

UNIT 2: God's Creating Work

Section 2: Introducing Genesis

A Book Review From:
The Battle for the Beginning
John MacArthur

INTRODUCTION:

Q1: Why is the Doctrine of Creation important?

Q2: Is Evolution really incompatible with the Bible?

Q3: How do we handle objections to Creation?

The Dominant *Religion of Modern Society*: **NATURALISM**

- Fundamental article of faith: **EVOLUTION**
- Views every law and every force operating in the universe as natural rather than moral, spiritual, or supernatural
- Like to portray their system as a philosophy that stands in opposition to all faith-based world-views, pretending that it is scientifically and intellectually superior precisely because of its supposed non-religious character
- BUT it is RELIGION- basic presupposition → rejection of everything supernatural (leap of faith)

III) **Carl Sagan**- one of the big voices of this worldview based entirely on naturalistic assumptions

- Everything in the universe has natural cause and explanation
- Wrote "Contact" (movie made based on it)
- Borrowed divine attributes such as infinitude, eternity, and omnipotence and made them properties of the universe itself
- Having examined enough of the cosmos to see evidence of the Creator's infinite power and majesty, he imputed that omnipotence and glory to creation itself.
- His statement: "The cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be."
- **Sagan** put creation in the Creator's rightful place!

Romans 1:18-23 "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures."

1. Evolution allows for man's conception of god
 - **Marvin L. Lubenow** said, "The gods allowed by evolution are private, subjective, and artificial. However, the God of the Bible is the Creator, Sustainer, Savior, and Judge. All are responsible to him. He has an agenda that conflicts w/ sinful humans. For man to be created in the image of God is very awesome. For God to be created in the image of man is very comfortable."
2. Where does all of this lead?? Inevitably to the same place...
 - Sense of utter insignificance and despair
 - "Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves."
 - Unnoticed, accountable to no one, petty and irrelevant in cosmos so expansive
 - **Interview** on Nightline w/ Ted Koppel 3 months before his death. Asked for pearls of wisdom... "We live on a hunk of rock and metal that circles a humdrum star that is one of the 400 billion other stars that make up the Milky Way Galaxy, which is one of billions of other galaxies, which make up a universe, which may be one of a very large number—perhaps an infinite number—of other universes. That is a perspective on human life and our culture that is well worth pondering."

3. **MORAL CATASTROPHE:** w/ no personal Creator to whom humanity is accountable, and survival of the fittest governs the universe, all moral principles that govern human conscious are groundless.
 - People in general still believe human life is special (society still benefits from the collective memory of biblical world-view), but do so w/o any philosophical foundation!
4. **Other Supporters of Naturalism**
 - **Charles Darwin-** Origin of the Species
 - **Karl Marx-** Das Kapital
 - **Herbert Spencer-** “Social Darwinism” [strong survive, weak perish] There is no moral reason to be sympathetic to the struggle of disadvantaged classes.
 - **Friedrich Nietzsche-** believed Christ’s teachings glorified human weakness and were detrimental to development of the human race. Nietzsche scoffed at humility, mercy, modesty, meekness, compassion, and service to others
 - **Nazi** movement sprung from these philosophies!
5. **Danger Looming!!** Now, even the church seems to be losing the will to defend what Scripture teaches about human origins... people try to reconcile Scripture w/ naturalistic theories!
 - A major re-interpretation of Genesis 1-3 is occurring!

Why is Genesis 1-3 Important? Why take such a strong stand on this issue??

Common Objections:

1. Creation is divisive.

- A. Many claim that creation is DIVISIVE.
 - “There is widespread *disagreement* about it.”
 - “To make a hard stand on creation is *unnecessary* and just *divides* the body.”
 - “If you only recognize one view as valid, it because you *think you’re better* than everyone else.”
 - Why don’t you *focus on issues that unite* the body of Christ instead of something you know will just stir up trouble?”
- B. If creation is divisive, it’s **only because the church is not taking a stand** on it.
 - Throughout the whole history of Israel and the church, creation has been a starting place of great unity, even with unbelievers!
 - It’s when the church is silent on an issue that believer’s really *begin to disagree* with one another.
 - We cannot afford to be silent about every issue that the lost world disagrees with us about. We must continue to teach the Bible, especially in these areas, or there will not be any common truths left for us to hold on to.
 - Besides, POPULARITY has never made anything true!

2. Creation is unscientific.

- A. One common complaint about creation is that it is unscientific.
 - “A belief in creation ignores scientific data.”
 - “Believing creation is just like believing a MYTH or a LEGEND.”
 - “Hasn’t science pretty much proven that everything got here through evolutionary processes?”
- B. Creation is not in conflict with any true science.
 - Evolution has NOT been proven. In fact, the empirical evidence does not and never has suggested any form of macro-evolution (adaptation of life from one kind to another).
 - Actually, all scientific evidence points to a creator and to the earth as formed through great cataclysms (namely the six day creation and the world-wide flood).
 - Besides, general revelation (science) is not and never will be judge over specific revelation.

3. Creation is a stumbling block to unbelievers.

- A. We shouldn’t talk too much about it because it is a stumbling block to unbelievers.

- “We’ll sound foolish to the scientific world and to any one who has ever taken a high school science class.”
 - “Wouldn’t it be better if we spent more time talking about Jesus and less time talking about Genesis?”
 - “When non-Christians hear us talking about creation, they’ll close their ears and won’t hear anything else we have to say.”
- B.** Every Bible doctrine is distasteful to unbelievers.
- From creation to the incarnation, all of it is foolishness to unbelievers.
 - 1 Cor 1:19-21.
 - Creation is a vital part of the gospel.
 - Acts 17:22-31.
 - The ears of unbelievers are already closed, just as yours and mine were. They won’t hear unless God Himself opens their ears for them (and who are we to stand in judgment over what God has said as we are expecting that very same God to save those with whom we share?).

4. Creation is just a secondary issue.

- A.** Creation isn’t a core doctrine of Christianity like salvation by faith, so don’t make a big deal of it.
- “Let’s face it, creation isn’t as important as salvation by grace through faith.”
 - “Lost people don’t need to be distracted by creation; its just not that important.”
 - “We don’t need to focus on creation any more than we need to focus on whether or not women can have braided hair.”
 - Wrong. Creation is a core doctrine of Christianity.

Reasons:

1. Creation is in the Bible.

- A.** God thought it was important enough to include.
- B.** It’s not just in the Bible... it’s all over the Bible!
- C.** It is where God chose to start!
- Christianity doesn’t start with John 3:16, or with Matthew 1:1.
 - Christianity starts with **Genesis 1:1**
 - *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable!* That includes Genesis 1 – 3, and every other passage that deals with creation.
 - **2 Peter 1:20-21.** *But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of ones own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*
- D.** If you don’t believe creation, then you don’t believe the Bible!
- In fact, you don’t have biblical faith at all!
 - **Heb 11:3.** *By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.*

2. Creation is true.

- A.** This is not just a philosophical debate about who has better proof for their position.
- B.** There is a true origin of the universe and for all of life, and for humankind.
- C.** The true origin determines who and what we are, as well as what we will be when this life is over.
- D.** Don’t be deceived into thinking that creation can be true for me, but evolution is true for somebody else.
- E.** The fact is: creation is true.
- God made us.
 - He has given us dignity as His image bearers.
 - He is our divine judge.
 - He has given us a revelation of Himself in His Word.
 - His Word tells us how He made us.
 - One day all of us, evolutionists and atheists included, will come under His divine judgment.

3. Creation serves as the groundwork for many doctrines.

- A. Creation is not an isolated issue that God apologetically mentions at the beginning of Genesis.
 - *I know you're gonna have a hard time believing this, but way back in the beginning, God kinda made everything.*
- B. On the contrary, creation is the groundwork for tons of important doctrines.
 - The substitutionary atonement of Christ.
 - The origin of sin and plan of redemption
 - The judgment of God.
 - The end times.
 - Biblical faith.
 - I Cor 15:22,45; Rom 5:18-19, I Tim 2:13-14, Jude 14

4. Creation is the basis for morality.

- A. If we are just the result of chance occurrences, there is no groundwork for universal morality.
 - Actually, if we evolved through the Darwinian process called "survival of the fittest," then we have an evolutionary obligation to destroy the weak.
 - This is precisely the motivation that fueled the Nazi holocaust.
- B. However, if we were created by an eternal God, then God has determined morality, and God will enforce it at the last judgment.

5. Creation is the basis for human dignity.

- A. If we are the result of evolutionary processes, then we are no more than mere animals.
 - The only reason we get to be human and the ants don't is pure chance.
 - Killing a baby boy is no different than killing a flea.
 - Some have decided that all life should be protected, so those who kill fleas, eat meat and cut down trees are guilty of murder.
 - Others have decided that people shouldn't be protected any more than ants and have advocated mass human suicide to protect the planet from our harmful influence.
 - Abortion is obviously acceptable, and there is no reason not to kill young babies, children, or adults either.
- B. Since we were created by God in His image, human life is sacred and valuable.
 - This recognizes that we are not just animals.
 - There is something more to humanity than what can be examined under a microscope.
 - We are body and soul. There is a part of us that does not end when our bodies die.
 - We have an obligation to care for the earth God has put under our authority, but we are different than anything else in it.
 - Human life is valuable beyond anything else that has life and breath.
Genesis 9:6. *Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man.*

6. God is glorified in creation.

- A. The Bible is full of declarations of God's glory in what He has made.
 - ***Psalm 8:3-4.***
 - ***Psalm 33:6-9.***
 - ***Psalm 95:6-7.***
 - ***Psalm 96:5.***
 - Psalm 148:5.
 - Isaiah 37:16.
 - ***Isaiah 40:26.***
 - ***Jeremiah 32:17.***
 - Romans 1:20.
 - ***Revelation 4:11.***

- B. Who are we to take that glory away and attribute it to the creation itself?
- *Isaiah 42:5-8.*
 - *Isaiah 29:16.*
 - *Romans 1:22-25.*

7. If you compromise on Genesis 1-3 by making it what you want it to mean you open a “Pandora’s Box” [theological mischief]

- In order to still be evangelical you must make an arbitrary hermeneutical shift at some point... how do you justify this shift?

8. If the Lord wanted to teach us that He created the world in 6 literal days, how could He have stated it any more plainly?

- Periods described by periods of night and day
- Week pattern of human labor and rest
- Literary form does not negate literal meaning
- Overall Theme (God created everything) does not make details moot!

9. No one would think anything other than a normal week if you were to read the Bible, allowing it to interpret itself.

- FRAMEWORK hypothesis – parallelism: Day 1&4, 2&5, 3&6
- Behind this hypothesis is presupposition that science speaks w/more authority about origins than Bible does.

Solution:

1. Take **Genesis 1-3** at Face Value
2. Faithful handling of God’s Word requires we use proper principles of hermeneutics (Biblical Interpretation)... Look at NT interpretation of Gen 1-3
 - **Mark 10:6, 13:19; John 1:3; Acts 4:24, 14:15; Rom 5:12-20; I Cor 11:8-9, 15:22; 2 Cor 4:6; Col 1:16 I Tim 2:13-14; Heb 1:2,10; James 3:9; Rev 4:11, 10:6, 14:7**
3. Remember: Our faith is based on the sure foundation of God’s Word. That is what we will study!
 - All geological, astronomical, and scientific data can be easily reconciled w/ the biblical account. The conflict is not between science & Scripture, but between the Biblicist’s confident faith and the naturalist’s willful skepticism.
 - The Bible is supreme truth, and therefore the standard by which scientific theory should be evaluated, not vice versa!
 - Although it is not a textbook on science, whenever it intersects w/ scientific data, it speaks w/ the same authority as when speaking on moral precepts!
 - Science has never and will never disprove one jot or tittle of the Bible
 - Science merely offers conjecture!
 - Scripture is God’s own eye witness account of what happened in the beginning.