

## **The Theology of Creation**

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 90-359

On Sunday nights here at Grace Church for many months, we have been dealing with very important matters of theology, great doctrines that are critical for our understanding of the Christian faith, and therefore our service to the Lord. And tonight I want to embrace one that is certainly foundational, I want to call it, "The Theology of Creation...The Theology of Creation." Creation is a theological issue, not a scientific issue. Theology is the only source from which we have any information about creation. Any study of creation must come in the framework of theology because it is a word from God.

Theology, by the way, used to be called the queen of the sciences. It was called the queen of the sciences because in the final analysis the ultimate reigning truth is theology. Biblical theology, the revelation of God in Scripture, trumps all other sources of information and knowledge. And so, for centuries creation was a theological issue, not a scientific one. And then came Darwin and Darwin confiscated the subject of creation out of the realm of theology and tried to put into the realm of human knowledge and did no service to mankind.

If we want to understand creation, if we want to understand origins, if we want to understand how the universe came into existence and everything that is in it, we have to look at theology, not science. And the source of theology is the Word of God in which God speaks. The Bible is not theory, the Bible is fact. The Bible is reality. The Bible is truth no matter what subject it addresses, but particularly with regard to origins since no one was here when God created, we have only His eyewitness account.

And when the Bible speaks with regard to creation, or when it speaks with regard to origins, it speaks truly, it speaks factually. And Scripture begins in Genesis 1 and 2 with a very straightforward account of the origin of the universe and the earth and everything on the earth. Scripture opens with one very clear unmistakable statement, it is this, Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." That is not an ambiguous statement. That is not an unclear statement. That is frankly not a statement that needs any explanation. Pre-Darwin, no one was confused by it. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." From there the first chapter of Genesis proceeds to tell us that in six twenty-four hour days God created everything that exists. It is so simple and so clear and so unmistakable that even a small child can understand Genesis 1.

But as simple as even the first statement, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," is, it is at the same time an illustration of the profundity with which God speaks in simple language. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, a child can understand it. And yet in those

simple, clear, unmistakable words there is massive, massive, profound data.

Herbert Spencer, a non-Christian scientist, hailed as one worthy of many prizes in science, died in 1903. His greatest achievement, Herbert Spencer, was that he discovered the categories of the knowable. That is to say he determined that everything that exists fits into one of five categories. This was hailed as a massive, massive cataloging of realities. Spencer said, "Everything fits into one of these categories, time, force, action, space, matter," and was hailed by the scientific community.

Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning," that's time, "God," that's force, "created," that's action, "the heavens," that's space, "the earth," that's matter. Everything that Herbert Spencer discovered in 1903, or before that, was in the first verse of Scripture. The Bible says that God created everything, and in saying that, the Bible gives us all the categories that exist. And He did this out of and from nothing, that is with no preexisting material, and He did it in six days.

Now, because the Bible is so clear about this in Genesis 1, and then giving us an even further and more detailed look at this creation, rehearsing its elements in a broader way in chapter 2, you face a test at the very outset of the Bible. You're not going to get past the first verses of the Bible, you're not going to get past the first verse in the Bible, the first chapter in the Bible, the first two chapters in the Bible without facing a test. And the test is this, do you believe the Scripture? Do you believe the Scripture? That is the test. No one gets past the opening verses of the Bible without having to face the test of whether or not that person believes the Bible to be the authoritative Word of God. Do you submit to Scripture? Genesis 1 is your first test.

Now I'm going to give you three words to think about tonight and we're going to kind of unpack these words and they'll be sort of little categories that we can put our thoughts in so we can understand them a little more clearly. The first word is fidelity...fidelity...fidelity, faithfulness. Either you believe what the Bible says or you don't. That's the test. You can accept what Genesis says, or you can reject it. You can't change it, you don't have that privilege. In fact, were you to add to Scripture or take anything from it would be added to you the plagues that are written in it. There's no need for you to edit God. There is nothing lacking anywhere in Scripture and that's true of Genesis 1 and 2 which somehow needs you to embellish it. You either accept it or you reject it, you have those two options.

You say, "What about science? Don't we have to apply science to the Genesis account to be intellectually honest? Don't we have to bring the vast scientific knowledge that we've accumulated in the modern world to bear upon the text of Genesis in order that we may have a true understanding of it?"

Well there are a lot of people who believe that and there are a mass of people who call themselves Christians who believe that Genesis is an inadequate presentation of what happened and we have to marry it with scientific discovery in order to get to the truth. Let me help you, folks, let me help you.

Get past that notion and you will free yourself from needless doubts and endless confusion. Get past the idea that science, listen, makes any contribution to an understanding of creation. It makes none.

Now this may shock you. There is no such thing as the science of creation. There is no such thing. It does not exist. Why? Because there is no scientific way to explain creation. It was not a natural event or a series of natural events. It was a brief series of monumental super-natural events that cannot be explained by science. And so again I say, there is no such thing as the science of creation. All science is based on observation and no one observed creation. All science necessitates verification by repetition and creation cannot be repeated, and thus it cannot be verified.

Creation had no observers and cannot be repeated. It is not observable. It is not repeatable. It did not happen by any uniform, predictable, observable, repeatable, fixed, natural, laws. None of it happened according to any of those things. It is just the opposite of that. Creation was a series of supernatural instantaneous, inexplicable miracles...supernatural. That is why there is nowhere in the Genesis account any place where evolution is mentioned or even hinted at. There are no natural processes in creation. They are all supernatural. Evolution was not the means or a means by which God created, it was all supernatural and miraculous. There's only one record of creation, Genesis 1 and 2. You can believe it or you can reject it, but that's all there is.

You say, "Well wait a minute. Don't creatures change?" Yes. "Don't plants change? Don't animals develop and mutate within species and isn't there progress in growth?" Yes and all of that is true and has absolutely nothing to do with creation...nothing.

How the created material reality operates we can observe. How the created material functions we can discern. But watching the way it functions and the way it operates gives us...listen to this...no information about its creation, none. It doesn't tell us anything about how it came into existence in the first place.

Let me give you an illustration. Let's say that you lived in Jerusalem at the time that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead and you met Lazarus. "Hi, Mr. Lazarus, nice to meet you." You felt his hand, and wow...you were dead, huh? You're alive, right? Yeah. Could I hang around you a little bit, I want to kind of observe that like do a little analysis of you? Sure.

And you followed Mr. Lazarus walk around. You watched the way he walked. You watched the way he talked. You watched the way he scratched his head. You watched the way he ate and you observed him. You kept a little record of all the things that he did. You could keep observing Lazarus as he did his daily living for the rest of his life and it would tell you nothing about how he came back from the dead, nothing because his resurrection had nothing to do with any of those natural processes. It was a supernatural miracle.

Or let's say you were in Galilee the week after Jesus fed the five thousand men, plus women, plus children, the loaves and the fish and you wanted to know where in the world did He get that ability to do that? How did He do that? How did He feed those people with loaves and fish, how did He do that miracle? And you decided that you were going to go up there and you're going to interview all those people and you're going to ask them about what they felt while they were eating it and how it was digested and any experiences that they might have had after having that meal. It wouldn't do any good if you were in the process of that investigation trying to figure out how Jesus made fish and bread out of nothing. You see, that is analogous to the issue of creation. You can observe the way things are now but that doesn't tell you anything about how they became what they are. Creation cannot be understood any other way than by believing the revelation of the creator. And that's your first test when you open your Bible.

I am absolutely astounded at how many people who call themselves Christians who lead large and effective Christian ministries don't have any position on Genesis 1 and 2 except that they find it hard to believe it. And I ask them, "At what chapter do you kick in? When do we finally get you on board? Is it Genesis 3, do you buy that? Or maybe 4?"

What I'm saying is, creation has no connection at all to science anymore than the behavior of Lazarus could in any way reveal how he was raised from the dead. Creation is not a scientific event, cannot be explained scientifically as if natural law played any part. Creation was a massive supernatural miracle to be equaled by the future uncreation when in a lot less than six days God destroys everything He created. Neither event, creation or uncreation, can be explained by any natural fixed laws.

So, all that is left to the reader is the opportunity to believe...fidelity, faithful trust in the Word of the Creator. That's all we've got. People say, "Well couldn't God have used evolution? Couldn't He?" That's a ridiculous question. Could a frog fly? It's irrelevant. It's intrusive. But the answer is no. He couldn't have used evolution because God doesn't equivocate with Himself, He determined to create miraculously which is the only way that it could have happened because it's the way it did happen. And He did it all in six days. This is either true, or it's not. If it's true, then Scripture is true. If it's not, then Scripture is not true. So you can see at the very outset of the Bible, you face a formidable test.

In Job chapter 38, I love this chapter, the Lord is trying to put Job in his place. "And the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and reminds him of his silly ideas and the equally ridiculous ideas of his friends, and He says, 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?'" Here are counselors doing nothing but obscuring truth. "Now gird up your loins like a man. I will ask you...God says sarcastically...you instruct Me, you tell Me, you've got all the answers, huh? Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" I want to say that to every evolutionist. Really? You're going to tell me how it happened, are you? Well God has a word for you, "Where were you

when I did it? You were nowhere. Tell me if you have understanding. Who set its measurements since you know? Who stretched the line on it? And what were its bases sunk? Who laid its cornerstone? And when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who inclosed the sea with doors, boundaries, and bursting forth it went out from the womb? When I made a cloud its garment, thick darkness its swaddling band and I placed boundaries on it, I set a bolt and doors, lightning bolt, and I said, 'Thus far you shall come but no farther.' God put borders on the water and stopped the proud waves."

"Have you ever in your life commanded the morning?" I love the sarcasm. "Have you ever caused the dawn to know its place that it might take hold of the ends of the earth and the wicked be shaken out of it? It is changed like clay under the seal; rolled on an axis is what that means. Have you ever entered...in verse 16...into the springs of the sea? Have you ever walked in the recesses of the deep? Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Have you seen the gates of deep darkness? Have you understood the expanse of the earth? Tell me if you know all this. Where's the way to the dwelling of light and darkness? Where's its place?"

Verse 22, "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow? Have you seen the storehouses of the hail?" And He goes on like this. Where does the ice come from? Where does the lightning come from? Where does the thunder bolt come from? Where do glaciers come from? Verse 30, "Water becomes hard like stone and the surface of the deep is imprisoned. And what about the constellations? Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion? Can you hold a constellation together or break one up? Can you lead a constellation in its season as it moves across the sky and guide the bear with her satellites? Do you know the ordinances of the heavens or fix their rule over the earth? Can you lift your voice to the clouds so that an abundance of water may cover you? Can you send forth lightning?" I mean, this is just humiliating...humiliating.

"Can you hunt the prey for the lion?" Verse 39, "Can you satisfy the appetite of the young lion?" It just keeps going like this. It goes like this through chapter 39. And eventually Job gets the point and he realizes this is ridiculous.

In chapter 40 and verse 3, "Job answers the Lord and said, 'I am insignificant, what can I reply to Thee? I lay my hand on my mouth.'" Smart guy.

You weren't there and nobody else was there, only God was there and told us how He did it. You can either believe it or you can reject it. If it's true, the Bible is true. If it's not true, the Bible is suspect. If you look at it the other way, if the Bible is true then this is true.

The issue, friends, is fidelity to the truth. This is theological. I'm very much aware of the interesting creation research. I'm very interested in science that is being done today by Christians who believe in creation. But I think there's a very large missing component, and that is the biblical theology of

creation. They seem to always be trying to prove their point that evolution doesn't exist by using some scientific method. And while nothing in the world supports evolution, nothing, nothing in the world supports evolution now or in creation, disproving evolution now doesn't necessarily disprove it in creation because there is no scientific explanation for creation. So we don't gain any ground by somehow saying that because evolution doesn't exist now, it couldn't have existed then. God did not use evolution because it is clear in Genesis that He created everything in six days.

Furthermore, look at Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 3. "By faith...here we go, fidelity, faith, trust...by faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the Word of God." We have to do this by faith, right? We weren't there. No one was there. It is by faith. "So that...this is very critical, verse 3...what is seen...what is seen, the material creation...was not made of things which are visible." In other words, God made everything that we now see from what is invisible. That is to say He made everything out of nothing, *ex nihilo*. Hebrews 11:3 is telling us what Genesis records, that God created everything that exists in the universe out of nothing, from no preexisting material, obviously, that obviates evolution.

There are honest non-Christians who recognize the impossibility and non-existence of evolution in the world today and have honestly said that evolution is not an explanation of present reality and therefore it can't be an explanation of prior reality. It isn't happening now. It doesn't happen, therefore it hasn't happened. I'm glad for that. I'm glad for that kind of honesty in the scientific world. But while they are admitting that, they are not embracing the account in Genesis because if you embrace the account in Genesis as true, then you embrace the Bible as true and the God of the Bible as the true and living God and you get not only a Creator but you get a lawgiver and a judge. And so, they would love to find another alternative except the Creator God of Scripture. So you have the development of this new kind of science called ID, Intelligent Design, in which people acknowledge that there is behind this great reality of the universe a mind that is intelligent from which it all springs, but they are unwilling to acknowledge that to be the God of the Bible and Genesis to be the accurate account of creation.

So they come up with this non-threatening middle ground safe halfway zone called I.D., Intelligent Design. By the way, far from safe, deadly dangerous to reject the God of Scripture as Creator and therefore as Judge and as Redeemer.

Why do they do this? Well let me quote from my book. You know you're in trouble when you start doing that. I wrote a book called *Battle for the Beginning*. "Evolution was invented in order to eliminate the God of Genesis and oust the lawgiver and obliterate the inviolability of His moral law. Evolution is the latest means fallen sinners have devised to suppress our innate knowledge of God and the biblical testimony to Him and that we are accountable to Him."

So even if you reject evolution, there's not a mad rush to embrace the God of Scripture because that brings to bear upon the sinner way too much responsibility and accountability. Evolution is not happening, it has never happened observable in the world in which we live and there is no reason to assume that something that doesn't happen and never has happened was the way in which everything was created, particularly since no one was there and since the one who was there and who did it all has given us a complete revelation of exactly how He did it.

So I say to you, Scripture is the test then of what you believe about origins. Scripture is the test. And we come to the formidable battleground on this issue and it is a formidable one. Even Paul recognized it when he said this to Timothy, 1 Timothy 6:20, "Guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called science which some have professed and gone astray from the faith." Watch out for false knowledge, false science.

These are the things which Paul writes about in 2 Corinthians 10:3 to 5, these are the ideologies, every high idea raised up against the knowledge of God. So the first word to consider in the theology of origins is the word fidelity, trust in Scripture. The matter of origins is the foundation. It's the starting point of all reality revealed in the Bible. It is your first opportunity to believe the Bible or to reject the Bible. But understand that whatever you do with Genesis 1 and 2 sets the tone for your attitude toward Scripture.

There's a national ministry that not too many years ago was having one of the greatest impacts on this country of any ministry in terms of numbers of people influenced ever. That ministry affirmed the gospel of Christ, the authority of Scripture, said it was Bible based, Christ proclaiming, gospel centered.

A letter was written to the president of that organization to ask the position of the organization on origins. Here's the written answer. "Our ministry takes no stand on such secondary issues. Our efforts are designed to bring people together based on the historically essential doctrines of orthodox Christianity. Creation is one of those secondary doctrines and we believe it falls into the category of non-essentials like spiritual gifts, eternal security and the Rapture, etc."

All of a sudden we have an organization that's now decided what the second class doctrines are. Amazing. We don't get into secondary issues. There isn't any issue more primary than this because it's the first one you're confronted with when you open your Bible and get past the title page. Amazing. I would like to suggest a sort of basic test for any Christian ministry that you might be drawn toward, either to participate with them, to support them in some way. I would suggest that you ask any ministry, any so-called Christian ministry, especially a Christian college, Christian seminary that you're thinking about going to, or sending your friends or your children to, or church that you might attend, one question. And here is the first question you should ask them. Write it in a letter and send it to them next time some ministry solicits money from you. "Do you believe completely in the literal

interpretation of Genesis chapter 1 and chapter 2?" Ask them that.

There are 106 Christian colleges in what is called "The Christian College Coalition." Five would say yes to that. A hundred and one would say no. Just exactly does Genesis 1 and 2 mean then if it doesn't mean what it says which even a child can understand, then how are we to know what it means? And at what point can we trust anything that the Bible says?

The answer to the question, "What is your view of Genesis 1 and 2?" will reveal the attitude of any organization, any ministry toward Scripture. And if they believe that Scripture is inerrant and authoritative and complete, you'll get the right answer. If you get the wrong answer, then they have a weak view of Scripture. And if they reject Genesis 1 and 2, then you can ask them the other question that I posed a little while ago, "Just exactly where do you start believing the Bible?"

Oh some will say, "No, no, wait a minute, we believe in a literal Adam." Oh really, literal Adam, that God created a literal Adam and a literal Eve in the middle of this long billions of years of evolution. Well this involves a very severe and a very arbitrary change in your principles of interpretation when you get to chapter 1 verse 27, chapter 2 verse 7, all of a sudden now you've got miraculous instantaneous creation of a man in the middle of an evolutionary process. There's nothing in the text itself that would allow you to do that. If everything else is symbolic, if everything else is some kind of myth, if everything else is some kind of poetry, if everything else is some kind of extended allegory, then why would you all of a sudden change all your principles of interpretation and say the creation of Adam was in instantaneous miracle in the middle of an evolutionary process? That betrays a lack of fidelity to Scripture in a very arbitrary way of interpreting it.

So, the first issue is fidelity. Let me give you a second word, a little category, simplicity...simplicity. The Genesis account is by all honest consideration simple, plain, clear, perspicuous, uncomplicated, unmistakable, unambiguous. It is what it is and a child can understand its simplicity.

Or, John 1, "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God the Word was God, He was in the beginning with God, all things came into being by Him and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." Is that complicated? Nothing exists that He didn't create.

Or Colossians 1 and verse 16, "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things have been created by Him and for Him."

Deuteronomy 4:32 speaks of the day that God created man on the earth. Scripture is simple in its clarity. Look at Psalm 104...Psalm 104, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, O Lord my God, Thou art very great, Thou art clothed with splendor and majesty, covering Thyself with light as with a cloak, stretching out heaven like a tent curtain. He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters. He

makes the clouds His chariot. He walks on the wings of the wind. He makes the winds His messengers, flaming fire His ministers. He established the earth upon its foundation so that it will not totter forever and ever. Thou didst cover it with the deep as with the garment. The waters were standing above the mountains, at Thy rebuke they fled.” This is describing the creation. “The mountains rose, verse 8, the valleys sank down.” Verse 10 talks about God sending forth springs in the valleys that flow between the mountains to give drink to every beast of the field. Verse 14, “He causes the grass to grow for the cattle and all the vegetation for the labor of man. He creates the high mountains for the wild goats,” in verse 18, and on and on and on it goes. Verse 19, “He made the moon for the seasons, the sun knows the place of its setting.” Verse 24, “O Lord, how many are Thy works? In wisdom Thou hast made them all.”

How simple is that? How unmistakably clear is that? Coming to the end of or toward the end of the Psalms, Psalm 148, “Praise the Lord, praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the heights, praise Him all His angels, praise Him all His hosts, praise Him sun and moon, praise Him all stars of light, praise Him highest heavens. Let the waters that area above the heavens, let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created. He has also established them forever and ever, made a decree that will not pass away. Praise the Lord from the earth, sea monsters and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and clouds, stormy wind, fulfilling His Word, mountains and all hills, fruit trees and cedars, beasts and cattle, creeping things and winged fowl, kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all judges of the earth, both young men and virgins, old men and children, let them praise the name of the Lord for His name alone is exalted, His glory is above earth and heaven.” All creation praising the Creator.

This again is the unmistakable simplicity of biblical testimony. It is not complicated. Isaiah 40:28, “Do you not know, have you not heard, the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired.” Ephesians 3:9, “God created all things.” Colossians 1:16, “By Him all things were created.”

Turn to Revelation for a moment, Revelation chapter 3...verse 14, “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write, ‘The amen...this identifies Christ...the amen, the faithful and true witness...then this, so wonderful...the beginning of the creation of God says this...” That could be translated “the beginner, the originator of the creation of God. John 1, “All things were made by Him.”

We never forget as the church of Jesus Christ that the Christ that we worship is the Creator who made everything. “And without Him was not anything made that was made.”

In the fourth chapter, the glimpse goes from earth to heaven and we see the hosts of heaven worshiping. Verse 11, “Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power for Thou didst create all things and because of Thy will they existed and were created.” Eternal praise offered to God in heaven for the work of creation....for the work of creation.

Chapter 10 of the book of Revelation, "Saw an angel...in verse 5...standing on the sea and on the land, lifted up his right hand to heaven, swore by Him who lives forever and ever." That's God...that's God. Further described as, "The one who created heaven and the things in it and the earth and the things in it and the sea and the things in it." Chapter 14, "Heavenly praise having been offered to God as Creator, we who proclaim Him in this world will also then proclaim Him as Creator."

In the future time of the Great Tribulation, there will be an angel flying in the mid-heaven, verse 6 of Revelation 14, and he'll have an eternal gospel, an everlasting message of good news to preach to those who live on the earth and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people. And what is the message? What is the everlasting message? What is the message that will be preached, is being preached, has been preached? It is this, "Fear God and give Him glory." That's the timeless message, "Fear God and give Him glory because the hour of His judgment has come and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters." And therein, dear friends, lies the rub with the evolutionists. If He is the Creator, then He is to be worshiped for the God that He is. He is to be feared because He is holy, is to be loved because He is gracious.

The eternal gospel is the good news of salvation to be preached to the world. It's the same message preached now, preached in the past. There is a God, He is a holy God. We have violated His Law. We need to fear this God and we need to worship Him. The means by which we can come to worship Him is through Jesus Christ.

Sinners over the world have always been commanded the same thing. "Fear God, give Him glory, worship Him or die, or perish." And who is this God? The one who made the heaven and the earth.

There are all kinds of examples of this. Read Psalm 33. All kinds of examples of this, worshipping God as the Creator. There's no question about the fact that the writers of the New Testament affirm the Genesis record. There are 165 passages in Genesis directly quoted or referred to in the New Testament. Genesis has alluded to 200 times, 165 of them are quotes or direct references. They're all clear. They're all simple, straightforward affirmations of the book of Genesis and the simple account of creation that is contained there. Every New Testament writer, every New Testament writer refers to Genesis. Universally the writers of the New Testament affirm the reality and the truthfulness of Genesis. According then to the plain meaning of Genesis 1:1 in the original Hebrew, the infinite, personal, eternal God at a particular chosen point in eternity created all reality outside of Himself out of nothing. The verb in the Hebrew in the *kal stem bara(????)* has a much more limited use than we would use the word "create" in English, and it means to bring something into existence out of nothing..*ex nihilo(??)*. This has been the universal confidence of God's true people through history.

Let me give you an illustration of it. Nehemiah 8...Nehemiah 8 and you remember the great story of the revival when the Word of God was recovered and Ezra, the scribe, brought the book of the Law,

chapter 8 verse 1, that would be the Pentateuch...that would be Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy starting with Genesis, starting with the creation account. And you remember that the Word of God was read and it was read daily through seven days. And on the eighth day, according to the eighteenth verse of chapter 8, there was a solemn assembly in response to the reading of Scripture.

Chapter 9, "On the twenty-fourth day of this month, the sons of Israel assembled with fasting and sack cloth and dirt upon them, and the descendants of Israel separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins in the iniquities of their fathers. And while they stood in their place, they read from the book of the Law of the Lord, their God for a fourth of the day and for another fourth they confessed and worshiped the Lord their God. And all of the Levites on the platform are named there and they said this..." go down to verse 5, "Arise, bless the Lord your God forever and ever. O may Thy glorious name be blessed and exalted above all blessing and praise. Thou alone art the Lord, Thou has made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their hosts, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. Thou dost give life to all of them and the heavenly hosts bows down before Thee. Thou art the Lord God who chose Abraham and brought him out from Ur of the Chaldees and gave him the name Abraham. Thou didst find his heart faithful before Thee. Let's make a covenant with him, give him the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, Amorite, Perizzite, Jebusite, Girgashite, to give to his descendants and Thou hast fulfilled Thy promise for Thou art righteous."

And then the recitation of the history of all God's mighty deeds which are factual taken out of the Pentateuch. And then verse 17, "But your people were stubborn, they refused to listen. Didn't remember Your wondrous deeds which You had performed."

We do a great dishonor to God to deny Him as the Creator. They read the Genesis account and they extolled God as their Creator and their Redeemer. Were they somehow lame in their understanding of reality? Were they and every other one who devoted his life to the true and living God and put his trust in Him, before Charles Darwin worshiping God in some kind of ignorance? Were they in thinking that God had wondrously, miraculously, gloriously created everything in six days misinformed and thus their praise, the praise of those that are ignorant? And what about the church of Jesus Christ through the centuries the pillar and ground of the truth, the guardian and proclaimer of the true God, have they also been captive to some kind of simplistic naive notion about creation? Or do the people of God have it right? Do they have it right?

To reject the Genesis account is to reject not only Old Testament worship but New Testament worship and the worship of the church of Jesus Christ through the subsequent centuries when the believers put their confidence in their God and their Christ as the Creator. So fidelity and simplicity rest together.

But there's one more word and one more category. The creation account is not something to trifle with. It is not something secondary. It is not something arbitrary. It is preeminent. It is primary. It is essential. It is critical to the main theme of divine revelation and the eternal purpose of God. So let's use the term priority...fidelity, simplicity, priority.

What is God's priority? What is His purpose for which He made everything? What is the goal in the end and the reason? What is the divine priority? Obviously God created with a clear end in mind. God didn't create and hope some meaningful plan evolved. He created with a very specific scheme in mind. He created with a very defined ultimate purpose that would be brought to its fulfillment. And God orchestrates the array of circumstances, contingencies, changes and revolutions from person to person, day to day, nation to nation, era to era, toward some certain fixed goal to which everything moves inexorably.

Jonathan Edwards put it this way. "Providence subordinates all changes in the affairs of mankind." That's a great statement. Providence subordinates all changes in the affairs of mankind and they're all subordinated to a divine plan. Everything from creation to consummation is part of one great divine plan being worked by God's powerful providence. There's not one hostile molecule that operates outside of that plan. History will end exactly the way God wants it to end. The actual end of history will be the end of history which He Himself brings to pass. This universe is not eternal, it will come to an end. It will implode in a nuclear implosion and go out of existence. That's what Scripture says. But not until and only when God's scheme is complete and He has no further use for this universe.

Meanwhile, divine providence, divine purpose, subordinates orders, overpowers controls all things to achieve God's end. There are lots of places in Scripture where we have insight into this. Perhaps one you might not think about but is critical to our understanding is found in Isaiah 46 verse 9. "Remember the former things long passed. I am God, there is no other. I am God, there's no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done saying, 'My purpose will be established, I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'"

As we read in Colossians, "All things created by Him and for Him." And what is this grand design? What is this grand purpose? What is God doing? Why did He create this universe? Why did He create the earth? Why did He put on the earth all these creatures? Why did He make man? What is the point of all of this?

And the answer is, "The grand design is redemption." The grand design is the gathering of a redeemed people into eternal glory for the purpose of worshiping Him forever and ever. And all God's works of creation and providence and consummation are all associated with the work of redemption. The work of redemption is not incidental, it is the reason why the universe exists. It is the reason why there is an earth. It is the reason why there is a supporting life system for man. Every part of the

creation is intended to focus on the purpose of redemption.

Even the heavens are declaring the glory of God so that men might be led to redemption. Even the beast of the field gives Him honor so that men might be led to the God who created the beast of the field that they might see Him as not just Creator but Redeemer. Every molecule in the created material universe, every spiritual entity be it a demon or a human fits somewhere into the subordinated purposes of God under the great unfolding plan of redemption.

In Ephesians chapter 3, just to show you this quickly, in Ephesians chapter 3 and verse 8, Paul says, "To me the very least of all saints, the grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things...listen to this...He created all things, He created all things in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord."

That is just profound. Why did He create all things? In order that He might put on a display of manifold wisdom for all the angels of heaven to see and for which they would forever praise Him. He created to redeem, to display His glory to the holy angels.

So, when you look at creation, you must understand that in creation is the very beginning of the purposes of God in redemption. The New Testament makes those kinds of connections as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. Romans chapter 5, I think, very familiar to us, verses 18 and 19, draw parallels between creation and redemption. So then through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, meaning Adam's sin, so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. Through one man's disobedience many were made sinners. Through the obedience of one, many will be made righteous.

You go back to Genesis 3 and the Fall and even in the Fall there is a clear connection to the work of redemption. We're familiar with that. But that also is not just limited to those categories of fallenness. First Corinthians 15 says, "Adam was given life but the second Adam is a life giver."

First Corinthians 15:21 says, "The first Adam brought death, the second Adam conquered death."

Revelation 2 says, "Adam lost paradise." Revelation 22 says, "The second Adam brings paradise."

First Corinthians 14:47 says, "The first Adam was earthy. The second Adam is heavenly." First Corinthians 15:48 and 49, "The first creation is in the likeness of God and the new creation will also be in the likeness of God."

All kinds of salvation analogies are drawn not only out of the parallels between Christ and the fallen Adam, but between Christ and an innocent Adam. But perhaps the richest analogy between redemption and creation is in 2 Corinthians 4, and I want you to look at that and this is where we'll kind of tie our thoughts together. Second Corinthians chapter 4, "For God who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness.'" Now we'll stop right there.

What's that referring to? What's it referring to? Creation. God said, "Let there be light." And so, Paul sees in the original creation of light a picture, an analogy of the light of salvation. For God who said light shall shine out of darkness. Do I need to remind you about that? "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," Genesis 1:1. But verse 2 says, "And the earth was without form and void and...what?...darkness was over the face of the deep."

It was formless. It was lifeless. It was empty. It was a void of darkness until God said, "Let there be light." And the rest of the verse, "It is that God who spoke light into the primeval darkness who is the One who has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

Folks, God creating light in the midst of the darkness by His sovereign instantaneous power is a picture of what He does in the darkness of the sinner's heart. If you introduce some convoluted concept of evolution into the book of Genesis, you tamper with the sovereign, divine, instantaneous miracle of God who gives life to a dark universe as parallel to God who gives light in an instant to a dark heart.

Jonathan Edwards saw this here and pursued the idea all the way through the first chapter of Genesis and suggests that the light dawned and the darkness was gone but things had not taken their form yet and day after day of creation things began to take form and take shape and become clear and the earth became richer and fuller and finally very good. And then came rest. And Jonathan Edwards says, "What a magnificent picture of the life of a believer. In the darkness and in a split second the light shines in his heart and he lives in the light but the process of sanctification just begins and he flourishes and he becomes richer and fuller until one day he enters into everlasting rest. This is the picture, don't tamper with it. This is the glory of redemption tucked in to the testimony of creation.

Father, we thank You for the picture that You have given us, even in the beginning, first chapter, of how You bring light to the darkness. And then it's a cycle of the evening and the morning, light and dark, light and dark, light and dark, and even that is like our lives, the light shone in our hearts, the light of the glory of the gospel of Christ shining. The darkness was dispelled when we were saved, but still our lives are cycles of dark and light and we find ourselves struggling with sin while loving holiness, embracing the light. And yet the darkness clings. But as the days of our lives progress, the

new creation flourishes, becomes more beautiful and more beautiful. And one day we enter into final and eternal rest. A vivid picture of the redemption that is the reason for the creation. May we trust Your Scripture in every word beginning to end because this is right and this gives You glory.

We thank You that You have opened our eyes through Christ, the work of the Spirit, to understand these truths. We desire to honor You and to worship You as our Creator and in all aspects of our lives as our Redeemer. Redeem us continually from every remaining vestige of our sin and some day take us into that eternal rest which we have tasted now but will fully enjoy in Your presence. Thank You for Your gift to us, for all the elements of that gift which will be ours forever. In the name of Christ and everyone said...Amen.

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