

Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:21

“1 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; and 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. 6 Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." 7 Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day. 9 Then 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 And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good. 11 Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. 12 And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 13 So the evening and the morning were the third day. 14 Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; 15 and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. 16 Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. 17 God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 and to rule over the day and over the night, & to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.”

"God's Rulers in the Heavens"

Today we come to the fourth day of creation and we have a LOT to cover.

Much more here than I can do justice to in one sermon, but don't despair we will come back to the significance of these rulers in the sky and how they impact the nations of the earth as we move on in the Book of Genesis.

- For today I want to focus on the text that is before us, touch on some of the perspectives we can properly have and of course consider what it means for us today.

To properly understand the significance of the events on this fourth day of Creation we must once again remember where we began in the Book of Beginnings:

By faith, we believe in the eternal personal God who existed before anything was created, including all time, matter and energy.

We believe in the events of this Day because He has revealed Himself to us in the Scriptures and given an eye-witness account of His Creation!

We have seen how this stands in stark contrast with the secular materialism of today which, also by faith, makes lifeless and mindless matter eternal, with nothing added but time & chance!

We have considered some of the details of this contrast in the past few weeks and will continue to do so in our study of Genesis, but this morning we are going to deal with such counterfeit philosophies and the text before us in the way most banks deal with counterfeit money:

- We are going to make sure that we understand the truth well!

[explain counterfeit training]

On this fourth day of creation the Lord fills the vastness of space that He made on day two with heavenly bodies: Sun – moon – stars – planets – a super nova -- & anything else we are yet to discover!

The work of this day is detailed, straight-forward & quite honestly beyond comprehension! It must take us back to those verses we have studied in the Book of Hebrews: “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.” Or as we read in Psalm 19: “The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.”

- **Can I explain how God filled all of space with His handiwork in a single day?**
- **Not in human terms, but we see the heavens that declare the glory of God and we know from His Word that He spoke them into existence.**

However, this account IS detailed and straightforward if we simply follow the text that we have before us. This first thing that we notice is that the sun was put in the sky to be a sign for the days and seasons on the 4th day.

- **It did not create the day, nor did it create light, both of which were present on the first day of creation.**
- **Another important detail is that the sun did not bring forth the plants on the earth, but simply sustains them in history.**

The other point that is simple and straightforward is that God did all of this very quickly. I mentioned last week that we would discuss the issue of 24 hour days more thoroughly this week and evolution next week when God creates the animals.

- **So just how much time passed during this creation of the heavens and the earth...**
- **And is the answer important?**
- **I will argue that the Bible gives a very clear answer and that it is VERY important!**

I would begin by starting where I think Jesus would have started in such a ‘theological discussion.’

IF I bring children into such a discussion and ask them how long the creation took after simply reading the account we find here in Genesis chapter one, how long do you think they would say it took?

Even the harshest critics of a literal 7-day creation have to admit that the reading of this chapter leaves such an impression with an honest reading.

- **Thus, thousands of pages have been written by those who do NOT believe in six-day creation, trying to explain why this is really NOT what it means.**

They put gaps where we don’t need gaps, they call days ages and they usually just resort to saying that this first chapter of the Book of Beginnings is just some beautiful poetry where God communicates the idea of creation, not the history of creation.

This sounds very pleasing to our Gnostic age where ideas are the important stuff of life and must not be allowed to get all messed up by the material things we must deal with.

For example, this is why the enlightenment writers often talked about ‘ideal love’ as the feelings they had for a mistress they had almost no contact with, while the normal sexual relationship, having children, or living in a home are left with the drudgery of the life they had with their wives.

Sadly this Gnostic thinking has had a great influence on the church and it begins in large part right here in the Book of Beginnings.

- **But if the plain reading seems to indicate seven literal days, how do we know that we are not missing something or that God actually did intend it all to be poetical?**

For the proper answer to those questions we should rightly turn to what the Bible itself has to say, and in this case it is abundantly clear! To confirm the plain reading of the text we can turn a the reference to the days of creation in the Law of God which we recite often here at Church of the King.

The Fourth Commandment says, “ “8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.”

- So, let me ask the children: What does God mean here by ‘days.’

That’s right, not periods of time or ages or even poetry, but a literal six days that we are to work and one day that we are to rest! God goes on to explain how we are to rest on the Sabbath Day and then we come to reason for this commandment: “11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.” And lest there be any doubt about what is being taught here in the commandment, God says this to Moses later in Exodus when He is giving further instructions about the importance of keeping His Sabbaths: “Exodus 31:15 “Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to Jehovah. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. 16 Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. 17 It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.’ ”

Now you would think this would make a pretty open and shut case for a literal seven days of creation, but sadly there are still many within the Church who try to argue for longer ages.

They do so either because they want to accommodate what they think are some conflicting facts in modern science or perhaps because their god is just not big enough to do such things in a short amount of time! For whatever reason they still go to great lengths to say that when God refers to the ‘days’ of creation they do not have to be 24 hour days.

The Hebrew language has a word for ‘day’ just as we do in English and yes it can be used in different ways. It can refer to the daylight portion of the 24 hour day:

- We have an example of this in our morning text where the greater light, the sun, is to rule over the day.

It can refer to a period of time, even an age. We find an example of this in chapter two of Genesis when we read:

- “This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens...”

The skeptics love to point to this verse along with Peter’s admonition “that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” as a means to argue for something other than 24 hour days. Now of course this desire for ages of time requires us to ignore how the days of Genesis one are qualified by ‘there was evening and morning.’

- The plain reading of the text that any child would see and accept!

We must ignore the command for the sun to rule the day on the fourth day and of course we must ignore the days in the fourth commandment and God’s instructions about that commandment, which we reviewed in Exodus.

And Kenneth Gentry adds this important point when we are seeking to discern what the Bible means when it uses ‘day’ here in Genesis one:

“in the 119 instances of the Hebrew word for “day” [yom] standing in conjunction with a numerical adjective [first, second, etc.] in the writings of Moses, it never means anything other than a literal day. Consistency would require that this structure must so function in Genesis 1.”

- We affirm a literal six-day creation here at Church of the King because it is the plain teaching of the Scriptures!
- IF this foundation is laid wrong, it will impact the rest of the building, right up to and including the literal resurrection of our Savior!

Now it is also important for us to remember that just because the text of Genesis one is simple and straight-forward, this does not mean that we cannot benefit from the vast treasures of meaning that can and have been discerned down through the ages. As we have seen, there are many who want to solve their perceived problems with science by making this chapter a poetic representation of what God has done and this is very dangerous.

- On the other hand, we don't want to look at this important chapter as just a simple text because it is revealing the wonder of God's Creation.

It can and should be perceived or appreciated more like a fine diamond: A precious jewel that has a wondrous appearance that can be seen and appreciated from many different angles and in many different lights.

- BUT never in a way that would imply it was not a real diamond!

We could begin with the fact that God took seven days to create the heavens and the earth as we know them today. Augustine argued that God did not need that much time to do the work: He could have done it all in an instant! Yes, but He did not. God could also have worked over billions of years, but again He did not!

- So why seven days?

Just as we have seen that the sun did not create the day, we must see that the fourth commandment did not create the week...

- But rather this 4th Commandment is the part of God's Law which regulates the time He put in place at the very beginning.

In fact the week is the one unit of time that is not regulated by the sun, moon and stars which are assigned to keep track of the signs & seasons here in Day Four with days, months & years.

- The seven day week is a reflection of God's work in Creation and NOT of any solar or lunar cycles.

While the sun is certainly a major player in God's creation and ongoing sustaining of the earth, we are reminded here that the sun is not the master, but rather God's servant! The sun has been an object of worship in ages past & sadly still is today. In the past it was worshipped in physical ignorance and today it is worshipped in a new ignorance of so-called science.

- The first commandment reminds us that we are to worship God and Him only!

We are to put no created thing, even the wonders of the heavens, in the place where only their Creator belongs! We could look at many other perspectives of this text, considering how it is the center of the seven days or how these rulers of the skies relate to the later creation of man as the rulers on the earth and we will cover many of them as we move on in our study.

- But for this morning I want to close with some thoughts on what all of this means for us today.

We began by considering the simple text before us and why we should believe that it means what it says.

We moved on to consider the richness of this text by seeing it as a fine jewel with many glorious perspectives.

- But even the image of a precious jewel is not enough when we consider how God is moving through history.

When we come to the pictures that the Bible gives us about the end of time and history we see not just propositional truth & not just a precious jewel, but rather a bride for God's Son Jesus.

- A bride who loves and serves her Savior who is the light of the world!

Jesus in His Revelation to the Apostle John shows him the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Later in chapter twenty-one the angel shows John the bride and it is described as a glorious city having the glory of God and light like unto a stone most precious, which should remind us of the Spirit of God hovering over the deep on Day One & the creation of light!

And yes, as the creation matures and the Spirit of God fills the earth with the Kingdom of Jesus there comes a day where the wonders of this fourth day of creation have completed their task:

In Revelation 21:22: "But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. 24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it."

As we move forward toward the consummation of history we are to be reminded by the sun, moon, and stars that the seasons continue and that we are to work while it is day. Jesus gave instructions to us in the sermon on the mount about how we are to humbly be the light of the world:

Matthew 5:1 "And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. 2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. 13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. 14 You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. 17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill."

Our hymn of response on this Trinity Sunday, as we traditionally do, will be St. Patrick's Breastplate.

Patrick was a missionary to a very dark land: He returned to witness there even after being persecuted & held as a slave for six years by the people in that very same land.

Patrick went with the Spirit of the teachings which Jesus gave us all in the Sermon on the Mount and He gave them the true light of the Gospel and the truth of ALL God's Word.

Patrick confronted evil Druid Lords who had the power to put him to death with the truth of the Bible that undermined all of their authority.

- May we be as bold today in confronting the skeptics of our day who have brought such darkness upon our land.
- May the sun, moon & stars remind us each and everyday as they carry on their appointed tasks, that Jesus said "YOU are the light of the world."

Communion Meditation: John 1

“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 & truth.”