

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Rest of Creation

Scripture: Genesis 2:1-3

Code: 90-221

Let's open our Bibles to the second chapter of Genesis tonight. Let me read the opening three verses, Genesis 2.

"Thus the heavens and the earth were completed and all their hosts; and by the seventh day, God completed His work which He had done and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

The creation account thus closes. That initial account that unfolds in chapter 1, more details of that...of elements of that creation, namely the creation of man, are expanded in chapter 2. But the creation itself, the primary account itself ends with those words, a reference to the seventh day.

The seventh day is mentioned three times in those verses I just read to you. It is mentioned because it is important. It is mentioned three times because it is important. The seventh day is unique. It has incomparable significance, indicated also by the fact that this is the first time the word "holy" is used in Scripture. The Hebrew word qedes translated "sanctified," in verse 3, is the word holy. The root meaning of qedes, holy, in the form of qadash, the root, is thought to mean "to be cut off, or to separate." And holiness, qodesha(?) is elevation, or exaltation, above the usual level.

So the seventh day is a special day. It is a day set apart. It is a day cut off from the other days and elevated. It is a day lifted up. It is a day exalted. The Hebrew use of, I'll get a little technical here for those of you who care, the Hebrew use of the stem called piel(??), which is a title used for some Hebrew stems, indicates causation...that is to say, He made this day holy. The verb form is also what we call declarative in the Hebrew which indicates He then declared it to be holy. He made it specially to be holy and then He declared it to be holy. So it is doubly set apart by His making, or design, and by His declaration. It is then a very, very unique day. None of the other six days is so identified and set apart as holy or sanctified, as exalted and lifted up above the others...a very unique day.

Now there are three reasons why it is unique and those three reasons are indicated by three verbs in this passage...the verb "completed," you see it there in verse 1, you see it again in verse 2; the verb "rested," you see that in verse 2 and again in verse 3; and the verb "blessed." It became a sanctified day, it became a holy day, it became an exalted day, it became an elevated day for the three reasons, that which signified that God completed, God rested and God blessed. Each of those three

verbs, by the way, is associated with the seventh day explicitly. Verse 2, "The seventh day God completed." Verse 2 again, "He rested on the seventh day." Verse 3, "He blessed the seventh day." So in each case the verb is tied explicitly to that seventh day which is mentioned three times.

Also, each of those three verbs is associated with the work of God. In verse 2, "God completed His work which He had done." Verse 2 again, "He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done." Verse 3, "God blessed the seventh day and because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

So the pattern and the structure here is very simple. This is a sanctified day. This is a holy day. This is a set-apart day. This is a unique day. For the reasons that it marks out God had completed His work, rested from His work and blessed this unique day.

Now let's just take those three for a moment and look at them. The first one is "completed." Verses 1 and 2 indicate the uniqueness of this day is connected to the fact that God completed creation. Verse 1, "Thus the heavens and the earth were completed and all their hosts, by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done." It is clear by the language here that the entire work of creation was completed, that's what the Hebrew term means. The entire work of God was completed so that on the seventh day it had been already completed and God rested. That is again to reiterate that creation was finished at the end of day six, finished in six 24-hour days. Since that time, there has been no other creation. No creation after that, it was completed. The heavens were completed, the earth was completed and "all their hosts" simply means everything in the heavens and everything in the earth.

Now a couple of weeks ago I mentioned to you how important it is to consider your options when you consider the completion of creation. Option number one, you'll remember, is materialistic evolution, that is the option that believes there is no such thing as creation and there is no God who is creator. In fact, materialistic evolution believes that the entire universe as it now exists came into existence out of nothing. Somehow there appeared out of nothing something in a primordial slime through billions of years, mutated into the intricate, complex and vast universe of today.

The second option is what's called theistic evolution which believes that God does exist as the original mind and the original power who launched and punctuated with creative acts the process of evolution. The process of evolution going on with some divine assistance.

The third possibility is divine creation which affirms that the eternal God, all wise, all powerful, without the aid of any evolution, made the universe completely as it is now in six days, after which all creation was completed. Nothing new had been created since then in the time/space world. There are no other options.

And we have been learning in our series that the first option can't be true because evolution is impossible. It cannot happen. It is an impossibility, random chance cannot result in anything. Nobody times nothing cannot equal everything. The system of life, DNA, the information encoded in genetic structure in every living cell prevents evolution because DNA only allows a living entity to be what it is and nothing more and when change does occur it is inferior rather than superior because something has gone wrong in that system. Random chance evolution is an utter impossibility.

The second option is also impossible because since evolution is impossible, any kind of evolution is impossible, even theistic evolution.

We're really left with only the third option, that is the universe is created by God and we are confirmed in that belief, it is the only reasonable belief, more than that, it is the testimony of Scripture. How the universe came into existence is clearly told to us in Genesis chapter 1 and 2. There is nothing in any part of the Scripture to indicate that any evolutionary process existed. God created everything as it is now and He did it in six 24-hour days. And the genealogies later on in Genesis indicate to us this likely occurred six to seven thousand years ago, that's all. This is what the Bible says and the Bible is the Word of God, inspired and inerrant. It is unmistakable.

When God began the Bible, He initiated revelation with the historical record of creation. That is because it's foundational to the gospel. It's foundational to all theology and all history. Creation is the foundation of all truth and all true religion because the issue of origins is critical to any understanding of the role God plays in the universe.

So we've been saying all along, the Bible is to be taken seriously in Genesis 1 and 2, just as it is in John 3:16 or anywhere else. If you question the inerrancy and authority of Scripture in Genesis 1 and 2, you're striking a blow against the integrity of the Word of God and you're dishonoring the God who inspired it and that is a serious crime. And we've been saying that Jesus Christ is not really the beginning of the gospel. Christianity does not begin with accepting Jesus Christ as Savior, it begins with accepting God as creator. When the church seriously demands that people recognize God as creator, sustainer, sovereign and consummator of the time/space universe, they will know God is acting in this world where they live and that they are accountable to this God who is creator, sustainer, sovereign and consummator. And when they understand that they are accountable to the creator and the Bible is true when it speaks of creation just as it is true when it speaks of the gospel, they then become aware that they are under God's sovereign authority, they view Scripture completely different. And we've been saying, and science never has found one shred of evidence, that anything has evolved or that the record of Genesis is anything but absolutely true.

So we have come to this point in Genesis where we affirm what it says, that the heavens and the earth were completed in six 24-hour days, about six or seven thousand years ago, most likely. So

when you come to day seven in that original week, all creation has ceased. If you believe in evolution, even theistic evolution, you have to believe that things are still evolving and that is in direct contradiction to the clear statement that the heavens and the earth were completed and all their occupants, all their hosts.

Now we remember on day one God created light; in day two He created water and the firmament. On day three He created the dry land; on day four the sun and the moon and the stars; on day five, the fish and the birds; day six, the land animals and man. He did it in each case in a 24-hour day as indicated by the phrase, "There was morning and there was evening," or "There was evening and there was morning." And at the end of the six days the heaven and the earth were completed. Back in verse 31 of chapter 1, "God saw all that He had made. Behold, it was very good." That is God's final stamp of approval on His completed creation. It was finished, it was complete, it was very good which was to say it lacked nothing.

Now that takes us to the second verb here, rested. "By the seventh day" literally could be translated, "And since by the seventh day God had completed His work which He had done, He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done." Repeatedly, I told you, three times it tells us that His work was done, His work was done, His work was done...in verse 3 using the words, "He rested from all His work which God had created and made." Three times it is said that God was finished, creating everything that has existence.

Now the verb "rested" is very interesting, shabath(??) in the Hebrew. It is not to imply any kind of weariness. It is not that God was worn out after a tough work week. Isaiah 40:28, you ought to remember this verse, Isaiah 40:28 says, "He faints not, neither is weary." There is when God works whether He's working in creation or whether He's upholding the creation by the Word of His power as we saw in Hebrews 1, or whether He's accomplishing any particular task, there is no dissipation of energy, there is no law of entropy, there is no breaking down of matter, there is no disintegration in the absolute, ineffable, pure, holy power of God. That's why Psalm 121:4 says He doesn't slumber and He doesn't sleep. He needs no replenishing. He needs no refreshing because He never gets weary, He never gets tired.

What does the Hebrew verb mean? Rested is a word that we could misunderstand, that's why I'm taking a minute or two to explain it. The Hebrew word simply means "not to do work." It is a negative connotation, primarily, not to do work. And what it is saying is since He had completed the creation, there was nothing for Him to do with regard to the creation. He ceased to work. He ceased to do the work of creation. That's what it means. And the word is used in those negative ways even the Mosaic Sabbath Law texts, giving us the idea that the indication, first of all, here is that God was done with His work and so He didn't do any further work.

Listen to Exodus 20, the Ten Commandments, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," this is under the Mosaic Law, we'll get to that later, "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God, in it you shall not do any work." Verse 11, "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them and didn't work...is literally what it means...did no work on the seventh day." So that the seventh day was rest, not in the sense of replenishing lost energy, but in the sense of not doing any work. That same idea is also in Exodus 23:12.

But there's something more than that. I don't want to just leave it at that. There is also a positive effect in that word. It can be used in a positive way and I want to draw that from Exodus 31 and verse 17. It says, "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth," and again reiterating exactly the same time as Genesis, "six days the Lord made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day...it says literally in the Hebrew...He ceased." He stopped. He stopped creating. He stopped making. "And was refreshed," now that's an addition. That's the positive side of it.

Now you say, "What does it mean He was refreshed? That sounds again like He needed to sort of regain His dissipated energy." Not at all. The idea of that Hebrew word "refreshed" is the idea of satisfaction or delight. It is not to say that the result of God not working was some necessary replenishing of lost energy or strength, not some level of rehabilitation, but the idea of being refreshed or to find delight because of satisfaction. It's really the response of God to what is stated in verse 31 that He saw everything He made, it was very good and as a result of that, He was satisfied. He found joy. He found delight. He found a certain fulfillment, satisfaction of accomplishment. Not unlike a master painter when he finishes his masterpiece and steps back to delight in what he has accomplished, not unlike a sculptor who molds the perfect image of a man and steps back having concluded his work to enjoy the finished product.

It's noteworthy, I think, and you need to follow along with this thought, it's noteworthy that there's no mention of the word Sabbath here, it doesn't occur in Genesis chapters 1 and 2, the creation account. No mention of Sabbath...that word is not here. And furthermore, I want you to file this, there is nothing said about man resting here. It is not appropriate to inaugurate here in Genesis some rest for man, that is to miss the point here. In fact, man isn't even mentioned here in connection with this seventh day rest, only God is mentioned. No rest for man is inaugurated here. No Sabbath for man is inaugurated here. That doesn't come until the Mosaic Law.

And I want to take you further into understanding this. When you read this, there is a startling omission here and sometimes half the fun in interpreting the Bible is finding what isn't there. But if you were to read through the six days and read day seven, what component of the first six days that was there in every single day is not in this discussion of day seven? The little phrase that says...what? "There was morning and there was evening," it's not there...it's not there. It was in every other day...verse 5, verse 8, verse 13, verse 19, verse 23, verse 31. But when you look at the

seventh day, you find no such formula and we might expect that "On the seventh day was evening and morning," but it isn't there. And, you know, in any kind of examination of the creation account, you can go into the minutest detail and you find careful, careful accuracy, great care taken by the Spirit of God in inspiring Moses to write down this description, this historic description of creation. It is a very, very careful account, carefully constructed. And when you see something there all the time and is all of a sudden omitted, there must be a reason, there must be a design, this can't be accidental because everything in this account is so well thought out and well planned. What was God endeavoring to say by not saying that? Well I think it should be obvious but let me help you with it a little bit.

What are we talking about when we talk about God's rest? That He was tired mentally, tired physically? No. Simply that He ceased, He ceased creating and then was, as it were, sitting back and just being satisfied with what He had created.

He was enjoying it. He was delighting in it. I mean, it was the light of God to see the work of His hands that had never existed before this time. How refreshing it must have been, how delightful, how well pleased God must have been when He saw the created universe free from sin, free from decay, free from the curse, no death, no decay. When He saw pristine blue skies sparkling with diamond stars, a brilliant blazing sun, when He saw crystal-clear waters without any kind of pollution, when He was a world with no death, when He saw shining white sands and magnificent colorful flowers, stately trees, forming the stage, as it were, for birds and fish, animals cavorting all over His created earth without fear. And how much God must have delighted when He walked through the Garden and fellowshiped with man, with Adam and the wife He made for him, named Eve. What a delight it must have been.

And God must have delighted in the fact that everything that man needed had been provided for him. Everything necessary was there for the happiness of Adam and Eve, this was the seventh day. But the reason it doesn't say evening and morning is because that didn't end in 24 hours, did it? It didn't end. In fact, God's delight wouldn't end until when? Sin came. That one day, that seventh day inaugurated some period of time in which God delighted in a world that sparkled with pure life and a world which enjoyed the presence of God and a man and his wife in open fellowship with their creator. Sin and its resulting curse still unknown. There was no more creation work to do and there was no work of preserving all of this because it wasn't prone to decay. And so we could say that on day seven God entered into a permanent state of rest, at least permanent until sin.

The conditions and characteristics then of that seventh day were designed by God to continue and they would have continued had it not been for the sin of Adam and Eve. It was not God's design that they would eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and bring a curse. It wasn't God who prompted them to do that and destroy their paradise. The entrance of sin devastated Eden's perfection. As the prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 59:2, "Your sins, your iniquities have made a

separation between you and your God."

The seventh day, listen, had an evening and a morning because the cycle of days began in creation, but the seventh day 24-hour period only inaugurated that period of time after God's having created in which He delighted. We don't know how long that was because we don't know how long it was until man sinned.

Summarizing God's rest then. It was an ongoing rest. He was delighting in the satisfaction of the goodness of what He had made in all of its pristine perfection. It was characterized by His delight and His satisfaction. He enjoyed perfect fellowship with Adam and Eve. And I remind you again, the seventh day of rest in Genesis had nothing to do with man. God didn't say to Adam and Eve...Now you folks, every time a seventh day rolls around, you do this. There's no command for man to rest on the seventh day. There's no command for Adam to do that after the Fall. God doesn't say, "Okay, now that you're fallen you can only work six days and take one off," that is not in Genesis. There is no Sabbath rule given here. There is no Sabbath rule given in the Abrahamic Covenant. You come in to chapter 12 and the following chapters and you have the rehearsal of the Abrahamic Covenant, God's first great covenant with Israel, and there is no discussion of any Sabbath, there's no discussion of any single day. And that, by the way, was a covenant of promise, a covenant of blessing.

So when you look at the seventh day here, what you're seeing is a day related to God. He ceased from His work and He delighted in what He had made.

The third verb that I would draw to your attention connected with the seventh day and with the cessation of God's work is in verse 3 and it says, "God blessed that day," or "God hallowed the day." In other words, God identified it with some...some unique holy character. Now the question is immediately asked...what does that mean? What does it mean He...He hallowed it?

Well, let me tell you what I believe that means. I believe God set it aside as a memorial. That's right. I believe He set it aside as a memorial, as a remembrance. All of creation occurred in one six-day period, not billions and billions and billions of years. All of creation occurred in six days. And then on a seventh day God took that day and said...I'm going to bless this day, I'm going to pull this day apart, I'm going to lift it up, I'm going to elevate it and set it apart as a reminder that in six days I created the universe. It didn't evolve. It isn't evolving. It is not randomly creating itself. God said the creation was done and I set apart the seventh day to be a day in which you will acknowledge the creation was done.

I really believe that what God was inaugurating as far as we're concerned when it says He blessed it, what God was inaugurating as far as we're concerned is the blessing of the seventh day was to establish that day as a reminder of God as creator. I don't think it has anything to do with Mosaic

Sabbath Law. You can't find that here, you can't read that in here legitimately.

You know, I've done a lot of reading on the subject of time and all of that and there is no rational reason, no philosophical reason, no mathematical reason, no scientific reason for weeks. Why in the world do we occupy our lives in weeks? Why seven days? Nobody in their right mind would purposely divide 365 days into sevens, it doesn't work...it doesn't work. That's why some months have 30 days, some months have 31 days and February has alternate days, depending on whether it's Leap Year. Why all that? Because you can't divide 365 by seven. Well why didn't we do it some other way? There's no real reason for that. Why do we have these weeks? Why is everything counted in weeks? Weeks don't even fit well into months, do they? Four weeks don't make a month. Five weeks don't make a month. Nobody would purposely do this. No committee would do this. Why in the world do we operate in sevens?

I'll tell you. There's only one reason and that's because God established that order because of creation. And every week of our lives we go through a cycle that is intended by God to remind us that He created the world in six days and rested. Every time a seventh day passes we should be acknowledging God as our creator. That's a memorial to a completed creation.

To reject God as creator and to reject a six-day creation is to unbless the seventh day. Therefore it's to deny God His true identity as creator, it's to rob Him of glory due His name. Any kind of evolution, any kind totally confounds the blessing of the seventh day, doesn't it? Of course it does. If we're evolving out of billions of years, there is no seventh day.

But on the other hand, if we believe what the Bible says, then every seventh day that passes is a memorial and a reminder that God created the entire universe in six days and was finished. And for that glorious accomplishment He deserves our praise.

So what does that have to do with me? Well, I think you ought to remember that. I think Saturday should be identified in our minds with completion of creation. You know, somewhere in the background of our western civilization somebody knew that because when they began to develop work patterns, they gave us Saturday and Sunday off. Saturday is the seventh day and, I mean, typically the ideal scenario, I know when I was growing up, it was very common on Saturday, we as a family had a picnic, or we got in the car and drove out to the creek and went fishing and we got together. It was always seemingly outside, it was...it was a day maybe somebody down the road knew needed to be enjoyed in the creation of God. It was a day when we remembered that He had created everything and we could enjoy His creation. We didn't work that seventh day, that was a day to enjoy the creation, that was a day to delight. That was a day to set the labor aside and just delight in what God had done.

I used to look forward to Saturdays more than Sundays as a kid because they used to put me in this little Lord Fauntleroy suit with...with knee-length stockings and knickers and make me sit the whole day, even after church until church at night. You couldn't do anything but eat. You could have...gluttony was the one sin that dominated Sundays. (Laughter) And that was on Sunday. But Saturday we went down to the park. We ran into the woods. We chased down to the creek and maybe somebody down the line knew that that was the day that we should enjoy the creation of God. When I look at the blessing of the Sabbath in Genesis, I don't see any Mosaic prescription here. I don't see anything about the Mosaic Law here. I don't see anything designed for man to do except to remember that God did it all in six days and He was finished. And what He did was very good to the degree that He completely delighted in it.

That memorializes that day for me. I hope it does for you. I mean, we can...we can live our lives, I think, appropriately like that. Saturday gives testimony to God as creator. Sunday gives testimony to God as Redeemer because of the resurrection, right? On the seventh day God rested because He had finished creation. On the first day Christ arose because He had finished redemption. Maybe somebody knew that when they gave us Saturday and Sunday. One day for the creator, another day for the Savior.

Saturday is a perpetual witness that God finished creation and is the glorious God of creation. Sunday is a perpetual witness that God finished redemption and is the God of salvation. Sadly in our society most people don't care about either of them. But I do and I know you do. I guess in some ways men are like monkeys because monkeys don't worship God either and monkeys don't care about His creation and monkeys don't care about His redemption. But we do. Evolutionists are anti-God, they're anti-Bible and they do what Romans 1 says is so deadly, they refuse to honor God, they refuse to give Him glory and so they bring on themselves, Romans 1 says, a reprobate mind and...and they engage in unspeakable forms of foolishness, sexual perversion, homosexuality and they delight in their wretchedness rather than delighting in the God of creation and the God of salvation. That's evolutionists.

But for us, for those of us who believe in the one true and living God, we believe in creation and no week goes by without a memorial and no week goes by without a witness, no week goes by without a testimony. No week goes by with a holy day, that's where we get the word holiday. No week of our lives ever goes by without one day that points to God as creator. Every seventh day is that.

Do some practical things on the seventh day. Go out and rejoice in the beauty of God's creation. Go play with your grandchildren and the wonder of human life. No week goes by without a reminder that God is creator. And isn't it wonderful, no week goes by without a witness, a testimony and a memorial to salvation, right? That's today, isn't it? The first day of the week was the day in which Jesus rose from the dead for our justification.

I think that's what's on the heart of God as He blesses the seventh day. And I think we need to leave it at that. Can't tell you how many books I've read in the last few weeks that say here God established a universal pattern for man. It doesn't say that. It doesn't say that at all. Man isn't even discussed here. God didn't instruct Adam to do anything on the seventh day. It isn't even limited to a day. God engaged in some permanent condition of delight over the completion of His creation until sin came. And I think that all we need to take is what the text says and see this day as simply God's design for human life. And isn't it amazing that the whole world operates on seven-day weeks? I remember in America when they tried to change everything over to...from inches, you remember, to meters and all of that and nobody would buy into it finally because the housewives didn't want to get rid of all their utensils. That was really what stymied the whole thing. Husbands would be made ill because all the recipes would be wrong if they started cooking with liters and all those things. So we're stuck with our own system as over against the whole world who has a different system.

But in the case of calendars, the whole civilized world operates on weeks and there's no reason for that except that's the way God designed it so that everyone every so often in the routine of life would face the fact that a great creator created it all in six days and every seventh day He gave us that reminder that His creation was done. Isn't it sad that people won't give Him the glory He's due? The honor He's due?

Now all of that opens up the subsequent teaching on the Sabbath law on the Mosaic economy. How is that connected to this? Well, I'm not going to tell you tonight. I just leave Genesis where it is and next time we meet I'm going to take you into the Sabbath law of the Mosaic economy and show you if and how that connects and if at all it establishes any precedent for what we do now on the Lord's day. That's going to be a fascinating study. But you've been very patient and we'll leave it at that for tonight. Let's pray.

Father, it's...it's such a joy to just see the Word of God come to life. We bless You, we honor...we thank You for...for doing it in a week. We thank You for doing it in six days and then giving us a day to remember that. We thank You that You have told us that You are to be honored and worshiped as the creator. You are to be remembered. Every seventh day is like a living time memorial affirming the wonder of six-day creation. We glorify You as our creator. We adore You as our Redeemer. We realize, God, that it is beyond our comprehension that You could create in six days. Your power and Your wisdom is way beyond us. It is equally beyond our understanding that You would redeem us. But, Lord, You filled us with such richness for we know You and we love You and thus we can remember You as the creator each week and remember You each week as the Redeemer as well. May we never forget, never forget. And may we glorify You for all that You've done. By virtue of the work of Jesus Christ we offer You our prayers and our lives in Christ's name. Amen.

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