

TUTORIAL

1.10

God revealed through His creative acts

See Tutorial 1.6 notes for overall instructions.

The portions of Scripture referred to in this tutorial are: **Genesis 1:3-25**.

Last time

We reminded ourselves who other than God existed. He had created a huge number of spirit messengers to do His will, equipped with the knowledge and ability to fulfill what He gave them to do, lead by the most able, the most powerful of their number, Lucifer. They were witnesses to the incredible beginning of all things as we know them, the “beginning”, when God began His creation, from nothing...no matter, no energy. We left the story with the Spirit ready to bring order out of the uninhabitable chaos, darkness and emptiness.

Light

So in Genesis 1:3 the Narrative starts into the specifics of God creating the universe as we know it. And significantly, creation is described as an action of communication, “Then God said...”, speaking things into existence, immediately and exactly as He intended. The first thing He spoke into existence, of course, was light. In that swirling, chaotic, darkness...light, with all its implications. Illumination yes, but energy, potential for life and growth. And all it symbolises about God’s revelation of Himself, through creation. Knowing He would create beings with eyes that would need light to see. Light for warmth, a world of light...for us. And as for each of His creative acts to come, God noted that the light He’d spoken into existence “was good” (Genesis 1:4). He’s telling us in His Narrative that everything He made was that way. *“It’s who I am, I am good, the things I make are good, what I speak into existence is good in every way, good and perfect to me and for you. I cannot do things otherwise. I don’t make flawed things. It’s not who I am”.*

Day and night

Continuing the Story in Genesis 1:5 God divides light and darkness. The planet which would be home to the human race, which would mean so much to Him

(and also cost Him so much) would spin in space for as long as He wanted it to, half light and half dark. Significantly, there were no other planets yet, no sun, moon, or stars. So light, now ordered into its designated time to illuminate the earth, was not the product of any source. God, right here at the beginning of His narrative, is letting us know that He is not subject to even the most fundamental laws - thermodynamics. He is their author. Humans only discover and describe whatever systems He embedded. So He could make light without a source. He could have the earth partially dark and partially light, without a sun and planetary rotation as a cause. He's the great Cause. The Light-maker. The Initiator. The Story Writer and Teller.

The atmosphere

God continues bringing order from the chaos, which is something that He does. Who he is. He commands – declares – that there will be a space...with water below (still covering the planet) and a layer above.

Dry land and plant life

Each day, more order. Now, on the third day, the oceans are pushed into place by his command and dry land appears, mountains, islands, slopes and plains.

The planet is starting to look a bit more habitable. God declares that everything is good, perfect...just what He's after. But it's barren. There's no life, and as well as being a communicating God and a God of light, He's also a God of life. Life is what He's about. He gives life and delights in life. So now, as recorded in Genesis 1:11 He describes plant life. But in words that are themselves alive and productive, fruitful.

So that by the end of the third day of creation, the planet is covered in plant life, trees, shrubs, flowers...and importantly, with seeds that will reproduce the same genera, species and families. The potential for self-propagating life contained in each. Each a small testimony to the creative power of God's voice. No blind chance here...careful, planned, intentional creation.

The rest of the planets

Now, on the fourth day of creation, the planets. From the small and specific detail of plant life, some on a microscopic scale, to the mind-blowing scale of the universe...containing billions of stars and perhaps infinitely big. We simply don't have scales to measure or scales of reference that make any sense. In all of that, the sun and moon and stars were created that are exactly what is needed for life to flourish on this little planet we call earth. Because God the communicator, the light and life-giver, is also loving. He was preparing a place for us, for humans. Somewhere orderly and habitable. A home.

Marine life and birds

Continuing His Story, He fills the oceans and rivers and lakes with creatures, and birds that fly above the planet. The variety and beauty are astounding. When we see these things and call them beautiful, that's because God created them, and us to see them in that way.

"Beauty" is a concept without meaning unless it is something invested by God in both the object and the subject. The story of Science sees no beauty. The physical world, and we in it, are reduced, in that story, to systems of particles and blips of energy...the product of chance or some incoherent survival force.

Animal life

So this first part of the story ends on the sixth day with the creation of animals in Genesis 1:24, 25. Again, with the inbuilt DNA models that will reproduce themselves generation after generation, unique and consistent. An incredibly diverse, wonderful world of creatures of all shapes and sizes.

So this part of the narrative of who He is was told, and continues to be told day after day, in every corner of the world...sometimes seen by humans but often carried out in the depths of oceans, in the far-reaches of the universe, on a scale too small for us to see, or in jungles and deserts with no human witnesses. A testimony to the creative power and brilliance of our God.

But for all its diversity, beauty and complexity, and though God said it was all good – all perfectly what He wanted....all of this is just background for what is about to come. God is about to create a race of beings for which the planet was now ready. That's where He chose to take His Story.



DISCUSSION POINTS

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1. Trace some of the results different starting points have on someone's worldview (e.g. the purpose of the material world: a "closed" system without outside influence vs. a reality defined by an involved, ever-present Creator. How do you think these things relate to current issues like the drive for us to "preserve the planet"?)

2. Describe some of the factors (a) external, i.e. in our society and culture (b) internal, i.e. in our own thinking and attitudes that might be obstacles to us appreciating God's creation. As believers, how do you think we develop a greater sense of wonder and worship of God as our Creator Father?



ACTIVITIES

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1. Other than the Biblical Genesis account and Scientific Materialism's version (Big Bang, Darwinian evolution), in approximately half a page describe another version of "Origins" that you have heard about or are familiar with. e.g. Hinduism, Buddhism.
2. Spend at least 30 minutes outside on a clear night observing the sky. Note down anything that you feel is reflected there about who He is and what He is like.