

Week 1 – Creation – Class Notes

Genesis 1:1-2:3

The Absolute Beginning (verse 1)

- Genesis 1 does not take us back beyond or ‘before’ the beginning. Other parts of Scripture do that – see Proverbs 8:23; John 17:5 and 24. Genesis starts with the ‘absolute beginning’ of all that is other than God, including time, space and matter. Matter is not eternal.
- God is identified as the creator of the entire universe. Therefore he owns and rules everything – see Psalm 24:1. Everything owes its existence to him and is dependent upon him, including agnostics and atheists – see Acts 17:28.
- The Hebrew verb used for ‘created’ in verse 1 is *bara*. It is used always and only with God as the subject. This is ‘creative activity ... without analogy’.

The Earth’s Early Condition (verse 2)

- **The Centrality of the Earth.** Theologically speaking. A humbling truth. See Psalm 8:3ff.
- **The Role of the Spirit in Creation.** *ruach Elohim*. The Hebrew word for hovering found elsewhere only in Jeremiah 23:9 to describe the ‘trembling’ of the prophet’s bones, and in Deuteronomy 32:11 to describe the Lord caring for Israel as an eagle cares for its young. Birdlike, the Spirit of God hovers over the young, embryonic earth. Intimacy with the earth. God is not remote. The Spirit brings the ‘embryonic’ earth to form and fullness. The language of this verse is reflected in Luke 1:35 where the conception of Jesus is described. Charles Wesley’s hymn, ‘Come Holy Ghost’ (v 3): ‘Expand thy wings celestial Dove. The overshadowing Spirit in revivals.’

The Week of Creation (1:3-2:3)

- **The Role of the Word in Creation**

Ten-fold use of the phrase, ‘*and God said*’. The word of God is creative and effective. See Psalm 148:5; Psalm 33:9.. It achieves and accomplishes God’s desire and purpose. See also Isaiah 55:11. Creation is a Trinitarian work: Father, Son and Holy Spirit are involved. Father (Psalms 121:2, etc) is ‘Maker of heaven and earth’. The Son/ Word too – see John 1:1ff. Other texts: Psalm 33:6; Job 33:4

- **An Ordered/ Structured Creation**

The series of recurring phrases: ‘*And God said*’; (2) a commandment; (3) the execution of the commandment; (4) a description of the act; (5) an approval formula: ‘*God saw that it was good*’; (6) a further divine word, naming or blessing; (7) a mention of the day and its number

‘there was evening and ... morning...’ This structured orderliness makes science possible. Recurring pattern, yet variety. This orderliness reflects the character of the Creator himself – see 1 Corinthians 14:33. Other evidence of structure, e.g., Day 3 and Day 6. Correspondence between Days 1-3 and Days 4-6.

Day 1 Light	Day 4 Light producing bodies
Day 2 Sky (and Waters)	Day 5 Creatures of Sky and Water
Day 3 Land and vegetation	Day 6 Creatures of the Land: animals and humans sustained by vegetation

- **Progression in the Work of Creation**

God brings his creation forward stage by stage towards its climax.

Formless	Empty
Day 1 Light and Dark	Day 4 Lights of Day and Night
Day 2 Upper Waters/ Sky/ Lower Waters	Day 5 Creatures of Sky and Water
Day 3 Land (and Seas)	Day 6 Creatures of the Land
Formed	Filled

So also the work of sanctification – see Philippians 1:6.

- **The Goodness of Creation**

The approval formula. ‘Good’ refers to ‘quality’ (Gen 2:12); that it’s ‘fit for purpose’ (Gen 2:9); that it’s beautiful (Gen 6:2). Can have moral element (Gen 2:17). Here, the emphasis lies on the quality, appropriateness, and beauty of what God has created. God the great Artist; the great Gardener (v 12). His sheer delight. Creation bears witness to the greatness and goodness and glory of God – see Psalm 19:1ff; Romans 1:20. Need to regain and retain this doctrine. The physical realm is not in itself evil. Philippians 4:8.

- **Consummation of Creation – Sabbath Rest**

- **Humanity begins from a position of rest**

Humanity’s first full day on the earth was a ‘Sabbath’. Gift. Not Earned. Israel experienced ‘rest’ from oppression in the Exodus. See Deuteronomy 5:12-15. Salvation restores the creation order. Christians too start from a position of rest in Christ – see Matthew 11:28.

- **Creation and humanity moves towards a future rest**

Exodus 20:8-11. The experience of Jesus: see John 4:34; 17:4; 19:30. The next day? His spirit/ soul in paradise; his body rested in the grave. So with ourselves. ‘Rest’ from our labours – see Revelation 14:13. Bodies rest in the grave.

- **Concluding Thoughts**

(1) We know by Faith; (2) It leads to worship; (3) It ends in New Creation