

Introduction...Creation: The setting for the story that God wants to tell

Stories play a huge role in our lives, larger in fact than many of us know. Sure, we love to read stories, we love to see our favorite stories on the big screen, we love to tell stories, and some of us even like to make up our own stories. But stories serve a much more significant role in our lives than simply to entertain us, they have a much greater significance.

Dan Taylor had this to say about the role of stories within the human experience,

Human beings are story-shaped creatures. We are born into stories, raised in stories, and live and die in stories. Whenever we have to answer a big question — who am I, why am I here, what should I do, what happens to me when I die? — we tell a story.¹

Do stories play a role in the Christian life? Absolutely! It is largely through stories, through Biblical narrative, that God has chosen to reveal Himself to us. God didn't give us an instruction manual or a step-by-step (Idiot's) guide to understanding your deity. When God wanted to reveal His character to us, He plunged us into a story about the time when Moses asked to see God. When He wanted to show us His power of creation, He planted our feet along the banks of the Red Sea and told the story of how He made a road right through the middle of the water.

So much of what we have learned about God has come to us through these Biblical stories that He has given to us. You see stories are God's idea. **God is the master storyteller.** He has given us a story, and the opening line of His story is this,

In the beginning God created the Heavens and the earth...Genesis 1:1.

Transition...

Not all stories are fictional. In fact, the greatest story ever told is the story of this world and this is our story. As the people of God, we have a story, a well-rehearsed narrative preserved and passed down from one generation to the next. This morning we are going to focus on God's role in how this story began as we study the work of God in Creation.

Sermon Focus...**I. What – What did God make? All Things...**

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth...

This morning we are going to enter into this story as we sit at the feet of Moses. Moses, our storyteller, lived sometime between 1500-1300 BC and he wrote the first five books of the Bible by the inspiration of God. His main audience at the time was the Hebrew people who were just freed from slavery in Egypt.

Picture in your minds that we are crammed into a large tent in the middle of the desert and Moses is sitting in front of us teaching us about **God**. The first thing He wants us to understand is that the world we live in came to be by the **creation by God**. He wants us to understand that everything we see in the sky at night and everything we see during the day was created and put in place by God. He wants us to understand that all the animals that we see and all the plants that we see were created by God.

¹ <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-life-shaping-power-of-story-god-s-and-ours>

He wants us to understand that **we** were created by God. **But he also wants us to understand that God himself has always been. God creates but He wasn't created. God makes but He wasn't made. God simply is and He has always been.** There was a time when the universe did not exist but there has never been a time when God did not exist. God is not dependent upon anything, instead everything is dependent upon God.

In the sequence of the creation story there was a point when the universe was not, and then all of a sudden ***the God who was already there*** created the Heavens and the Earth. Out of nothing God brought into existence everything. The answer to the great question of "How did life begin?" is that God who stands outside of time and space ***created all that is*** and sustains all that is by His mighty hand.

God created all things out of nothing (time, universe, planets, stars, galaxies, solar systems, plants, animal, see Job 38-40)

Ps 33:6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

Heb 11:3 By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

Acts 17:24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth...gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

God created the Spiritual Universe (Realms and beings)

Neh 9:6 "You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.

God created Adam and Eve (Gen 2:18-25)

When Moses moves from chapter 1 to chapter 2 in the story of God, the focus shifts from cosmology and biology **to romance**... The narrative moves from the creation of the universe to the creation of the family and we learn that the purpose behind creation was to fashion a garden home as the backdrop for a love story.

Gen 2:18 Then the Lord God said, "It is ***not good*** that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

God is still speaking and He says something that should grab our attention. 7 times in Ch 1 God declared His creation to be good, but here in Ch 2 He declares that something is ***not good***. The man is alone and this is not good because God made man in His image. The animals are all identified according to their *kinds* but mankind was made in the *image of God* and God exists as One God in three persons.

Within the Godhead there is relationship and love. In order for Adam to understand his true identity as made in God's image he must experience something of the loving relationship that God enjoys within the trinity. Yes, Adam had God to relate to but the Father wanted to give Adam a helper that was uniquely fit for him.

So here's what God did:

V. 19 Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

According to v. 15, Adam has been placed within the garden of Eden and he has the responsibility to work the garden and to keep/guard it. On this day his task is to name the animals and since Adam is a genius, this task will not be a difficult one. **But there is something that God wants Adam to learn from this task that has nothing to do with giving creative and fitting names to the animals. God wants Adam to understand that he is alone.**

20 The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. *But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.*

As Adam observed the animals he noticed that something was missing. Over time he noticed that they were pairing off and mating. He noticed that there was a male and a female and it didn't take him long to realize that he did not have that, he was on his own. God allowed Adam to sense his **need. God allows Adam to come to the realization that He was alone but God has a plan to remedy Adam's loneliness.**

21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

The language here is similar to what we have already seen but refined in a way. In verse 19 we read that, "*out of the **ground** the Lord God **formed** every beast...*" in verse 7 we read, "*then the Lord God **formed** the man of the **dust** from the ground...*" Man was made out of the dust, the animals were made out of the ground, but the woman was made out of the man.

She is unique among all of creation. She is doubly refined, fashioned from Adam's rib. **Matthew Henry commented centuries ago**, the woman was "not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved." There she stands, the first woman— pure, lovely, dear to God.²

And when God the Father saw what He has made and He was pleased. The work of God in Creation was setting the stage for the true drama of History to unfold. I'm referring to the drama of salvation; the story of love, loss, separation and redemption. We are going to look at the work of God in redemption next week, but for now let's continue to study the work of God in creation.

II. Who – Who made you and all things?

The Father is understood to have decreed the creation of the universe, He was the One who initiated the work of creation. The Holy Spirit is the One who completed creation by giving life/breath to all creatures. **But the Son is the person of our triune God who is said to have been the active agent in creation.**

² Ortlund Jr., Raymond C. (2016-10-13). Marriage and the Mystery of the Gospel (p. 26). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Col 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

He is not part of the created order but rather He is responsible for bringing the created order into being. **We call Him the agent of creation, the instrument by which the Godhead brought the material and immaterial universe into existence.**

“By Him all things were created”

All that God made, He made by means of His Son. **Now, what does that mean for us today?** There are plenty of people today who look at the world around them and think that ***matter*** is all there is. ***Humanism*** declares that the universe is self-existent and not created. The humanist looks to the material world (nature) and says: “From you are all things, in you are all things, and all things return to you.”

God’s Word says that there is something higher than the created world, someone who is responsible for it all. The world around us is amazing but it is not ultimate. It came into being by the power of Jesus Christ. The heavens and the earth were created by Him.

That sunset that makes you stand in silent awe...He made that. The starry night sky that you could stare at for hours...He made that too. The Hubble telescope images of the galaxies that fill our universe...He made those in His first art class. The ocean that houses an entire alien world that fascinates and frightens us...Christ made all of it.

The smell of freshly mown grass, the sight of a pasture covered in Texas bluebonnets, the bright blue Texas sky as far as you can see; this and every other image of natural beauty from snow-covered mountains to the bayous in Louisiana lined with Spanish moss covered cypress trees; ***for by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth.***

There is even a world that you cannot see...He made that too. There is a visible world and an invisible world. From invisible natural laws to spiritual entities, all of these things came into being when He commanded them to do so. Angels were created by Him. Spiritual realms were created by Him. You can’t breathe under water or accidentally float off into space because Jesus built it that way.

The heavens and the earth were made by Him. The spiritual world that we cannot see was made by Him. As their creator, His authority extends **even to the power structures** within those visible and invisible worlds.

Whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities...

No human king/queen, wicked or otherwise, has gained power on their own. No president, pope, prime minister, or tribal chief has come to power apart from the sovereign plan and purpose of God.

7 times in this Colossians 1:15-20 we see the word “all.” All creation, all things, all the fullness...the point is to show the totality of Christ’s rule over creation. But notice how Paul wraps up verse 16:

all things were created through him and for him.

He called creation into being and it exists in its present state to bring Him glory.

III. How – But how did God create? By His Word.

Genesis 1:3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Genesis 1:6 And God said, "Let there be an expanse¹ in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."

Genesis 1:9 And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so.

The same phrase is found in verse 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, and 29. **9 times in Genesis ch 1 we see that God speaks and His command is obeyed.** Every day of creation was ushered in by the Word of God. *Creation Sings the Father's Song...*

(Like **Aslan** in C.S. Lewis' *The Magicians Nephew* or **Tom Bombadil** in Tolkien's *The Fellowship of the Ring*.)

God is so immensely powerful that His voice alone brings into being things that once did not exist. **Can you even begin to wrap your mind around the reality that the only barrier between you and nothingness is the command of God?**

But what was the state of that creation? Again, Genesis 1 tells us that what God made was good.

Genesis 1:4 And God saw that *the light was good*.

Genesis 1:10 God called the dry land Earth,¹ and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw *that it was good*.

Genesis 1:12 The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. *And God saw that it was good*.

The same is said in verses 18, 21, and 25. The Lord God saw what he had made and he declared that it was good. Then finally, in verse 31 after He had made man and woman, God looked upon all that He had made and said it was very good.

Creation was fashioned by the Word of God, it is sustained by the power of God and it is evidence of the goodness of God. In the beginning all that God had made was in perfect harmony; there was no brokenness, no sin, no death, no decay, no hurt, no pain, it was good.

IV. Why – Why did God make you and all things?

God did not create the world because He was lonely, or bored, or starving for attention. He did not need to create it, because there is no need or lack in God. Creation doesn't in any way complete Him or add to His God-ness. **The creation of the universe was a totally free act of God that reveals His power and declares His glory.**

Rev 4:11 "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

The question is often asked why would God, who is self-sustaining and perfectly holy, create a world of beings like us? Here is how Jonathon Edwards answered that question.

"Why would such an infinitely good, perfect and eternal being create? The ultimate reason that God creates, is not to remedy some lack in Himself, but to extend that perfect internal communication of the triune God's goodness and love...The universe is an explosion of God's glory. Perfect goodness, beauty, and love radiate from God and draw creatures to ever increasingly share in the Godhead's joy and delight. The ultimate end of creation then is union in love between God and loving creatures."³

God created all things, and mankind at the pinnacle, to both show and share His glorious and eternal love.

Conclusion...

1. This should move us to worship Christ more sincerely.

Tim Keller once told a story of how a Sunday school teacher changed his life with a simple illustration. The teacher said, "Let's assume the distance between the earth and the sun (92 million miles) was reduced to the thickness of this sheet of paper. If that is the case, then the distance between the earth and the nearest star would be a stack of papers 70 feet high. And the diameter of the galaxy would be a stack of papers 310 miles high."

The teacher then added, "Our galaxy is just a speck of dust in the universe, yet, according to Colossians 1, Jesus holds the universe together by the word of his power." **Finally**, the teacher asked her students, **"Now, is this the kind of person you ask into your life to be your assistant?"**

Jesus deserves both our silent awe and our loudest praise. He deserves our deepest devotion and our most joy-filled delight. **He is Lord over all and there should be no greater pursuit in our life than to worship Him.**

2. This should give us great hope for what God can do in and through our lives.

One of the things that I think we need to understand is that we serve a God who can take nothing and make something amazing and glorious. Because that is true, God can take the brokenness of our lives and by his mercy and grace and power, can turn them into something that can bring joy and beauty in the world. God can take the chaos of our lives and shape us into something good.

He can mold us in such a way that we bring happiness into the lives of others. He can take our broken marriages and turn them into strong, happy relationships that display his glory to those around us in profound ways. Our creator God is still in the business of creating, He is in the business of making us a new-creation in Christ.

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ all this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself...

God invites sinners to come to Him through faith in Jesus. He takes the guilt of our sin and covers it in full. He supplies our need of goodness and righteousness by the perfect obedience of His Son. He

³ George Marsden' Biography of Jonathon Edwards quoted in *The Reason for God* by Tim Keller on page 218.

gives us a new heart, a new purpose, a new start, a new life and a new hope. By the power of God, we can be made new, re-created, born again to eternal life.

The work of creation continues today through the gospel of Jesus Christ and in all those who call on the name of the Lord to be saved.