

CREATION

Before we get to the creation story itself presented in Genesis, let us take a look at some other portions of Scripture that will prepare us a bit for a better look at that amazing, and mostly un-believed, account.

First: **The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows his handiwork.** (Psalm 19:1). If you want to acquire some basic knowledge of the power, wisdom, faithfulness and goodness of God, a good place to start is the works of creation and the immensity of them. There you obtain a sense of the infinite greatness and majesty of God, and his matchless glories. Consider the visible heavens, so vast, spacious and endless, richly adorned with stars, planets and the like.

The referenced firmament means an expanse, that which is spread out, and is applied to the heavens as they appear to be spread out or expanded above us. That word is used frequently in the creation story found in the opening chapter of Genesis. It is that vast space extended from the earth to the highest heavens, with all of its goodly furnishings.

And that firmament, that beautiful array of celestial bodies, shows us something, viz. it reveals the excellency of the work of its all-powerful author and that it did not just appear by chance or spring up of itself, but was made by the Lord God Almighty. *The heavens make known the work of his hands. The idea is that God had made those heavens by his own hands, and that the firmament, thus adorned with sun, and moon, and stars, showed the wisdom and skill with which it was done.* (Barnes). **When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?** (Psalm 8:3, 4).

Next: **Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.** (Hebrews 11:3).

Another aspect of the creation is presented by this interesting verse. Many mock the notion that God created this universe. We don't! We believe the worlds were formed, fashioned and finished by the Almighty Creator. The word "framed" here means the various parts were made, produced, set in place and arranged in the right order. *[H]eaven, earth, and seas, with all their hosts of creatures, the visible creation and the invisible world, were put into being and existence, placed in their proper order, disposed and fitted to their end, by the mighty word of God.* (Poole).

It is through faith we understand and believe this creation story. We apprehend, receive and comprehend this idea through faith. Our knowledge of this established fact is derived solely from faith, and not from our own reasoning. Barnes well says: *After all the acts of faith which have ever been exercised in this world, perhaps there is none which is really more strong, or which requires higher confidence in God, than the declaration that this vast universe has been brought into existence by a word!*

As to that word; it is not a reference to the Word as in the Son of God, the second of the Great Trinity, but a word spoken, a command. **By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.** (Psalm 33:6).

All we now see, or could see, was not created or made from some pre-existing substance, but was made out of nothing. **Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these *things*, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that *he is strong in power; not one faileth.*** (Isaiah 40:26). *God created, or made to appear, the heavens and earth, which before were not in being, and unseen, and created to make*

[and] made them to appear, that he might put them into the form and order they now are. (Gill). [T]he visible world, and all visible in it, were made all of nothing; this reason could never digest. All was produced of that formless, void, dark chaos which was invisible, which void, formless, dark mass itself, was made of no pre-existent stuff, matter or atoms, but of nothing; which differenceth the operative power of God from that of all other agents. (Poole).

Finally: **And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.** (Colossians 1:17).

He is! He is what? The “I am” of eternal existence. **Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.** (John 8:58). God pre-existed all things, which must be if he in fact created all things. *[T]he fair and proper meaning of the word "before" (πρὸ pro) is, that he was before all things in the order of existence[.]* (Barnes). This is the same as saying God is eternal because he that had an existence before anything was created must be eternal. **The LORD possessed me in the beginning of His way, Before His works of old.** (Proverbs 8:22). **Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.** (Psalm 90:2).

By him, that is, this great I am, all things consist (or subsist), which is to say he both created, maintains and sustains all things. **God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high[.]** (Hebrews 1:1-3). *The meaning is, that they are kept in the present state; their existence, order, and arrangement are continued by his power. If unsupported by him, they would fall into disorder, or sink back to nothing.* (Barnes). All things were called into

being from nothing, and are maintained in their present state, by his power. Subsist = remain in being, force or effect.

Now, against that backdrop, let us consider the Creation Story found in the opening of Genesis:

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

[Day 1 commentary: The days of this creation are natural days of twenty-four hours each. We may not depart from the ordinary meaning of the word without a sufficient warrant either in the text of Scripture or in the law of nature. But we have not yet found any such warrant. Only necessity can force us to such an expedient. Scripture, on the other hand, warrants us in retaining the common meaning by yielding no hint of another, and by introducing "evening, night, morning, day," as its ordinary divisions. Nature favors the same interpretation.] (Barnes)

6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

[Day 2 commentary: *It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in(.)*] (Isaiah 40:22)

⁹ And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

¹⁰ And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

¹¹ And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

¹² And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

¹³ And the evening and the morning were the third day.

[Day 3 commentary: This creation day dealt primarily with the earth's land and what it was to produce. *The bare soil was clothed with verdure, and it is noticeable that the trees, plants, and grasses—the three great divisions of the vegetable kingdom here mentioned—were not called into existence in the same way as the light and the air; they were made to grow, and they grew as they do still out of the ground[.]*

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown) It must be observed that the earth's dressings (grass, trees, etc.) were created first, followed by their seed; in other words, God caused the earth to bring them forth, then grow and reproduce; they were not the product of the powers of nature.]

¹⁴ And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

¹⁵ And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

[Day 4 commentary: In this 4th day of God's work we see the stunning creation of the sun, moon and stars. **Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.** (Job 9:9) The Psalms are replete with magnificent descriptions of this aspect of the creation (including some citations previously provided in this sermon), too much to be fully presented here, but see generally Psalms ##8, 19, 104 and 147. These celestial bodies were created (1) to divide between the day and night, (2) for seasons, days, years, and signs of extraordinary events such as the birth of Christ (Matthew 2:2) and divine judgments (Matthew 24:29), and (3) to serve as lamps on the earth, which is indispensable to the growth and health of every creature.]

20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

[Day 5 commentary: Day 5 of creation was all about birds and beautiful creatures of the sea – animal life that appeared in the waters and air.

One translation starts the 5th day off like this: "God said: Let the waters swarm with swarms, with living beings, and let birds fly above the earth in the face (the front, i.e., the side turned towards the earth) of the firmament." *"[L]et the waters swarm with living beings," seem rather to indicate that the animals were created, not only in a rich variety of genera and species, but in large numbers of individuals.* (Keil and Delitzsch) This differs from the creation of mankind where only one was created originally.]

²⁴ And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

²⁵ And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

²⁶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

²⁸ And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

²⁹ And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

³¹ And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

[Day 6 commentary: Did you notice that God pronounced days 1 through 5 as “good” (except the 2nd day, where nothing was said of this nature), but here he told the world that Day 6 was “very good?” That’s probably because on Day 6 he created man. **I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest part of the earth. (Psalm 139:14, 15). And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation(.) (Acts 17:26). *And behold, it was very good; it had been said of everything else, at the close of each day's work, excepting the second, that it was good; but here the expression is stronger upon the creation of man, the chief and principal work of God, that it was "very good"(. (Gill)]***

1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

² And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

[Day 7 commentary: **(F)or in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.** (Exodus 31:17). This represents the blessedness of that rest which remains for the people of God. (Hebrews 4:9). God himself does not get tired or weary (Isaiah 40:28) but that he was refreshed notes the pleasure and delight he took in reflecting on his works.]

³ And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

⁴ These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,

⁵ And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.

⁶ But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

⁷ And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. (Genesis 1:1 through 2:7).

The Creation Story runs throughout the Bible and displays the awesome and incomparable power of God. **For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. (Psalm 33:9). O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein. (Psalm 104:24-26).**

In his dynamic speech on Mars' hill, Paul's opening words included: **God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; * * * he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation[.] (Acts 17:24-26).**

Returning to that topic, Paul again resorts to discussion of the creation in the opening chapter of Romans, wherein he references the **Creator, who is blessed for ever** (Romans 1:25) in the context of **the invisible things of him from the creation of the world which are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead[.]** (Romans 1:20).

And not surprisingly, as touched on earlier, Paul returns to this favorite topic in his letter to the Colossians while exhorting those in that church to continue in the faith **grounded and settled, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel** (Colossians 1:23), one of his proofs being: **For by (God) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him[.]** (Colossians 1:16).

As you have seen, much of the creation account is found in the first book of the Bible. The last book also speaks to it, including these samples:

And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer[.] (Revelation 10:5, 6).

Saying with a loud voice, fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Revelation 14:7).

Just a sampling of hundreds of verses across the Bible that discusses the creation! Back to basics!