

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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Sermon Title: This Incredible, Eternal God, Genesis 1-2

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INTRODUCTION: There are two points to today's message:

1. God is a God of order.
2. God is a God of creativity.

I'll be speaking today from the first few chapters of Genesis. I'd say the densest theology in the Bible is in the first few chapters of Genesis. We understand who God is, we understand who mankind is, we understand who Satan is, and we understand the challenges before us in this sinful world—all in the first few chapters of the Book of Genesis. And so, Bible teachers approach this unique book in a variety of ways.

We spend a lot of time trying to use the Bible to answer the questions of how and when God created the world. When we try to wrap our minds around the questions of how God did it and when God did it, we're going to run into all kinds of questions that are really not answerable. We know God spoke creation into being, but we don't know the scientific chemistry behind what happened when his voice spoke. The Bible does not give us those details. I'm humored by Christians who are afraid of science because they are afraid science will contradict the Bible. I really don't believe true science contradicts the Bible in any way.

And, I also am humored by both scientists and Christians who try to put an age on the earth. Time began in verse 3 of Chapter 1, which was the first day. We measure time in days. We reduce days to hours, and we reduce hours to minutes, minutes to seconds. But, verse 1 clearly says the earth was created *in the beginning* before time. Therefore, we cannot put an age on the earth. There is a belief within Christendom that true believers will believe in a young earth theory because when adding the generations of the Bible together, the earth is relatively young.

Do you remember write-offs as punishment? Do they still do that? Did any of you ever have to write, “I will not talk in class” a hundred times? I had to do it so many times I developed a gadget so multiple pencils could write it at the same time. When I hear a Bible teacher focusing on the age of the earth, I just want to tell them, “It’s time to do write-offs”—We cannot know the age of the earth because Genesis 1:1 tells us the earth was created before time began.

It’s like asking, “How old is God?” Children ask that question because they lack the inhibition to keep them from asking. God has always been. God will always be! How is that? And, it makes no sense in human terms that there is something, God—and he doesn’t have a starting, and he doesn’t have an ending point. He’s just always been. And so, in this message, I’m taking a different approach than what you’ve probably heard before—

First, GOD IS A GOD OF ORDER.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 1:1-2 ¹ *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* ² *Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*

I want you to notice in Chapter 1, the order of creation. First, there was the beginning, and then—

- On day one: God created light, and he separated light from darkness.
- On day two: God created the atmosphere.
- On day three: God separated water from ground and created vegetation.
- On day four: God created stars so man might have a calendar (verse 14). Then he created the sun and the moon... You’ll notice God created light on day one, and he created the sun on day four. So where does light come from? If the sun were to burn out, would we still have light? According to the creation story, yes.
- On day five: God created water creatures and birds.
- On day six: God created livestock, other land creatures, and man. There is more description on this particular day. And, in this verse, we learn in creation, God put man in charge of everything on the earth. He was to be in charge all animals in the sea, the sky, and on the land, plus vegetation. God created people—male and female, according to verse 27—in his own image.

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 1:31, 2:1-3 ³¹ *God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.*

¹ *Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.*² *By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.* ³ *Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.*

EXPLANATION: We can really get caught up in how God did it, and we can lose the main focus—that God did it. And, just because we don't understand how God did it, doesn't mean it's outside of God's order. God has an order of things we don't understand.

So, here's the best way to understand creation: First, there is God who does not have a beginning or an end...He always "is." Then there is a period called "the beginning" in which God created the heavens and the earth. This period cannot be measured in human time. These things are outside human understanding because we are locked in time and we think about time. We can't really think outside of time.

And, since we cannot understand the eternal nature of God and since we cannot measure "the beginning" in terms of human time, verses 1 and 2 sound scary and cold to us. *The earth was formless and empty. Darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.* But, when we read verse 3, it sounds kind of cozy to us. Why do verses 1 and 2 sound cold to us? Here's why—because in "time-language" terms, we understand verse 3 better.

But, there's nothing scary about the beginning before time. Why? There's nothing cold about it. Why? Because God was there. It's just that his creation up to that point was not meant for animals, fish, vegetation, birds, or people.

Someone might walk out right now or change the channel because of the elementary nature of this message; however, I have a strong point to drive home to you.

Genesis 1 tells us about the nature of God: He is a God of order, even if we cannot understand how, even if we cannot understand when, even if we cannot understand exactly why he does something. And so, it seems rather juvenile of me to point this out, but I want you to look at the order of creation. He didn't create men and women first without oxygen, food, and water. Adam wasn't created and said: *God, thanks for creating me, but I need some air (cough), my stomach's growling, and my mouth is dry.*

What we see in Genesis 1 is God's sense of order. We see in Genesis 1, God created the supply before the need even existed. And, within his creative nature, that's what God does. The water was created before fish. The land was created before vegetation. The sea was created before there were fish and other animals in it. There was a sky before there were birds. There was a full food supply and place to live before he created people.

God's order of things was recognized by King David in Psalm 139—

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 139:15-16 ¹⁵*My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days were ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to me.*

David knew—before he was born, God had direction for his life.

Second, GOD IS A GOD OF CREATIVITY.

Look around the room. God's been pretty creative, hasn't he?

It's common to hear God created "ex nihilo," which is Latin for "from nothing." This past week, I read this: Something produced by nothing from nothing would, logically, have had to create itself. But, if it created itself, it would have had to exist prior to its own creation, which means it must both exist and not exist at the same time and in the same way.

In other words, atheists who say, "It just happened," defy logic. It just doesn't even make sense. And so, before the beginning, we cannot say there was nothing, because God existed, and he always has existed. Saying there was nothing before

creation assumes the creation carries more importance than God. And, we err if we say creation is God. We are supposed to worship the Creator, not the creation.

God created matter because he is eternal and had the power to do it. People cannot create in the same way... We can only synthesize. When I say, “I created that,” when I say, “I made that”—what it means is I just put things together that already existed in a particular way.

And, the reason we cannot create “ex nihilo”— meaning “from nothing” is because we are not eternal. We don’t have the power to do so. But, the resources God has given us to bring things together to be used in different ways is quite incredible. The most advanced device anywhere near us is our cell phones, but think about this: All of the things people use to assemble those cell phones existed since the beginning. It’s really nothing new. Man has just figured out how to put things together in a different, new way that’s technologically advanced. When Adam and Eve walked on this earth, everything in your cell phone was on the earth at that time.

And, to understand the creation narrative story, I challenge you to read it multiple times. You will learn something new. What I told you about what I believe here about the age of the earth—that it can’t be known because the earth was created before time began—I’ve never heard anybody else say that. The only reason I came to that conclusion was because I just read it so many times and I realized, “Wow, the earth was created before time began.” If you read this, God will speak to you out of Genesis Chapter 1, Genesis Chapter 2, and Genesis Chapter 3. You will learn so much.

So, read it and ask the Lord to show you something new. Ask him to show you something you’ve never seen before. Ask him to help you understand it better.

Well, God saw that the light and said it was good. The sky, the water, the land—they were good. And, the celestial bodies, living creatures, including people...all were good. And, in the last verse of Chapter 1, God looked back and saw all that he created and said it was **very** good.

And, to this day, creation is quite incredible! When the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan, it was predicted nothing would live there for years, yet three

years later, grass sprouted. At other times, ecological disasters have been absorbed into nature. In 2007, there was a prediction that in ten years most of the planet would be a desert. We have a strong world of creation. God, in his creative power, seems to absorb man's abuses, but he doesn't give us the authority to abuse.

And, in the creation narrative, people are given authority by God to take part in his creation. In verse 20, after God created people, he told them to...

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 1:28... *fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.*

And, all these years later, we are still learning how to do it properly. Notice he doesn't tell people to rule over people. God told people in the Scripture to rule over the earth. But, later we see Adam and Eve sin, and when sin entered into the world, there was a whole new normal. And, it was a less than good normal, and that's when people started ruling over people. And, the reason we struggle with our stewardship on this earth—the reason we destroy the earth and have to go back and fix things is because we are busy ruling over each other instead of ruling over the earth as God originally planned.

As we get to the fall of mankind—Adam and Eve, as they sinned, we will see that it all changed. But, in the beginning, in the first part of Genesis when God created this wonderful garden and this wonderful earth—he put them in charge of it. He told them to be stewards of it, and that was their jobs. That's what they were to do. And, then later, we see they sinned and they were put out of the garden. And, life changed, but in God's grace, he did not take them out. He allowed them another opportunity.

We've got a beautiful world. And, in spring, after such a dreary look of winter, we see all the beautiful flowers. We're all remarking of the beauty of nature. This world, as beautiful as it is, is not even close to what it was in the beginning because when the earth was cursed by God because of Adam and Eve's sin, it changed. Can you imagine what it was like before?

When we look at the beauty of the mountains, when we look at the beauty of the ocean, when we look at the beauty of nature in and of itself and we remark about

how beautiful it is, we cannot even imagine what it was once like. But, we have hope in the end, in Revelation, that it will all be restored.

CONCLUSION: I've shown you God is a God of order. Satan does just the opposite. He is just the opposite. He's not a leader of order. He's a god in a sense of chaos—the lower “g” god. Remember how I said: God created the supply before the need? God wants to do the same thing for you. He has done the same thing for you. Whatever your need is, whatever your needs are, the supply is already out there. We see it in the creation motif—God does not create something without the supply already being out there.

But, you know, Satan wants to take this God of order, and he wants to lead people toward chaos. He wants you to panic during your need, and he wants you to believe God will not and cannot supply your need. And, he wants to give you the shortcut to get your need met because he's not the God of order. Satan brings chaos—just the opposite.

When you have a need, I encourage you to remind yourself of the creation motif found right here in Genesis 1. And, even though you may not see the supply, trust God that he will bring it to you in his timing.

I've also shown you God is a creative God. You know, Satan does just the opposite of create. What does he do? He destroys. So, right here in Genesis 1, we gain an understanding of who God is, and then shortly here in a couple of chapters, we gain understanding of who Satan is and how he does just the opposite of what God does. Satan does the opposite of create; he destroys. He wants everything to run backwards.

Remember how I told you that God looked at his creation and saw that it was good? Satan wants you to look at his creation and think of it as bad. Satan wants you to look at yourself—created in God's image—and he wants you to think of yourself as ugly. Satan wants you—you created in God's image—to look in the mirror and hate yourself because he's not a God of creativity. He brings destruction, and he doesn't want you to be creative. Ultimately, his goal for you is to be completely ineffective in your Christian witness.

Many years ago, when I was being hired by a church to do youth work, the pastor of the church met with me privately, and he gave me this charge. He told me he wanted me to reach kids for the Lord. He wanted me to have great programs, and he said, “Be creative.” I just loved that charge and how it excited me.

What does all this mean for us? Let me ask you this: What is your life like? Is your life full of chaos? If so, then you need the God of order in your life. Is your life dull? Is your life unfruitful? Then you need a fresh work from this God of creation—this God of creativity in your life. This morning, I shared about God as the God of order creativity, and I asked the question: Is God in your life? Have you repented of your sin and trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior. This is what the Scripture tells us to do. We will stand down here and have our altar call if anybody would like to come forward for prayer or if you’ve made a decision for the Lord that you want others to know.

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