

**THE TRIUNE GOD AND CREATION**  
**(SUNDAY, AUGUST 30, 2015)**

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**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 1; John 1:1-14

**INTRODUCTION**

There have been a number of periods in our nation's history where a very radical change has taken place.

We could point to the most recent transformation of our nation from generally being against so-called same-sex marriage to its full acceptance and celebration.

This took place in just about 10 years.

Another profound change in our nation took place from the 1870's to about 1925.

George Marsden in his book, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, writes a very detailed history of this time in our nation's history.

In approximately 50 years, there was a dramatic shift from the dominance of a Protestant and Christian worldview to a view that treated a literal belief in creation as described in Genesis as laughable.

The great critic and journalist H. L. Menken said in 1924.

“Christendom may be defined briefly as that part of the world in which, if any man stands up in public and solemnly swears that he is a Christian, all his auditors will laugh.”<sup>1</sup>

The year 1925 is important in our nation's history as the date of the famous Scope's Monkey Trial.

Williams Jennings Bryan, who served as the prosecutor, won the trial. John Scopes was found guilty of teaching evolution in violation of state law in Tennessee.

However, Bryan was made to look like a fool in his belief and understanding by the much savvier lawyer Clarence Darrow.

The year 1925 can be marked as a significant turning point in our nation's history.

We must be very thankful for those that God raised up in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to help His church stand fast in the truth of God's Word.

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<sup>1</sup> George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 3.

I hate to think about where we would be as a nation and as a church unless the Lord did raise up a number of valiant men and women who were not ashamed to testify to the truth of God's Word.

Today we give attention to the doctrine of creation. We will consider three points.

- 1) Creation is the work of the Triune God where He made all things out of nothing.
- 2) Creation's purpose is to manifest the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness.
- 3) God's work of creation was accomplished in six days.

**Always marvel at our Triune God's power, wisdom, and goodness as you look at all He has made.**

### **1) CREATION IS THE WORK OF THE TRIUNE GOD WHERE HE MADE ALL THINGS OUT OF NOTHING.**

The very first words of Scripture bring together some of the most important doctrines – creation and the Triune nature of God.

**Gen. 1:1** 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.

Verses 1 and 2 give the introduction to what God created and accomplished on the first day.

The words of verse 1 are so familiar, but we will never exhaust the wonder of considering the power of the infinite, eternal God who chose to create out of nothing the beautiful, complex, and even mysterious earth and universe.

#### **Marvel at God's power.**

Out of nothing, God brought into existence time, space, energy, and matter.

The verb **created** in verse 1 speaks of God bringing into existence all things out of nothing.

The Latin expression is *ex nihilo*.

The verb **create** can be used also to speak of God creating out of already existing matter as we have in the case of the creation of Adam and Eve.

Genesis 1:1 though emphasizes creation out of nothing.

**Heb. 11:3** 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.

Let also consider how creation reflects the work of the Triune God in that all throughout creation we witness both unity and diversity.

We see in verse 2, reference to the Spirit of God.

The word God in Hebrew used here is Elohim. It is a plural noun.

It is best to understand that the plural as used here is a form of self-address which prepares the way for further teaching in Scripture concerning the Triune nature of God.<sup>2</sup>

Like God's work of redemption, Scripture speaks often concerning creation and God's triune nature.

The Scriptures speak of creation in relationship to the Triune God in six related ways.<sup>3</sup>

1) To God absolutely without distinction of person.

**Gen. 1:1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

**Gen. 1:26** Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

2) To the Father.

**1Cor. 8:6** yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*.

3) To the Father through the Son.

**Heb. 1:2** has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

4) To the Father through the Spirit.

**Psa. 104:30** You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the earth.

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<sup>2</sup> C. John Collins. *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, And Theological Commentary* (Kindle Locations 677-678). Kindle Edition.

<sup>3</sup> A. A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith*, 82.

5) To the Son.

**John 1:2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

6) To the Spirit.

**Gen. 1:2** 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.

**Job 33:4** The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

We next consider the expression the heavens and the earth.

There are several questions that can be asked about this phrase.

Is it an expression for the totality of God's creation?

Some take it that way, but I believe it is best to see that verse 1 focuses on two different aspects of God's creation – heaven and earth.

The next question then is what is the heaven or heavens of verse 1?

This is a challenging question.

Not all commentators even deal with this question.<sup>4</sup> Further making this a difficult question is that conservative, Bible-believing scholars give different answers.

Let me mention two reasonable possibilities. Henry Morris believes the heaven or heavens of verse 1 suggests the component of space that makes up how we understand the physical creation in terms of space, mass, and time.

On the first day, God created the earth and the space of the universe in which the earth and everything else physical exists.

This is a possibility that must be considered. It could be supported by other passages of Scripture.<sup>5</sup>

Another possibility that must be considered is that this usage of heaven refers to the spiritual world where the angels dwell, the throne room of God.

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<sup>4</sup> For example Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1 of Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. IVP/ Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 48. I am not sure that John Calvin also specifically commented on this question.

<sup>5</sup> Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record*, 41.

This interpretation suggested by James Jordan and others is challenging, but I think must be considered as possibility for several reasons.<sup>6</sup>

Listen again to the familiar words of Col. 1:15 and 16.

**Col. 1:15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16** For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

Another aspect that makes attractive this understanding is that throughout Scripture heaven is described as being a pattern for the earth.

We pray in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Right from the beginning of Scripture we can say that God designed the earth so that it would reflect His glory displayed in heaven.

The ending chapters of Revelation show how God's purposes for His creation will one day reach their climax in a new heaven and earth – the holy city New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

Another glorious connection of heaven and earth is in the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Robert Letham writes:

"In summary, since the Triune God created the universe, we cannot understand it apart from the historical reality of the incarnation in Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Trinity who made it."

God's glorious work of creation out of nothing testifies to His work of redemption, which has no basis in sinful man, but rests completely in His sovereign working.

There is a goal for creation that we see in terms of redemption!

God the Sovereign Ruler who created a most perfect and beautiful universe will be glorified even through the fall and man's rebellion, because of the greater power of His glory and grace in redemption!

**2) CREATION'S PURPOSE IS TO MANIFEST THE GLORY OF HIS ETERNAL POWER, WISDOM, AND GOODNESS.**

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<sup>6</sup> Jordan, 174-176.

Why did God choose to create all things?

I don't think this is a question that we can truly answer.

But here is a question that we can answer.

What does creation show about God?

Let us consider four familiar but very important Scripture passages that answer this question.

**Rom. 1:20** For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

What a powerful and important verse!

That which is invisible about God can be clearly seen!

God's eternal power and divine nature can be understood through all that God has made.

Therefore all men have no excuse in saying, well I didn't have enough information about this God that made me and all things.

Verse 20 indicates that we see the power and divine nature of God in all aspects of creation.

Whether we are looking at the massive size of the universe or things incredibly microscopic, they bear testimony that none of these things could just come by chance.

There is no such things as simple life!

**Jer. 10:12** He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion.

In a similar way this verse says that creation bears witness to God's power, wisdom, and understanding or discretion.

Some scientists today speak of the fine tuning of the universe.

By this they speak of the speed of light, the gravitational constant, and other similar factors as being precisely what they are for life to exist.

Even Stephen Hawking has said, "The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life."

Sir Martin Rees, a British cosmologist, has stated, “Wherever physicists look, they see examples of fine-tuning.”<sup>7</sup>

Now some of those who use this argument accept some evolutionary ideas in terms of the age of creation, etc. but it is a testimony to the truth of Scripture that the universe does bear testimony to God’s amazing power, wisdom, and understanding.

**Psa. 104:24** O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions—

Here this Psalm which speaks of the creation week reminds us of the incredible number of things that God has made.

It is estimated that there are about 1.4 million animal species and 307,674 plant species.<sup>8</sup>

As we have seen before, Genesis 1 refers to kinds, which is not an identical category to species.

But these statistics do show the amazing variety that is seen in creation.

**Psa. 33:5** He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD. **6** By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

The word translated in the NKJV as goodness is the very important Hebrew word *hesed*, which speaks of God’s covenant love and loyalty. The ESV translates this word most often as steadfast love.

Isn’t this an amazing testimony that the earth is full of God’s unfailing love?

Now to be sure, we do not learn the full extent of God’s love just by looking at creation.

We need the cross to know the fullness of God’s love for His creation and for those whom He would redeem in Christ.

But the world and that which is in it is not simply a machine, operating merely according to patterns and laws.

The earth testifies to a God of love.

Now we know from Romans 1, the place where we began this brief excursion, that men and women in their rebellion suppress this truth.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpIiIaC4kRA>

<sup>8</sup> According to Wolfram Alpha, August 29, 2015.

Denial does not mean absence.

The corruption of sin and rebellion do not eliminate truth but means that God must change the heart of a sinner.

Creation reflects the glory of a Triune God. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit working in glorious unity and harmony must change the dead heart of a sinner so that he can fully recognize and embrace God's glory displayed in all things.

### **3) GOD'S WORK OF CREATION WAS ACCOMPLISHED IN SIX DAYS.**

Did you hear the recent news articles about psychological research studies?

Starting in 2011, a number of scientists started a massive project to reproduce the results of 100 psychology experiments from three important journals. Only 39% of the experiments were reproducible.

**75% of social psychology experiments and half of cognitive studies failed the replication test.<sup>9</sup>**

All of these studies were in scientific journals.

This is not to say that all scientific research is rubbish, but that one must consider that research can be easily affected by worldviews, money, and other factors.

Many people are naïve when it comes to how science works.

It is not simply people in white lab coats running experiments and carefully reporting all the data without any concern for what might be found.

Paul Johnson writes about science in the Soviet Union during the time of Stalin.

Some of the experts at Stalin's court were ready to argue that, with the 'Man of Steel' in charge, human will could overcome anything, and what had hitherto been regarded as the laws of nature or of economics could be suspended. As one of his economists, S.G.Shumilin, put it: 'Our task is not to study economics but to change it. We are bound by no laws.'<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/aug/27/study-delivers-bleak-verdict-on-validity-of-psychology-experiment-results>

<sup>10</sup> Paul Johnson, *Modern Times*, 267.

Just a few years ago, NASA held a press conference to announce they had discovered an arsenic-based life form.

They announced a press conference where they were to reveal “an astrobiology finding that will impact the search for evidence of extraterrestrial life.”

At the press conference, they revealed a microbe found on earth. What was special about this microbe was that they claimed its DNA was held together with arsenic rather than phosphates which underpin the DNA of all other known organisms on earth.

Later it was found out that this was a bunch of hype and poor research. Your tax payer dollars at work!<sup>11</sup>

Many Christians have no problem accepting the clear truth that God is the creator.

They do have a problem believing that God’s work of creation was accomplished in six days.

A. A. Hodge the son of Charles Hodge wrote a commentary on the Confession of Faith in 1869, just 10 years after the publication of Darwin’s famous book, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*.

Listen to what Hodge wrote:

Since the Confession was written the science of geology has come into existence, and has brought to light many facts before unknown as to the various conditions through which this world, and probably the stellar universe, have passed previously to the establishment of the present order. These facts remain in their general character unquestionable and indicate a process of divinely regulated development consuming vast periods of time.<sup>12</sup>

Hodge would go on for another long paragraph to show that there is no ready solution for bringing together the clear testimony of Scripture with the supposedly equal clear testimony of science.

This was the view of one of the most prominent and respected theologians in 1869.

The statement that really jumps out to me is where Hodge speaks of the facts of geology as being **unquestionable**.

This is a very dangerous belief – to say that the facts of speculative, historical science are unquestionable.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://io9.com/5708505/was-the-arsenic-life-form-announcement-just-a-nasa-publicity-stunt>

<sup>12</sup> A. A. Hodge, 82.

The Westminster Confession of Faith completed in 1647, states with respect to creation, that God accomplished it all in the space of six days.

Many who are highly supportive of the Confession are troubled that it agrees with Scripture at this point.

Why do we believe in a relatively recent creation that was accomplished in six, literal days?

We don't profess this simply to stand out from the majority of the world.

We don't profess this simply because we want to rebel against the establishment.

We believe this because this is what we understand is the very clear teaching of Genesis 1 and other passages of Scripture.

Additionally we submit that trying to merge the Bible with prevailing scientific ideas is not a good idea nor does it solve all your problems.

There are real problems if you believe there were millions of years of death before Adam and Eve were created.

Where does one stop embracing what science supposedly teaches when it comes to Scripture?

Was Adam a real, historical figure or just a metaphor?

Was there a real fall into sin and rebellion with a curse that has affected all of creation or is this also just a metaphor?

Did Jesus Christ really have the power to walk on water and calm the seas and waves or was this just an illusion? Maybe instead of calming the sea, Scripture means for us that he calmed his disciples.

Maybe instead of Jesus feeding the five thousand, what He really did was teach the crowds to share their food as I heard one liberal women minister teach.

Science has never shown that a man dead for three days can be brought back to life. All "science" would never support such an idea.

Was the resurrection of Jesus Christ a literal, bodily resurrection or just the resurrection of His ideas and spirit?

Finally under this point, I want to share again seven reasons why we believe Genesis 1 and 2 teach a literal creation in six days.

First, the word **day**, used over 2300 times, most often refers to a literal, 24-hour day.

Louis Berkhof writes: “In its primary meaning the word *yom* denotes a natural day; and it is a good rule in exegesis, not to depart from the primary meaning unless this is required by the context.”<sup>13</sup>

Second, the word “day” is given additional qualification by the attachment of the phrase evening and morning.

Third, each **day** in Genesis 1 is given a number. When a number is used, it is always a reference to a literal day.

Fourth, the same terminology is used after the sun is created and used to regulate the day-night pattern that was established before the sun was created.

Fifth, man’s work-week is specifically patterned after God’s work-week.

Sixth, the plural of the word day is always used in the context of normal 24-hour days. This is what we find in Exodus 20:11.

**Ex. 20:11** 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.

Seventh, the Holy Spirit could have directed the writer of Genesis 1 to use a different Hebrew word if God meant us to understand an extended period for creation.

Our belief in a literal understanding of Genesis 1 and 2 has a good foundation in an honest reading of the text.

## CONCLUSION

**Always marvel at our Triune God’s power, wisdom, and goodness as you look at all He has made.**

1. Scripture
2. Willing to endure shame
3. Not being stupid or anti-intellectual

## Prayer

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<sup>13</sup> Quoted from Ken Gentry’s article in The Counsel of Chalcedon Magazine. October/November 1998

**Hymn: 105**

**Benediction – 2 Cor. 13:14**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
*be* with you all. Amen.