

Created By God – Genesis 1:1

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Too Familiar*

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

1. John 3:16 and Gen. 1:1 are probably the best known verses of the Bible.
2. “Oh, and Judge not lest ye be judged!” That’s another favorite.
3. Maybe these verses are just a little *too* familiar.
 - a. maybe we are so accustomed to them and and heard them so many times we think we’ve plumbed their depths and drained their meaning and significance dry.
 - b. like a married couple who become so familiar with each other they begin taking each other for granted
 - c. there’s a chance we’ve taken the words of Gen. 1:1 for granted
4. We’ve spent 2 weeks so far on this verse – and yet there is still more here.
5. We’ve spent 2 week looking at jus the first 5 words, today we’ll finish it by looking at the last 5.
6. But please don’t think that we’ve exhausted the treasure house of truth in this verse.

B. *Emphasis*

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

1. Let me read that again with varying emphasis and I think you’ll grasp the main theme of my message this morning –
2. In the beginning - **God** created the heavens and the earth.
3. In the beginning - God created **the heavens and the earth.**

II. TEXT

A. *Space, Matter & Time*

1. While the Bible isn’t a scientific *textbook*, when it speaks to issues of the *physical* realm it *is* reliable and accurate.
2. And Gen. 1:1 is a dramatic demonstration of that which science has only recently discovered.

3. You see, three astrophysicists, Steven Hawking, George Ellis, and Roger Penrose turned their attention to Einstein's Theory of Relativity and what it reveals about our notions of time and space.
 - a. in 1968 & 1970 they published papers in which they showed how Einstein's formula pointed to *a beginning* for time, space, and matter.
 - b. the reaction of the scientific community to their discovery was angry and intense.
 - c. but no one has been able to refute their calculations.
4. Gen. 1:1 is a *perfectly accurate scientific statement* summarizing what we now know about the universe.
 - a. the words "heavens" & "earth" in v. 1 could easily be translated from the Hebrew as *space & matter*.
 - b. so v. 1 speaks of the beginning of time, space, and matter –
 - c. the three basic constituents of the physical universe.
5. But let's not get bogged down in the science this morning.
6. What we need to see here is that GOD created *physical matter!*

B. Matter Is Not Evil!

1. There's an unhealthy carry over from Greek philosophy that sullies the conscience of many today: It's the idea that *matter is evil*.
2. Among the Greeks, all material things were considered evil while the realm of the spirit was good.
 - a. this was such a deeply rooted idea in their philosophy and religion that it ended up coloring every level of life.
 - b. sadly, some of the earliest Christian theologians and philosophers were heavily influenced by Greek philosophy and some of this thinking tainted their ideas.
 - c. some of the early church fathers wrote formal letters to the Roman emperors telling them why they ought NOT persecute Christians.
 - 1) these letters made appeals to the accepted wisdom of that time which was heavily influenced by Greek philosophy.
 - 2) the Romans had the deepest respect for Greek philosophy and religion
 - 3) so the Church fathers drew on this to defend the church
 - 4) but they drew from a poisoned well and ended up carrying over into their writings and teaching the subtle idea that the

- physical world was evil –
- 5) a thing to be shunned and rejected in favor of a life of withdrawal and meditation.
- d. the whole monastic movement was sparked by this attitude that the physical world was evil.
- 1) all earthly pleasure was sin – and the only life that pleased God was one of total abstinence of anything that might bring comfort or delight to the senses.
 - 2) so people fled the comforts and temptations of the city to live in caves in the wilderness.
 - 3) they wore sackcloth and ate bland food.
 - 4) when this level of abstinence proved unsuccessful in attaining the level of spiritual enlightenment they sought, they went so far as to actually inflict pain on themselves by prolonged fasting, and exposing themselves to the elements.
 - 5) it became fashionable to sit atop poles as they tried to flee the world altogether.
- e. there quickly developed two-classes of Christians –
- 1) the elite super-spiritual one's who *fled* the world
 - 2) and the commoners who had to resign themselves to a second-rate kind of spiritual life because they couldn't move to some cave in the desert.
 - 3) the commoners would take food and clothing out to the elite hermits as a form of compensation for their lack of spirituality.
 - 4) a whole system developed in which a few hermits would live a life of devotion ON BEHALF of the rest and the common people would then benefit from their extremely godliness.
3. All of this arose from the idea that matter is evil and all physical pleasure a sin.
4. But let's back up – Gen. 1: 1 tells us that the physical universe was created by God - and whatever God makes is holy and good.
- a. therefore the physical universe is a *good* thing.
 - b. the Greek premise that matter is evil is *false*.

C. World Versus Earth

1. I'll be among the first to admit that we preachers and pastors in the Evangelical Christian Church spend a lot of time warning people

about the “evils of the world.”

- a. in the call to holiness we often refer to the dangers of living in a world that’s in rebellion against God.
 - b. in our recent study of the Book of Revelation we charted the end times collision that will take place between the kingdoms of this world and the Kingdom of God.
2. So let me be absolutely clear this morning – the *earth* and the *world* are *two different things*.
- a. we must not confuse the *physical creation* with the *rebellious system* of fallen man.
 - b. by “*world*” we mean all that which is the result of the Fall.
 - c. but by “*the earth*” we mean the *physical* planet.
 - d. God created the earth – not the world.
 - e. the *world* isn’t physical – it’s a *spiritual* thing.
 - f. the *earth* on the other hand, is *material*; it’s composed of the matter God created at the beginning.
 - g. and there’s nothing inherently evil or corrupt about the earth or the things in it.
 - h. on the contrary – the Earth *belongs* to God.
3. In Psalm 24:1 we read –

The earth *is* the LORD’s, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein.

- a. Deuteronomy 10:14 says –

Heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, *also* the earth with all that *is* in it.

- b. Psalm 89:11 –

The heavens *are* Yours, the earth also *is* Yours; The world and all its fullness, You have founded them. ^[1]

4. As we think about the earth and the things in it, we ought to rejoice and receive them as good and gracious gifts from God.
5. Paul puts it this way in 1 Timothy 6:17 -

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.

- a. did you catch that? God gives us richly all things to enjoy.
 - b. in the context, Paul is speaking of the good things of this earth!
 - c. take careful note of *the balance* the apostle calls for here –
 - d. God has given us a great abundance of things to enjoy,
 - e. but their enjoyment must never eclipse the person of God Himself.
 - f. the gifts must never hide the Giver;
 - g. they're only to be enjoyed as *expressions* of His love -
 - h. they must never take His place!
6. Just as dangerous as focusing too much on the things God has given, is the tendency to *ignore* or call evil the good gifts of God.
 7. If being saved means we've been restored to a right relationship with God and our place in His creation, then if there's anyone who ought to know what the Good Life is, it's the Christian!
 8. I was at the bookstore recently, scanning the magazine rack and saw a brand new magazine called "*Best Life*."
 - a. it's a men's fashion magazine: Here's the description -

Live Your Best Life • You're smart, successful; you've made it. Way to go! And now you're looking for something more. Best Life is an all-new magazine . . . dedicated to helping you live a more purposeful and satisfying life — the Best Life. It's about looking good and feeling great, being passionate about work and play, taking care of yourself and those you love, and enjoying the best that life has to offer.

- b. but we will look in vain in that magazine for the article on how to be reconciled to God.
 - c. no, for the world – “the good life” is defined by the quantity & quality of the things one possesses.
9. The Christian is someone who realizes that true life isn't counted in the accumulation of things but in *knowing God*.
 - a. and once God has been restored to the throne of our lives, then everything else will fall in to the right place *around Him*.
 - b. including our possessions and all the physical gifts God has given us to enjoy.
 10. If anyone is living the Good Life – it ought to be the Christian!

11. Only the Redeemed can live the Good Life because we understand what the good things are for – they’re expressions of God’s love for us.
12. It’s sad that the world has the goofy idea that being a Christian means missing out on so many things.
 - a. hey – the only thing we miss out on is the sorrow and death rebellion against God produces.
 - b. the only thing we miss out on is eternal separation from God!
 - c. and contrary to missing out on pleasure and fun, both are enhanced by the absence of the guilt that sin produces.
13. If you’re an unbeliever – please don’t pity the poor Christians for all fun they’re missing because we aren’t.
14. Let me let you in on a little secret – we’re having a blast!
 - a. we get the best this life and earth has to offer
 - b. and then we get eternal glory and pleasure thrown in as well!
15. Save your pity for yourself – you’re the one who’s missing out!
16. But you don’t have to. Today, right now you can put your faith in Jesus Christ and discover new life.
17. Christian – understand this! God has filled this earth with incredible goodness & pleasure!
 - a. we do not honor Him by calling such things evil or shunning them because we have some perverted sense of holiness!
 - b. God has given us all things to enjoy.
 - c. part of spiritual wisdom and maturity means receiving them as His gifts and keeping them in the right perspective.

D. Dominion

1. As we read on in Gen. 1 & 2 we see that when God created Adam & Eve, He gave them *dominion* over the physical creation.
2. In fact, He told them to *take* dominion over it and *subdue* it.
3. Now, to some that sounds *hostile*.
 - a. they consider such domination and subjection as *permission* to rape and pillage the earth.
 - b. but that is not at all the picture these chapters of Genesis paint for us.
 - c. in fact the words speak of a diligent kind of *stewardship*;
 - d. abuse is the *farthest* thing from what they mean.
4. In Genesis 1:27-28 we read –

27 So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

5. This is nothing less than God’s foundational directive and mandate for humanity as it *relates* to the creation.
 - a. they are to go out into all the earth and *study* it.
 - b. they are to seek to understand it and how it works; that’s the work of *science*.
 - c. then they are to apply that knowledge in ordering and protecting it; that’s *technology*
6. Genesis 1:27 & 28 is nothing less than God’s mandate to mankind for science and technology.
7. Then in Ch. 2:15 we see the *quality* of that mandate.

Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

- a. far from *abusing* the creation – God called man to nurture & protect it!
 - b. God made man and woman *stewards* of their home.
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8. There’s a war taking place in our culture today between science and faith.
 - a. it’s sad that it ever began because Christians ought to have always taken the *lead* in the field of science.
 - b. we have a mandate from God to study and understand the creation.
 - c. believers ought to be on the cutting edge of scientific discovery.
 - d. until just a hundred years ago, that was in fact the case.
 - e. look at most of the scientists up until a century ago and you’ll discover most of them were deeply committed believers who were driven by their conviction that God was the Creator and more glory would go to Him by discovering His fingerprints in creation.
 - f. their theme was Psalm 19 –

1 The heavens declare the glory of God; And the

firmament shows His handiwork.

- 2 Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge.**
- 3 *There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard.***
- 4 *Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world.***
9. Today, many Christians see science as an *enemy* – a great tool of the godless to destroy faith.
10. Listen – we have nothing to fear from science!
 - a. on the contrary, science rightly done is an ally.
 - b. never forget that the aim of science is to discover the truth.
 - c. we know the truth – His name is Jesus!
 - d. and it is He who stands behind and above the creation.

In the beginning – GOD created the heavens & the earth

11. What has been marvelous to observe is how the continuing discoveries of modern science *keep* bringing the scientific community back to the accuracy and reliability of the Bible!
12. The evolutionary theory has been dealt a series of serious blows by the recent discoveries of information science and the field of genetics.
 - a. many agnostic scientists are now coming to the conclusion that *chance cannot* account for the complexity of the universe.
 - b. the vast amount of *specialized information* contained in the genetic code of living things demands a super-intelligent Designer.
 - c. this inevitable conclusion has driven many one-time evolutionists into the camp of those who accept the *fact* of special creation.
13. Science is not the enemy of faith because our faith is not some blind leap in the dark despite the evidence.
 - a. our faith is rooted in real historical events!
 - b. and one of them, the most basic of them – is that God created the heavens and the earth.
14. This is not to say that the enemies of faith won't try to use

- science against us.
- a. they will, but they will never succeed because again--*science rightly done* is only concerned with discovering the truth, no matter what sacred cows it might slay!
 - b. what's fun to watch is how science keeps affirming our faith while slaying the false beliefs of the skeptics.
15. Just recently a burial box was discovered in a private collection of some anonymous antiquities collector.
- a. it was tested by scientists and discovered to be dated to the first Century and the region of Israel.
 - b. the inscription on the side identified it as belonging to *James, the son of Joseph and the brother of Jesus*.
 - c. for years skeptics and critics of Christianity have said that what it would take for them to believe in the claims of the Christian faith is to find evidence for the person of Jesus *from outside the Bible*.
 - 1) when asked *what kind of evidence* they meant, they said inscriptions and writings that referred to him -
 - 2) but they couldn't be influenced by or tied to Christian sources.
 - d. when such evidence was then presented in the form of the *ossuary*, the bone box of James –
 - e. all the critics and skeptics surrendered their disbelief and became converts, right?
 - f. not at all! Instead, they all retreated to their studies to formulate a *new excuse* for their unbelief. We still await their next strategy to dismiss the faith.
16. PRECISELY BECAUSE God created the universe we ought to see science as *the special purview & field of the Christian*.
17. You young people who are considering what subject to pursue in college and what field to enter for a career – consider science.
18. One day Calvary Chapel of Oxnard would like to have a junior & senior high school
- a. my vision for that school is that it will produce graduates who know how to think and live Biblically
 - b. throughout the course of study, each student will be encourage and shown how to seek God's will for their life –
 - c. the faculty and student body will encourages each student to

- discover what vocation God has for them,
- d. and then pursue that field from a thorough-going Biblical perspective – taking their subject, whatever it is, captive to Christ.
 - e. our school will take this verse and apply it!
 - 1) producing scientists & mathematicians who will take dominion of their field
 - 2) politicians, mechanics, engineers
 - 3) yes, even those graduates who follow God’s calling into the noble and honorable vocation of being a domestic engineer, a home-maker, will pursue their calling through the lens of Scripture.

III. CONCLUSION

A. Not Just For “Church”

1. Friends - the Christian faith is not something to be lived just within the walls of a church.
2. It comprehends *all of life* – all of this Good Earth!
3. Christianity isn’t just Bible studies and singing religious songs.
4. It’s eating and drinking – it’s friendship and romance. It’s work and play.
5. Our faith embraces all we are and do!

B. The Good Life

1. Greater and more effective than any message some gifted evangelist can preach is the *quality of life you live before a watching and empty world*.
 2. Christian – to you God has given the Good Life because you have Eternal Life!
 3. That life doesn’t begin when you die – it began the moment you were born again.
 4. God has given you this whole earth to enjoy.
 5. It’s an expression of His great love for you.
 6. Use it – enjoy it – but always and only with the greater end of glorifying Him.
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[\[1\]](#) Psa. 50:12; Exod. 9:29, 19:5; 1 Chr. 29:11; Job 41:11; Dan. 4:25; 1 Cor. 10:26