

Genesis Chapter One

Introduction to the Commentary

It is the sincerest wish of the author that whoever finds this work in their hands understands one thing of him: that he was wise enough to know to counsel you to destroy this work if it draws your gaze away from Scripture and from communion with God. For he has read the works of wiser men. All of them, without exception, regardless of the time they lived in, prove to be flawed in so many ways. None of them, outside of Scripture, are flawless. And it is the clarity of this writer that his work shall prove to be no different. That it will serve the kingdom only insofar as God's Scripture bursts through its pages by His grace, the Spirit bringing clarity by His mercy.

The author has sought to write his best here. He does not have the resources of materials, time, intellect, wisdom, patience, or strength of vision that he wishes he did. But he realizes at the same moment that if he to have all the books, time, logical abilities, the experiences of a hundred lifetimes, and the patience of a brick wall, it would amount to nothing if what is now before you was not written with a heart towards God. The test of this author is not of how knowledgeable or well-presented he is. It is a test of his walk with God, and the communication of that walk. For all spiritual warfare consists in this: are we to know, live, and fellowship with the eternal God (1 John 1-3)? Or are we to have idols (1 John 5:21)?

One last note before we set into the exposition of Scripture: this is intended to be a full commentary. Later on, I hope to write a concise commentary, intending that the two would go together and build off of one another. I wanted a commentary that went extremely deep, and yet a commentary I could take with me to church so that I would have my thoughts ordered and ready when people asked me for an exegesis or exposition. This could not be accomplished by only writing a concise or full commentary, but only by writing the pair. I have made this ongoing project available to you that you too might benefit in some way from this overly ambitious, slow, humble work.

Introduction to Genesis Chapter One

As we come to this passage, it would be beneficial to remember what Owen Strachan writes concerning this passage. "To know God and His intentions for humanity we must start where Scripture starts: Genesis 1 . . . [this text] offers not simply knowledge of God's creative work, but knowledge of God's design of humanity" (Strachan 13). A lot rides on the interpretation of this passage. Let us therefore move forward with humble patience as we enter into this text, as we seek to behold Him clearly. For, as Calvin reminds us, "[we] cannot

behold him clearly unless [we] acknowledge Him to be the fountainhead and source of every good” (Calvin, Calvin’s Institutes of the Christian Religion, Volume 1, Edited by John T. McNeil 42).

Verse 1 Beginning

In the beginning...

In J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*, when Bilbo and Gollum get into game of riddles, a riddle is given as the two talk:

Then [Gollum] thought the time had come to ask something hard and horrible. This is what he said:

*This thing all things devours:
Birds, beasts, trees, flowers;
Gnaws iron, bites steel;
Grinds hard stones to meal;
Slays king, ruins town,
And beats high mountain down.*

Poor Bilbo sat in the dark thinking of all the horrible names of all the giants and ogres he had ever heard told of in tales, but not one of them had done all these things. He had a feeling that the answer was quite different and that he ought to know it, but could not think of it. He began to get frightened, and that is bad for thinking. Gollum began to get out of his boat. He flapped into the water and paddled to the bank; Bilbo could see his eyes coming towards him. His tongue seemed to stick out of his mouth; he wanted to shout out: “Give me more time! Give me time!” But all that came out with a sudden squeal was:

“Time! Time!”

Bilbo was saved by pure luck. For that of course was the answer (Tolkien 77-78).

Time. It is the motivator of so much terror. Without it nothing else would be truly terrifying. Before we see time as it was intended to be in the original creation, first let me draw out the horror of time we experience today because of sin. It is what gives rational and depth to the fear of death, as expressed by a dying character in the movie *Interstellar* in the words, “I’m a physicist—I don’t fear death, I fear time” (Nolan). It is that which makes one alone, and makes all his achievements and works meaningless, as it was for the character Frank Sheeran in the movie *The Irishman* (Scorsese). Time is what gives definition to human woes. Is it not the horrifying quality in the Book of Ecclesiastes? Is it not the thread in that Book which sends all its true readers running to the everlasting-to-everlasting God? This is life, and this is time,

under the sun—without God and His glory as the *telos* of all things—a universe in sin. But what was time meant to be before the fall? How are Christians to see time now?

The purpose of time

God begins with time—something we cannot comprehend being outside of. He began with it because it was the prerequisite for all else that would follow. Later God would give specificity to time (Genesis 1:14; Psalm 104:19), but here He begins with the raw, unbounded flow of time for the rest of creation to be made in. For the entire creation, as we will come to see, was intended for the purpose of God to have communion with mankind, and for people to have communion with Him. Time is the facilitator of that. Without it, communion would not be what God wanted it to be.

If any would question this, that this was the intent of God in creation, I point simply to Paul's words in Ephesians 1:10 and expand the point out into all of history. Here, Paul is unfolding God making known His plan and purpose of salvation. That God, before the foundation of the world, has elected a people in Christ, in love predestining them for adoption as sons in Christ—for redemption, in grace, for transformation. All the way through these few verses, the Spirit is making clear by Paul that God has a "purpose that He set forth in Christ," "according to the purpose of His will," bringing it to pass and revealing this to His people "according to the riches of His grace," a "plan for the fullness of time." That phrase, "a plan for the fullness of time," leaves no room for doubt. God has a plan from before the foundation of the world to eternity future in Christ. Christ is the reference point—not just in creation, but also for the outworking of history. For all things were created through Him and for Him—and without Him, nothing was made that has been made (Colossians 1:16; John 1:3). More than this, all this hold together in Him, being upheld by the word of His power (Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3). And through Him, as He is truly God, the plan of God is fulfilled, to reconcile all things to Himself in Christ (Colossians 1:19-20). And so, His church—His body, His bride—is the bringing to pass of that plan (Ephesians 1:11-14; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 2:10). This was always God's plan—not because He needed this plan to be who He is, but because in His graciousness He was pleased to do it (Isaiah 53:10, 61:10-62:5). It is His pleasure to draw His righteousness near, to bring salvation and restore His people (Isaiah 46:12-13). How does He do this? According to His good purpose which He accomplishes in time (Isaiah 46:8-11). And it is marvelous in our eyes (Psalm 118:23).

Without time there would be no hope. There would be no walking with God. There would be no marvelous picture of graciousness drawn by the hands of a loving Sovereign. There would be no incarnation. No mediation. No intercession. No long years of sickness healed by the touch of the compassionate One. No death followed by resurrection. No rebellion followed by judgment or reconciliation. No commission. No feet upon the hills. No becoming Christlike: God would not work all things together for the good of those called according to His purpose in the way that He does in time (Romans 8:28). Nothing would be

anything like what God created it to be. The very fabric of reality bears witness to His heart. He is the longsuffering steadfast in love King. As John Lucas expresses in a lyric (Lucas),

There is a time for healing and pain
A time for drought and a time for rain
There is a time for everything
Until we crown the risen King...Until we crown the risen King

And I don't know the end, or tomorrow's story
But I have found the one who gives me rest
And I will make my bed in His promises
For He holds true when nothing's left... When nothing's left

So crown Him in your mourning
And crown Him in your laughter
And crown Him when it all turns dark

Crown Him when you bury
And crown Him when you marry
And crown Him when your faith finds a spark

Crown Him for He's faithful
And crown Him for He's worthy
And crown Him for He is good

Crown Him for His promises
Cut through the blindness
Of children that have barely understood

The beauty that has come
And the beauty yet to come
And the beauty that is yours and that is mine
And that death produces life
And that we are made alive
By the King who paints beauty with time

Without time God's glory would not be how He has shown it to be. For we would not see His beauty, nor He Himself, and Him alone, as our good. As Edwards has so skillfully shown,

God in seeking His glory, seeks the good of His creatures; because the emanation of His glory (which He seeks and delights in, as He delights in Himself and His own eternal glory) implies the communicated excellency and happiness of His creatures. And in

communicating His fullness for them, He does it for Himself; because their good, which He seeks, is so much in union and communion with Himself. God is their good. Their excellency and happiness is nothing, but the emanation and expression of God's glory: God, in seeking their glory and happiness, seeks Himself: and in seeking Himself, i.e. Himself diffused and expressed (which he delights in, as he delights in his own beauty and fullness), He seeks their glory and happiness (Edwards, A Dissertation Concerning the End for which God Created the World 25-26).

It is this God's passion to diffuse and express His fulness that He has ordered all creation in time, for the expressed purpose of His communicating glory.

All that being said, let it be known and proclaimed throughout all generations that it is the One true God who makes sense of time. No other so called god comes near the glory to fill this reality that the One true God has created.

Before the beginning

Do not think it impious as some would have you, to wonder and seek an answer to what God was doing before creation, though the one who admonishes you be Calvin or Augustine (Calvin, Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion, Volume 1, Edited by John T. McNeil 160). For Christ only can provide a satisfying answer, and He has done so (as we will see). He would not leave us to waver in doubt about the Being and Nature of who God is that He would create as He has. Out of the grace of God's Being, He pours out before us that knowledge only a friend would disclose (John 15:15). And it is by faith in the God who reveals Himself, and by that alone, that we are His friends (James 2:23). Therefore, let us fully rely and lean on Him for understanding, that we might see our Creator more clearly.

In Genesis 1-3, we are given that beginning which God creates. Later in Scripture, we are given a fuller understanding of the God who created the beginning. Here we are dealing with a created beginning. Later, in John's Gospel in particular, we are given a look into eternity before creation, filled by the eternal triune God (John 1:2). There God gives full vent to the light of Himself such that we would know the particulars of how and why He created. For there we understand the Nature of God as He is before the creation of the world (John 1:1). And we are given an understanding into the character of that Nature (John 17:24: "Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world"). Furthermore, we are told upon what foundation our salvation is grounded: not upon the sands of space or time, but upon the bedrock of the gracious Nature of the eternal God (Ephesians 1:3-6; Deuteronomy 33:27), everlasting to everlasting (Psalm 90:2)—the same bedrock upon which creation springs.

¹ For this reason is it so crucial to see the "before the foundation of the world" in Jesus' words

¹ Eric Alexander picks up on this in his introduction to Genesis, preaching that "...when you ask the question, 'why did God create the universe in all its glory, and man as the crown of it,' the only answer is that He was pleased in His condescending grace to share His joy in all that He was with us. And the creation is therefore an expression of

in John 17:24. As we have already seen, before the foundation of the world, we were chosen in Christ by the Father for adoption in love. But just as God's redeeming love for His people does not rest on created or space and time, so God's love doesn't originate as first resting on us. No, He sets His love on us "in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6-7). For before the foundation of the world there was no other matrix by which God was to set His love upon us other than Christ alone, out of the overflow of the very love with which He loved the Son.

The love between the Father and the Son through the Spirit, then, is the bedrock for all reality in creation and redemption. The Triune God is the Fountain of all life, and the Source of all goodness. Michael Reeves has shown this in many places, and I would gladly quote him here that you might explore this in more depth with him as I have had the delight of doing. Commenting of John 17:24-26, Reeves writes and says,

The Father loved Him [that is, Christ] before the creation of the world, and the reason the Father sends Him is so that the Father's love for Him might be in others also. That is why the Son goes out from the Father, in both creation and salvation: that the love of the Father for the Son might be shared (Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity* 44).

Jesus, in His high priestly prayer, in John 17:24 put it like this: He said, 'Father, you loved me before the foundation of the world.' Eternity is filled with a Father's love for His Son. *That* is where it all starts. That is the bedrock for all reality. The Father eternally loving, delighting in His perfect Son. And this eternal fountain of love clearly was of such super cosmic potency, so more than satisfied was it, so full that the Father didn't want to contain it or restrain it! The Father so delighted in His Son that He wanted to share His delight. To share His love with others. He wanted His Son to be the first born among many sons—the first born among many brothers. He wanted *billions* to share His joy, to be embraced with the very love that He has always embraced His Son with.

And so, that eternal fountain of love brimmed over. The love exploded outwards. This, my friends, is why this cosmos exists. And you can go outside and you look at the sun up there, you look at the clouds going past overhead, you look at the moon and the stars twinkling at night, and you can think, 'why are all those things there?' *Because God loves.* Because the Father's love for the Son was so great that it overflowed, meaning all this. Unlike all the gods that we make up as humans, unlike all the gods of human religions, this God doesn't create because He's lonely, because He's needy, because He's bored. No, this God created because He is so BURSTING full of love! And creation is about the extension of that love outward, that it might be enjoyed by others.

the grace of God—it is a work of grace just as redemption is. And we are introduced to it here because this is what God is like all the way through Scripture... God persists even with His rebel creatures, not because He has any need of us, but because He longs to share His joy, His holiness, His righteousness, His beauty with us—it is because He is a God of grace! And He does so never on the ground that He needs us, but on the ground of His infinite grace" Invalid source specified..

That is where the story begins. With ecstatic, overflowing, hyper-full love. The Fathers uncontained delight in His Son (Reeves, The Story Gone Wrong 11:13-14:56).

It was in that same gracious love that God chose to reveal Himself in this way. It was in the binding of our minds within the confines of time that He might show us that He is Himself the “primal source of the human race and of all things,” and that we might seek the God who is the “Maker and Founder of the universe” (Calvin, Calvin’s Institutes of the Christian Religion, Volume 1, Edited by John T. McNeil 160). And it is in this that we see God’s fatherly nature (Deuteronomy 33:27). He would patiently lead us by the hand, showing the human race and individuals distinctly who He is in the construction of not only creation but of history, from the beginning on. He is mercifully content, in loving His church in Christ, to woo her over the ages and over the years of His children’s lives, building her child by child (1 Corinthians 12:24b-27). He mercifully deals with them in their arrogance and speculations, calling them back to a true knowledge of Himself. He is not slow in fulfilling His promises (1 Peter 3:9), and it is not that He is unwilling to fully expound His goodness to His elect (Isaiah 48:10; 1 John 2:27), but rather that He is gracious in communicating with and to them His very goodness, seeing the end from the beginning, and bringing to completion the maturity of His adopted sons (Philippians 1:6). It is in this that God’s fatherly grace is expounded: that the Father will not suffer the loss of anyone whom He has given to His Son—not even to time itself (John 6:39-40). If we can trust God that in His fatherly care He will raise us up on the last day, at the end of history on this side of the Book of Revelation, can we not also trust Him now too? Can we not rely wholly on Him to give us a fuller knowledge to us individually of His Revelation when He sees fit? For has He not always revealed who He is in His own good time to His children, and provided everything needful for knowing Him in His Word?

Therefore, let us plow the depths of the created beginning to see in God’s grace the Maker and Founder of the universe—“The Fountainhead and source of everything good”—of love, and life, and grace, and justice, and reality, and of merciful condescension.

In the beginning, God...

Moses, as MacArthur notes, makes no “attempt to defend the existence of God” (MacArthur, The MacArthur Bible Commentary 8).² Again, White states the same: “God chose to begin His revelation of His truth not by arguing for His existence, but by asserting that He alone is God, the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1)” (White 34). By this I gather what is related elsewhere in Scripture, namely, that God is not known by human speculation or mere reason, but rather by divine communication and spiritual transformation (Romans 1). For two things keep the unbeliever back from the acknowledgement of God: first, they do not “believe the

² And by “existence” I here take MacArthur to mean that God is, and that all else obviously exists from Him, as Sproul clarifies in dealing with the using the word exist to describe God Invalid source specified.; but this is inconsequential.

truth,” saying in their heart, “there is no God. And second, they take “pleasure in unrighteousness,” being corrupt, [doing] abominable deeds, [not one among them doing] good” (2 Thessalonians 2:12; Psalm 14:1 and 53:1).

That said, as for the defence of the Being of God in this text, and as for the meaning of the word *Elohim* (“In the beginning, God [Elohim] created...”), whether it is intended to denote the Trinity, I answer³ that I hold it to be inferred that only the Triune God would create in this way, and therefore the point is slightly mute. For if all that God does here is not only consistent with the truth that He is Triune, but actually points us to that truth, what is the difference in how you take the word *Elohim*? We ought to let God take us by the hand and lead us in this. We should not haughtily conjure something out of the text that isn’t actual there. Rather, we are to read the text as Moses intended it to be read by the first recipients. After that we can return from traversing the Scriptures to see exactly who this God is.

As for the word *Elohim* itself, I leave it to wiser men than me for now. For I conclude that Moses is patient, wanting his Spirit inspired corpus completed, and that God is not pressed to answer for His own Being. Rather, He Reveals His Nature and character as the Personal God from Genesis 1:1 and on throughout the whole of Scripture. We should not therefore feel pressed to dig out of this text more than what the original readers of the Pentateuch would have understood without the light of the rest of Scripture. And with this we should be satisfied and not speculate about the text, but to return to it with the light of more Revelation. Suffice to say, God does not argue His own Being, but rather shows that He is the basis for *our* existence, and thereupon impress upon us our enjoyable dependance on Him for *our* substance and identity.

...God created...

The fact that God creates is one of the most miraculous things about God. And by the fact that God has created, and created in the way that He has, we come to understand throughout Scripture how remarkable is to be our knowledge of God as the personal Creator. Peter Mead tackles this point succinctly:

“Everyone assumes that God is primarily concerned with demonstrating His power, thus Genesis 1 is always read as a presentation of divine power. But as we read through the Bible, is God’s main concern really to prove His power? Do we read ‘His impressive power and absolute authority endures forever’? No! Over and over the Bible repeats: ‘His Steadfast love endures forever.’

“God’s nature determines everything that follows. If God were a singular being, self-absorbed and eternally silent (nobody to talk to or listen to), then creation might well be

³ With due consideration to both the words use throughout the Old Testament, particularly in Moses’ writings, and with thought to the harmonizing of verse 1 with verse 2 if interpreted as a reference to the Trinity.

a manifestation of power. ... Without diversity within Himself, we can only guess what creation might have been like: one type of functional fish, a generic grey plant, and maybe people who were made simply to serve and obey. Life, but grey.

"...Sibbes rejected the idea that creation is primarily about demonstrating power. 'If God had not a communicative, spreading goodness, He would never have created the world. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were happy in themselves, and enjoyed one another before the world was. Apart from the fact that God delights to communicate and spread His goodness, there had never been a creation or redemption'" (Mead 32-33).

...God created the heavens and the earth.

There is an absoluteness and finality in this statement. "With that statement the Word of God, holy Scripture, affirms the existence of the universe and everything in it as the product of God's creative act" (MacArthur, *The How, Why, and When of Creation*, Part 1). God created it. Not any other. It is an absolute truth. An unavoidable claim.

"Creation is God calling into existence what does not exist. There's no room in that for evolution. Evolution is something appearing that has mutated from something else; that's not creation. At a particular point in eternity the eternal God spoke everything into existence, made up of components which had never before existed. Therefore, we say the material space, time, universe had an absolute beginning.

"There was no pre-existing material. Nothing is in existence that God didn't create" (MacArthur, *The How, Why, and When of Creation*, Part 1).

Furthermore, God finished it in six days. He did not do it in any other time frame. Creation was a definitive act. This is shown in the fact that He created it in 6 days, and that He created it as inhabited, and its inhabitants as fully matured (Psalm 33:6-9; see commentary on Genesis 2:5-9). There is no new created material today. He forms or puts together things and individuals, and He sustains everything by His power, giving "breath to the people... and spirit to those who walk in it" (Isaiah 42:5)—"who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the spirit of man within him" (Zechariah 12:1). But what He does in these six days, and in particular in this statement, is set everything in right order as it should properly be—as "good". There is therefore no room for any notion of evolution in the text.

"He created the entire universe out of nothing, from no pre-existing material, and He did it in six days. We know that from verse 5.

"The first day he created light and it says there was evening and there was morning, one day. Just to make sure you don't miss it, He says it was one, and then just to make sure you know exactly what He means, it was the kind of day that has an evening and a morning. What kind of day is that? That's basically what we call a solar day. It's just a

plain old normal, common, everyday day. Now I want to tell you something. God did all this in six days, verse eight says there was an evening and a morning on day two, and verse 13 says there was an evening and a morning on day three, and it goes all the way down that way.

“Evolution demands ongoing transition, even theistic evolutionists who say they believe the Bible have the evolutionary process of necessity going on and going on and going on, and ostensibly bringing new things to life.

“But God created everything in six days, there’s no evolution in that chapter, there’s not a hint of evolution anywhere in this chapter. There’s no place for an evolutionary theory because you have days” (MacArthur, *The How, Why, and When of Creation*, Part 1).⁴

Verse 2 Beauty and Order

The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Kidner helpfully points out of this text that it “would be better translated ‘Now the earth ...’, for the construction is exactly that of Jonah 3:3 (‘Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city...’). By all normal usage the verse is an expansion of the statement just made, and its own two halves are concurrent” (Kidner 51). This is crucial because of what is termed gap theory, and the idea of the pre-fall catastrophe (the implications of which will be examined further under verse 4). Wayne Grudem defines gap theory as “The idea that between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 is a gap of millions of years during which God judged an earlier creation, making it ‘without form and void’ and necessitating a second creation depicted in Genesis 1:3-2:3” (Grudem 1243).⁵ But this is not in the Scripture. The normal reading of the text is simply that verse 2 is a description of precisely what the world was like after God had created the heavens and the earth (Alexander 25:25-38). There is no suggestion of a period of time between the creation and description of world.

⁴ This refutation of evolution will be continued when we come to Genesis 1:5.

⁵ Grudem addresses gap theory on pages 287-289, and suggests sources for further reading both in favor of the theory and against it. Charles C. Ryrie, who I have found very reassuring, writes about it in *Basic Theology*, pages 206-215. Millard Erikson also helpfully explains gap theory: “The gap theory holds that there was an original, quite complete creation of the earth perhaps billions of years ago (the creation mentioned in Gen. 1:1). Some sort of catastrophe occurred, however, so that the creation became empty and unformed (1:2). God then re-created the earth a few thousand years ago in a period of six days, populating it with all the species. This creation is described in Genesis 1:3-27. The apparent age of the earth and the fossil records showing development over long periods of time are to be attributed to the first creation. The catastrophe is often linked to the fall of Satan (Lucifer). Creation then lay in ruins for a long period of time before God rehabilitated or restored it” Invalid source specified.. Of these three, as of March 29, 2022, I would first point you to Ryrie.

Calvin writes of this that when God first created the “earth was empty and waste,” or, “without form, and was of no use” (Calvin, Commentary on Genesis, Volume 1 34). It was desolate. Now this preliminary step in God’s creation was not meant to be seen as beautiful or complete in and of itself.⁶ Rather, for our sake, God orders the making of creation in this way to make clear to His image bearers that which He invested into creation for our good and happiness, such that we would in thanksgiving worship and walk with Him. When man goes on in pride and against fellowship with God, the LORD’s blessing in this becomes the basis for His humbling of man, as in Job 38:4. Matthew Henry expresses a similar line of thought:

There was nothing in it desirable to be seen, for it was *without form and void*. *Toho* (or *Tohu*) and *Bohu*, *confusion* and *emptiness*; so these words are rendered, Isaiah 34:11. It was shapeless, it was useless, it was without inhabitants, without ornaments, the shadow or rough draught of things to come, *and not the image of the things*, Hebrews 10:1. The earth is almost reduced to the same condition again by the sin of man, under which the creation groans. See Jeremiah 4:23, *I beheld the earth, and lo it was without form, and void* (Henry, Matthew Henry’s Commentary Genesis to Deuteronomy 3).

Again, throughout the Old Testament, when the people of God rebel, the created order reverts. The land is no longer “inhabitable” for God’s people, because God’s people turned their backs on God and His good purpose for creation: communion with the Lover of humanity who created their reality so that they could be known and know, loved and love (see Jeremiah 4:23-26) (Kenneth L. Barker 3).

Where, then, is the *beauty*, the *desirability*, the *usefulness* of creation in all this? As Calvin relates, God calls it the “abyss and waters, since in that mass of matter nothing was solid or stable, nothing distinct” (Calvin, Commentary on Genesis, Volume 1 37). It is when God goes on in creation that He shows the beauty of solidity, stability, and distinction. Order is not ridged and restricting with God, as so many are inclined to comprehend it. Order is the adhesive component in God’s creation which serves the goal for which He created everything: the communication of His goodness in all creation, specifically to His special creation, rebounding to His glory. Now everything He created He ordered for that cause when He created it—from every atom and molecule, to the very way in which He ordered creation. For “Nothing that was ever made by God in creation was just ‘meh’ [take it or leave it].” When God gets to man, the creation intended for creation, the pinnacle of all He had made, He looks back and says that it is *all*—creation in toto as His mind had foreplanned—very good (Montgomery 12:48-12:55). The very goodness of all the creation God was making here was with an eye towards when He would complete it with His pinnacle creation. In the next verses He begins to order the world to that purpose, such that communion with Him as the holy God would be accurate and to the fullness of His intention. For it was fitting to our God to fashion the world in every way according to the shape and perfection of His own wisdom, just as an architect seeks to fashion a tower according

⁶ It should be borne in mind as you read all that I am about to write, that “Scripture doesn’t reveal why God chose to start His creative work with a chaotic mass that was dark, formless, and empty...” Invalid source specified..

his own imagination and to his own liking, to the best of his ability. Reality is His, and therefore no attempt to call good evil or evil good will ever stand because such an idea is contrary to the mind of God, and runs contrary to His creation, and therefore acts as an anti-reality to His (as we see play out in chapter 3 and in the rest of Scripture). Only by submitting to God and relying on the Spirit to align and reshape our view of His reality can we see the true beauty, desirability, and usefulness of creation. Let us always remember, however, that our flawed vision of His work does not remove what He has invested.

Quickly, to prove the point, consider Isaiah 45:18. God speaks from creative authority to His people, “For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!)”⁷ It was not in the mind of God that His creation was finished at this point (Genesis 1:2). No, but He forms the earth, making it, establishing it, filling it—it is all *one* tapestry. No part or thread missing, no color out of place, no note sung out of harmony with His design. It is His whole creation, made according to His pleasure, conformed to the tastes of His beauty. He has made creation as enchanted by His spreading goodness. He has dignified and invested it with the joys which spring from His own Triune nature.

On this point, I draw a line of contention with Matthew Henry. After that first section I have quoted previously, he goes on to state that “To those who have their hearts in heaven this lower world, in comparison with that upper, still appears to be nothing but confusion and emptiness. There is no true beauty to be seen, no satisfying fullness to be enjoyed, in this earth, but in God only” (Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary Genesis to Deuteronomy* 3). To this I respond in line with Edwards. For while I accept that the corruption of sin in this world reaches unto all corners of it, I do not accept the premise that “there is no beauty to be seen... in this earth....” True beauty can only ever be properly ascribed to God alone. But God shines that beauty into His creation so as to invest it with, and fashion it by the tastes of His beauty. It is distinct from Him, but it is His handiwork. Is this totally done away with in the fall? Are all the rivers and valleys to be seen as “emptiness and confusion”? Of course, I agree, that this is no “satisfying fullness to be enjoyed.” But insofar as our world conforms to that way in which God ordered and fashioned it at the start, are we not to commend it as beautiful? I think that it is better to hold that “The good things of this world—the tastes, the sights, the smells, the accomplishments, the relationships—” though tainted with sin in themselves and in our view of them, “are all echoes of the true Joy, the joy of which every earthly pleasure is a shadow. ... Cornelius Plantinga puts it: ‘Ultimate joy comes not *from* a lover or a landscape or a home, but *through* them. . . . They point to what is ‘higher up’ and ‘further back’” (Ortlund 77). Just so was all creation intended by the Joy Giver to be so seen. God is not hideous nor greedy; therefore, He invests His creation lavishly with His own sense of His own splendor so that they might see His own truthfulness and goodness, such that ultimately Christ would be “glorified in His saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed” (2 Thessalonians 1:10).

⁷ “In other words, God did originally create the world formless and void, but since this was not His ultimate wish for it, He proceeded to fill it with living things, including man” (Ryrie 210).

And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

In this God shows that He did not and does not intend His universe to be a gathering of materials; for He Himself is not material. In this He also shows that He is not a God who cares simply for grandeur and space. God did not create out of a sense of claustrophobia from within Himself. He created with purpose, out of delight and a desire to spread His overflowing love. He created with a reference point, Christ Jesus, the eternal LORD and Son. And so, the Spirit hovers. He is about to act. He is about to go on in creation. By this He shows what kind of a God He is in that He would not consider His work “good” with the mere matter and space of the universe, intending a greater end in His creation—an end which accords to His own Being and Triune Nature.

How does this God create? Not with raw power, but with both great power (Jeremiah 10:12, 16:19, and 51:15) and gentleness (Genesis 2:7-8; and Genesis 1:2 with Deuteronomy 32:10-14, focusing on the word *rāḥaṗ* or hover); with lovely beauty and a terrifying display of thundering might! Reeves, I think, does justice to both sides of this, as he so elegantly puts it, first focusing on the powerful side,

...in Genesis 1 the Word goes out in the power of the hovering Spirit so that on God's Breath his Word is heard: “Let there be light!” Thus the Father creates through his Word (Jn 1:3), the Word being his executive arm. This means that the Son is so fully involved in his Father's work of creation that Paul can write: “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him” (Col 1:15-16) (Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity* 50).

Reeves continues, showing the gentler side,

We have already seen that the Spirit empowers the Word, but He does even more: while the Son establishes and upholds all things (Heb 1:3), the Spirit perfects or completes the work of creation. Job 26:13 puts it delightfully: “By His breath [or Spirit] the skies became fair.” In other words, the Spirit garnishes and beautifies the heavens and the earth. Our first vision of the Spirit, hovering dovelike in Genesis 1, captures something essential. It is that, like a mothering dove settling on her eggs, the Spirit vivifies, bringing what has been created to life (Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity* 51).

So then, the very way in which God creates, sustains, and holds all things together testifies to His heart in creating, and the wonder of His glorious Being.

Furthermore, as Matthew Henry observes, “God is not only the author of all being, but the fountain of life and spring of motion” (Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary Genesis to Deuteronomy* 3). The Spirit Himself goes out to hold together the universe and give it vibrancy

out of His own life. And here, as Reeves has written above, we can also see the tethering of the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit. Christ “upholds the universe by the word of his power” (Hebrews 1:3) and that “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. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:16-17).⁸ This He does according to the Spirit of holiness, just as He conducted His own ministry according to the Spirit. For what is the only other time in the Scripture when the Spirit hovers over the waters? It is when He hovered over Jesus in the Jordon at the start of His ministry, as Reeves observes on Matthew 3:16-17,

...just as the Spirit, after Jesus’ baptism, would send him out into the lifeless wilderness, so in Genesis 1 the Spirit appears as the power by which God’s Word goes out into the lifeless void. In the very beginning, God creates by his Word (the Word that would later become flesh), and he does so by sending out his Word in the power of his Spirit or Breath (Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity* 30).

Let it then be known and cherished by every believer, as it is testified everywhere in the New Testament, that if you have the Spirit and are of Him, you have Christ; and if you have Christ and life in Him, you have and are of the Spirit (“a being of the Spirit is given as a sure sign of being in Christ” (Edwards, *A Treatise on Grace* 4)). For the Father sends the Spirit of His Son as His seal of adoption to those He makes sons in His Son. For the Spirit and Christ are united in their work in salvation. Just so we may understand it to be here: Christ is so united with His Spirit that He does all things by Him, and the Spirit likewise does all things by the Son. And so the Spirit hovers, and God speaks His Word: and there is light.

Verse 3 Light

And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

“God speaks, and things respond” (Montgomery 11:41-11:46). Here is a marvelous thing: “God created light and there was light, simply because God told it to exist” (MacArthur, *The How, Why, and When of Creation*, Part 2). “...that God by speaking causes that to exist, which had no existence before” (Luther 54). How could Moses have described the power of our God in a better way than this? Light had at its nascence no other source but the word of command of the One who dwells in unapproachable light. This is a mystery worthy of contemplation and study through the rest of Scripture, but for now, let us recall to mind from this that all other sources and not sources of anything. They are only conduits set up by Him to convey His good

⁸ Even after the Fall, God in His gracious goodness still upholds the habitation of the now sinful race, as Calvin observes: “...we learn out of this place that God did not so create the world once that he did afterward depart from his work; but that it standeth by his power, and that the same God is the governor thereof who was the Creator” Invalid source specified..

gifts to us, that we might have joy in fellowship with Him in both the light of day, and in the dark of night.

Verse 4 Goodness

And God saw that the light was good.

As for a full exegesis of what I make of the recurring word “good” (*tôb*) throughout the text, see my comments of Genesis 1:31. As for the light being good, it seems fit to just quote Matthew Henry and Charles Spurgeon:

That the light which God willed, when it was produced, he approved of: God saw the light that it was good. It was exactly as he designed it, and it was fit to answer the end for which he designed it. It was useful and profitable; the world, which now is a palace, would have been a dungeon without it. It was amiable and pleasant. Truly the light is sweet (Ecclesiastes 11:7); it rejoiceth the heart (Proverbs 15:30). What God commands he will approve and graciously accept; he will be well pleased with the work of his own hands. That is good indeed which is so in the sight of God, for he sees not as man sees. If the light is good, how good is he that is the fountain of light, from whom we receive it, and to whom we owe all praise for it and all the services we do by it (Henry, An Exposition, With Practical Observations, of The First Book of Moses, Called Genesis, Chapter 1)!

But why did God say that light was good? I suppose it was because its creation displayed his attributes. The instantaneous coming of light revealed his power, his sovereignty, his goodness, his wisdom, and his love; he is not a God whose glory consists in darkness, but “he covereth himself with light as with a garment . . . Because it is so essential the Lord pronounces it good” (Spurgeon).

As to whether or not Moses’ statement that God “saw that the light was good” excludes the darkness, must now be examined in the next section.

And God separated the light from the darkness.

Here is a strange thing. For here we find a darkness without any malice. “Even the darkness was not sinister. It had boundaries and would yield to the brilliance of morning” (Mead 33). There is nothing inherently evil in darkness. And there was nothing malicious within its veil for light to expose as later there is in the fallen world. Only when sin enters in do sinners love the darkness rather than the light. Only when sin enters is darkness viewed as the enemy of light, and light as striving against the dark (John 3:19-20). As light and darkness were first created, they were to be in harmony, showing the excellencies and benefits of each other. And in that harmonious fellowship between light and darkness, the glory of the creating Triune God

was to shine bright! For neither darkness or light, morning or evening, were bad. Both had benefits and value. And they gave testimony to the excellencies of each other, as the man and the woman would later give testimony to the excellencies of each other. Distinction, yet harmony. That is my view in general on the glory of this verse.

Now, as for the speculations of some on this passage which demand some notice because of their prevalence in and danger to the present generation, it is necessary to raise the question of the fall of Satan. For here, some persons, like Tony Evans, hold the position that Satan has already fallen at this point, and is or has actively messed up God's creation, backing such a proposition by this verse.⁹ Evans comments on verse 2, writing that,

"...it seems that something else has happened between verses 1 and 2, because disorder and darkness do not reflect the character of God. Someone else arrived on the scene, and his name is Satan. We get few details of Satan's fall in this chapter (Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 provide more), but it appears that his rebellion plunged the earth into darkness (see Luke 10:18). Fortunately for humanity, even when Satan is active, God has a plan to save. The Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters, ready to bring order out of chaos" (Evans, *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary* 104).¹⁰

From this, Evans states from verses 3-5 that "the eternal Son of God was seeking to re-create and restore his planet" (Evans, *The Tony Evans Bible Commentary* 104). This is at least barrowing from gap theory, if not subscribing to it. But such an idea is theologically destructive and hermeneutically invalid. Though it is very true that darkness in Scripture is related to a place of misery, challenge, hardship, vexation, folly, ignorance, sinfulness, self-deceit, and/or disconnect from God in one form or another, "does it follow that darkness is inherently evil? I think not" (Ryrie 210). For even those descriptions are tempered by the differentiation between a fallen view of darkness and God's view of darkness (if I can put it in such terms). For, "He made the

⁹ Martyn Lloyd-Jones himself, whom I have great respect for, presented this kind of theology fairly, though he did not give a refutation of it, or see the flaws in it that I would seek to point out. His words, however, are useful for those trying to understand this frame of theology of creation better.

"There are those who believe that this great cataclysmic event which took place in that pre-cosmic fall when the devil and the angels fell, involved also an original material creation. This, they argue, is the key to the understanding of the second verse in the Bible. The first two verses of Genesis read thus: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.' The word 'deep' there really means 'the chaos'. It is a description of a state of chaos. The idea, the speculation, is that before this cosmos that you and I are aware of, there was an original creation. That first verse in Genesis, it claims, is really a reference to the great original creation. It is a general statement that God has made everything. But it may also include the idea that God made a world, a cosmos, in which these angelic principalities and powers lived and functioned and dwelt. But when some of them fell in their rebellion and pride and disobedience, God punished their universe also, and it was reduced to a state of chaos. So that what is described in Genesis 1, verse 2 onwards, is the restoration, the re-creation of this original creation which had got into a state of chaos and of darkness" Invalid source specified..

¹⁰ Evans affirms this view in several other places, such as in this part of one of his books: "Where does sin find its roots? This question takes us all the way back to some point in eternity past, before the creation of the world, when the angel Lucifer decided he was tired of being less than God" (Evans, *Totally Saved* 18).

moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting. *You make darkness, and it is night*, when all the beasts of the forest creep about” (Psalm 104:19-20). “*Tohu* (formless) appears in the Old Testament referring to space (Job 26:7) and the wilderness (Deuteronomy 32:10) without any evil connotation” (Ryrie 210). More than that, the proposition falls apart from a simple observation of Genesis 1. Does it follow that because God doesn’t call darkness good that it is not good? “I think not. If so, then we would have to conclude that the expanse that He created but did not specifically call good was not good (verses 6-8)” (Ryrie 210).

That alone should be sufficient to point the flawed preposition in Evan’s exegesis of the text and theological exposition thereof, that “darkness... does not reflect the character of God.” But to go on furthermore, does the Psalmist not also say, “If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,’ even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you” (Psalm 139:11-12). Here there are two different views of darkness. One in the light of the knowledge of God as Savior, and one which is earthly. One understood in fallenness, and one seen as through the eyes of redeemed sinners—seeing that God is the great Light of the world (Isaiah 9:2). All this to say, that just because something is dark doesn’t mean it’s bad or against God’s character.

Wenham gives a wonderfully helpful paragraph on this matter when commenting on verse 2, and I add it here for your consideration:

“darkness” is another evocative word in Hebrew. If light symbolizes God, darkness evokes everything that is anti-God: the wicked (Prov 2:13), judgment (Exodus 10:21), death (Psalm 88:13). Salvation is described as bringing light to those in darkness (Isa 9:1, etc.). But whereas darkness is opaque to man, it is transparent to God (Psalm 139:12). Indeed God can veil himself in darkness at moments of great revelation (Deuteronomy 4:11; 5:23; Psalm 18:12). There is therefore an ambiguity in this reference to darkness covering the deep. *Prima facie*,¹¹ it is just another description of the terrible primeval waste, but it could hint at the hidden presence of God waiting to reveal himself (Wenham 53?).

More than this, we are never taught in Scripture that nature is distorted because of the devil fiddling with creation. We are told that it is in misery because of Adam (Romans 5:17; 8:20-21).¹² The devil only acts as the deceiver, and the one to whom Adam sells himself into slavery (Hebrews 2:14-15; Romans 6:16). Moses never describes the destroyer in such glowing terms as the one active before God fully finished His creation; and nowhere else in Scripture is it said to be so.

Furthermore, this view insinuates that there was an age before the six days of creation, and that the devil was there—in Evan’s own words, “...in eternity past, before the creation of

¹¹ Or, at first sight.

¹² “There exists no biblical proof that Satan’s fall resulted in judgement on the earth. Adam’s fall did (Genesis 3:17-19)” (Ryrie 211).

the world, when the angel Lucifer...” (Evans, Totally Saved 18). There is no warrant to suppose this from the text. Moses makes no nod to there being a period of time between when God creates, to when the Spirit hovers, to the six days. And let us not go into discussions about the marking of time, for time is signified as God’s servant from the beginning in the words “in the beginning God...” It is God who gives definition to time, the text doesn’t even insinuate a gap between verses 1 and 2, there is no indication that He waited for the devil to fall before He made the rest of His creation—no ages of time, no gap theory, no pre-fall fall.

This isn’t just poor hermeneutics on Evan’s part, as I hope is evident. It’s poor theology. When you begin to hold to things that aren’t supported anywhere in Scripture, making presuppositions about God and His workings to the effect that He is backed into a corner unless you bring in your extra Biblical understanding, that’s a big problem, and we shouldn’t wink at it.

We dare not, for all this, pass over that which the Apostle Paul points to so clearly as a marvelous thing, writing of “God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness’” (2 Corinthians 4:6). Such a statement, indeed, is far greater in majesty than we suppose in our hubris. For God does create anew out of the fallen world, redeeming from the grip of the devil, and restoring life where there was none. But it is not in Genesis 1 or 2. Out of nothing and out of darkness the universe and light were made by the Word of God alone (Luther 55-56). And it is that same power that shines in the heart of God’s elect “to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6). Such miracles are far higher in glory than we can comprehend. Let us take refuge in the God whose power is united with such a mercifully redeeming goodness.

Verse 5 Days, Evolution, Literary Design

God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

I consider it a doleful task to sort through all the opinions and speculations out there when it comes to the interpretations of these passages—especially as it concerns the timing of the seven days. Largely it is not beneficial to the commentator or the reader. Let what is to follow, therefore, suffice for my study of and position on the matter.

The word in Hebrews that is used for the days, *yôm*, as MacArthur explains,

[is] used in the Bible to indicate a 24-hour, normal solar day, or sometimes to refer to the daylight portion of a day. You might say, I’ll be gone four days and you mean four days both day and night; or you might say to someone, This has been a beautiful day, and you’re referring to the daylight portion of it. You use the word the same way the

Hebrews used it. When *yôm*, is modified by a number, universally, without exception in Scripture, it refers to a normal solar day.¹³

Now sometimes day is used in Scripture to refer to some period of time not precisely defined. Job said, “My days are vanity.” Psalm 90, verse 9 says, “Our days are passed away,” and that’s defined. But we understand what that means, a period of time. But even at that, day still means some finite succession of normal days, not some vast age of millennial years or millions of years (MacArthur, *The How, Why, and When of Creation*, Part 1).¹⁴

Some would raise the opinion that this cannot possibly be a literal solar day, because there was at this point no sun or moon. This is simply grounded on a false predilection, which makes time the definer and describer of the actions of God, and not the other way round. The One who made time—as well as the sun and the moon—revealed that He created in six literal solar day. Why is it so preposterous to take Him at His Word? To trust His own schedule? Is it as though God couldn’t keep track of time without the sun and the moon? Surely that cannot be!

Quickly, another main objection for the 24-hour-day view needs to be responded to, namely that “the seventh day has no end” (Hughes 26), and that if “the seventh day is not a twenty-four-hour day ... it indicates that the preceding six days must be similarly understood” i.e., not as twenty-four-hour days (Hughes 27). R. Kent Hughes grounds this objection on the context, rightly reminding his readers that “when a word like *yom* appears in a text (a word that has a wide range of meanings), the context must determine the word’s meaning” (Hughes 27). And to answer this I simply ask: was it that the day never ended, or was it that the rest that God entered into on the seventh day never ends? I believe it is the latter, that the rest never ends, and I cite Hebrews 4:10, “whoever has entered God’s rest,” notice, it is not whoever enters God’s day, “has also rested from his works as God did from His.” Otherwise, (again to quote

¹³ “The word ‘day’ when used with a numerical adjective in the Pentateuch always indicates a solar day” (Ryrie 211).

¹⁴ “God wanted to establish a pattern for mankind, and that pattern was you work six days and you have one day when you set it aside to rest, and replenish your body, and focus on worshiping God. God chose to do it in six days to set a pattern for us. Now, if in fact it took him billions of years, then the pattern is ridiculous. God’s work of creation set the pattern for man who bears his image; six days you work and one day you worship. Henry Morris in his book *The Genesis Record* says, ‘God called the light day and the darkness he called night. As though in anticipation of future misunderstanding God carefully defined his terms. The very first time he used the word day he defined it as the light to distinguish it from the darkness called night. Having separated the day and night God had completed his first day’s work. The evening and the morning were the first day. This same formula is used at the conclusion of each of the six days,’ as I read to you, ‘It’s obvious that the duration of each of the days including the first was the same. It is clear that beginning with the first day and continuing thereafter there was a period of cyclical succession of days and nights, periods of light and periods of darkness’” (MacArthur, *The How, Why, and When of Creation*, Part 1). Again, in Exodus 20:8-11, “The commandment [to keep the Sabbath day] loses completely its cogency if they are not taken literally” (Weeks).

Noel Weeks, writing on Exodus 20:8-11), “The commandment [to keep the Sabbath day] loses completely its cogency if they are not taken literally” (Weeks).¹⁵

Why Six Days?

I must now respond to those who would make this case: that God gives us an account of creation that we can understand, but which is not accurate to what really happened. Thus, they say, God graciously condescends to us in Revelation. Some resort to such silliness in interpreting this passage, stating that God used the words and phraseology that He did because we could not comprehend the timeframe in which He created. To these, and those like them, I give the following answer.

We are not to understand two separate realities in which God deals. God’s created reality and His Revealed reality are not at odds with one another, and are more properly described as two parts of the same Book, or two Books in the same series. God does not present one reality to us in Revelation different to that of created reality so that we are comforted by false visions. God condemns such deception and manipulation of reality (Ezekiel 13:9, 16; Ezekiel 22:8; Lamentations 2:14, etc. There is no division between the Revelation of God and the reality which God has made. If such a separation existed by the will of God, we could not trust such a divine deceiver. For if He was willing to separate reality from His Revelation of it in Genesis, why would He not also separate reality from Revelation when it comes to the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ? To say that the resurrection means anything apart from the accompanying Revelation is absurd—for we are called to believe in Christ and Him crucified as He truly is, never as He might be or belief in the mere validity of an event. It is the same when it comes to the Revelation of creation. Surely God does condescend to our weak intellects in revealing things to us—but those things which He reveals are not lacking in truthfulness. There is one and the same Christ in the Scripture and in reality. There is one God in both Scripture and reality. And since that is true, there can only be one work, one truth, and one correct interpretation of His history. If you renounce that God is One, or that all things hold together perfectly in Him, then you will have forfeited all sound reality, and all certain hopes. The same is true the other way round: renounce that reality holds together in Him as it does, and you will begin to lose your certainty of the One true God who is the Truth.

¹⁵ I would be much more apt to follow the line of exegesis of MacArthur, when he preached, “...we might expect, ‘And the seventh day was evening and morning,’ but it isn’t there... when you see something that is there all the time, and is all of a sudden omitted, there must be a reason. ...that seventh day inaugurated some period of time in which God delighted in a world that sparkled with pure life, in a world which enjoyed the presence of God and a man and his wife in open fellowship with their Creator... The seventh day... had an evening and a morning, because the cycle of days began in creation. But the seventh day 24-hour period only inaugurated that period of time after God’s having created in which He delighted” Invalid source specified..

Moving on to the question of why God made everything in six days - Calvin, in answer to this quandary, gives a most Biblical response, which ought to be taken in unity with that which is in his commentary on pages 40-41 as he intended¹⁶. It is as follows:

[It is] in the very order of things [that we ought] diligently to contemplate God's fatherly love toward mankind, in that He did not create Adam until He had lavished upon the universe all manner of good things. ...Now when He disposed the movements of the sun and stars to human uses, filled the earth, waters, and air with living things, and brought forth an abundance of fruits to suffice as foods, in thus assuming the responsibility of a foreseeing and diligent father of the family He shows His wonderful goodness towards us (Calvin, Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion, Volume 1, Edited by John T. McNeil 161-162).

It was in the deliberate outworking of God's kind providence that He moderates His power in creating the universe that He might demonstrate to us His loving kindness in both reality and in Revelation. The creation is so specifically oriented for the suiting of mankind, both in its making and in the Revelation thereof, so that we would clearly perceive who God is and who we are in relation to Him. It is therefore an account not only of the making of creation, but also His purpose for creation, which is contained within the text.

It is clear as we read the account of creation in Scripture that we must not think of it as simple progression—or worse, as a cosmic soup: “God starts by getting the raw materials from nothing, then begins to separate this from that, adding ingredients, and mixing it all together. And then all of a sudden, wow, the universe! Amazing!” This is not how God reveals His intention or progression of actions in creating. In Proverbs 8:30-31, God makes clear that when He created the world, He created it inhabited. Genesis 1:31-2:3 make clear that it was only after He had made man and woman and called it all “very good;” that He rested from “all His work that He had done.” God, therefore, reveals that His creation is deliberate, relational, and held together. That He created it as a harmonious whole.¹⁷ He is as a skilled craftsman who does not present His complete work until it is finished. Then, once it is completed, He delights to show the intricacies of His work for the sake of His children, that they might experience and know His care.

A short refutation of Evolution

This brings us on to a refutation of the most insane and God dishonoring views of the origins of creation: evolution. Call it theistic evolution or something else, it doesn't matter. The theology is the same whatever you call it. God cannot take the care that He does, in the way

¹⁶ “Having thus, as it were, paved the way, as it will be unnecessary, in any Commentaries on Scripture which I may afterwards publish, to enter into long discussions of doctrinal points, and enlarge on commonplaces, I will compress them into narrow compass. In this way much trouble and fatigue will be spared to the pious reader, provided he comes prepared with a knowledge of the present work as an indispensable prerequisite” Invalid source specified..

¹⁷ Paul and the Psalmist would later extend this wholeness across time as well (see Acts 17).

and timeframe that the text clearly teaches He did, if evolution is accurate. It would be better for those who claim theistic evolution to renounce the entirety of Genesis than to continue on in their postulations. Before I give my argument for this claim, let us examine the facts.

MacArthur has done a wonderful thing in his sermons on Genesis particularly from 1999, and I suggest them and those whom he cites in them to any who want a fuller refutation of evolution from either a scientific or Scriptural stand. Let me quote a few paragraphs in which excellent arguments are made, and move on from there to make my own argument.

Hubert Thomas, in his French book on Genesis 1 to 11, in the introduction, writes this, "In effect, three main points are demonstrated by reading the list we provide. These three points confirm that the New Testament can in no case whatsoever be appealed to in order to sustain any sort of evolutionary theory."

...And then Thomas goes on to give three reasons. "First, without exception, references to creation and especially the citations of Genesis 1 to 11 point to historical events. They are no different than the historical death of the Lord Jesus Christ on Golgotha. As far as the New Testament is concerned, creation ex nihilo...that is out of nothing...and the creation of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and the flood, as far as the New Testament is concerned there is no legend and no parable. All deal with persons and events of historical and universal significance."

"Secondly," writes Thomas, "without exception creation is always mentioned as a unique event which took place at a particular moment in past time," not something that's going on all the time, as is the theory of evolution. He further says, "Creation took place, it was finished. Events occurred which corrupted the world, and now it awaits a new creation which will take place in the future at a given moment."

"Thirdly," Thomas says, "recitations of creation given in Genesis 1 to 3 are considered in the New Testament to be literally true, historical and of surpassing importance. The New Testament doctrine based on these citations, out of Genesis 1 to 3, would be without any validity and even erroneous if the events of Genesis were not historically true. For example, consider the entry of sin into the world. If Adam were not the head of the whole human race, then Jesus Christ, the last Adam, is not the head of the new creation," end quote. He's referring to Romans where it says as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive. And clearly the New Testament writer, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, saw sin and death enter the world through the very historic man, Adam, and through his very historic act of disobedience (MacArthur, Creation Day 2).

That gives you, my reader, a least a good footing on which to carry this study out further. Now, it should be clear, and to any who take the time to read or listen to MacArthur's sermons, or do their own study of the texts of Scripture relating to this matter, that evolution

does not fit into the text whatsoever.¹⁸ Let us ask, however, what the result would be if one were to force evolution into the text, and why I say such strong words against those who do.

If you bring in evolution into the Scripture, such that it destroys the clear meaning of the text (as evolution always does), you have not only been unfaithful to the text, but you actually deny the total authority of Scripture. “It is nonsense to speak of the unique and total authority of Scripture at the same time as we change our interpretation of Scripture to accord with theories drawn from outside Scripture... If Scripture itself forces us to such an interpretation then we are not subjecting Scripture to evolutionary theory” (Weeks). But the question then is this: does Scripture teach evolution? And the retort must be, flatly and finally, as we have already seen, no.

The text does not support their theology. And therefore, their theology is actually no theology at all. For only the theology which submits to God has any true right to be called true theology. All the speculations of mankind not only mock God, but also make a mockery of those who concoct such speculations about Him (just as the maker of idols becomes more like the idols, see Psalm 115:4-8, and Psalm 135:15-18). For once one has perverted their source of light, the same will find themselves lost in a labyrinth of their own speculative and fallen reason. Once one has perverted the Scriptures, they will lose a solid grasp of reality. This is why I say that it would be better for those who are theistic evolutionists, or Christian evolutionists, to renounce at least Genesis, if not the entire Bible. For no honest interpretation can hold to such a theory. Still, they try. And they please the devil in the hubris and stubbornness of philosophical speculation, being guided largely by the fear of men.

Some, trying to justify this atrocity to the text, have imagined a safe haven for them to run to in defense of their position. They say that Genesis 1-3 is poetry, and therefore not to be taken literally or plainly. We will now turn our attention to this.

Is this account poetic?

To state my answer upfront, no. First things first though, to do away with the notion that this is a refuge for the theistic evolutionists, I again quote Mr. Weeks,

Even if Genesis 1 were poetry, we would still be entitled to enquire what truth it conveys. Our answer to that question would have to be framed in terms of the rest of Scripture. If we take the passages referred to above¹⁹ we obtain enough to place us in

¹⁸ If you wonder what resources I would suggest for a further exploration of the merits, or more accurately demerits of evolution, I suggest typing in “evolution” to the search function of Monergism.org. I have read many of those articles, and I think they would give you a large range of thought, study, and research to draw from. See: <https://www.monergism.com/search?keywords=evolution&format=All>. I would also suggest Charles C. Ryrie in his work *Basic Theology*, pages (Ryrie 195-205).

¹⁹ To quote a more comprehensive support of the point than Weeks provides in his essay, Abner Chou writes that “The New Testament refers frequently to events in Old Testament history when discussing theology. This includes creation (2 Pet. 3:4), Adam (Rom. 5:14), Cain (Jude 11), Enoch (Jude 14), Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt. 22:32), Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 17:28-29), David’s wilderness wanderings (Luke 6:3-4), the queen of Sheba (Luke

conflict with modern evolutionary approaches. Thus the claim that Genesis 1 is poetic does not resolve the problem (Weeks).

If Scripture is to be valued as anything worthy of study, it must be valued as from God, as it claims for itself. And if God is to be known as worthy of being known, His Word must faithfully communicate Himself as He truly is. Therefore, even if it were obscure and confounding—which Genesis 1-3 is not—we would still have to inquire into the intention for which God Authored His Word if we have any desire to take Him at His Word. Furthermore, what if it were poetry? Surely it is undeniable that the rest of Scripture still deals with it as history? So then, the evolutionist must first denounce God as something other than He is as Revealed in the entirety of Scripture if they want to worm their theory into the text. Only then can they attempt to gnaw and rot away the apple of God's Revelation. Again, it would be better if they denounced and renounced Scripture altogether. At least then they would not be so paradoxical in their theology.

As for the merit of the argument itself, which others besides evolutionary theorists have presented: Is this passage poetic? Let it be known that the majority in this case base their argument off a parallelism found within the text between days 1-3 and 4-6, as Weeks again explains:

Furthermore, by what criteria do we call Genesis 1 poetic? The parallelism of days 1-3 to 4-6 is often cited. This however is merely parallelism of ideas and is not the same parallelism that makes up Hebrew poetry. Hebrew poetry consists of a series of couplets or triplets exhibiting complementary, climactic or antithetic-parallelism e.g. in Psalm 5:1, 'Give ear to my words, O Lord', is complemented and paralleled by 'Consider my meditation'. This is clearly different from the fact that on days 1-3 God creates the environment and on days 4-6 the creatures who are to live and rule in the respective environments. One is a parallel of ideas in successive stichoi, the other a parallel of ideas which may be several verses apart (Weeks).

So then, there is parallelism, but not (necessarily) poetry.

Now, on my part, I would be lost at this point. For I do not know ancient Hebrew, and being dyslexic, probably never will to any meaningful fashion. But praise God for His body, the church, each member working to build up one another—and praise God for those who do so! So then, I retreat to quote Douglas Kelly on this matter:

11:31), Elijah and Elisha (Luke 4:26-27), Jonah (Matt. 12:39-41), and the Ninevites (Luke 11:29-32). The author of Hebrews also walks us through much Old Testament history in the "hall of fame of faith" (Hebrews 11). In all these passages, the authors do not doubt Scripture's historical accuracy. Rather, they base their argument upon its historical assertions. This even extends to the subject of authorship. For example, Jesus and the apostles assume that Isaiah wrote the entire book of Isaiah (John 12:38-41), Moses wrote the Pentateuch (Mark 7:10; Luke 5:14; Rom. 10:5), and Daniel wrote Daniel (Matt. 24:15). The apostles thoroughly affirmed the historical accuracy of the Old Testament in their writings" Invalid source specified..

The late Edward J. Young of Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, an author of massive erudition in Hebrews and cognate languages, has responded to evangelical claims that Genesis 1-3 is poetry rather than serious history. He addresses the question: 'Is Genesis Poetry or Myth?' as follows:

To escape from the plain factual statements of Genesis some Evangelicals are saying that the early chapters of Genesis are poetry of myth, by which they mean that they are not to be taken as straightforward accounts, and that the acceptance of such a view removes the difficulties... To adopt such a view, they say, removes all troubles with modern science... Genesis is not poetry. There are poetical accounts of creation in the Bible—Psalm 104, and certain chapters in Job—and they differ completely from the first chapter of Genesis. Hebrew poetry had certain characteristics, and they are not found in the first chapter of Genesis. So the claim that Genesis One is poetry is no solution to the question. The man who says, 'I believe that Genesis purports to be a historical account, but I do not believe that account', is a far better interpreter of the Bible than the man who says, 'I believe that Genesis is profoundly true, but it is poetic.'

In a word, Genesis 1 is not written according to the canons of Hebrew poetry with various types of parallelism. As professor Currid states: '...there is no indication of figurative language in Genesis 1. If the narrative is to be considered imagery, one would expect to encounter many of the essentials of figurative language (e.g., schema, metaphor, and other tropes), but there are none.' Rather, the first eleven chapters of it are written as historical narrative much the same way that I and II Chronicles are written. That is, they are theological interpretations of actual states of affairs that have occurred in the space/time cosmos (Kelly 41-42).

And so, on my part, I will stick with the faithful hermeneutic as best I can, and understand this as historical rather than poetic. There is therefore absolutely no basis for evolution in the text, and beyond that, there is no logical or scientific basis for evolution. As for any notion of making the text less than literal historical truth, I repudiate as being the imaginations of rebellious man trying to squirm out from under the weight of their own wickedness by making God less than who He is, twisting His Revelation to do so (2 Peter 3:16). Call me an idiot if you want, but if you have seen any of my limited interactions on other issues, you know I will not hesitate to respond to any argument by anyone on any issue to the best of my capacity—so call me stupid, but inquire of my stupidity how incredible it is if you truly believe that I am.

Verses 6-8 Waters and Firmament

And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

Though I am fully aware of the amount of work done on these verses, both for good and for ill, it is not suitable to me to deal with them in full. To dive into those extensive arguments would unbalance me, and be useless to most readers. If I encounter the need to return to an exposition of these verses I will do so then. Allow me then to put forward a simple interpretation of these verses.

God is not a God of disarray. He is a God for whom order, and not chaos, fulfills His design (as already established under verse 2). He therefore distinguishes and separates. He forms and fills. He enriches and solidifies. All of this is being done not only that He might create life, but to create it in the fulness of His good intention—that His pinnacle creation would see and enjoy the beauty, desirability, and purpose of creation and so be brought into the richest communion with Himself. As MacArthur preached,

“...day one, day two, day three, series of separations. Before God can create life He has to separate light from darkness, and create the continuum of light and dark in the 24-hour solar day. He has to separate the heaven from the earth, which He does on day two. Then He has to separate the water that is now completely engulfing on day one and two, He has to separate that from the dry land so there’s a place for the fish in the sea and the land life on dry land. Thus the universe is made ready for life in the first three days, a very reasonable approach. Light from dark, heaven from earth, dry land from water” (MacArthur, Creation Day 2).

As for the particulars of what is going on here with the firmament or expanse, I simply take the text as it is. Day one you have water covering all the earth. On day two some of the water that covered the earth was raised above the water God left to remain covering the earth. That is the solid observation here.

It is harder to interpret what the expanse and heavens is actually referring to. For at one and the same time, the birds are said to fly across it (Genesis 1:20), and the sun and the moon in it (Genesis 1:14). On top of that, there are the other references to the expanse (*rāqiaʿ*) and heaven (*šāmayim*) throughout the Old Testament, and particularly in the writings of Moses. For my part, I think it befits both Moses and the Spirit to interpret the expanse as encompassing both generally, setting aside a precise distinction between sky and space. For it would not be fair to the Spirit, who created the universe and is accurate about it everywhere else Scripture, to here interpret Him as unclear. Likewise, it would not befit Moses, who defines so clearly the functions and places and happenings of everything else in the account, to here interpret him as unclear. It seems inconsistent to follow that line of interpretation. Is it not much more logical

that the Spirit communicates the truth in ways that people throughout the generations could understand?

When it is written, therefore, that God raised the waters above the expanse, that is perfectly true. We do not need to suppose that there is a boundary of water around the universe (Faulkner). God raised it above the atmosphere, but not above space. Above the expanse (i.e. sky), and also not above the expanse (i.e. space). The birds are said to fly across the expanse, but the text doesn't mean that they fly in outer space (as the first readers would have known, not being familiar with the concept of space as we are today). So then, the context defines what Moses is referring to, just as we interpret other passages of Scripture. Therefore, the expanse in this chapter refers both to the atmosphere in one case, and to outer space in the other.

Verses 9-10 Seas and Land

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

God now makes a habitable land. God raises up the continent or continents (whether one or many continents, it does not matter for our present exploration). And the water that are below the "expanse" or "firmament" He "gathered together into one place." As for what this "gathering together" means, I draw from what is found in Job 38:8-11, Psalm 104:5-9, and Proverbs 8:27-31. We will give a simple explanation of the first two, and get to the third in a couple sections.

Job 38:8-11,

⁸"Or who shut in the sea with doors
when it burst out from the womb,
⁹when I made clouds its garment
and thick darkness its swaddling band,
¹⁰and prescribed limits for it
and set bars and doors,
¹¹and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther,
and here shall your proud waves be stayed'?

Here we see a similar picture to what has been described in these verses (Genesis 1:1-8). In this passage (Job 38) we gather that God set boundaries to the waters below the skies, and made

the skies above it. God is the one who governs the waves and the rivers and the floods. He determines where the rivers begin and end. And He determines if and when they will flood.²⁰

Psalm 104:5-9,

⁵He set the earth on its foundations,
so that it should never be moved.

⁶You covered it with the deep as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.

⁷At your rebuke they fled;
at the sound of your thunder they took to flight.

⁸The mountains rose, the valleys sank down
to the place that you appointed for them.

⁹You set a boundary that they may not pass,
so that they might not again cover the earth.

In this passage, particularly verse 5, I think that God solidifies the earth under what we know as the science of isostasy—"that the earth is in perfect balance. The heavier materials of the earth sunk to the center, the lighter ones to the outer part, and it is perfectly balanced" (MacArthur, Creation Day 3). Verse 6 makes clear that water covered everything originally. Verse 7 makes clear that whatever He wills it is done, just as soon as He speaks it. Verses 8-9 makes plain that God made the mountains and the valley's the terrain of the world, with the result that the waters would not cover the world like they had done prior to this. This would also have another result, which we will see when we get to verse 12-13 when we come to Proverbs 8.

See then that on this day God was establishing the borders of the ocean(s), making the Seas, and causing there to be dry land that was not flooded. Whether the language of "one place" is referring to the ocean, or simply making clear the distinction between the dry land and the seas, or that He was bringing to pass something like what we know as hydrogen bonding, I do not know. What is clear is that from the beginning He is Lord of the wind and the waves.

That is all that needs to be said on these words. Now we turn to explore why God created what He did on this day. That is what we will see in verses 12-13 and in Proverbs 8:27-31 after the next section.

Verse 11-12 Plants, their Creation, Order and Beauty

And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. The earth

²⁰ For more in this vein of thinking in particular, see Matthew Henry on Job 38, or listen to MacArthur in his message Creation Day 3.

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 land was brought about for this immediate purpose and result, that there would be plant growth, and that those plants would reproduce. In short, God makes all plants. This statement is all too quickly overlooked and set aside, but we cannot. For there is immense weight in this. It is a marvelous display how generously and minutely God cares for His creation. For God invests into the plants the ability to grow, to collect water and nutrients, to produce seed, etc. There is a loveliness to this. As Rico Tice preaches of Psalm 104:14, “What do you make of... verse 14: ‘you cause the grass to grow?’ Doesn’t it sound a little too quaint? Are you nervous of attributing something so mundane to the work of our awesome Creator God as the grass growing? ‘Look outside at the grass, it grows because God causes it to grow’ the Psalmist says. That’s what we tell the children at least but it’s true. And we mustn’t outgrow this emphasis: the grass grows because Yahweh makes it grow. He’s not only the great and awesome King of the universe (Psalm 104:1-9), He’s personally involved in the smallest details—in the grass growing” (Tice 14:00-14:45).

O may we never get over that! The excellency of our God who grows grass! It may not seem like the most respectful acknowledgment, that God is concerned with such minute details as blades of grass, but it is true. Truly, in this God is the sum of human hope. For in this Fallen world, “As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more” (Psalm 103:15-16). What God but this God would care for the loathsome spectacle that is frail humanity? “Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! ... Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 27-28, 32). The same God who causes the blades of grass to grow has numbered all the hairs of your head (Matthew 10:30). For “the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and his righteousness to children’s children, to those who keep His covenant and remember to do His commandments. The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all” (Psalm 103:17-19).

He clothes them (Matthew 6:30). It is a majestic work of beauty that God does in this. For here He creates for the first time a beauty unknown in the universe, unknown even to the stars—for trees and flowers, plants of all kinds, can be cared for by human hands. For they change with the contours of time, possessing finite beauty (not that they would have died in perfection, but that their beauty can wax and wane). Their beauty can be brought out as they are cultivated and cared for. The stars in all their magnificent splendor do not know the beauty for which God made the plants and the animals.

What were these plants like? In what form were they made? “[God] made full-grown, fully-mature vegetation with seed in it that could be dispersed” (MacArthur, Creation Day 3) (just

as God made Adam and Eve fully grown). Each kind of plant reproduced according to its own kind. There was no evolution here. Plants didn't come from one original plant. The text leaves absolutely no room for that. An orange tree produces oranges, and so will all of the orange trees that come from it. An apple tree produces apples, and so will all of the apple trees that it produces. There will be no apple trees in the reproduction line of the orange tree and visa versa. There is no confusion of the species, no chaos of "according to their kind". What the plants are they are, and what they are they produce. Such was the design of God. Such was the way He shaped these things to the tastes of His own delight. To war against His creation in such a way that one says that creations order is confused (as evolution does) is to war against the shining out of the beauty of God into creation. Let us therefore hold fast to God's Word, searching His creation to see the beauty of it, so that we can rejoice in Source of it. For, as Calvin observes citing Psalm 33:6, "Hitherto the earth was naked and barren, now the Lord fructifies it by his word. For though it was already destined to bring forth fruit, yet till new virtue proceeded from the mouth of God, it must remain dry and empty. For neither was it naturally fit to produce anything, nor had it a germinating principle from any other source, till the mouth of the Lord was opened" (Calvin, Commentary on Genesis, Volume 1 43-44).

All these things came about by the Word of God perfectly according to His design, as we see in the last words of verse 12 in the next section.

Verse 12-13 The Purpose and Goodness in Day Three

And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

Returning to Proverbs 8:27-31, to the purpose for which God did all of this by the Word of His power:

²⁷When he established the heavens, I was there;
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
²⁸when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the deep,
²⁹when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
³⁰then I was beside him, like a master workman,
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
³¹rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the children of man.

In this passage we see again that God separated the waters and made the skies as we know them, and established limits to the ocean(s). We see that it was God's delight in doing this (whether wisdom is referring to God the Son does not matter for this point), was the purpose of creating and delighting in humanity as they delighted in Him.²¹ That even from the "marking out the foundations of the deep [and] of the earth," God's good purpose was to delight in the "children of man," rejoicing in the world as it was to be the house in which His children lived. This is why it is good. Why then does the text say that God "saw that it was good?" Why not, "and God said that it was good," just as He spoke it into existence and named all that He had previously made?

God saw that it was good because it was good. That may seem like a moronic statement, but pause for a moment to think about what that entails. Creation is not a part of God, as in pantheistic systems. Creation isn't an extension of God's Being, as in many forms of Hinduism. It is something He caused to exist from nothing (John 1:3), and it stands apart from Himself (Isaiah 66:1-2). All things need God to exist and have their being from Him (Acts 17:28; Colossians 1:17), but they are not a part of God.

God doesn't merely paint His beauty or excellency onto His created beings, however. No, He does lavish His goodness on what He has created, but more deeply, He invests into the things and creatures He has made a goodness that owes its nature from Him. The creatures that He makes owe their being to His power, and yet He says of His creation that it is actually good. He infuses goodness into creation—He doesn't merely endow or envelope His creation in His goodness.

In this God rejoices in. He chooses to be delighted in this creation of His, to pour out fatherly care for His children in everything He has made for His glory. As Edwards so often observes in so many words, that God delights in the communication of His own goodness as He delights in His own glory.

Here we see that the beauty of the universe consists chiefly in this: every created thing is in complete reliance on God for its being, fulness, and excellence - and that its beauty rests in its dependence on God for its fullness and excellency. The philosopher who is in pursuit of value may therefore find the spring of worth in this: that everything that has been created was designed as Godward in every sense. That all things are shaped and enriched in that they are made to depend completely on God through human beings' communion with Him. As Owen Strachan observed from Genesis 2:7 that "His [Adam's] existence was God-derived, God-dependent, Godward in every sense" (Strachan 22).

²¹ MacArthur says essentially the same: "It was good. Why? Because it was now habitable; it was now habitable. Oh, the light was good in and of itself, according to verse 4. But the earth now became good. And then the plants, verse 12, were good. And verse 18, the bodies in heaven were good. And verse 21, everything He made in the sea and in the air was good. And verse 25, all the animals were good. And verse 31, He made man, and He looked at all of it, and it was very good. There's no sin there, folks. There's no death. It's just good" (MacArthur, Creation Day 3).

This is where the rest of Psalm 104 comes in. Search out this truth in this passage. See the One who is the Source of goodness. And see how the beauty of creation and the relationships therein display these truths.

⁵He set the earth on its foundations,
so that it should never be moved.

⁶You covered it with the deep as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.

⁷At your rebuke they fled;
at the sound of your thunder they took to flight.

⁸The mountains rose, the valleys sank down
to the place that you appointed for them.

⁹You set a boundary that they may not pass,
so that they might not again cover the earth.

¹⁰You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
they flow between the hills;

¹¹they give drink to every beast of the field;
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.

¹²Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell;
they sing among the branches.

¹³From your lofty abode you water the mountains;
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.

¹⁴You cause the grass to grow for the livestock
and plants for man to cultivate,
that he may bring forth food from the earth

¹⁵and wine to gladden the heart of man,
oil to make his face shine
and bread to strengthen man's heart.

¹⁶The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.

¹⁷In them the birds build their nests;
the stork has her home in the fir trees.

¹⁸The high mountains are for the wild goats;
the rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers.

¹⁹He made the moon to mark the seasons;
the sun knows its time for setting.

²⁰You make darkness, and it is night,

when all the beasts of the forest creep about.

²¹The young lions roar for their prey,
seeking their food from God.

²²When the sun rises, they steal away
and lie down in their dens.

²³Man goes out to his work
and to his labor until the evening.

Have you seen it? The water gushes for the beasts of the field and the birds (verses 10-12). The plants grow for the livestock, and all that for mankind, that we might work, gladden our hearts, and be strengthened (verses 14-15). The trees grow that the birds may find a home (verses 16-17). The hills and the rocks provide homes for the goats and the badgers—the freer and more secluded animals (verse 18). The sun and the moon give definition to time that His creatures and His children might live in the world well (verses 19-23). And see from whom all these things are made to be? “You make springs...” “you water...” “the fruit of your work...” “you cause the grass...” “He planted...” “He made the moon... the sun...” “you make darkness...” “food from God...” In all the earth the Psalmist sees the loving care of the creating Father.

In this the Psalmist is describing what Jonathan Edwards would later call “the diffused beams of His Being” (Ortlund 27). This is the unity and harmony of the created universe. As Marsden summarizes Edwards’ vision, “The key to Edwards’ thought is that everything is related because everything is related to God ... The created universe itself is a dynamic expression of ... that quintessentially bright light that pours forth from the throne of God” (Marsden 460).²² This is what the Psalmist then glories in!

²⁴O LORD, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom have you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

²⁵Here is the sea, great and wide,
which teems with creatures innumerable,
living things both small and great.

²⁶There go the ships,
and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it.

²⁷These all look to you,
to give them their food in due season.

²⁸When you give it to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

²⁹When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die

²² We will return to this concept in the exegesis of Genesis 2.

and return to their dust.

³⁰When you send forth your Spirit, they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.

³¹May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
may the LORD rejoice in his works,

³²who looks on the earth and it trembles,
who touches the mountains and they smoke!

³³I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

³⁴May my meditation be pleasing to him,
for I rejoice in the LORD.

³⁵Let sinners be consumed from the earth,
and let the wicked be no more!

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

Praise the LORD!

In verses 24-26, the Psalmist summarizes all that God had created so marvelously, emphasizing the abundance and interdependence of His creation. And In verses 27-30, the writer moves to showing that without God, all these things are nothing, empty, and dead. The beauty, then, with which God has invested into the whole creation in so many diverse ways and in varying degrees, is God's own. He made it. It is His own work. He has the right to claim it and do with it as He wills. It has beauty, but only because God is related to it. When God takes away His hand, they become emptiness. For nothing in this universe is beautiful unless the Triune God is and relates to what He made and sustains.

This glory is what the Psalmist rejoices in, verses 31-35. It is the glory of the LORD that is the foundation of His works splendor, and even the Psalmists own being. His song and life, his praise and being, his meditation and joy is pleasing to the LORD because of who the LORD is in His glory. Ortlund, quoting Edwards, writes: "All the beauty to be found throughout the whole creation, is but the reflection of the diffused beams of that Being.' What a cold underground spring is to a mountain lake, God is to all real beauty in the universe. Edwards uses this very image: God is 'the foundation and fountain of all being and all beauty; from whom all is perfectly derived, and on whom all is most abundantly and perfectly dependent'" (Ortlund 27).

This is the foundation of all true theology. Without this, no true communion with God can be had. Without this, reality cannot be understood, much less enjoyed. Without this, nature and created things become idols. When this is wrong, nothing is right. When this is wrong, all else is wrong. We were made to be dependent on God from the beginning. Not as though we needed something from Him that He had not supplied, or was withholding until we came to Him. No, but we are dependent on Him as we are dependent on our lungs for breath, our heart for the flow of blood, our eyes for vision.

He is our life. He is not ever simply to supply our living on this earth. Christ is meant to be our center and focus, our joy and assurance, our life and Fountain of love. We are made for eternal life in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:23). We were made for it now and forever (John 3:36). He is to be in and through all we do. It is the Spirit's joyous work not only to point to Him, but to make Him our life in all things (John 16:14, John 14:23), so that Christ is glorified (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12). From the joy of this relationship and communion, all other relationships that we might know are to be set right. This dependance of soul upon God in Christ is the splint by which all that is wrong is to be set straight. It is from the fullness of His steadfastness that our lives are to be made such that we might know His joy, and that our joy would be made complete, regardless of our circumstances or relationships throughout our lives. It is a following dependent relationship we were made for, from the garden onward. This is what we are brought into now in Christ (Ephesians 2:18), and this is what we will be brought into the fullness of in glory (Colossians 3:4). Therefore, in Him, by Him, and in the certain hope of Him, we live all our lives to the full (Colossians 3:12-17).

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