

How It All Began

A Sermon for Creation Sabbath written by
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The story is told that a group of scientists had a meeting and decided that humans had come so far that they no longer needed God. After reaching their decision they appointed one in their number to go and explain to God that He was no longer needed. The scientist said, “God, we’ve concluded that we no longer need you, because we are to the point that we can conceive life in a test tube and even clone people. We are so technologically advanced that we can do many things that at one time would have been thought of as miraculous. So we are asking you to leave the world in our hands.” God listened until the man was finished. With great kindness in his voice, he said, “Very well then, but first, why don’t we have a man-making contest.” This sounded like a marvelous idea to the scientist, and he agreed to the challenge. But God said, “Now, you understand that we are going to have to do this just like I did back in

the garden with Adam.” The self-assured man said, “That will be no problem,” and scientist bent down and grabbed a handful of dirt, realizing that he held in his hand all the building blocks of life. But God looked at him and said, “You don’t understand. You have to get your own dirt.”

We as human beings have become so self-sufficient that we have forgotten where we have come from. We have theories about everything, even how the world began. One theory is that it all happened by chance. But that doesn’t seem to measure up with the evidence we have.

We are told that that there are over 60 criteria that are necessary for life on earth. Here is a partial list of what is needed for life:

- Earth’s rotation was slower, or faster
- We were 2% closer or further from the sun.
- Earth had a 1% change in sunlight.
- Earth was smaller or larger
- The moon was smaller or larger

- We had more than one moon
- Earth's crust was thinner or thicker
- Oxygen/Nitrogen ratio was greater or less
- Ozone layer was greater or less

So we can see that there was no way that this earth or this universe we enjoy could have come into being by chance. But how did it come about? Let's look at one of the most familiar passages in Scripture that talks about how this all came to be, **Genesis 1:1.**

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Here we see a summary of what is going to be recorded in the rest of Genesis 1 and 2. It is also the foundation of everything else that goes on in Scripture. So let's take a look at it word by word.

In the beginning

Scripture clearly shows us that there was a beginning. That life is not an endless cycle. That all

of this began at a specific point in time. There are some out there who look at the creation story as simply a myth, something that was made up by the ancients in order to simplify how evolution took place. But the Hebrew, “bereshith” says that there was indeed a beginning. When was this beginning? Some say that the beginning was millions of years ago, others says tens of thousands of years, and still others say just thousands of years ago.

Now, if you open some Bibles to **Genesis 1**, you will see the year 4004 BC. This is the date that Creation supposedly took place. I have to tell you that this is not an inspired date. It is a date the Anglican Bishop of Ireland, James Ussher, came up with in 1650 by studying the chronology of the Bible. Actually, Bishop Ussher came up with the exact date of October 3, 4004 BC for creation. However, Ussher in his study made some assumptions that we are finding out doesn’t hold true, which takes Creation a little further back. However, what Ussher does do is help us see that the world is not billions of years old, or even millions of years old.

But all that the Genesis record tells us is: in the beginning.

“In the beginning” also tells us this world, including humans, is not an accident. At some point in history an Infinite Being purposed and created this world. This world, you and I, are not accidents. We were purposefully created.

Let’s look at the next word: In the beginning **God**.

The word in Hebrew is “Elohim”, which is a very important word in the Bible.

There are two main words that are used in the Old Testament for God. The one that we might be most familiar with is Yahweh or Jehovah. It is the personal name of God. The other which is the word used in this passage is Elohim.

An example of the differences between the uses of these two words is actually found here in the first two chapters of Genesis. The first chapter uses the word for God, Elohim, exclusively. It talks about God speaking and there being light, it talks about God

speaking and there being the sun, moon and the stars, it talks about God speaking and all the animals appearing. It even talks about God creating man but doesn't say how it was done. So God, Elohim, is a powerful God who speaks and gets things done.

Then we get the chapter 2. There the word used for God changes from Elohim to Yahweh. All of the sudden we see a much more personal God. A God who bends down in the dust and creates man, a God who created the Garden of Eden for man to live in, a God who sees that man is lonely and performs the first surgery to create a helpmate for Adam.

So the fact that we see a powerful and personal God involved in the creation of the world immediately casts doubt on:

ATHEISM- Doctrine of: If there is a God, His existence can't be proven.

PANTHEISM - Doctrine of: God is in everything. The danger of this is that the Creator is now subject to the whims of His creation.

POLYTHEISM - Teaching that there are many gods.

But the Bible tells us that an Infinite Being, God Himself, was the Creator.

We have seen that indeed there was a beginning, that this is not a Universe of endless cycles and that this world was not an accident, we have seen that a powerful and personal God was responsible for the universe , and now let's move onto the next word:

In the beginning God **created**.

The word “bara” in the Hebrew is very telling. It is only used with God as the subject, which means that only God can create. I will admit that it took me a little while to understand the implications of this. Only God can create? But what about the great masterpieces, great pieces of art, weren't that created by the artist? What about the great culinary delights? Weren't they created by the people who brought them? What about parents? Didn't they create the child they call their own?

You see many times we use the words “create” and “make” as interchangeable. But in reality they aren’t, at least in the Bible. The Bible makes it very clear that only God can “bara”, create. But what is the difference?

Notice what God did? He created something out of nothing. He spoke and there was light. He didn’t take a wire and hook it up to some great generator in the sky and then made light that way. No, He created light where there was no light. He created it out of nothing. He spoke and the birds and the fish came into being. He didn’t have an incubator somewhere and transfer the eggs to make the fish and the birds. He made something out of nothing.

We saw in the story at the beginning of the sermon that we as humans can make all kinds of things with materials that already exist, but we can never create something out of nothing like God can.

What does that tell me? It tells me that the powerful and personal God deserves to be worshipped as the Creator. The only Being in the

universe who can speak and something comes into being. The only Being who can make something out of nothing. A Being who spoke and the trees appeared. A Being who spoke and the water appeared. A Being who spoke and the sky appeared. That kind of Being deserves worship because He is the one and only Creator.

By the way, that is what the Sabbath is all about. Worshipping and being in awe of the One who is the Creator. We as humans become like the scientists we talked about at the beginning who think we can live without God. That we don't need God anymore. But every 7th day, we are reminded that "All you have to do is look around and see that you are not a creator, but God in heaven is the Creator who deserves to be worshipped."

We have seen a Universe that is not an endless cycle and this world was not an accident. We have seen a powerful and personal God that was responsible for the Universe and now we have seen a Creator who, unlike any other being in the Universe, made this world out of nothing.

Let's move to the final words of this verse:

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

There is a debate going on in religious circles as to whether this refers to the whole Universe or just the world in which we live. Now, I am not going to get into that debate, because I think that the words "heavens and the earth" tell us very clearly that God is responsible for everything. Any time this phrase is used refers to everything that exists. So as we look in a microscope, every little thing we see, God created. As we look up into the night sky with a telescope, every star and planet we see, God created. As we look around us today, God created all of this. And He has given you and me, as humans, stewardship over what He has created. So I think it is important, as we enjoy the world God created, we remember that God is also the One who has given us responsibility to take care of that which He created.

It was all perfect. At the end of creating on the 6th day, as He prepared to rest, God said, "It

is very good.” He had created everything, even man and woman with whom He could now have a relationship. But then something went wrong. Somewhere down the line, the man and woman sinned, and because of sin, His creation was marred. All of the sudden death came in and the things He created began to die, even the humans.

But God would not allow this to go on unchallenged. He put a plan into action that He had made even before He started creating. He would come to earth Himself and save humanity by dying. It would be a big risk, but God was willing to pay the price to stop sin and death from going on forever.

The apostle John describes it this way:

John 1:1-4, 10-14

“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. In him was life, and that life was the light of

men....He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

God Himself came to this earth to put a stop to sin and death marring His creation. And so this “Word” that John describes, the Creator Himself, Jesus Christ, came lived among us and then died to stop the cycle of sin and death.

But it isn't over yet, God's creation is still marred, but one day that will all change. The same apostle John who described Jesus as being the Creator in the beginning also describes these words that also echo the first words of the Bible:

Rev. 22:12, 13

“Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”

Because Jesus came and stopped the cycle of sin and death, He can promise that one day it will all end. One day He will come back. One day sin, death, and suffering will end. And one day, God’s creation will be recreated, never again to be marred by sin or by death. Listen to how John describes this recreation:

Rev. 21:1-5

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his

people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.' He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.' He said to me: 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.'"

Conclusion:

We may be awestruck by the beauty that we see around us today, but very soon there will be a new heaven and a new earth recreated. We can't even start to imagine how beautiful that is going to be. I want to invite us today, to begin planning to be a part of this earth made new. Tell our Creator that you are planning to be a part of this great recreation, where sin, death, and suffering will never again rear its ugly head. Amen.