the sky

Matthew 24:29 *“The sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.”*

Revelation 6:13 *“... the stars in the sky fell to earth...”*

F. The Fifth Day

vs. 20-23 *And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.”²¹ So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.²² God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in*

number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.”²³ And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

1. Tremendous proliferation both of species and of quantities
 - a. “Let the waters TEEM” “Be fruitful, increase in number, fill the sea & the sky”
 - b. “According to their kind”... species absolutely defined genetically by God
2. NOTE: Great creatures of the sea... Canaanite and Babylonian creation myths had the Creator God defeating a giant sea creature... here, God just simply creates the whales and lets them play in the deep!!! No great struggle, no wrestling with creation

G. The Sixth Day: In two steps... beast first, then man

1. First, the creation of beasts of the dry land

vs. 24-25 ²⁴ *And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so.*
²⁵ *God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.*

- a. “Let the land produce...” beasts come from the earth
- b. created from the ground, they will return to the ground when they die
- c. reproduce after their kind... a phrase which appears five times in these two verses

Illus. Livestock, reptiles, and game... How many species of living creatures??

2. Second, the creation of man

vs. 26 *“Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule...”*

- a. special act of creation... Let the ground produce vs. let us make
 - b. “Let US...” not some extra-terrestrial aliens; rather, preview of the Trinity
3. Verse 26... statement of intention; Verse 27... statement of execution
 4. Image & Likeness of God Planned
 - a. character: God-like
 - i) **mental**: able to think, reason, remember, plan, imagine, feel
 - ii) **moral**: righteous, pure, holy, loving good

- iii) **physical:** body also part of image; or else why would Christ have a resurrection body? Hands are extensions of our creativity, feet of our desire to move; “fill the earth” how possible without feet & hands?
- iv) **relational:** male and female... “Let them rule...”; able to communicate, to have deep relationship with God and with others

b. role

“Let them rule over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air...”

- i) dominion over the earth part of our creation in image of God
- ii) As God rules over us, so we rule over the world
- iii) role enhanced and underscored in our mandate... fill the earth & subdue it (vs. 28)

NOW: sin has defaced the image of God, but not removed it entirely; Genesis 9 & James 3 both refer to us as created in the image of God

Yet we are deeply scarred by sin, and the image seems almost totally defiled... YET Christ has come to restore the image and complete it

Ephesians 4: 24 “to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

1 John 3:2 “We shall be like him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

5. Image & Likeness of God Imparted

vs. 27 “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

- a. image of God actually imparted to human race at creation
- b. NOTE: imparted to BOTH male and female alike... total equality of worth and value before God, both at creation and in redemption
 - i) gender intrinsic to God’s physical plan
 - ii) be fruitful and multiply only possible with male and female
 - iii) equality of worth does not mean identity of roles...

iv) Satan has attacked vigorously at this point, especially now-a-days with such a confusion about gender

v) but yet, male and female genders are a gift from God, called good by God

c. culmination of all creation

6. Humanity's Mandate: Fill the Earth and Rule Over It to God's Glory

vs. 28 *God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.*

a. perfect culmination of God's plan... physical spiritual beings filling the earth with God's image, ruling over it in a godly manner

b. able to see the creation with knowledge, understanding and awe, we were to give God the worship He deserved for it

c. God's plan... our spiritual worship in our physical setting

Habakkuk 2:14 "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

7. God's Blessings and Gifts

vs. 28 "God blessed them..."

vs. 29 [Gift of vegetation & fruit for food, both to man and beast alike]

a. God's preparation for man was complete

b. everything in place for the unfolding of history

c. God blessed them... intention of abiding presence and pleasure

d. God gave us all we needed for food... bodies require sustenance; part of our physical nature

V. God's Reaction to His Creation (vs. 31, 2:1-3)

A. The Pleasure of God

vs. 31 "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day."

1. God richly enjoyed His work... you can't miss the pleasure of God here

His works display His glory

Psalm 19:1-2 “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.”

2. The entire creation in all its vast array was complete

2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

3. **No evil at all**... even the being who eventually became Satan was good at that point

B. The Rest of God

vs. 2-3 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

1. Not to be understood that God was tired in any way
2. Nor that God was not continuing to work

John 5:17 “My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I too am working.”

God sustains the universe moment by moment by His power

God feeds all living creatures and sustains their life

3. God is sitting as a King in Rulership over all this creation

VI. Application

- A. Weeding out false concepts: “in the beginning, God created the heavens & the earth”

Henry Morris: This one statement refutes many of the false philosophies of our day

- It refutes **atheism**, the universe was created by God
- It refutes **pantheism**, for God is transcendent above what He has created
- It refutes **polytheism**, for one God created all things
- It refutes **materialism**, for matter had a beginning

- It refutes **dualism**, because God was alone when he created the universe
- It refutes **humanism**, for God not man is the center of the universe
- It refutes **evolutionism**, for God spoke, and they were created and stood fast

B. Worship

1. Wonder & awe

Psalm 139:14 “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

2. Humility

Psalm 8:3-4 “When I consider your heavens, the work of your hands, the moon and the stars which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?”

C. Work

John 5:17 “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.”

D. Walking righteously

1. Because God created everything, he owns everything, too... including you
2. Doctrine of creation leads to doctrine of stewardship... doctrine of stewardship leads to doctrine of judgment
3. God has made a beautiful world... even marred by sin, it's still a source of wonder and worship... we are to work righteously and walk righteously

BUT if you don't know Jesus as Savior, realize that He is both your creator and sustainer... come to faith in Him today