

God Readies Our Dwelling Place: A Third Day

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[0:00] Genesis chapter 1. What is this, Greg? Three weeks, four weeks in? Three short weeks, I love it. Into the book of Genesis.

I'll begin reading in chapter 1, verse 1. And we'll take it down to verse 13. In the beginning, God created the heavens, and the earth.

The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep. And the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Then God said, Let there be light. And there was light. God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness.

God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening, and there was morning, one day. Then God said, Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.

[1:11] God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse, from the waters which were above the expanse. And it was so.

God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening, and there was morning, a second day.

Then God said, Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear.

And it was so. God called the dry land earth. In the gathering of the waters, He called seas.

And God saw that it was good. Then God said, Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth, bearing fruit after their kind, with seed in them.

And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, trees bearing fruit with seed in them, after their kind.

[2:19] And God saw that it was good. There was evening, and there was morning, a third day. The title of my message for this morning, God readies our dwelling place.

We'll be zeroing in on verses 9 through 13. And as we begin, I want to offer you a statement that will not be very popular.

Nevertheless, it's very true. Listen to this. The world will hate you for loving God as your creator. And that's all it'll take.

You might not even have to open your mouth to share one bit of truth, one bit of gospel. The world knowing that you are created and that you worship the creator will be enough to cause the world to hate you bitterly.

Some of you have experienced that already. I know I have. In a previous message, I shared with you how the Bible tells us that God's creation worships him.

[3:33] Creation worships God. Creation itself was created to worship God and to bear witness to God as almighty creator.

Let me share these passages with you. These were things that we went over in a previous message. The heavens are telling of the glory of God and their expanse is declaring the work of his hands.

and the heavens declare his righteousness for God himself is judge. But, but, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

That would be the truth about creation. Because that which is known about God is evident within them. For God made it evident to them.

For since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and his divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are

without excuse.

[4:52] what a telling passage of scripture. Creation is speaking to the glory of God. Creation, all that we know as nature, all around us in our world, is testifying to the goodness, power, and glory of almighty God.

And man in his rebellious spirit suppresses that truth and comes up with all kinds of explanations and theories and schemes about the origins of life, why we're here.

Suzanne, my wife Suzanne, had read an article this past week. She passed it on to me just for my information.

She said, I just thought in light of what we were studying on Sunday morning that you'd find this interesting. But I, I'd like to share some of it with you because it's so timely for what we're being called to through our study in Genesis as the foundation for everything.

When I say that, I mean everything regarding life, regarding how we understand why we're here and why we were made and what we function as, the purpose of life. Many of you will be familiar with Tim Chalise.

[6:01] Yes? Tim Chalise, that name? Tim Chalise is a Christian writer and theologian. He posted this particular article that Suzanne shared with me.

He posted this last week. It's written by a man named Rice Laverty. Rice Laverty. Here's the title. What did you plan to be hated for? Intriguing.

What did you plan to be hated for? His opening statement was this. Christians are no longer hated for grace but for nature. Now here's the question.

What does he mean and why is that important for us to know? Why would he take time to write an article like that? Laverty goes on to say this. Typically, typically, you and I expect as Christians to be hated and persecuted for our faithfulness to the gospel as the only way for salvation.

Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about. As a young Christian, when I came to know the Lord in college, I didn't anticipate people responding to me in negative ways when I shared the wonderful truth of salvation with them because I was so excited about it.

[7:12] And I didn't expect. I shared it in one occasion and a guy punched me in the chest and knocked me back over a table. This is the world. This is the world.

You're in a conversation, let's say, with several different people from other faiths and you're just sitting around and you're all talking as long as the topics stay on religion and everybody is respecting everybody's view of what it means to have a relationship, religiously with God or gods.

As long as we're talking in circles like that and in vague ideas like that, everybody's getting along fine. But as soon as you do this, well, that all sounds just fine except for the one problem.

The Bible says there is an exclusive way for us to know God and be forgiven for sin. As soon as you go exclusive, you got a problem.

That's what this man is saying. We expect to be hated by the world because we're the people that stand up and say Jesus Christ is the only way for the forgiveness of sin that God has provided.

[8:25] The only way. Exclusive. And the world hates us for that. That's not PC. He goes on to say this. Not only that, we also expect to be hated and persecuted for our commitment to an uncompromising personal holiness.

Have you ever been ridiculed or mocked for being holier than thou? Goody two shoes. Oh, let's not take it that seriously. That degree of personal holiness isn't popular.

Have you ever had anybody around you be honest enough to say, I don't like hanging around you because it's too convicting? The world hates us for stuff like that.

And it hates us for our unswerving love for Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior. Talk about religion. Talk about theology.

Talk about all kinds of different topics. But as soon as you go Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of all, now we're in a different territory with the world. That's the way the world thinks.

[9:29] This is the point that this man is making. We expect that. We've lived with that. That's been the case. We all kind of feel that if we've walked with the Lord for any degree of time on this planet. Laverty maintains that those are manifestations of God's grace at work in the life of a believer.

God's undeserved favor helping us, guiding us to strive in personal holiness, to be exclusive about the gospel and be courageous about it, but gracious about it. And to stand on our love and devotion to Jesus, those are manifestations of God's grace as believers.

He then says this, and I quote, We no longer live in a world which simply hates grace or God's work in the life of a believer. We live in a world which hates nature.

What does he mean? And understanding this fact is one of the most urgent priorities in Christian discipleship today. Well, that's quite a statement. Understanding this very fact that we no longer live in a world which simply hates God's work in our life.

We live in a world that hates nature and understanding that fact is an urgent priority for Christian discipleship today. Nature, in the way that he's talking about it here, concerns the reality that we live in with God as our creator.

[10:52] so that we are accountable and thankful to God for our lives and for our salvation. That's what he's talking about when he talks about nature and the world hates us for it.

God as creator is real reality, if you'll let me. Just take that second reality and make it a capital R. Real, capital R, reality.

God's reality is reality. Amen? The true reality of our existence, whether we acknowledge it or not, is that God is creator of the universe and we are all created in his image.

Every single human being on the planet created in the image of God. This is the truth about us and about creation, both created by God and that's what the world has come to hate about us now.

Our very existence existence and insistence based in God as creator grounding us in our worship of him and not of self, not worshiping creation, that is all abhorrent to the unbelieving mind.

[12:08] Now, I can testify to you as I look into your eyes that that was my life. I wasn't saved until I was in college, so I had plenty of time to sin. I had plenty of time to form adult opinions about the world and adopt a world view that had nothing to do with Jesus Christ.

This was Jeff Jackson at one time in my life. The entire idea of God as my creator and me being accountable to him was abhorrent to me. on Sunday, I wanted to be at the lake, not sitting around here doing this kind of manby-pamby stuff.

That's how I felt. What did I know? Thank God for truth, gospel truth that invaded my life. Thank God that he broke into my heart and showed me my need for Jesus Christ so that this became precious to me, more precious than anything I've ever known.

and then miracle of miracles, God calling me into ministry and allowing me to preach that gospel. Jesus saves. Jesus saves. Friends, if you'll notice, our identity of being made in the image of God as the fundamental reality of our nature, who we are as human beings, is enough to incite the contempt and ire of unbelievers.

that's enough. This is just another proof of why it's so critical for you and I to believe, understand, and hold to the truths of creation as the Bible reveals those truths to us in Genesis.

[13:46] This is where we make our stand right at the beginning. This is where we plant our feet firmly in the concrete of God's truth and say, thus saith the Lord. I believe it.

This is what God has said and this is what we accept. We begin this morning then with what God did on the third day of creation. For those of you who are visiting, I just hope that it'll flow well enough for you to just kind of grab this as a stand alone because we've already done several sermons marching our way into this.

So here's where we are today. God's good way, a third day, land, sea, and vegetation. And what I'm picking up on in the way of my outline is very straightforward. I'm just simply allowing God's own evaluation of his work to drive how we understand this account.

It's good. Later he'll say it's very good. So this is all about God's good and perfect way of designing the world the way that he wanted it. Land, sea, and vegetation.

God's work of separating in these early days of creation is a good work of dividing and differentiating elements of creation so that his work, his work of separating is reflected in his relationship to us as his creation.

[15:06] You say, how in the world? He is the God who separates and saves. If you'll notice with me again in verse nine, then God said, let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place and let the dry land

appear and it was so.

God called the dry land earth and the gathering of the waters he called seas and God saw that it was good. So I'm just picking up on that theme and driving it right through this.

Then God said, let the earth sprout vegetation. So there were plants, there were fruit trees after their kind and he brought all of this forward in the third day. So this is a major work of God separating and moving, distinguishing elements of creation, bringing things into creation out of nothing.

We established last time that the Lord's literal six day cycle is important to how we relate to both God and to each other.

That was that was last week. A six day creation week is the basis of our work, rest, worship cycle. God established that.

[16:22] It's one of the many reasons that you and I take Genesis one literally and believe that this is a literal 24 hour six day creation week day by day by day, not long ages, not any kind of weirdness, just taking the normal reading of the text, just the common reading of the text.

No reason to do any kind of monkey business with it. That's what we believe. When Jesus Christ died on the cross, acting as your substitute, standing in your place, taking on your sin.

He died so that one day he would now hear me carefully. Now he would separate you, separate you from what sin and death, sin and death.

And then set you apart to himself by the miracle of making you a new creature in the Lord Jesus Christ. God is in the business or the work of separating and setting apart and we're glad for it.

And we can go all the way back to Genesis one and see the foundation for that work. Jeff Jackson can look at Genesis one and say, oh, wow, all the way back before he ever made me or any other human being.

[17:39] God was doing this work of separating. He's a powerful God. You know what? I can look at this and I can say, wow, if God can separate like this, if he can move this stuff around like that and pull it apart and put the waters up there and down there and make dry land come up and all this, it just wasn't really a big deal for him to save me.

It was a big deal for me, but it wasn't anything hard for God. God was not up in the heavens looking down at Jeff Jackson's life and wringing his hands and going, oh, come on, dude, you can do it.

I hope you can do it. You can do it. God spoke to Jeff Jackson's heart. And Jeff Jackson obeyed, and I am so thankful for that reality.

God spoke and my life changed and I got a new life in Jesus Christ, a new life in Jesus, a new creature. Now, if you ask me, Jeff, what do you mean when you say that?

A new what? The moment before I trusted in Jesus Christ to forgive me for my sins, I was living with Jeff Jackson as the little G God of my own life.

[18:49] I was God. But when I came to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, I went from little G Jeff God to big G God, the maker of heaven and earth.

This God who's doing this powerful, powerful work that we should let just wash over our souls, condescended to know you and I and his son, Jesus Christ.

Christ, all that power coming to know you and be used to change you and give you hope beyond sin.

What a work. What a work. And it all starts right here. We we mess around with a monkey around with all of what we're seeing here in the way of what God's doing and try to explain it away.

We're going to have a hard time when it comes to the fact that Jesus takes dead people and makes them alive. That's not an issue for God, is it?

[19:48] That is not an issue for our Lord. God has been in this business of separating for a very, very long time in terms of human years. Look at this.

God speaks and creation happens. God speaks and life occurs. God speaks and separation happens. Peter tells us that God speaks his word into our hearts and spiritual creation happens.

Look what Peter says. For you have been born again, not of seed, which is perishable, but imperishable. That is, how were you born again?

How were you made a Christian through the living and enduring? What word of God? God. And the Lord continues this work of separating you or setting you apart is the way that we say it as he transforms you stage by stage into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You and I come to know Jesus as our Lord and Savior. And then every day in our life until God brings us to heaven, every day is about becoming more and more like Jesus. We're in a process at that point so that I speak more like Jesus.

[21:00] I think more like Jesus. I prioritize and value more like Jesus in the way of the spiritual values of heaven becoming more and more my life, taking on this image of this wonderful son who has saved me.

As he glorifies himself in my life. Once again, once again, here's what we see. God's creative work is laying the foundation for everything.

Separation is the theological basis for our salvation and our progressive sanctification. What is what do you mean by progressive sanctification? What is that? That is our spiritual growth in Christ likeness.

That's the process I was just talking about. God saves us and then God continues to set us apart or work into us this holiness to become more and more like his son.

It's an amazing and beautiful process that God has us in. This is all the good of God working in our lives. In verse nine, we have the good of God said God said.

[22:08] Then God said, let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place and let the dry land appear. And the Bible says, and it was so. Friends, one of the most soul stirring effects of the creation account is its brevity and cogency.

It is a relatively brief, but also very clear and powerful treatment of origins, especially when compared to competing cultural myths.

You aware that just about every civilization that you can study in school has some type of creation myth. You're aware of that?

It's the same. You might be aware of this. It's the same as when God willing we get to the flood in a few years. Whenever we get there, wink at me, Linda, because, you know, you got my back on this. Many, many, many ancient civilization have flood myths as well. They all have some kind of an account of the flood. It's the same thing with our origins. Ancient cultures have all kinds of ideas about how origins came about, where we come from, how this planet was was made or got here or whatever.

[23:23] All kinds of competing ideas. Most most of these competitors have multiple gods. Little G, of course, multiple gods contending. Here's the issue now.

Contending with each other for control, manipulating each other with the result then being that the earth is somehow formed and filled out of that struggle is the key.

I want you to hold on to that. And all these myths struggle and competition and manipulation are the keys to this world becoming what it is.

What does that sound like? Now, this these are ancient myths. Does that sound just a little bit like Darwinian theory in evolution? The survival of the fittest.

Struggle is the key. It's the fight so that only the strong should survive. Did you know Hitler adopted that very mentality?

[24:21] That's where Nazism was born in Darwinian theory. So was Stalin's. Many of the tyrants that you and I have known, many of them living within the lesson.

These people believed in Darwinian theory and evolution. This is very, very serious stuff. Struggle is the key in these ancient myths for human origins.

The Egyptians and early Mesopotamians deified the waters of verses seven through ten. These waters that God's dealing with and moving around, the Egyptians and Mesopotamians made gods out of these waters.

In fact, what they said was the waters that we're studying in scripture right now, that God is manipulating and moving around, creating these these waters were made up of the gods.

Apsu, Tiamat and Mamu. Now, as these three gods who were the waters, that's the waters made up of these three gods. As these three gods struggled and and fought against each other,

separation of the waters took place in that struggle.

[25:40] And the earth was the result. There you go. You sink your teeth into that one. Base your life on that. That's what they say.

Both ancient and modern cultures deify creation and worship water. For what they see as its role in giving and sustaining life, bringing crops and rain and fish.

And so they worship the water. When they pray to their gods, they pray to their gods in ways that deify water as maybe a smaller God.

And so they pray to the big, big boy God to get the smaller God to do what he's supposed to do so that we can have our rain. And things like that. They they see all of that as a struggle.

Many of you probably studied as you went into college and all you study Greek mythology. And so you understand all of the different Greek gods and many, many, many of the understandings that the Greeks have about why the world is the way it is, is because of all the gods manipulating and doing all kinds of weirdness behind each other's backs and being unfaithful to each other and trying to kill each other.

[27:01] Right. Now, why, why, why bring all of that up? For this reason, beloved scriptures, creation narrative depicts no struggle or violence.

Nothing and no one are suffering by what God's doing. Quite the opposite. God orders creation, responds to make life happen. Life, not death.

Scripture's account of origins puts almighty God in the center seat of creating, molding and moving the elements of matter with ease. With a fluid beauty that captures our imaginations and puts us in awe of this mighty God who simply speaks.

And it was so. No struggle, no strive. God doing what God does. What only God can do. Create from nothing. Create from nothing just by speaking.

And it comes into existence. Well, to this point in the narrative, the waters have covered the entire earth. And so now at this point in creation, God assigns the boundaries for the waters consistent with the pattern that we've been looking at and moving through the water and land obey God's directions with immediate effect.

[28:26] This is the Bible's and it was so immediate effect. And now I would like for you to look at this with me. Do you see one of the miracles here?

Look at the text with me again. Then God said, let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place in verse nine and let the dry land appear. And it was so.

What's the miracle here? Normally under the laws God made for his world's operation, land submerged underwater would not rise from that water and be dry, would it?

But the text tells us that God made the dry land immediately. See, there's no words wasted in this account. Underwater. Come up out of the water.

Dry land. Wow. Yeah, but that's nothing for your God. It should wow us, but it's nothing for the Lord. He's doing this stuff every day.

[29:28] He just does this thing the next day and there it is. He speaks it and there it is. And we should step back and say, wow. Wow.

Wow. So it was nothing for God to become a human being. No. In terms of struggle and striving, how am I going to do that?

I got to study on this one a while. So it took him 2000 years before he figured out, I know what I'll do. I'll become a human and go down there and do this. We get so ridiculous when we think about this stuff and we feel like we have to put theories and help God out and, you know, take verses and stick stuff in and wedge it in between the verses.

Ah, that'll help the Lord out. Now that makes better sense. When our God speaks and things obey. That's our God. Our God condescends and becomes a human being.

Takes on the form of a man. And lives a life on this filthy planet without sin. And then substitutes himself in your place and goes and is tortured to death on a cross.

[30:36] Giving himself for you and your sin to pay your penalty for the sins you committed. Not the sins he committed. Then they put him in a tomb for three days. And by the power of God, he is raised up to life.

Walks out of that tomb. And many, many hundreds of people see him. And now he sits at the right hand of God the Father advocating for you, interceding for you as his child.

With the promise that one day he will come and take you to paradise. He will make a new heaven and a new earth pristine. Like before there was ever sin. And you'll live there with God for all eternity.

Myth? Myth? That's not what the Bible says. The Bible says truth, truth, truth. With all the chaos going on in the world right now, we come in here and we hear the truth.

The unadulterated truth of the word of God. Thus saith the Lord. So God is making the boundaries. He is speaking. Everything is obeying him.

[31:38] Now what happens when this dry land comes up and immediately is there before the Lord? Well, this is the good of God called. The good of God called. Again, just following the outline of the text itself.

God called in verse 10 the dry land earth. So now God is naming. He gathered the waters together and he called them seas. And then God looks on all of that and he says, this was good.

This was good. Dry land here is the Hebrew word. The Yabasha. Yabasha. Earth is the same as in verse one when we went through that earlier few sermons ago.

Eretz. Eretz. So God called the Yabasha Eretz. In other words, Yabasha distinguishes dry ground and Eretz is the name of that land or that dry ground.

In Exodus. You remember this? In Exodus, the Israelites walked on Yabasha through the Red Sea, didn't they? When God had the waters part, they walked and made a point of saying they walked across on dry ground.

[32:50] Yabasha. Dry ground. This is this is nothing for the Lord. The gathering of the waters. God called plural seas. Seas.

Seas. Perhaps the plural helps us view the land as the emphasis with seas around it. I want to explain that just for a moment because there's all kinds of theories out there about this.

The land in the text is the focus. Start there. Put your feet down right there. Whatever whatever is going on in the text right now. The land is the focus of the text at this point.

The seas are being given boundaries so that the land can exist. The dry land can be what it is.

That's why we're manipulating the seas and making them what they are because the land is the point.

Otherwise, you'd have gills. Is that not true? You'd have to be in the water. But he didn't do that. He made land and you don't have gills.

[33:53] This is what God's doing. He's getting the earth ready for us. He's making a place for mankind as air breathing land dwellers. That's his that's his will.

That's his design. God sets the boundaries of the waters. You know what? Why does this become so important as we read this text and we understand the foundation for what God's doing here?

Because. What's his name? Elon, Aaron, Musk, whatever his name is. What's the guy? The space dude. Thank you. That guy.

He's wrong. We don't have to become a space faring generation to survive. I watched several documentaries where he's quoted saying that that's his favorite thing.

We have to become a space faring society or culture or whatever he calls it in order to survive because this planet isn't going to sustain us for much longer.

[34:49] So we've got to get to Mars and we've got to set up shop on Mars or we're not going to make it as a human race. He believes that you watch him watch them.

This man is pouring billion. Hey, I'll give him this. He puts his money where his mouth is. He's pouring billions of dollars into this project of his own stuff. Let me read this again.

The land is the focus. God is making a place for mankind as air breathing land dwellers. That's why he's making the boundaries for the waters. God's got this. And as long as there is an earth and it's God's will to have the earth here, then we'll have seasons.

We'll have crops. This is God's design. Now, folks, there are many theories and models depicting the land masses of earth as once being connected.

Have you seen that? So that maybe at one time we had one giant super continent. Now, here's the thing. The Bible doesn't give us that kind of detail.

[35:54] That's not in the Bible. When I was younger, I did this. You know, I'm sitting there looking at the globe because I'm bored to tears

with what's going on in school. So I'm looking at the globe and I'm doing the jigsaw puzzle thing.

Have you ever done that? Doesn't it look like at one time all of this was one piece? And there have been some theories about maybe the flood kind of pushed all that away.

Well, maybe. But the Bible doesn't say that. Here's what we do know. God is saying dry land singular seas plural.

So I know the land is the focus. Today's earth cannot tell us much about origins because of the catastrophic impact of the worldwide flood.

But what the Bible is making clear to us is that God is making his world livable for us. That's what we need to camp out on. Whether there was one giant super continent at one time or not, or whether I tend to think the way that it's written, that while things were dramatically changed by the flood, no doubt I have of the opinion that God made the continent separate when he rose them up.

[37:10] And so seas is plural, meaning that around these land masses that he rose up, we have seas that are now given their boundaries.

I tend to go that way. Not a hill to die on. You can join our church and believe that it was all a giant super continent at one point. That's fine. But just make sure that you see the point of the text.

God's making a livable place for you and for me and for humankind. So now we have air. That was before previous message. Now we have land.

And now we have God saying, and God saw that it was good. Now over the next three verses, what we see is God repeating this pattern of speaking creation into existence and creation responding obediently.

Immediately and immediately so that the work on the third day is completed. There's no competition. There's no struggle. There's no striving. There's no groaning. No moaning. That came after sin entered the world.

[38:09] Right now, creation is delighted to obey its creator. I think it's beautiful. I think it's a beautiful work. And I don't want to do anything to disparage it for what it is. It's a beautiful God doing a beautiful thing, making our world ready for us to live in.

So we're back to the good of God said. God creates biology. So now we're moving into verse 11. Then God said, let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, fruit trees on the earth, bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them.

And it was so. What do we have going on here? God created vegetation. Literally, this means grass. It could be translated green growth.

So this vegetation would include plants. It can mean herbs or green plants, very similar to the other word for vegetation. And then after that came fruit bearing trees.

Now, like the plants, these trees are created to immediately bear fruit after their kind. That's the point of with seed in them. So these are mature, fully mature trees.

[39:20] Fully mature grasses, plants, vegetation. And they have all that they need, the DNA, if you will, in them, the seed in them to begin to reproduce immediately across the globe.

That's the work of God. It's instantaneous. Verse 11 ends with, notice with me in the text, friends. And it was so. So this is all spontaneous creation. God is creating these plants and these trees fully mature from nothing.

From nothing. God did not grow these things. If you were to take my chainsaw and cut down one of these trees and look at it, there'd be no growth rings.

Why not? Because God created them fully mature. They didn't have to grow. We get growth rings because things grow. They're not growing. They're there. Out of nothing.

[40:22] This is the point, again. When we study the words of the context carefully and unpack this, this is just something that stacks up one after the other to just amaze us.

And say, what a profound work that God's, there's never been a work like this since. There won't be another work even close to this until God makes the new heavens and the new earth for us to dwell in where righteousness dwells.

Amen. Where there's no sin and no possibility of sin, no tears, no pain, no suffering. Oh, we're not there yet. But we know that God can do it.

He's promised and he's going to do it for us. He created all of this, not only from nothing, but with all of the elements of production and reproduction built into them from the very start.

There's no need for evolution here. There's no need. Why? Because God created it all mature and ready to do what it's supposed to do. Evolution suggests there's some kind of process or need for it to continue to evolve.

[41:29] God said, no, I've got it right where I want it. It's going to do exactly what I wanted it to do. I'm making a livable place for what I'm going to create next. Animals and then us, not animals, humans.

Verse 12, verse 12. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed. There it is again, after their kind, trees bearing fruit with seed in them. There it is again, after their kind.

And God saw that it was good. Verse 12 tells us with repetitive emphasis, creation was brought forth as God declared it to come forth.

Both verses speak to God's design for like to produce like or to produce after their kind. That really sends a death knell into evolutionary theory.

Ten times, in fact, the Lord repeats this phrase in chapter one. Ten times the Lord speaks to after their kind. I want to share this with you.

[42:34] Dr. MacArthur points out that creatures reproduce according to their own kind as a fundamental rule of genetics. Boundaries.

Notice this now. Boundaries are set on which species may be cross pollinated. Then he goes on to add this. It's fair to say that this crucial phrase, according to its kind, clearly refutes the very heart of the evolutionary idea.

It debunks the notion that all life descended from a common source. You see that? And it sets a limitation on the degree of difference between any creature and its offspring.

Why is that so important? Because the heart of evolutionary theory, the heart of Darwinian evolutionary theory, is the idea that non-living chemicals produced life.

Now, just think about that with me. Life came from nothing. You say, now, wait a minute, Jeff. Come on. That's exactly what you've been saying about God.

[43:41] Life came from nothing. That's what God did. But there's a huge difference between those two concepts. What's the huge difference? God. In one, you have non-living chemicals needing billions of years to do some kind of soup thing.

And nobody knows. They can't explain it. Soup thing. And then out of the soup thing comes other things that eventually have tails to swim.

I guess like a tadpole. I don't know. And then it becomes this and this and this. And so all of these different entities pop up out of this one single entity. And what we're saying is that's not the way God made the world.

You don't see that happening in any other area of creation or nature over the years. So now we need billions and billions of years for that chemical process to happen so that it can produce whatever we are and get to that complex design.

And I know it's just you hear me saying this and you go this. That's nuts. Yeah. Some of the most quote unquote brilliant men in the world believe this and teach it. This is what they teach in our schools. You have public school kids.

[44:50] This is what they're being taught to some degree or another. It's not being taught as theory. It's being taught as fact. This is what they say. Non chemical life produced life.

What's the difference? What was behind life coming forth in the creation account from nothing? Life did come from nothing.

But it was God who was doing it. So there was a living being that was creating from nothing. So life came from life, didn't it? That's what the Bible says.

Life came from life. Life came from life, not from some soupy pudding that they can't explain how it got there. Some big bang happened. Now, look, you just just not rocket science.

I'm not a scientist in any sense, but I try to be careful with this. You keep tracing it back. Well, where did the bang come from? What made the bang?

[45:50] I don't know. Yeah, nobody knows. Then they'll do this. Well, what made God? Well, I've got an answer for that. The Bible says that

God's the Alpha and Omega.

He has no beginning and no end. And then they say, well, that doesn't make sense. And I say, no, you can't put God in your matchbox, can you? But that's why he's God and you're not.

That's why we don't spell your name capital G-O-D. He's God. So then we get back to faith, don't we? Faith. We take this on faith, don't we?

What do you think they take the big bang on? Because they weren't there either. This is all faith. It's all faith. It's religion. And that's why we can stand with grace and say, no, no, no, no, no.

God has told us what he's done, and here's what he's done. From nothing, from nothing, God created the kinds of plants and trees in differentiation from each other so that these did not evolve.

[46:52] They did not evolve from another species, and they certainly didn't produce animal life. Animal life did not come from plant life. It's very important for us to distinguish a critical biblical fact about the plant life that we're reading about here, the vegetation.

This is very important now. Look at this with me. While plants and trees can be described as living things, they are not living creatures.

They do not have living souls. One of the commentators I've quoted from a couple of times in my messages already, Sarfati, he pointed out that nowhere in Scripture are they ever described, plants and vegetation, described in the way that animals and humans are described, to the point that plants are said to, look at this, not die, but to wither.

It's a very interesting fact throughout Scripture. When we talk about plants, they wither, not die.

Psalms 37:2 would be one place you could put down your notes.

We saw this when we went through the book of Jonah months ago. We went through the book of Jonah. We saw this where the plant God used to shade Jonah is said to have withered, withered.

[48:10] Check it out. That's Jonah 4:7. What am I saying? The world's ideas about giving nature and creation a soul or of being on par with humans, mother nature, that's unbiblical and ungodly.

It elevates creation to a place that God never intended for it to be. You and I steward plants and trees which God made for us, but we're not to value them as we do those who are made in God's image.

Did you hear that? You can say amen to that. We are not supposed to value creation on a par with how we value human life. Right? Wouldn't you rather see 10,000 trees bulldozed than one life extinguished?

I love trees. But I don't love them that much. We steward the earth that God has given to us. Now, the truth of scripture, beginning with God as creator, lays the foundation for everything so that we can understand and share God's perspectives and priorities for our stewardship of the earth. That's where we go. We start with the Lord, and he helps us understand how we're to think about our world and what's going on in our world. Please don't hear me saying, folks, that we shouldn't be good stewards.

[49:23] We should be. We should be responsible stewards of the earth. It belongs to God. It's his stuff. We should treat God's stuff with great respect. Amen? So that's all fine and good.

But not worship it. You and I are engaged. Friends, we are engaged in spiritual warfare with an ancient enemy, and he works to deceive and discourage us from believing God about our origins. So much so, listen to this, so much so, there are skeptics who accuse the Bible of being written to deceive you. Here's what they say.

The fact that God made the plants, trees, animals, and even Adam and Eve mature, fully mature, is deceptive because it makes them seem like they have experienced age when, in fact, they have not.

You know the thing, did they have a belly button? Did Adam and Eve have belly buttons? Did they? No. She says no. That's exactly right. Why didn't they have belly buttons?

[50:27] Because they weren't born. They were created. Well, that's important. They were created fully mature, like the trees don't have growth rings. They didn't have a belly button because they didn't need one.

Fully mature. That's the way God wanted it. That's the way God designed it. I know I used to think that was a little inane, but now I'm like, oh, no, okay.

That could be theologically helpful. Just not too much, but a little bit. He made it all mature. And they're saying that's deceptive.

It has the appearance of age, but it's deceptive. So the question then is this. Is God guilty of an appearance of age deception? We know that God has not given us a false history of our origins, nor has he made some silly and unnecessary attempt to deceive us about creation and put us some kind of spin on it.

I came across, and I'm about to close. I came across a little parable. It's called the parable of the candle. And as I read this, I thought, boy, this is not only clever, this is helpful.

[51:35] So I want you to think about this in the sense of this parable is answering the idea that God deceived us when he made all of this originally mature. That it's some kind of big psych out kind of thing.

And also, the idea that we need to go into the creation account and mess around with it and insert stuff of our own making and take it apart and dissect it in ways that go, aha, looking for some flaw in what it can't be, and that kind of thing.

Listen to this parable of the candle. Here it is. Chris and Lucy were looking for manual. They came to a room with a note that was signed by their friend, manual.

And here is what the note said. Hi, it's 2.30. I'm leaving to run some errands. I'll be back in a couple of hours.

And by the way, the electricity is out. So I lit a candle for you. Signed, manual, your friend. Well, Chris read the note and realized that manual would be back soon since manual was honest and straightforward.

[52:48] That's the creation account. But Lucy analyzed the candle. She measured the height. She measured how fast it was burning, the rate that the wax was melting, and the amount of solidified wax at the bottom of the candle.

That's clever. I wouldn't have thought of that one. So she concluded that manual had been gone for a day. Thus, the note was either wrong or it needed to be reinterpreted.

But then in comes manual. As his note said, Lucy demanded to know why he took so long. Obviously, over a day because of the evidence of the candle.

Well, the manual simply replied, well, first of all, that candle isn't burning anywhere near as brightly as when I first lit it. Second of all, I didn't light a new candle.

I used a used one. Thirdly, I used another candle to light this candle. And in the process, the wax from that candle spilled all over this one and dripped down to the base.

[53:58] Lucy said, so you set up that candle to deceive us, to make it look like you left the room over a day ago when, in fact, it's been less than a couple of hours.

We do this, to which manual replied, look, I left you a note telling you when I left.

I never intended for you to conduct some silly experiment measuring wax dripping off of a candle to figure out when I left. I put the candle there so that you guys would have some light.

Day three ends with some dramatic changes as the earth went from being covered with water to having dry land and glistening seas, plural.

And then to being covered in all kinds of green and colorful and productive and even edible vegetation. And the Bible says this as it ends this section in verse 13.

[55:06] There was evening and there was morning a third day. Will you pray with me? Almighty God and Father, we thank you so much for this account.

That helps us to better understand the power of your heart in creating the world. To making a livable, habitable place for us as.

Land dwellers, as air breathers. People who would be on this land and steward this land. I pray, Father, that you'll help us to take these things into our hearts and be encouraged that you are a big God doing a great big work of salvation in our world.

Many, many, many people are coming to know you. And in all of the chaos that we see now and the tragedy and the heartbreak that we feel over the loss of life in certain parts of the world.

Lord, we know that you have all of this in hand. I know that you tell us that your purposes are being served in all of this. And so, God, we pray not only for peace, but we pray that you will safeguard those who are trying to stand for right and do the right thing in a very, very hard and difficult context. [56:25] May your will be done and your purposes served even as we go about our week here. Help us to speak the gospel with words.

Help us to live the gospel in life and help us to be faithful to you to bring much glory to your name. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Once again, thank you for your...