

In the beginning

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[0 : 00] Genesis chapter 1 verse 1. In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.

The Bible is given to us by God in order to set in our minds the framework of reality.

We do not know what reality is until we read and understand the word of God.

So God has given us the Bible to be the framework of our understanding. And in the Bible, what we are told is this.

That God has made two worlds. One in which we live now. And one in which believers are to live at last.

[1 : 09] So there is the first creation. And there is the second and last creation. The first creation is what we have recorded here in Genesis chapter 1.

But the second creation is something which is going on silently and secretly in the hearts of God's people all the time.

The first creation had a beginning and it will have an end. But the second creation, which has a beginning in this world, will go on to eternity.

And is referred to under the title of new heavens and a new earth. So the summary of the Bible's entire teaching is found under the idea of creation.

In the beginning, in the beginning, in the beginning, in the beginning, God created. But in the end, he will make all things new. As he tells us in that reading that we had at the end of the Bible in Revelation 21.

[2 : 28] What I wish to do with you today is to look at three things. First, how God created.

Second, why God created. And thirdly, to show you the similarity between the first creation and the last.

So we begin, first of all then, by considering the words in Genesis chapter 1 and verse 1. In which God tells us here and throughout this chapter, how he created all things.

In the beginning. In the beginning. That is to say, in the beginning of this world's history.

In the beginning of time. Because when God created, He brought into being three things.

[3 : 43] Matter, space, and time. Those three. Before this beginning.

There was nothing at all. But only God. And before there was a world. There was no space.

No time. No matter. No angels. Nothing. There was no dust.

There was no air. There was no vacuum. There was no light. There was absolutely nothing.

Nothing. And that reminds us that God lived in eternity before the world began.

In those far off times before creation. There were the three holy persons of the Godhead.

[4 : 50] The Father, the Son, and the Spirit. And they three loved one another with a perfect love.

and they dwelt in eternity even as they still do. God does not live in time but in eternity.

But at a time when it was pleasing to God He brought into being everything which now exists. And did so, we are told here, in the space of six days.

Everything that exists Heaven, Earth, Hell, Angels, Men, Animals, Birds, Plants, Trees, Oceans, Continents, all things were brought into being in those six days.

Now some people have said that God created the world because He was lonely and needed people to love Him. That is not correct.

[5 : 59] God was never lonely and He cannot be lonely because of the three persons within the Godhead. Each person loves the other two.

There is a perfect world of love between the three persons of the Godhead. God did not create because He was lonely and needed anything.

God never needs anything. He created because it was His good pleasure to do so. And I'll say a little more about that in a moment. Look now with me at this word create.

In the beginning God created. Now I need to say to you that the word used here is a special word which is only used in reference to God.

And it means creation out of nothing. Creation from nothing. There are other words in the Bible for making things creating things and forming things and shaping things but they differ from this word.

[7 : 13] This word always gives the idea of making from nothing. It's absolute creation as distinct from what we call relative creation.

Sometimes when you listen to the radio you hear people talk about a musician has created a piece of music or an artist has created a piece of art or a poet has created a poem.

All that he has done is he has used materials which were there before. But this word create means God made all things out of nothing.

And he did so by absolute power. It requires almighty power to bring into being things which were not there before out of nothing.

Now something that we do not always understand is verse 2 and what verse 2 means. The earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

[8 : 30] There are certain things we need to understand about this verse and the first one is that it is talking about what God did on the first day.

And something else we need to know about this second verse is this that when God created the world on the first day he brought things into being in a chaotic state.

He could have brought the universe into existence in an instant but that was not his will. For wise and good reasons he brought the earth and everything into existence in a shapeless form what we call chaos.

He first of all made everything in the terms of raw materials before he gradually in six stages reduced it to a cosmos a beautiful creation a wonderful universe.

So verse 2 refers to the incomplete or incomplete and shapeless condition of the universe as God brought it into being on the first day.

[9 : 52] it was without form and void. It's rather like somebody who builds a church. The church doesn't suddenly appear overnight.

What does appear first of all are the bricks and the blocks and the planks and the cement all in a raw form. The materials are there but they're not yet put together in a perfected form.

That's how God chose clearly to create the universe. First he made the raw matter and then gradually he shaped it bit by bit in six stages to bring it into its perfect form.

So chaos becomes cosmos by the end of the chapter and God can say it is all very good. now I wonder if you have realized this that there is a theory amongst some Christians that between verses 1 and 2 something very terrible happened.

We refer to this as the gap theory G-A-P the gap theory. It goes like this that God created everything in verse 1 but then Satan fell from heaven with his angels and so God judged the universe on that original fall of the devil.

[11 : 34] So when we come to verse 2 they say what we have is a universe which God has judged a universe in ruins which he has destroyed through judgment and what God does in the remaining verses they say is that he remakes the universe they say the first universe in verse 1 was populated by angels but because they sinned millions and millions of years ago God in a second creative work restored the universe and peopled it with human beings.

Now that's the gap theory. I won't go into the reasons why they think like that it has to do with the fossils that they discover in the soil but we won't deal with that just now.

But that is a false understanding of what is meant in verses 1 and 2. There is not the slightest suggestion that there's a lapse of time between verses 1 and 2.

Besides God did not destroy the universe at the fall of Satan because the universe was conditioned on the headship of Adam.

It was only when man sinned that the judgment entered into the universe not when Satan sinned. it was with mankind that God made the covenant and when mankind sinned the judgment entered into the universe not when Satan sinned.

[13:12] So the gap theory is not satisfactory it is not a right way of understanding the scriptures. All it is meant in verse 2 is that on the first day God made the raw materials and as you see at the end of verse 2 the spirit of God the holy spirit begins to brood over these raw materials.

He begins as it were to incubate them to bring into them life and in these successive days God brings this raw material into a condition of perfection.

So when the six days are over what do we have? We have like a three storied house. We have heaven above where God is visible and where the angels worship him we have earth in the middle where we live in this life and underneath there is hell where the devils were cast and into which the wicked go when they die Christless and godless and without mercy.

So that is what God has created and I must then point out to you that in creating the universe God observed order and intentional purpose.

The world is gradually in these six days made more and more suitable for man because mankind men and women boys and girls mankind is the crown of God's creation.

[15:06] Men and women are different from all the lower creation in that God held a special conference with himself before he made man.

That's why I came to read verse 26 missing other verses out. Verse 26 is extremely important. God said let us make man in our image after our likeness and let them have dominion.

Notice God does not say let me make man but let us and there you have these three eternal holy persons of God.

The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. They were there before the world began. And they take conference together. Not so much to make the world because the world is not that important but to make man because man mankind that is male and female.

When we say man I'm speaking now of male and female. Mankind is the apex, the climax, the highest point of all God's creation.

[16:23] And God has given to man this image. That is why man cannot live without God. It is because he was made for God.

And until he knows God his life is empty. And all his earthly material things do not satisfy him. Now they do satisfy cattle.

If you put a cow in a field of clover it is perfectly happy. It doesn't look up for anything else. It has what it wants. It has grass to eat.

That's all it wants. It isn't bored. It doesn't complain. It has what it wants. But all the material things that you can give to a man do not satisfy him because he can only be satisfied when he has God whose image he bears.

So now here we see that when he made the universe he prepared it for man. This is a man centered world in that sense.

[17:38] Of course in the higher sense it's a God centered world and a Christ centered world. But in a true sense it is also a man centered world. And whatever fears and anxieties and troubles and depressions you and I may have today it is something anyway it is something to know that when God made the universe he made the universe for us.

And he prepared it in the best way for us. person. And that is a wonderful tribute to the goodness of God. And it reminds us of the importance and the dignity that mankind has in the estimation of God. Let us make man in our own image. So the six days of creation were preparing the universe for man to be created within it.

if you want an illustration you can think of two young parents who are about to have their first baby. Their first baby is not yet born. But he or she is going to be born. So the parents prepare for it. They prepare a little bedroom. They prepare a little cot.

[19:02] They prepare a little pram. They prepare other things that babies need. The baby is not yet there yet. But the parents are preparing for it. Now that is what God as a parent did for mankind.

He prepared exactly the perfect world for us to live in. Just so much light of the sun. Just so much heat of the sun. Just so much daytime and nighttime.

Just so much work and rest. Because God made us for fellowship with himself. We were not made to be satisfied with our jobs.

We need a Sabbath day and a place of worship. We are not made to be satisfied even with marriage and children however important these things are.

We cannot be satisfied when we know God and come to have God in our life. So now that is how God created the universe.

[20 : 03] Let me come secondly to speak about why he created this world. Now you cannot get the answer to this question in Genesis chapter 1.

You have to go through the whole Bible. The entire Bible is given to us to answer the question why it was that God created the world. And I'm going to summarize the main lines of teaching that are given to us in the rest of the word of God.

It is this that the heavenly father in eternity before the world he so loved his own son Jesus Christ that he intended to give great honor and great pleasure to his son the Lord Jesus Christ.

And he intended to do it like this to give to Christ a bride who would be as it were his married spouse or wife and who would live with him in eternity future in heaven and in glory.

So God the father created a world peopled it with human beings and out of this human race the heavenly father in history has been calling men and women and children to faith in himself.

[21 : 34] All through the bible this is what God is doing and it is with the intention of bringing out of mankind a bride a church who will be the spouse and wife of his own dear son the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the end of history comes as we saw in revelation 21 the church which is the bride will be publicly married to Christ who is the son of God.

Now it is with all that in mind that God has created the universe that is why he did it. It is in order that there might be a people in this world and from mankind that he would draw men and women to himself to faith in himself that he would deliver them from their bondage to sin that he would give them faith and understanding to open their minds to see who he is and to recognize the glory of Christ as the everlasting son of God and that they would be then united to him in this world by faith and united to him at last in glory with everlasting blessedness Christ as the husband and the church as his bride bearing his image now you would expect of me to give you some scriptural passages to show you how the bible teaches this there are many of them let me give you some in

Matthew 22 at the beginning when the Lord Jesus Christ is explaining the purpose of God he puts it like this a king he said made a marriage for his son and that is his heavenly father making a marriage supper for himself for Christ and inviting men and women from the nations to come to put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ a king he said made a marriage for his son and that parable of the wedding feast and the invitation to men and women to come indicates that profound thought that in the mind of God the reason for all creation was to bring the bride the church into a condition in which she is ready to be married to Christ now that's one text let me give you another one this is the apostle Paul in Romans 8 in very familiar words all things work together for good to them that love

God Romans 8 28 to them that are called according to his purpose now we're getting the purpose of God that's what he's talking about all things work together for good to them that love God to them that are called according to his purpose now he's talking then about the purpose of God the why of God's creation why is God creating the universe well says Paul it's like this those whom he foreknew he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son Christ that he might be the first born among many brethren so you see the purpose is this it is that God has called sinners out of this world to faith in Christ so that they in the end may be conformed to the image of his son they may be Christ like they may bear in themselves that likeness and similarity to his own dear son and that's what it is to be a

[25 : 27] Christian it is to be somebody who is Christ like someone who bears the image of Christ they share a union by faith with Christ Christ is in them he is the hope of glory Christ is in them dwelling in them so you see there's another text indicating the eternal purpose of God whom he did foreknow he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son that he Christ might be the first born among many brethren he the head and they the members now there's another verse worth considering in this connection in Ephesians 1 verse 10 and it goes like this Paul is writing Ephesians 1 verse 10 and following that in the dispensation of the fullness of times to gather together into one all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which are in earth even in him so there again you see you have this divine purpose and intention the reason why

God created everything he did create in Genesis 1 and 2 is with this in mind it was with the view that in the end of time when history had wound up that Christ may be the head over all things and the church would be his body he the bridegroom she the bride and he would be lord over all now

you have the same idea comes out in Colossians 1 and verse 18 a most familiar verse it pleased the father that in him should all the fullness dwell that is in Christ that he Christ should have in all things the pre eminence that in all things he should have the pre eminence now that again is a divine plan purpose and intention when God created the world and began history when his voice uttered these words let there be light and there was light this is what

God was looking to it was that in the end of it all Christ should be supremely preeminent in the final form of the universe in that his people would love him serve him worship him adore him know him and be with him and you get that therefore in the great prayer of Christ do you not in earth John chapter 17 he prays for their unity that they all may be one in us in the father and in the son and that they may experience the love wherewith God has loved him and they may know the glory and see the glory of Christ there's another passage but this passage in Revelation 21 clinches it all right at the end of the Bible I shall read these words again in 21 of Revelation and I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and was no more sea and I John saw the holy city that's the church the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband so if you were to say what is going on in the world today what is it that God is aiming at today in the world I would have to say to you God's intention in the world today is that he is looking after his little church because his church is his the bride of Christ and the bride is still in her nursery she is not yet grown up the church in this world is still like a little girl maybe aged seven or eight or nine or something she is a little girl she is not fit to get married yet she is not old enough to be married yet you don't marry girls when they're only seven or eight you wait till they get older until they grown up then they get married well in the world today the church is growing up the world is the nursery in which the church of christ is growing up she is getting older getting bigger the day will come when the church will be full grown and matured in all the beauty of womanhood when that day comes a day only known to

God then the Lord will bring in eternity and he will wind up time and history and the history of the world will be over and this church which we read about here this new Jerusalem will be seen as a bride adorned for her husband and that's a very beautiful sight a bride is a very beautiful thing with all her ornaments and all her dress and her veil and so on it's a beautiful sight and people stop to look when they see a bride no wonder because it's a beautiful thing and a lovely thing and that is what the universe will do and all the angels will poke their heads out of their windows as it were in heaven and they will gaze at the church when she comes to her ripeness and fullness and maturity of womanhood when she is ready for the son of God but that day hasn't come that day is not yet dawned the church is still a little girl in the world and she is growing up and with the progress of time and the passing of centuries and centuries the church is growing to her maturity but

[31 : 34] God is looking after her in this nursery of a world and I find it very interesting that it is said in verse 1 of Genesis 1 in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and these two places are the two places in which the church lives while the church is in her immaturity in her juniority whatever word you use in her minority while the church is in her minority and is still a young girl she lives in the earth here in this world but when she is grown up and ready to be married she will live in another house and this is perfectly suited to what we know to happen amongst men a young girl lives under her father's roof while she is unmarried when she's seven or eight or nine she is in her father's house but when she gets married she doesn't live in her father's house anymore she goes to live in her husband's house and she takes his name becomes mrs so and so she is his bride and his wife and they're united now so it is in the beginning

God created the heaven and the earth he created the earth to be the nursery and the first home if you like of the church until she comes to her rightness and her maturity and then she will leave this earthly seed altogether and she will go to her marriage home she will go to her matrimonial home with the Lord Jesus Christ and there being married to him as the bride of Christ she will spend her happy eternity in the bridal home the marriage home God shall wipe away all tears from her eyes he says he that sat upon the throne said behold I make all things new it is done he says I am alpha and omega the beginning in the end I will give to him that is a thirst of the fountain of the water of life freely he that overcome shall inherit all things and I will be his God and he will be my son now now friends this is the picture which the

Bible gives us of God plan this is why he created the heavens and the earth I mustn't stop to make too many applications but I think you would agree with me that nobody understands this apart from Christians such a thought as I have just uttered from the Bible never entered into any man's head

except the head of those who have faith all of those of you here who have faith you know these things and this is the way you look at life and at the world but nobody except Christians can understand the divine intention it is a great mystery says the apostle Paul but I speak concerning Christ and the church and this is the comfort and cheer that Christians have on a dark day that they know they're marching towards their wedding they're going towards the day when they shall be with the

Lord Jesus Christ in his house and in his home this world is a painful place in many ways although a wonderful place notwithstanding yet a painful place and the Lord's people know that they have not yet come to their wedding day so they soldier on and fight on and they do so cheerfully and with comfort even though it's a difficult world because they know that one day soon the wedding day will come and that's why the church has throughout all the centuries been praying the words that Christ taught her to pray thy kingdom come for thine is the kingdom the power and the glory now my third and final point is this there is a wonderful similarity in many ways between the first creation and the last creation between the original making of heaven and earth in

Genesis 1 and this spiritual change which God is bringing into the lives of his own people at their conversion and at their regeneration and sanctification the first creation is when God made the original heaven and earth out of nothing and the new creation is as he brings sinners to faith in Christ and eventually will make all things new new heavens and new earth and there's a similarity between the two processes and the two methods whereby he does this let me draw attention just to some of these similarities first of all the old and new creation are both out of nothing when God made heaven and earth as I said earlier he made it without anything that existed before so it is when he makes a

[37 : 17] Christian there is nothing good in the sinner which he can work on there is nothing good at all in us sinners that God can get to work on in order to make us better because we are totally depraved and our willpower totally opposed to God the Bible calls it being dead we are dead in trespasses and sins but lo and behold when God comes and gives us this salvation it is absolutely all his creative work and so Paul says you are his handiwork creations of God new creatures created in Christ Jesus unto good works and the analogy is perfectly good just as in the beginning there was nothing to work on so in the sinner there's nothing to work on we are all rotteness from head to foot and that is what gives us hope about our unconverted loved ones even when our unconverted loved ones appear to be so indifferent to the gospel and seem to be so ready to stay away from church yet my dear friend go on praying for them as long as they live in this world and never despair for them no matter how far they go astray never give up praying and witnessing because the

God to whom you are praying is the creator and he can make Christians out of the most foul and out of the most depraved of men and women he has often done it and he will do it again now the second analogy is this when God created in the beginning he did so by his word he said let there be light and so on and there was it was through his word that God created all things and so it is in the new creation when God converts men and women to himself he does so always through his word faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God now that's the encouragement we have to keep on coming to the services of God's house and to keep on encouraging our men and women friends and our boys and girls our children keep encouraging them to come because it is not in vain one day the word may speak to that person in a way which will change their lives one single word from

God can make all the difference now I know that sometimes we are tempted to despair about the word of God we think it has no power we think sometimes of preaching it's a waste of breath everyone who ever did it and everyone who ever heard it has been tempted to think so so the apostle says despise not prophesying we're not to despise the word of God we're not to despair of the word of God we're not to have slight views of the word of God because one word from God can make a sinner into a saint that's the second analogy the third one that light is where God begins in the beginning of the creation remember he said let there be light on the first day light and so it is in the new birth when God is going to give salvation to an individual it begins with light light shines in the heart

Paul uses the same illustration that God he said who commanded the light to shine out of darkness has shined in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and that's what God does he shines in the heart with the light of his truth and he

illuminates the darkened mind of the sinner and gives him understanding that wasn't there before and then God changes the chaos of a sinner's life into the cosmos of sanctified redeemed christian man or woman and to be brief as I close that is what will happen in the end of history that the present universe will all be transformed and beautified and become a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness in us so all history will be this the loss of paradise but the regaining of paradise the loss of what was originally created and the gaining of a better creation so as we close where does this find you today have you the understanding of what god intended to do when he created the world there is only one thing that matters in the end and that is that you should have christ and be joined to him by faith so that when the wedding bells begin to chime and time becomes eternity that you will enter in in