

## God's Creation • Genesis 1:1

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. Creators

1. All of us have seen *pictures* of the great works of art – *Mona Lisa*, *The Last Supper*, Michelangelo's *David*, the *Trevi Fountain* in Rome, the awesome majesty of the ceiling murals in the *Sistine Chapel*.
2. It's one thing to see *pictures* of these great works of art – it's another thing altogether to actually stand before them!
3. In the LA Museum of Art there are a couple *Rembrandts*
  - a. in an art history course I took in college I'd seen pictures of those paintings and was impressed –
  - b. but when I had the chance to see them in person, I was floored!
  - c. there's something about them a picture just cannot capture.
  - d. Rembrandt's use of light and dark is amazing!
  - e. the light seems to *shine out* of the canvas.
4. The same was true of the sculptures of Michelangelo I had a chance to see at *St. Peter's* in Rome.
  - a. just inside the main entrance to the cathedral is the *Pieta* –
  - b. his sculpture of Mary holding the body of Jesus after the crucifixion.
  - c. I'd seen many *pictures* of this masterpiece,
  - d. but now, standing in front of it and seeing it with my own eyes, I was dumb-founded!
  - e. it was hard to believe it was made of marble, cut and chiseled by hand with the ancient tools of a hammer and chisel!
  - f. the folds and creases of Mary's robe look like the softest cloth!
  - g. the muscles under Christ's skin are perfectly formed.
  - h. really, you wouldn't be a bit surprised if Mary looked up and said something to you – it is so perfectly cast!
  - i. the genius of the great artist is clearly revealed by his creation.

#### B. Awe

1. *Art* has the power to *move* us in profound ways.
2. By "art" I don't mean just *painting* or *sculpture* – I mean anything *created*.

- a. architecture, music, engineering
  - b. all of these are *forms of art* because they involve the *creative process*.
  - c. really - whenever we take a thing and use it in a new way, it's a kind of art.
3. And there's something deep in the heart of mankind that's stirred by this creative expression.
4. Indeed – *creativity* is a uniquely *human* quality.
- a. to be human is *to be* creative.
  - b. now – some might say, “Hold on Lance – there isn't a creative bone in my body!”
    - 1) I've tried my hand at art; sketching or painting – and I just don't have it.
    - 2) I even flunked art class in high school!
    - 3) people won't even let me be on their team in *Pictionary*
  - c. *most* people cannot be called “artists” themselves,
  - d. but they still understand and enjoy art;
  - e. they know the sense of awe that comes from standing before something truly great.
5. On State Street in Santa Barbara there's a store that caters to dog-owners.
- a. it's next door to my favorite restaurant so after we put our name in, we'll wander through it.
  - b. that store is for hard-core dog-lovers.
  - c. they have a counter for dogs to belly up and enjoy a fresh baked doggie treat!
  - d. it looks a little bit like a Starbucks for dogs.
  - e. what just kills me is how they have a whole section of doggie furniture and appliances
  - f. they have several different kinds of food and water bowls
  - g. the more artsy the bowl, the more expensive
  - h. I've often thought – do the people who buy those expensive bowls really think their dog *appreciates* what they've done?
  - i. do dogs talk to each other and brag about the quality of their dish?
  - j. does the food taste better because it's served up in \$50 hand-painted ceramic instead of a \$2 plastic pan?
  - k. No! in fact, Fido wouldn't care if you just threw the food on

the ground!

1. animals have no capacity to appreciate art – but humans do.
6. Why? Because human beings, unlike animals, are created in the *image* of God – and God is a Creator!
7. Men, women, and even children have the unique capacity to appreciate beauty and to be stirred to the deepest core of their being by the act and art of creation.
8. In fact, that inner sense of awe that's stirred by the beauty of creation is but a distant echo of the *first creation*.
9. It's a still small voice that reminds us of our origin and our intended destiny.

## II. TEXT

### A. Gen. 1:1

**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.**

1. A few weeks back we took a look at the first 4 words of this verse – “In the beginning God.”
2. Today we add one more – “created.”

**In the beginning God created . . .**

3. As we saw in that first study – God is eternal, He has always been.
4. But as far as the Bible story is concerned – we're not given much information on what God was doing *before* the creation of the Universe.
5. The story begins for us at the beginning of the *physical* universe!
6. So the first thing we find God doing is what? *Creating!*
7. You'll remember from our study two weeks ago that the *rule of first use* says that the first time we find something in scripture sets the pace for that thing throughout the rest of scripture.
  - a. that being the case – and this being the first time we encounter the word “God”
  - b. what do we learn about Him?
  - c. we learn that He is The Creator; *creativity* is ascribed to Him.
8. I want to ask you to take special note of that. I realize it's a simple thing, but like the lesson a few weeks ago when we looked at just the first 4 words of v. 1, it's a *simple* truth with profound and far-reaching consequences!

9. God **Creates!** It's part and parcel of His nature.

### **B. What God Creates**

1. As we read on in chapters 1 & 2 we see the process of the physical creation carried out and *completed*.
2. When God rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, it was a sign that the act of *physical* creation was complete.
3. But just a moment ago we saw that creativity is a part of God's very nature.
4. If the physical creation is complete, in what way does God continue to create?
5. The answer to that is found in 2 NT passages.
6. The first is 2 Corinthians 5:17 -

**Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is a new creation*; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

7. The creative work God is doing now is in the realm of the *spirit*.
8. Right now all over the earth His Spirit is at work drawing people to faith in Christ.
  - a. He's sending forth His servants to share the truth of the gospel.
  - b. and everywhere that message is proclaimed, men, women, & children are being convicted of their sin and convinced of the remedy in Christ.
  - c. as they trust in Him, a new spiritual reality is birthed in them –
  - d. they become *literally* - **new creations!**
10. The Hebrew word "create" in Gen. 1:1 is *bara* and means to *create out of nothing!*
  - a. in that initial act of creation – God created the physical universe out of nothing!
  - b. He spoke – and the entire universe leapt into existence!
  - c. the Hebrew word "bara" stands in contrast with the word "asa" which means to *fashion* out of pre-existing material.
  - d. that's the way humans create – we *asa*, but never *bara*.
    - 1) we can only make something out of *pre-existing material*
    - 2) we take a hunk of marble and turn it into a *Pieta* or a canvas and paint and a *Mona Lisa*
    - 3) we can only *fashion*, never truly *create*.

- e. the story is told of a group of scientists who challenged God to a contest.
  - 1) they said that with the discoveries of modern science and technology they could *create* a man, and if they could create a man then they no longer needed God.
  - 2) God appeared & met the challenge.
  - 3) He said that they had to start where He'd started – with dirt.
  - 4) the scientists agreed and one of them reached down to grab a handful of earth.
  - 5) but God interrupted and said, “No! No! – Go get your own dirt!”
- 11. Just as God created the universe out of nothing – the new spiritual creation He accomplishes in us is something *new*.
  - a. the Greek word in 2 Cor. 5:17 for *new* corresponds to the Hebrew word for *create* in Gen. 1:1;
  - b. it refers to something unique and fresh; something that has not been before!
  - c. it isn't merely *renewed* – it's utterly new; *Brand New!*

### **C. The New Creation**

1. One of the most successful advertising slogan of all times is = “New & Improved.”
  - a. we've all seen it countless times.
  - b. even though it's years old, it's still commonplace on labels
2. There was an ad a couple years ago about a guy who was driving home from the store with a brand new computer all boxed up in the front seat.
  - a. he had a big smile on his face and an arm draped over the top of the box
  - b. he was in hog-heaven; he had the latest and greatest computer – an X4 or whatever model it was and he was just beaming at everyone he passed!
  - c. but then he saw a billboard going up with an ad for a new computer from the very same company – and it was the X5!
  - d. his smile dropped into a look of abject sorrow!
  - e. he hadn't even gotten home yet and his computer was already out of date!
3. Most computer users can totally relate to that, but it isn't limited to

just computers.

- a. every year the car companies come out with brand new models.
    - 1) you spend a bundle on a new car, and for a couple months you're stoked because you have the latest & greatest.
    - 2) but in less than a year, an *even newer* model comes out and you're no longer top-dog.
    - 3) when you're car's only 3 years old and running fine, you start thinking about a *new* one.
  - b. everything from boats to software sees a continual update and the desire for the *new* is ever present.
4. This is why advertisers use the slogan "New" and why they continually release updated versions of their products, because they KNOW that deep in our desires is the longing for something *new!*
  5. What we need to realize is that our desire for the New will never be satisfied by an advertising slogan and the latest goodie.
  6. The *new* we're looking for only God can give us because what we're looking for lies in *His creation*.
    - a. not the physical creation but something deeper –
    - b. on the level of the spirit.

**If anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

7. New! Brand new! Not renovated, not restored, not refreshed! New!
8. No matter how comfortable a person's exterior circumstance is, apart from Christ they're lost.
  - a. there's a nagging sense that there's more to life than what they've know -
  - b. so they embark on a never ending quest to find satisfaction.
  - c. they listen to the endless promises the world makes that if they will just buy this, do that, go there, then they'll find the new thing their looking for.
  - d. *novelty* is the great counterfeit the devil uses to keep people *distracted* from the truth that what they're looking for is only found in Christ.
9. The best the world can offer is a counterfeit in the form of *renovation*.

- a. a health club chain recently ran an ad campaign that showed several gorgeous hard-bodies working out – with the tag-line, “A Whole New You In 2 Months!”
  - b. clothing stores put ads in their windows – “A New You for 25% Off!”
  - c. some people think that if they could just get away from their current situation, they could make a new start and be a new and better person.
  - d. much of psychotherapy makes the promise of becoming new.
10. But these are all empty promises because they don’t really offer anything genuinely new – just a remodel!
- a. after a year at the gym you may be leaner and fitter – but you’re still the same person.
  - b. after a new wardrobe – the same person’s still there!
  - c. you can quit your job and ditch your marriage, but you’re still stuck with you!
  - d. and all the hours in therapy will only make you more aware of just how hopeless you really are.
11. God doesn’t want to remodel, renovate, or renew you – He wants to do something totally new in and for you.
12. He wants to create a *new you*.
- a. one in which the old person, the old habits and patterns of living and thinking are dispensed with
  - b. and something totally new and wonderful springs into existence, just as at the beginning when He spoke and the universe leapt into being.
13. Let’s look at 2 Cor. 5:17 again -

**If anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

- a. this isn’t a hypothetical – this is reality!
- b. **If anyone *is* in Christ,**
  - 1) meaning they’ve put their faith in Him,
  - 2) that He died for their sins and rose again from the dead.
- c. **If anyone *is* in Christ, then – *he (or she)* is a new creation;**
  - 1) this is a simple statement of fact. This is reality!
  - 2) that you or I don’t *feel like it* doesn’t change the truth of it one whit!

- d. **“old things have passed away;”**
    - 1) the person we were right up to the moment of our conversion is dead and gone.
    - 2) again, this may not square with our personal experience but that doesn't make it any less true.
  - e. **“behold, all things have become new.”**
    - 1) what's new? – ALL things!
    - 2) *we* are new! Not renovated, not remodeled – NEW!!!!!!!!!!
  - 14. What this verse teaches us is that in Christ, the Creative work of God has done something totally new that we may not even be aware of
  - 15. Let me use an illustration –
    - a. right now, there are several people in this country who are millionaires and they don't even know it.
    - b. they're the last surviving relatives of rich people who've died and left their fortune to them.
    - c. but the executors of their estates don't know how to get in touch with them
    - d. they have to hire Private investigators to track these people down
    - e. some of these heirs live for weeks, months, even *years* in near poverty, not realizing that they are in fact – rich.
    - f. all they need to do is lay hold of their inheritance.
  - 16. Jesus Christ died to grant us a glorious inheritance!
  - 17. That inheritance is claimed by faith!
  - 18. Yet the majority of Christians never lay hold of it – they continue to live in spiritual poverty and keep trying to find satisfaction in the counterfeit offers of newness the world offers them.
  - 19. Listen – are you distressed by your circumstances?
    - a. are you tired of continually falling & failing?
    - b. would you like a whole new you?
  - 20. Then simply lay claim to it! Look at the words one more time -
- If anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**
- a. if you read that and say, “If only it were true.” Realize it IS!
  - b. Be the new person this verse says you are!



- c. if you say, “But I don’t *feel* that way, and if I were to act like the person I WANT to be, then I would be a hypocrite.” Then you have exactly backward!!!!!!!!!!!!
- d. YOU **ARE** A NEW CREATION IN CHRIST AND BY NOT ACTING LIKE ONE – *that’s* hypocrisy!
- e. don’t let *feelings* interfere with faith! That’s one more hold-over from the person who’s passed away.

#### **D. God’s Creation**

- 1. The whole point of this is that in Christ, we are God’s creation – and what God creates, is gorgeous!
- 2. Look with me at Ephesians 2:10 –

**For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**

- 3. The word “workmanship is the Greek word “poema” and means a finely crafted work of art!
- 4. God doesn’t make junk – everything He creates is the epitome of beauty.
- 5. The creative work God is fashioning in you is awesome!
  - a. you’re a living work of art, sculpted by grace, mercy, love, and truth
  - b. you’re a canvas upon which the brush strokes of the Spirit of God are painting exquisite beauty.
- 6. We owe one another the duty of looking beyond the exterior appearance to see the incredible work of art God is fashioning in each of us.
  - a. man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks and acts on the heart.
  - b. as His people, we must learn to look beyond the surface to the inner person and the beauty God is creating there.
  - c. if we’re doing that, is there any room for criticism or gossip?
  - d. of course not for we would be criticizing and denigrating the creative hand and wisdom of God. What foolishness!

### **III. CONCLUSION**

#### **A. Art Museums**

1. LA has a fine art Museum.
2. The Getty just above the 405 Freeway is one of the world's finest art museums.
3. *The Louve* in Paris and *The Vatican* in Rome contain majestic works of art that inspire the utmost awe.
4. But at their best, all these museums contain only the frail attempts of fallen man to capture the creative spark and render beauty.
5. Compared to the creative act of God that's at work in the people in this room this morning the masterpieces of human artists are like black velvet paintings of dogs playing poker.

### ***B. An Appeal***

1. [To the lost]