

The Nature of God and Creation (Gen. 1)

I. *What Creation Reveals About the Being of God*

- A. **God exists before all else.** Before the universe existed, God already is. He is the eternal one who has always existed and who is the source of all other existence. God is not an idea that humanity needs to explain what we don't understand but is the being necessary for all else to exist.
- B. **God is Triune.** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all participate in bringing the creation into being. The Father speaks, the Son is the word spoken by which the Father creates (**John 1:1-3**), and the Spirit hovers over the face of the deep as the one who will bring to completion.
- C. **God creates by His word.** God brought all that is into being by the power of His word alone. This is important to note. God's word is the origin of the being and truthfulness of all that comes into being. God's word is the foundation and defining force for everything in the universe. There is no greater power at work in the universe than the word of God that defines and shapes it. This factor will be a key point to remember in a couple of chapters.

II. *What Creation Reveals About the World*

- A. **The world was made by God supernaturally.** The Holy Spirit did not inspire Moses to write the opening chapters of Genesis to give Israel a holy science book, but it does tell us some very important things that come to bear on science. First, it is very clear that the world is a supernatural creation of God. Therefore, any scientific theory about the origins of the world that is only naturalistic is necessarily wrong because it explicitly denies the world's supernatural origin. Second, there is nothing in the Biblical text itself that gives reason to regard the days as anything other than six normal days. The passage bears no marks of poetic or figurative language. There is nothing that happens in the six days that are too difficult for God to do. The positive teaching of the text leads only to the conclusion that God created in six normal days.
- B. **The world reveals God's glory.** One of the things that we often miss when we read this chapter with scientific questions in mind is the way it displays God's glorious goodness and power. This chapter is written to reveal the glorious God who created all things and His purposes for humanity and the world. This chapter is meant to make us stand in awe of the God who molds the universe to His will and to wonder when we consider that He is infinitely more glorious than the wondrous creation He has made.
- C. **The world was made good.** We live in a world tainted by sin and tend to think that the world must have always been this way. However, prior to the fall, there was nothing wrong with the world and God declared it to be good. However, when God made this declaration, He did not mean that it was a good as it possibly could be. He meant that it perfectly fit His purpose for it at that time.

III. *What Creation Reveals About God's Purposes*

- A. **God intentionally moves from chaos to order.** Genesis 1 should raise a question in the mind of anyone familiar with the God revealed in Scripture, why is His creation at first formless and void? God is all-powerful and all-wise; He could have just as easily made a creation that was perfect from the beginning. Instead, He intentionally made a creation that was deficient and spent time fashioning it towards His goal. This is the reason for the six days. God gradually forms the formless creation and fills the void creation. Recognizing this fact is essential for understanding God's actions in creation and providence.

<u>Spheres of Creation</u>	<u>First 3 Days – Forming the formless</u>	<u>Second 3 Days – Filling the void</u>
The Outer Heavens	Day One: God creates the world. God creates light; separates day from night.	Day Four: God creates bodies to “inhabit” the outer heavens, give light, and mark time.
The Waters	Day Two: God separates upper waters from lower waters.	Day Five: God creates creatures to inhabit the upper and lower waters.
The Dry Land	Day Three: God separates lower waters from land, creates vegetation.	Day Six: God creates creatures to inhabit land, culminating with man.

- B. **God progressively forms and fills creation.** God’s progressive creation advances according to three realms. There are the outer heavens (outer space), the waters (atmosphere and oceans/seas), and the dry land. In the first three days God forms each of these formless spheres and in the second three He fills these void spheres. All of this culminates in the crown of creation, which is humanity. Whereas all else in the creation God creates simply by speaking, when it comes to the creation of humanity, God deliberates within Himself (**1:26**), personally fashions the bodies of the man and the woman (**2:7, 21-22**), breathes life into man (**2:7**), makes humanity in His image (**1:27**), and gives them dominion over the rest of creation (**1:28**). Although God repeatedly declared that His creation was good, it is after the creation of humanity that He says that all is very good and ceases His creating work.
- C. **God’s progressive work in creation informs His progressive work in redemption.** One of the chief frustrations of the Christian life is the sin that still resides in us even after we have come to believe. God certainly has the power to make us perfect and sinless immediately, but that is not His purpose. Just as God intentionally did not create the world to be the best it could possibly be from the beginning but took time to fashion it according to His purposes, so also His designs in redemption are not served by bringing us to sinless perfection immediately. Our struggles and trials are no accident but have been given to us by our gracious creator and redeemer as He works His will in and through us. We can take comfort that, although God does not immediately sanctify us perfectly and we are far from what we wish we would be, God is working and will bring His process of sanctification to completion.
- D. **The Sabbath is the goal of creation.** Humanity is the climax of the creation but the Sabbath is the intended conclusion. Although there is a chapter division that editors have placed in the Bible between the other six days of creation and the Sabbath, the Sabbath must be seen in light of what God has done in creation. God specially blesses the day and makes it holy (**2:3**). The Sabbath is the only thing in all of Genesis that is said to be holy. God’s rest is not a rest from fatigue nor simply inaction but is resting from His work of creation. In a sense, it is God returning to His natural state before He began to create, only now, the creation is also called to participate in His rest. The Sabbath is the creation’s window into the bliss of God. In particular, humanity is called to observe the Sabbath and pursue communion with God. This is why the Sabbath is the goal and conclusion of the creation. God has made this creation for His glory and for the purpose of making His creation holy so that it can participate in His infinite love and goodness. Although the Sabbath is only one day a week, God is establishing an eternal Sabbath rest as He brings His creation to perfection in the salvation of His people (**Heb. 4:4-10**).