

The God who was there

Genesis

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Bible Text: Genesis 1:1-5
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We turn in the word of God to Genesis 1 and the first five verses. Genesis 1 and the first five verses.

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

Amen. Thus far we read the word of God.

Our theme this evening is "The God who was there." The God who was there. Our Lord Jesus Christ accepted that Moses was the inspired author of the first five books of the Bible; he appeals to those books as written by Moses. So after his resurrection, when he appeared to the disciples, we read, "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded on to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself," Luke 24:27. When he taught the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, we had Abraham saying to the rich man in hell concerning his brothers still in this world, "They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them," Luke 16:29. So we regard Moses as the author under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of this book.

The scriptures gave the history of the kingdom of God. After the fall, there is a distinction between the kingdom of the Lord's power by which he governs all things in providence and the kingdom of grace, that is, that sphere of the world where men have been, by his grace, brought into a willing submission through the gospel to own him as King over them. And in a fallen world, the kingdom of grace is smaller than the kingdom of his power. The Lord governed all things in providence, but only his people, by his grace, willingly and heartily submit to him and consciously own him as King over them. But at the beginning it was not so. There was no sin and all moral creatures loved God fully.

And in the final state of the kingdom of grace in the glorified state, in the book of Revelation, it is likewise that in the eternal state of the redeemed there is no sin, and all in that state totally and heartily submit to the government of God and of his Christ. But the final eternal state will be even more glorious than the original created state, but in the original created state there was no rebellion against God.

And Old Testament history is the history of God's promise of the Redeemer and the preservation and unfolding of that promise. We miss a great deal in the book of Genesis if this is not grasped. You see, the book of Genesis, although it begins before the fall with the creation, the bulk of it is giving us the early history of the promise of the Redeemer and the preservation and unfolding of that promise. If we don't grasp that, we miss the unifying thread and theme of the whole book and we reduce the book of Genesis to a series of spiritually instructive life stories and yet no more, and so the book of Genesis simply becomes lessons from the life of Abraham, lessons from the life of Isaac, lessons from the life of Jacob, lessons from the life of Joseph and so on. Now of course, we learn from the lives of these men with their lives recorded in the word of God, but the book of Genesis is not simply a series of lives from which we can learn lessons. That's true, it is that but it's more than that, it is over all the early history of the promise of the Redeemer and how God unfolded and maintained that promise until the time of Joseph, and then Exodus continues the same history of the promise of God being preserved and unfolded. So we must keep that in mind that the book of Genesis is not a series merely it's not merely, it is this but it's not merely a series of lives of individual believers but it is the history of the giving and the working and development of the promise of the Redeemer. We do not need to unwarrantably spiritualize the book of Genesis. It doesn't need any spiritualizing by us. It is spiritual and it is full of Christ and the promises in him, if we have eyes to see. So the promise is the central theme that before the promise of the Redeemer of sinners, we have creation and then man's fall into sin.

Now, before looking at these specific verses, let me say, first of all, that I intend to stick very closely to my calling as a minister of the word. I do not pretend to be a scientist, and even if I were, the ministry of the word is God-appointed ordinance as part of his worship, not science lessons. There are scientists in the congregation. If you want science lessons, you go to them, but I shall be sticking to ministering the word of God and so references to the theory of evolution will be passing ones as they arise from the text under consideration.

Let us consider from these verses, firstly, God created. God created. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." He created. The word "created" here is deliberately chosen as distinct from the word which means "to make or to form." It is a word that indicates that what came into being was not made out of existing materials but was made of nothing. It was made of nothing by the power of God. Matter, physical matter is not eternal. It hasn't always been there. God alone is from eternity. Everything else has a beginning. Everything but God has a beginning. From eternity past there was only God. God ordained when time should begin and when there should be something other than himself. The name Genesis means beginnings. The beginning of the world. The beginning of history. The beginning of time. Then the beginning of human sin. The

beginning of the promise of the Redeemer as given to men. The promise of the Redeemer, of course, in the eternal counsel of God that has been made known to men. The eternal God created. God created and so that beginning is when there was something else other than God, distinct from God, made by God, preserved by God but what he created. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The heaven or heavens and the earth. The heaven or heavens refers to the vast space in which the stars and so on were to be placed in due course, and the earth refers to the place where man was to dwell, or the matter that was to be shaped into man's dwelling.

So God created time, space and matter. The state of the earth is indicated, "And the earth was without form, and void." Without form, that is, the water has covered it, and it may be that it contained the necessary substances which were to be formed in due course. It is said to be void, that is, empty of inhabitants. It was not to remain so. Isaiah 35:18, Isaiah 45:18, "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else." That phrase "he created it not in vain," in vain is the same wording as in our text "without form." He didn't leave it without form. He rather developed it in order that it should be inhabited. That's why in verse 19 of Isaiah 45, "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain," that is, God does not tell men to seek him in vain, that is, in a formless, meaningless way, in an empty way. Just as he didn't leave the earth without form and void, so also he does not tell men to seek him in vain or without form or without substance or shape or content or truth and without the promise of reception. So then, going back to our text, at this stage it was without form and void but it was not to remain without form and void, it was to be formed into the habitation of man.

"And darkness was upon the face of the deep." This is added to emphasize that as yet there was no light and the earth was a deep, as like a vast ocean, "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." This seems to indicate that the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters preserved and held together this formless earth.

Now then, let us say here this is part of the work of the first day. This is part of the work of the first day. There is a view called the gap theory which has its origin in the 19th century when the church was under pressure from the confident assertions of evolutionists and capitulated by modifying the orthodox view of creation. This view known as the gap theory was included in the footnotes of the Scofield Bible when it was first produced, first published in 1917. Now, on this view there is a gap between verse 1 and verse 2, and the idea is that the original earth was populated with plants and animals, that's the earth as created in verse 1, and possibly some would maintain by pre-Adamic men, and that then Satan fell and as a result this original earth was destroyed by a massive flood and the earth became without form and void. Now you might say, "Well, why concoct this theory?" Well, the idea behind it was that because the evolutionists were asserting and maintaining with confidence that the earth was millions of years old, they thought this would somehow avoid the difficulty by creating a gap between verse 1 and verse 2, and they could say that all of this had gone on in millions of years previously, had come to an end, and by the time we get to verse 2, millions of years have

passed but all the life that was there previously had been destroyed and now in verse 2 we have our history beginning, the earth has become without form and void.

This view is utterly untenable. Adam in Genesis 1:26 as God's vicegerent over a creation that was very good, was not walking over the graveyard of multitudes of creatures who had previously perished in the earth's former state and history. The very good creation was not full of the remnants of death from some previous history lasting millions of years, nor are there millions of years of history that scripture tells us nothing about. Remember, the word "create" in verse 1 means something out of nothing, and in verse 2 it begins with "And," and that is in line with the Hebrew and it's simply a continuation. There is no gap between verse 1 and verse 2. Nothing is more sad than when Christians allow themselves to be bulldozed into ridiculous concessions by evolutionists who assert their contentions with confidence, and so Christians who know the Bible is the word of God, they are unnerved by the confidence and the force with which men assert their ideas and they start bumbling around to try to accommodate their understanding of scripture to some particular theory. But you might say, "Well, what about the question of apparent age? What about the question of apparent age?" Well, I'm not going to, as I said, pretend to be a scientist but I do want to say something that I can say from the scriptures: created things do have an appearance of age. Created things do have the appearance of a process of development if we judge them by the standards of what follows creation. Adam and Eve were made as adults but they were never infants. Animals too were made as adults without an earlier, without the normal process of growth and development. Trees normally exist as a result of a process of growth from seed and development but not the original trees. God formed them.

So you see, there's a great difference between creation and procreation and the normal processes of reproduction which follow. Creation involves the immediate bringing into being in a form that which would normally take a process to become. This can be illustrated and is often illustrated from Christ's miracles. When Christ changed the water into wine, that wine was something that normally would be the result of a process. Normally you have a vine, soil, the process, the development of grapes which are gathered, squeezed, the process of fermentation and then you have wine. So while when we look at wine we normally anticipate there has been a process that has resulted in that wine, but when Christ changed the water into wine, he produced something that normally is the result, the end product of a process, in an instant. The same is true of the five loaves, the five loaves that the lad at the feeding of the 5,000 had. They were vastly multiplied, that means that bread was instantly created without the process of grain growing and being harvested and so on, and baked.

So it is with creation. It is true that the things that were created in their developed form normally are the result of a process, but not when they were in the original creation. You see, those who start with the present processes which we observe, they assume that they can work backwards, always assuming uniformity or process, but we cannot allow that because there hasn't been uniformity of process. You see, once we allow this, "Well, this is how things develop now and this is the process that is followed now therefore it must always have been," we're allowing an assumption that creation never happened, that it

didn't take place. The present processes of procreation and development uniformly apply backwards but they don't. There was a beginning when God created, when he created the earth and he created Adam and Eve, and when he created the first animals and the first fishes and the first birds and the first trees. They came about not as the result of the normal process. Let us not then concede to the assumptions that processes which take place now must always have been. There is a difference between creation and providence. There is a difference between the creation of Adam and Eve and the subsequent births of those who followed. Adam and Eve were never born. They were never infants. They were never children.

And so that really ought to caution us about being thrown into confusion by the superficial appearance of age in things. But what's the basic question? The basic question is that asked in Job 38:4. Job 38:4 where God himself confronts Job in verse 1, "Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" And so on. There Job has complained, though Job is an example of godly patience, he wasn't perfect and he complained and he complained in a way that could not altogether be excused. And the Lord answers him. "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" He's saying to Job, "What do you know? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me." He challenges him to a verbal wrestling match. He says, "Get yourself ready." And he says, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding." He says to Job, "Where were you when the creation when I created all things, where were you?"

And that is the basic question for the evolutionists. No man was there. And this is quite basic, you don't need to be a scientist to understand this: when God created the heavens and the earth, no one was there but God. The God who did it is the only one who was there. No man, no scientist was there, and so evolution is a guess based on atheistic assumptions and no more. Origins are not really the province of the scientists. You see, the scientist, he doesn't recognize his place, by and large, except those who are Christians, but his role is to study general revelation, that is, the glory of God displayed in the things that are made, to study general revelation in all its magnificent detail, but the scientist has no basis for observing the beginning. He wasn't there. None of his colleagues were there. None of his predecessors were there. And so the idea that the theory of evolution can be established scientifically is simply dishonest. Scientists are to study what can be established. There was no one there but God and we are totally dependent upon special revelation, God's word, the Holy Scriptures, to know the origin of the world and of man.

So if you want real answers as to how the earth came into being, and the universe, and man, and the seas, and the land, and the trees, and the animals, you have to turn to this

book because there are no real answers anywhere else. It is part of the arrogance of man in his sinfulness that he can put aside special revelation, the word of God, the scriptures, that he can say, "I don't want God's word about this," and yet claim to have the ability to know what happened when there was no man. The thing is outrageous. The thing is absolutely outrageous that man should claim to be able to determine in the past what happened when there were no men. The only one who was there was God and he has told us, and if we won't take his word, there is nothing else.

Secondly, God defines day and night. God defines day and night. Verse 3 to verse 5, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." God defines day and night. God created light. He created light before he created the light-bearers. You see that the sun and the moon and the stars come later in the fourth day. So God created light before he created the sun, the moon, and the stars. You say, "But how could there be light without the sun and the moon and the stars?" Well, because God is God. God saw fit on the fourth day to create the sun and the moon and the stars as the bearers of light, but God can create light without the sun, the moon, and the stars. God does things his way because we've always been, because light comes to us always, all our days from the sun during the day, and the moon by night and the stars we see, it doesn't mean it has to always have been. Because that's all that we've ever seen doesn't mean that God is bound by that. We are so foolish, aren't we? We think because we've only experienced life one way that that's the only way it can be. But it's not so. He made the light first.

"And he called the light Day." He called the light Day. Now this should be sufficient on its own to put far from our minds the idea that the days in Genesis 1 are geological periods of millions of years. They're nothing of the sort. He called the light Day. God tells us what the day is, it's a period of light. Now that's not a geological age. The word "day" is the word "yom." You've probably heard it in the phrase Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. And its normal meaning is a literal day. The fourth commandment is based on God's created order. God could have made everything in a moment, of course he could, but he didn't. He took six days and he rested the seventh day and he blessed the Sabbath day. God did it this way to set a pattern for man. "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy works but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work." It's not talking about geological ages, it's talking about days, what we know as days. You say, "But isn't the word 'day' sometimes used figuratively?" Well, yes, it is. When older people talk about "in my day we did this and that and so on," they're not talking about a particular day. But you can tell from the context and there's nothing here to indicate the "day" means anything other than the kind of days with which we are familiar. Those days, like seven days in each week of our lives. The first three days are evidently no different from the fourth to the seventh day after the sun was created.

So the text must speak for itself and, you know, quite frankly, if the theory of evolution had never appeared would anyone ever think of regarding these days as anything other than literal? I don't think so. It's the pressure of the theory of evolution that caused people

to come up with the gap theory and with the idea of theistic evolution that God, yes, he made everything but he did it by the process of evolution, and these days represent geological periods and so on. No one would ever have come up with that idea simply expounding the text of scripture.

And God marked off the first day, "And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." The evening and the morning marked the passing from one day to another. Now clearly evening here is not talking or referring to anything prior to the first day. When it says the evening and the morning, it's not referring to something prior to the first day. Prior to the first day there was no light and there was no sun. So the idea that the first day was sunset to sunset is nonsense. It's not sunset to sunset. It's not evening to evening because there was no light prior to the first day, let alone sun to set. So clearly a day is not defined here as sunset to sunset, dusk to dusk. That means that the Seventh Day Adventists and others who argue that the Sabbath should be kept from sunset to sunset have no biblical footing whatsoever. The first day was not sunset to sunset, therefore neither was the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th or 7th day.

So the first Sabbath was not sunset to sunset rather what we are being told here is that the transition from one day to the next was between the evening and the morning. In other words, the middle of the night. And hence when the Sabbath changed to the first day of the week by the risen Savior, we find that he rose before sunrise and yet he appeared to the disciples at their sunset. So if we turn to Mark 16:2, Mark 16:2, "And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun." That's the women who came to the sepulchre that they found that he was already risen from the dead. So he rose from the dead before sunrise. And then we find in Luke 24:9 when he appeared to the disciples on the Emmaus Road that "they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them." Then he made himself known to them and then we read him verse 33, "And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them." So it was the evening, it was toward evening, the day was far spent. Then he opened their eyes and they knew him and vanished out of their sight. Then they returned to Jerusalem, that's eight miles by foot. They explained what had happened to the other disciples and then in verse 36, "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." This was undoubtedly after sunset. It was towards evening. The day was far spent when he left them at the Emmaus Road. They walked, they went by foot eight miles back to Jerusalem, explained what they had seen, and then he appeared to them again.

So he rose before sunrise. He appeared in this appearance after sunset, and that is why we keep the Sabbath not from sunset to sunset but from the middle of the night to the middle of the night. But thence, thirdly, why it matters and why it is rejected. The doctrine of creation, why it matters, and why it is rejected. Why is there so much enmity to this doctrine that God in the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth? Why so much desire to deny it? Why do men and women want to believe that they are evolved, that they are merely advanced animals no different in essence from animals and not created

by God? Why is that? Why should men want to think of themselves as simply advanced animals evolved by chance? Well, the answer is simply this: even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. If evolution were true, man is an animal and not accountable, and if there is no creation there is no Creator and no one to give account to anyway. And so men would rather believe that they are advanced evolved beasts than believe that man was made in the image of God and that he has sinned against him and that God, his Creator, has absolute rights over him and will act as his judge.

You see, this doctrine is basic to the gospel. If God is not acknowledged as the Creator, then man is not accountable to God and this is the real reason why the theory of evolution exists and that explains man's enthusiasm for it and his readiness to embrace it, and his willingness to convince himself that it's really proven when it's nothing of the sort. He wants it to be true. He wants to go on in darkness. So it must be true because this theory lets him go on in sin without feeling too bad about it. After all, who wants to spoil a life of sin by thoughts of God, the Creator, the judge, and so he seizes the theory of evolution as a most efficient dampener of the conscience.

The theory of evolution has justified many things. If man is just an evolved species, why not have abortion on demand? If the child in the womb is inconvenient, get rid of it. Why not have euthanasia? After all, if we're just an evolved species, if people are getting on and quality of life isn't much good, why not just get rid of them? How much murder has been and will yet be justified as a result of evolutionary theory. And despite all the indignation against Nazism and fascism, what was behind Nazism? The survival of the fittest. That's all. If the theory of evolution is true and the strongest species are meant to come out on top and it's just a process that automatically follows, then Hitler and the Nazis, they were just asserting themselves as the strongest species getting rid of the weak.

They walk on in darkness because they love darkness. Do you believe in evolution because you want to sin and not feel too guilty? The reality is this: God is your Creator. You exist because God determined you to exist and this God has the right to tell you what to do, what to speak, what to think, and you depend upon him for the breath you breathe, and you will give account to him for all that you do. If you've been living in this foolish dream of evolutionary thought, you must turn from it because in the end God will not stand for it. Turn and seek the living God against whom you have sinned even in your thoughts, even in your love of the theory of evolution, which is so sinful in the sight of God. Seek mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who was in the beginning and yet was manifest in the flesh, who bore the sin of many on the cross of Calvary. Turn towards this great God who created all things and against whom you have rebelled and before whom you are so guilty, because this God has sent his Son to be the Redeemer and he is gracious and ready to forgive. Amen.