

**THE WISDOM AND CREATIVITY OF THE TRIUNE GOD**  
**(SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2014)**

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**SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 1:1-19; HEBREWS 1**

**INTRODUCTION**

Bill Nye the “Science Guy” and other prominent people have been saying recently how belief in creation is bad for science and the future of the US. Supposedly the reason why children in the US are doing so poorly in science is in part because of the continued influence of creation.

Where do you begin in responding to such lies? Believing in a designer we are told is bad for learning about the incredible design and complexity of what we observe in creation. This is like telling someone who is studying auto mechanics to pay no attention to the car company which made the car, to think of everything on the car as just the result of chance. And of course, to be consistent, evolutionists have to reject the idea of design, but it is inescapable.

As Christians and those who believe in a personal, Triune God, we should be the best of scientists. Who has a greater reason to learn about creation?

While we realize that we are not all equally gifted in art, literature, science, and math, every Christian should want to learn more about God’s world, for we have had our eyes opened to realize that all the beauty and design comes from the infinite mind of the Triune God.

**Marvel at the incredible wisdom and creativity of God that is displayed in oceans, lands, and the heavens.**

Our goal for today is to study days 3 and 4 of creation, seeking to appreciate the verses we consider and then also to marvel in what God made on these two days of creation.

**1. THE CREATION OF OCEANS, LAND, AND PLANTS, vv. 9-13**

**Gen. 1:9** Then God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into 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 He called Seas. And God saw that *it was* good.

**Gen. 1:11** Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed, *and* the fruit tree *that* yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed *is* in itself, on the earth”; and it was so. **12** And the earth brought forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed according to its kind, and the tree *that* yields fruit, whose seed *is* in itself according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good.

**13** So the evening and the morning were the third day.

Verse 2 tells us that the earth after its creation on day 1 still needed what three things? It was in need of structure, things to fill it, and light. The rest of the creation week deals with each of these needs.

Last week we also noted that the creation of the firmament which divided the waters did not contain the statement, and God saw that it was good. The best reason I have heard for why this statement was not made on day 2 is that the division of the waters was not yet complete. The waters below were further divided in day 3. And day 4 also has a connection with day 2 in terms of God's work of creating things that appear in the firmament.

One of the points I believe we should see is how the days of creation are ordered very logically. It is not that we are figuring out the mind of God, or that we understand perfectly all the details, but the order of creation makes sense.

The earth on day 1 and day 2 was entirely covered by water. Today it is estimated that without mountains or sea basins, there is enough water on the surface of the earth to cover the entire earth to a depth of nearly 2 miles.<sup>1</sup> Today, the average depth of the oceans is 12,080 feet.<sup>2</sup>

We see from verse 9 that according to the mighty voice of God two things were accomplished. The waters which covered the entire earth were gathered together into one place and the voice of God also somehow shaped the earth such that dry land could now appear. There is structuring or ordering of both water and dry land.

In Genesis 6:17 we have a reversal of this third day of creation in that God determined to bring the waters to again cover the entire earth.

It is probably also worth mentioning that the word translated as dry land is used in the account of the Exodus, where Israel crossed through the Red Sea on dry land. God's power in separating water from dry land is most prominent on day 3 but not restricted to just day 3.

You know that I like statistics, so let me share a few concerning water and dry land. Now, these statistics represent the ordering post-flood. What the earth was like before the flood, I don't know that we can say for sure. But probably some of the ordering of land and water might be similar.

Today the earth is 20% dry land and 80% water. I find that an interesting balance, and of course, God knew exactly the proper balance that is needed.

Oceans make up about 70% of the earth's surface area and contain 97% of the earth's water. A statistic that I find amazing is that only about 5% of the World Ocean has been explored. Think of still how little we know about what God has made.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Creation Answers Book*, 178.

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia Article on Oceans.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics coming from Wolfram Alpha and Wikipedia. There are some slight differences between these two sources.

I don't know if you can imagine the size of Illinois. Illinois is about 58,000 square miles or about 37 million acres. Take the size of our property here in Arlington Heights and multiply by 3 million.<sup>4</sup> The total area of dry land today throughout the world is about 1,000 times the size of Illinois, about 37 billion acres.

You could give 5 acres to every one of the 7.13 billion people alive today. Obviously there are large sections of the world where you can't really live, but God has created still a very large earth that better supports over 7 billion people today than in times past in many ways.

God's marvelous work on the third day was good. And even in our sin-filled rebellious world, we can still marvel at the order God created in terms of land and water.

Verse 10 states that God saw that his work on this first part of the third day was good. I am sure you can picture today a beautiful beach you have visited. There is a special beauty in seeing the boundary between water and dry land. I think we probably all would agree that some of the most beautiful places in the world are the intersection of the two. What God created on the earth is like nothing else we can find in all creation. It was good and continues to show the amazing wisdom and power of God.

The earth after this first part of day 3 had both light and order, but was still empty. This God addressed on the second part of day 3.

According to verse 11, the mighty voice of the Triune God called for the creation of plants and trees.

In the NKJV there are three words used in verse 11 – grass, herb, and fruit tree. A number of commentaries and translations understand the word grass to be the larger category and that herb or plant and fruit tree are two categories or types of vegetation that God created on day 3. So according to verse 11, God created green vegetation consisting of two main types – plants that yield seeds and fruit trees which produce fruit containing seeds.

Note in verse 11 the word **kind**. This is a word used 31x in the OT. It is not identical to our modern word **species**. If you are familiar with how plants and animals are classified today, you know the final three designations are family, genus, and then species. The Bible obviously does not use these modern categories. There are some good articles I could recommend that explore the meaning of the word **kind**.<sup>5</sup> Let me emphasize here that God who brought order to the physical creation also established order in the creation of plants and trees. There can be incredible variety in a **kind** but still God has established boundaries in creation that must be respected.

Also from verse 11, let us again consider that God's work of creation was not some extended process but rather God speaking and what we can say the immediate fulfillment of what He spoke. There is no place for God using evolution or extended periods of time according to the clear reading of Genesis 1.

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<sup>4</sup> 57,910 to be more precise according to Wolfram Alpha.

<sup>5</sup> See for example: <http://creation.com/min-kind-hebrew>

Verse 12 records in the fulfillment of God's word. The earth brought forth grass – plants and trees. We also see in verse 12 along with verse 11, emphasis on the word seed. God created the tremendous variety of plants and trees to then reproduce. God would not continue to create over and over again. In His work of Providence what God made would continue to give birth to new plants and trees according to the order that God established.

We should pause to consider the incredible wonder of God's creation of plants and trees recorded here. Let me highlight one aspect of God's wonder, which is the process of photosynthesis – the amazing process by which plants produce the food they need by taking energy from the sun in combination with water.

Jonathan Sarfati wrote in an article on plants that the process of photosynthesis is one of the most important chemical reactions on earth. If somehow scientists could duplicate this process, we probably could solve all the world's energy problems. But the most brilliant scientists and chemists cannot duplicate what takes place in the most humble plant or even weed for that matter.

Sarfati writes, "If the most intelligent human designers can't duplicate photosynthesis, then it's perfectly scientific to believe that photosynthesis had a far more intelligent designer. This is especially so since Darwinian processes could not have generated photosynthesis, because there are too many intricate mechanisms necessary for it to work at all."<sup>6</sup>

Can you imagine the beauty of the world now after day 3? Imagine vast fields filled with the most beautiful of plants and trees. God saw that it was good!

Listen to the words of Jesus from Matthew 6 concerning the beauty of what God made on the third day.

**Matt. 6:28** "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; **29** and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. **30** Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?"

## **2. THE CREATION OF SUN, MOON, AND STARS, VV. 14-19.**

**Gen. 1:14** Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; **15** and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. **16** Then 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** God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light

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<sup>6</sup> Jonathan Sarfati, "Green Power (photosynthesis) – God's solar power plants amaze chemists." Available at <http://creation.com/green-power-photosynthesis#r2>.

on 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** So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

Some would consider day 4 the central day of the creation week and a precursor to the Sabbath rest that concludes the week of creation.<sup>7</sup> The ordering of what God made certainly shows His power and that ultimately all that God made depends on Him rather than just simply natural processes.

Isn't interesting that it was not until day 4 that God created the sun, moon, and stars? Unfortunately some Christians are troubled by this and so they want to say that the sun, moon, and stars were not created on day 4 but revealed on this day. Somehow before this their light was blocked or obscured by clouds or gas. I don't think that any such interpretation does justice to what we read in the text.

The language of verse 14 shows that again according to God's mighty voice, the varied lights of heaven were created. It is a most amazing statement, especially now in light of what we better understand concerning the size of the universe and the number of the stars and galaxies of the universe.

As you look at verses 14-18 there seems to be repetition. That repetition comes from the structure of the text. Let's consider how these verses are organized. They are organized to highlight how the sun and moon rule the day and the night. Consider the eight statements that begin with verse 14:

A. to divide the day from the night (14a)

B. for signs, for fixed times, for days and years (14b). It is possible here to see two or three categories. If three we have heavenly signs, religious celebrations, and the marking of days and years.

C. to give light on the earth (15)

D. to rule the day (16a) } God made the

D'. to rule the night (16b) } two lights

C'. to give light on the earth (17)

B'. to rule the day and the night (18a)

A'. to divide the light from the darkness (18b)<sup>8</sup>

Obviously many people today read the account of Genesis and laugh at it. How primitive they say. But consider the alternative as presented by no less an authority than National Geographic and a special magazine entitled "Beyond our Galaxy – Exploring the Vastness of Space."

Here is what this authoritative magazine says about the creation of our solar system.

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<sup>7</sup> James Jordan.

<sup>8</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, Genesis 1–15, vol. 1 of Word Biblical Commentary. Accordance/Thomas Nelson electronic ed. (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 22.

It all started 4.5 billion years ago with an interstellar cloud. The explanation of what happened began with French physicist Pierre-Simon Laplace (1749-1827), who theorized that the ordinary laws of gravity would produce something like our solar system from this interstellar cloud. There would naturally have been random regions in the clouds where mass was more concentrated, Laplace reasoned. They would have exerted a stronger gravitational pull, pulling in surrounding material. Eventually, one of these concentrations became our own solar system.<sup>9</sup>

Which view requires more faith do you think?

Later this esteemed magazine talks about the formation of the earth's moon. Let me quote what they say about the formation of the moon.

How could the Earth and the moon, both of which apparently formed in the same part of the planetary cloud, end up looking so different? The currently favored **theory** is that early in the formation of the earth – but after its iron had gravitated to the core – Earth and a similar Mars-size object collided. This collision broke off large chunks of both planets' lower-density mantles, and some of this ejected material went into orbit around Earth. At this point, the same process of accretion that built the terrestrial planets came into play, and the moon formed from that orbiting material.<sup>10</sup>

For those with little faith, the producers of the magazine include an illustration of this amazing, chance process. Belief in this is the basis for good science we are told over and over again.

Let me point out several others things from our text.

First, isn't interesting and significant that the sun and moon are not specifically named in Genesis 1? In verse 16 they are simply known as the greater light which rules the day and the lesser light which rules the night. Likely God is making a point that that the sun and moon are not gods. Many pagan cultures have worshipped the sun and moon. But clearly here we see that although God's power is emphasized there is from the text a de-emphasis almost on the sun, moon, and stars. The Biblical text stands out in comparison to other supposed creation accounts including National Geographic.<sup>11</sup>

Consider also the statement which ends verse 16 – **the stars also**.

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<sup>9</sup> National Geographic, "Beyond our Galaxy," 12.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>11</sup> Wenham, 21.

According to Wolfram Alpha, there are 300 billion trillion stars. Why the seeming downplay? One reason again is to emphasize that the stars are not the controllers of human destiny and so their creation is mentioned almost as an afterthought – they are merely part of God’s creation.<sup>12</sup>

Let me also point out what I think is an amazing testimony to the word of God in terms of the number of stars. You can count about 3,000 stars with the unaided eye.

What in Scripture is compared to the number of the stars? One comparison is the sand on the seashore. What I find fascinating is that some scientist estimate that the number of stars and the grains of sand to be equal in number. It is not that they have to be exactly the same, but clearly the Holy Spirit communicated early in Scripture that there were many more stars than what you can see.

Let me briefly comment on one aspect that can challenge Christians who believe in six-day creation. A question often asked is this. How can you see light coming from stars more than 6,000 light years from the earth?

For example, on Tuesday, January 21, 2014 an exploding star or supernova was spotted in one of the nearest galaxies to ours. This supernova is estimated to be 11.4 million light-years from the earth.<sup>13</sup>

How do we see this light if we believe in a young earth and universe?

This is a challenging question and one I cannot fully answer in this sermon.

I will point out again, that evolutionists also have a problem explaining various features of the universe based on what we know about the speed of light. The universe according to modern estimates is larger than the speed of light could travel even in their evolutionary time scales. It is not only young-earth creationists who have a “problem.”

Creationists in response to this question have come up with explanations that are not simple to explain or understand but might be ways of answering the difficult question. I would encourage you to visit [creation.com](http://creation.com) to read some of the articles that have been written which deal with this difficult subject.

I will also mention that there is much concerning the universe that we simply do not understand. According to the National Geographic magazine I quoted from earlier, the universe today is made of 72% dark energy and 23% dark matter. Dark matter and dark energy are concepts that are introduced to explain other mysteries in the universe and therefore only theories. But think of this. 95% of what makes up the universe is unexplainable by modern scientists by their own admission. No one has experimentally detected dark matter.<sup>14</sup>

The account of creation may seem simple but what is truly simple is man’s understanding in comparison to God’s infinite power and knowledge.

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<sup>12</sup> Wenham, 21.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2014/01/24/opinion/urry-exploding-supernova/index.html>.

<sup>14</sup> National Geographic, 91.

It is man that must bow before the creator. It is God's Word that is our foundation not the changing theories of fallible men.

## CONCLUSION

**Marvel at the incredible wisdom and creativity of God that is displayed in oceans, lands, and the heavens.**

**Col. 1:13** He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, **14** in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. **15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16** For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. **17** And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

## Prayer

## Hymn 105

### BENEDICTION – EPHESIANS 3:20-21

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.