

The Creation Account Teaches Us that God Is All....

Genesis 1:1-31

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In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he 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—the first day.

And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. (Genesis 1:1—2:3 NIV)

In the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Our text, Genesis 1, is the very first chapter of the Bible. The account of God's creating the world in six days answers many of our questions of life: "How did the world come into existence? Who am I? Where did I and all of mankind come from?" Many sermons could be preached from this text. But today, on Trinity Sunday, let us focus on this one question: ***What does the creation account teach us about God?***

Already, the first four words of the Bible teach us one thing about God. "In the beginning God..." Scientists and philosophers debate about the origins of this universe, wondering if it's always been in existence, or theorizing that maybe there was nothing, and then a "big bang," some kind of energy that exploded matter into the world billions and billions of years ago. But the only eye-witness to the creation—God—settles the question. God was there in the beginning, before time and all worlds began. God has *always been in existence*. He is, as the Son of God spoke in the last chapter of the Bible, "the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" (Rev. 22:13). The creation account teaches us that God is *all-eternal*.

There was nothing but God—and then, all of a sudden, there was everything. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." "Create"—in the Hebrew it's a word that means divinely make, that only God had the power to make it. He made all things out of nothing, something impossible for us to do. Then, on the individual days of creation, he brought order from chaos: Separating light from darkness; waters above from waters on the earth with a vault called the sky; dry ground separated from the waters of the earth, and so forth. How impressive God is when he created light, the waves and particles traveling 186,000 miles per second—or on the fourth day, forming the huge light-bearing objects of the sun and stars and the planets reflecting light, and scientists keep discovering more and more of them! Truly, God is *all-powerful*.

How he made all this is remarkable too. Over and over again, Genesis reports: "And God said... And it was so." Just by the power of his command, the power of his Word, the various parts of the heavens and the earth were made. Old Testament believers expressed that truth in Psalm 33:6, "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth." "Thy Strong Word" the hymnist declared; God demonstrates his power by his Word.

A closer look at some of the details of creation reveal more about the Creator God. Why did God create light out of darkness, and separate water from dry ground? That prepared for his creation of life. God's creation was well-planned. God set the sun the exact distance from the earth, so that it would provide just the right amount of heat as well as light for planet earth. Genesis mentions another reason for creating these bodies of light: "Signs to mark sacred times, and days and years," so that through the rotation of the earth on its axis and the revolving of the earth around the sun, we can mark time, know when it's planting time, harvesting, and so forth. What a wise God to think of that!

Or consider the vast variety of plant and animal life, the balance of nature that God made, a perfect home in which God placed the man and woman he made. Human beings like to talk about how intelligent they are, and to boast about the capability of artificial intelligence (AI) coming out now. But no human or machine could plan a better, more functional universe than what God created. Yes, the creation account proves to us that God is *all-wise*.

Now let's take a closer look at how God made mankind on the sixth day of creation. Here we find God showing special consideration for what would be the crown, the climax of his creation on earth. "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over" the animals that he had made. Mankind would be creatures unlike any other; they were made in his image and likeness, with a soul, with a mind like God's mind that was perfectly in tune with it, with holiness. They would be in charge of God's creation on earth. And he made them male and female, like many of the animals, so that they could reproduce and fill the earth, according to God's blessing. Martin Luther expressed that goodness of God in the way he made us, in the explanation of the first article: "I believe

that God created me and all that exists, and that he gave me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my mind and all my abilities.”

At the end of the sixth day, God paused to look over all that he created: The earth and the sky, the land and sea, the celestial lights, plants, animals and mankind, and he declared it all “very good.” When God says something is very good, he’s really saying it is perfect, it’s holy. And so the creation account teaches us another thing about God: He is *all-good, all-holy*.

But, as you know, Bible chapters following Genesis 2 point out the tragedy of the fall into sin and the ruin of God’s good, perfect creation. We human beings shattered the image of God with sin. God, however, has not changed. He remains holy and therefore must punish us sinners. Thorns and thistles and other harmful things grow from the ground; animals become vicious; we suffer pain and hardship and finally death and eternity away from God called hell. But God also remained a good God. He did not want to see us suffer forever in hell. Therefore, he promised a Savior who would crush the Tempter’s head, a Savior who would be a human being, yet without any sin, to make the perfect sacrifice to pay for all people’s sins and deliver us from death by rising from the dead. At just the right time God sent his Son, Jesus, who saved us humans and saved creation, too.

That leads us to one final thing that the creation account teaches us about God. He is *triune*: One God, three persons. It is clear from this chapter and all throughout the Bible that the true God is one, not many, as so many heathen tribes and peoples believed. “Here, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one,” Moses declared (Deut. 6:4). Yet, even in the first chapter of the Bible, there are hints that there’s more to God than that. When God spoke within himself about creating mankind, he said, “Let *us* make mankind in *our* image.” He wasn’t speaking to angels, created human beings, but to persons within the one Godhead.

What is hinted at in the Old Testament is made more explicit in the New Testament: God is one, yet he is three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as today’s other two readings point out (Matt. 28:19, 2 Cor. 13:14). We call God the Father the Creator, as we do in the Apostle’s Creed: “Maker of heaven and earth.” But already in Genesis 1:2 we find the Spirit of God “hovering over the waters” to protect the formless earth at the beginning of creation. And the Son was there, too. John’s gospel identifies him: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:1-3). The voice that spoke is the Word, God’s only Son.

All praise and thanks be to the Triune, one-in-three God, who at creation revealed himself as all-eternal, all-powerful, all-wise, and all-good and holy, forever and ever, Amen!

Let us now confess our faith in this triune God with the most detailed statement about the trinity with the Athanasian Creed....