

Genesis 1:1 - 2:3

The Creative Genius of God

Ancient Egyptians pictured a primeval ocean with an egg appearing. From that egg hatched the sun god who had four children, geb, shu, tefnut, and nut. From their rivalries the creation occurred!

In Babylon, the creation story was one of plot and counter plot among the gods involving banquets, rivalry and war!

Ancient Greeks spoke of the mythical giant, Atlas, who held up the heavens with a tireless head and arms!

And ancient Hindus pictured a world held by three elephants on the back of a tortoise who swam in a cosmic sea!

Obviously such thoughts are dismissed today as mere myth. There's another ancient account of creation, though; one many would also want to dismiss as myth. Yet it remains the only document from antiquity still seriously considered by many today; and for good reason - it contains the truth! It's the story of creation from the very beginning of the Bible! It tells us of the God who created EVERYTHING from NOTHING! In 31 verses of Genesis 1, God is mentioned by name 32 times! It is HIS very presence into which we are ushered from the first pages of Scripture!

If you believe nothing else this message says, believe this - you can trust this account! If we can't trust God when He speaks of creation, how can we trust Him about salvation? If we can't trust God when He tells of us earth in Genesis 1, how can we trust Him when He tells us about heaven in Revelation 22? Friends, you can trust this word about the creative genius of God! What is that word?

Notice first, The Eager Declaration of God in Genesis 1:1. We are told quite clearly that it is GOD who was responsible for all that exists! The Hebrew word used for create is bara, a word that is never applied to anyone except God! As one commentator put it, "Man cannot bara. Only God can bara. It is an exclusive activity of God." Man can make things (asah), and form things (yatsa), but never bara!

In 1965 researchers announced they had created artificial protein in the laboratory. Since protein is the basic building block of life, the event took the scientific world by storm. The Saturday Evening Post interviewed some leading scientists. Their comments included such as: "this is the biggest story of the century;" "this century will go down in history as the century when life ceased to be a mystery. Life is only chemistry;" and those of one British scientist who asserted that in several more decades, scientists would create life, adding, "I no longer find it necessary to believe in God."

BUT, the Post also interviewed some church leaders. One leading churchman had this instructive comment: "when a biochemist is able to create matter and energy out of nothing, then I'd like to talk to him."

This is what bara means. It's what theologians call creatio ex nihilo (creation out of nothing). It's what God Himself declares in Genesis 1:1. Yet it's what far too many today have difficulty believing! A number of explanations have arisen seeking to better understand this creation account. Let me point some of them out, however, let me hasten to add that they are ALL deficient!

Perhaps the least controversial is known as the revelation theory. This asserts that the days of Genesis 1 ARE 24 hour periods, but not of creation, of revelation. In other words, God began revealing to Moses how He created everything. He started by telling about the creation of light. It took God 24 hours to explain that to Moses. "Then the evening and the morning were the first day." The first day of revelation about creation was complete. And so forth for the next five days of revelation about creation.

Another is known as the gap theory. Genesis 1:1 tells of creation, it is claimed, but then a huge catastrophe occurred between verses one and two! Verse two is read as "the earth *became* without form and void." Then God begins re-creation at the end of verse two! This seeks to account for such phenomena as dinosaurs, the supposed age of rocks, etc.! However, there are serious problems with this view. To begin with there are technical problems. Such a view is prohibited by the Hebrew grammar. The verb for was is known as a perfect, i.e. one describing a condition. For it to describe a subsequent action (such as became) it would require an imperfect verb. So the very grammar used prohibits such a view. But perhaps even stronger than the technical problems are the theological problems raised. In Revelation 21:1 the Apostle John speaks of seeing the new heaven and new earth for the first earth (i.e. the one he was living on) had passed away. If there was a gap between verses one and two of Genesis 1 and God re-created the earth, John would have been living on the second earth when he wrote. However, it seems clear that he considered the earth he was living on to be the first earth. Even stronger than this, however, is the assertion of the Apostle Paul in Romans 5:12 that death did not exist in the world until there was sin. If dinosaurs and primitive cave men were created in the beginning millions of years ago (Genesis 1:1 according to the gap theory), and THEN Adam and Eve came along after this catastrophe, you have a major theological problem because now you have death and suffering in the world even though there was no sin (which is the very thing that brought death). It seems pretty obvious that the gap theory is ludicrous.

One final theory to consider is that known as the day-age theory. In this view, the days of Genesis 1 are NOT 24 hour periods but epochs or ages, i.e., vast periods of time. This seeks to reconcile scripture with modern "scientific" observations! Several things should be noted in this regard, however: Adam and Eve were created with the appearance of age; why could the earth not appear to have age from the very beginning? Also, Genesis 1 is a statement of origins. Science is not concerned with origins - science can only be concerned with how things go on now. In reality, it can say nothing about beginnings! To illustrate, consider a pendulum. If you study it, you can come up with an equation to determine its position at any point in the future. You can even change certain factors and probe into its past. For a while, the answers will make sense, but you will eventually come to a point when the equation gives ridiculous information. If you go back far enough in time, the equation will eventually say the pendulum was swinging in two directions at the same time! At that point, we must abandon reasoning for revelation. The only way you could state confidently, "this is how pendulum began to swing" would be if somebody who was there when it began told you how it began!

This is exactly what we have in this eager declaration of God! He says that creation marked the start of time (in the beginning). He says it was Him who created all that was (the heavens and the earth). But then He continues to give us more details.

Notice next, then, the Express Design of God in Genesis 1:2 - 2:3. We see the statement “and God said” ten times in Genesis 1. Commentator John Phillips describes this as God’s first set of commandments, not one of which has been broken. He contrasts this with what we read in Exodus 20, God’s second set of commandments, not one of which has been kept (except by Jesus).

It’s often argued that there are two creation accounts, 1:2 - 2:3 and 2:4-17. Liberal scholars will argue for different sources and even find contradictions between the two! Those who believe the word, however, see a general description here and a narrowing of the focus in chapter two to man. We’ll focus here on this general account and look at the second in a future study!

Notice first how ***life was established on Earth*** in verses 2-13. We can clearly see three stages. God deals first with **the darkness**. Years ago, Einstein developed his famous formula, $E=mc^2$, which helped usher in the atomic age. In the formula, *c* stands for the speed of light, which we now know is approximately 186,000 miles per second! Still we do not know what light is. We know what it does, but we can’t accurately define it. Yet it was the first of God’s creation. Perhaps this speaks to us about an even deeper need. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:6, “For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” Apart from Christ, we are in spiritual darkness. But the light of the gospel dispels that darkness and brings us to life. Perhaps God begins with light here when He creates everything to set the stage for that later act of redemption!

God deals next with **the disorder**. Notice that He first *raises the clouds* in verses 6-8. Water is 773 times the weight of air. Yet there is an estimated 54 trillion, 460 billion tons of water in the clouds! The annual precipitation on earth is enough to cover it 3 feet deep. Yet evaporation prevents that from ever occurring. These are things we take for granted, but they are things impossible if God had not raised the clouds!

Notice next He *raises the continents* in verses 9-10. Critics often say the author shows his naiveté in the statement that the “waters gathered in one place.” They say Moses (or whoever) had only seen one sea and thought that was all there was. But although the continents are divided, the seas DO occupy one bed!

God deals finally with **the deadness**. In verses 11-13 we see the first signs of life. Three Hebrew words are used: *deshe* (grass), *eseb* (herb) and *peri* (fruit). With grass, the seed is not obvious to the eye. In an herb, the seed is the marked feature. And the characteristic mark of fruit is fruit which contains seed. Modern botanists today still use this three-fold classification speaking of acotylidons, monocotylidons and dicotylidons.

And notice the distinguishing characteristic of this life - “after its (his) kind.” This expression occurs ten times in chapter one. It’s the rock upon which the whole theory of evolution perishes. God has said one kind will not change into another. There may be mutation within any given kind, but no change to another kind! Life was established upon the earth!

Notice second, how ***law was established on Earth***. We see in verses 14-19 that the **heavenly bodies were commanded to rule**. Ancient man generally thought the moon was bigger than the sun. If you’ve ever been out at night during what’s generally called a harvest moon, you can understand, as the moon appears huge in the night sky, much larger than the sun during day. But note the scientific accuracy depicted here.

Moses speaks of the greater light in referring to the sun (which we now know is 6,000,000 times the size of the moon!). And notice that he didn't say it was the greatest light. We now know that some stars are 64,000,000 times the size of our sun!

And note the description of the creation of stars; only five words (two in Hebrew)! Why is that? I think it's because the Bible is a book about redemption. To create God merely had to speak, but to redeem He had to suffer. God is far more interested in people than in planets; much more concerned with souls than stars!

So, we see next in verses 20-31 that **human beings were created to rule**. We note first in verses 20-25, day five and the beginning of day six. Here we see sea life, bird life, and land life coming into existence. We see created huge animals (which would include the dinosaurs!) and we also see microscopic creatures being created. Scientists have classified more than 800,000 insect types, 30,000 fish, 9,000 birds, 6,000 reptiles, 3,000 amphibians, and 5,000 mammals. To quote Phillips again, "only an infinite God could work on such a majestic scale as we see in the skies and such a microscopic scale as we see in the sea!"

But then came the crown of creation, day 6, when MAN was created in verses 26-27. This is not mankind, but rather one man (Adam) and one woman (Eve), as clarified in chapter two. From them spring the entire human race. Do away with this and you've done away with Romans 5 (where all sin is traced to one man, as mentioned earlier)! Do away with a literal Adam and the Bible is false, Romans 5 is based on a myth, Jesus was mistaken in Matthew 19:4-6 when he referred to a literal Adam and Eve, and, worst of all, there really is NO salvation!

Notice now verses 29-30. Adam is given, literally, paradise! Realizing such, we can certainly understand God's description in verse 31 that His creation was VERY good! The next time we see a similar phrase is in 2:18, where after man has been created, but not yet woman, God says it is NOT good for man to be alone. We see in this that God's intent from the beginning for creation to be complete, perfect, and very good involved both a man AND a woman.

God's perfect creation involved PEOPLE (both man & woman), a PLACE (garden), and also involved a POSITION (v. 28b). Mankind has been given dominion over the creation. That alone should stop the environmentalist wackos in their tracks! It doesn't mean we can abuse the created world for selfish gain (we are, after all, still stewards of God's creation); but neither does it mean we bow to the whims of idolatrous "Mother Earth mongers."

Mankind was created on that sixth day. But there was yet one more day.

So note how **leisure was established on Earth** in 2:1-3. Our society is recreation crazed. We're into walking, jogging, biking, and all manner of sports. But what is true leisure? True leisure is not found in activity (not to condemn activity), but it's found in God! Notice that 2:1 begins, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished." We see here that **creation was complete!** "It is finished," He said. This is reminiscent of another such statement. John 19:30 - "When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." Just as in creation, God looked at His work and said "it is finished", so in salvation, He looked and said "it is finished." Everything's complete, there's nothing more that needs to be done! In both cases, it was God who did all that needed to be done!

But not only was creation complete, also **the Creator was content!** Look again at verses 2-3. There are ten references to God in these two verses. It was God's Sabbath! What's so significant about that? It shows us that ultimately our rest is in Him!

A professor at a Capetown, South Africa University once told his class that everything that existed was a divine miracle. A student sitting on the front row snickered. "Don't you believe in miracles," the professor asked? "No," the student replied forthrightly. "Well Mankind is God's greatest miracle," the professor said. "You don't believe in yourself," he asked? "Yes, but not how you mean," said the student. The professor then proceeded to ask, "Will you, then tell us please, how red corpuscles are manufactured in our bone marrow? Tell us, if you will, how white corpuscles mobilize by the millions to attack infection? Would you please explain why no man, by will power alone, can stop breathing long enough to destroy himself? How is it that the millions of electrical connections are made in the brain to recall one memory? Will you please explain how the pictures seen by the eye are transformed into pictures in the mind? How . . ."

"I'm sorry sir," the student interrupted. "I know practically nothing about the human body."

"Then you will do well to study your body," said the professor, "for you can't understand one phase of its workings without believing in God. Learn just even a bit about yourself lad, and you'll believe in miracles."

This world has seen some amazing creations. The pyramids of ancient Egypt still astounds modern man. Consider the masterful architecture of the ancient Greeks & Romans, architecture that is still admired and often copied even today. Man has created empires and nations, not to mention ideological systems of thought. The communications abilities of modern man is one of the world's all time greatest creations. We've even created ships that will take us to the moon! The world has indeed seen some amazing creations! But none that compare to the creative genius of God. He created the heavens and the earth. But most notably, He created you.