



CREATION DAYS 1-5

Part 1 of Genesis

Pastor Mark Driscoll | Genesis 1:1-25 | October 03, 2004

So, what we're gonna do, is we're gonna take you through Genesis. And it's gonna take a while. Even tonight, I'm gonna deal with the first six days of creation, up 'til the making of the man and the woman. So this – this could take a long, long, long time.

(Laughter)

So, just so you know that. I hoped you packed some snacks, for those of you that are low on blood sugar, you're gonna wanna have a little bite, 'cause we're gonna be here for about seven or eight hours, doing Genesis 1.

(Laughter)

And then we'll go to work tomorrow. So, I will pray, and if you like something, yell. If you don't, keep it to yourself.

(Laughter)

Just – we'll have a good time in Genesis 1, it's so great to finally get in the book. It's – I'm like a slingshot that's been getting pulled for about ten years, waiting to finally teach this book. So, I'll pray, and then we'll jump right into it, and at least I will have a great time.

(Laughter)

Good to see you all.

So, Lord God, we do love you so much. You are a great God. You have created this earth as a gift for us. You have created us with life to enjoy what you have given to us. God, we thank you so much for this great day in which we celebrate your creation, in which we celebrate the creation of our church. What a great, great, great day this is for us all.

Lord God, as we study your Word, we pray that you would allow us to have understanding. As the Spirit was there in the beginning, bringing order into creation, we ask you Holy Spirit to come and bring order into our lives. As you brought the truth into the world, we pray you would bring it into our hearts and minds this evening.

We ask you, Holy Spirit, to open our hearts and our minds and our ears, so that we would love the God who is our Maker, and that we would do that for which we were made, and that is to praise him as worshipers.

God, as we study tonight, please give us a zeal and enthusiasm, a joy, a love and a thirst for your Word. May we hear from you, and may we respond with words of praise and lives of adoration. In Jesus good name, Amen.

Okay, as we get into it tonight, the book of Genesis.

Response: [Cheering]

It's very good, very good. As we get into it, here's – I'll set it up for you, and you can read the rest in the book. I gave you a book. You could read the book. And then you could e-mail someone if you disagree, but don't e-mail me, 'cause these are my ideas, my thoughts. I don't wanna argue about 'em. There's all kinds of positions, discussion, debate, opinions. It's okay for us to dialogue. It's okay for us to disagree.

But what I really want to do tonight is go right through the text. So, let me set it up for ya. The book of Genesis – it's taken from the first words, "In the beginning." Okay? That's the genesis. This is the genesis of creation. Human history, life, death, everything starts in the book of beginnings, and it is culminated in Revelation, which is the book of conclusions.

The author is Moses. Okay, now, if you went to college, or you're in college, your professor will tell you that it's not. Jesus said that it was. So, guess what? It is. It is Moses who wrote the book. And if your prof. say, "Well, I went to college," say, "Well, God says, and take it up with him."

(Laughter)

Jesus says that Moses wrote the book. It's in your notes, so, Moses wrote the book. Jesus is a great prof. He didn't go to a great college, but he's God, so, he's –

(Laughter)

– sharp as a tack, that guy.

(Laughter)

So, Jesus says he wrote it, he wrote it. And it's part of the Pentateuch. The Pentateuch means one book in five parts – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy is one book, written by Moses in five parts. The theme is God. We'll look at that, "In the beginning, God –" The book is about God. All the books of the Bible are about God. All of history is about God. Everything is about God.

Now, he writes this book, Moses does, about 1,400 years, roughly, before the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are now about three-and-a-half thousand years removed from the writing of the book of Genesis. What we're dealing with is a sacred, ancient text. Now fads, ideas, trends come and go. Ideas, philosophies, religions, speculation – they come and go. Genesis has been there for three-and-a-half thousand years.

When you pick it up, you pick something up that is time tested, proven true, and no matter what happens in human history, this is a good place for you to learn about God, and it's been – it's been that beginning place of our faith since day one.

And as we read Genesis, what you'll find is this: It's not exhaustive. It's a selective telling of history by Moses. The book of Genesis covers about 2,000 years of human history. It covers as much history as all of the rest of the Bible combined. From just from Genesis 2, 3, 4, and 5, it covers 1,656 years in a couple chapters.

So, it's not exhaustive. It's not telling us everything, but it's selectively giving us those things which we need to know because they're most important and most related to our understanding of God.

And so, Moses is writing a selective history of the world. And he's writing for the few million people who had been enslaved in Egypt. And they had been liberated by God, brought out in freedom to worship. And they had wandered around the wilderness some 40 years because of their sin. He is writing to that nation of a few million people. It included Jews, and according to Exodus 12:38, also people from other nations who joined them.

So, Moses is writing to a few million refugees who are trying to get home to the land of promise that was created and prepared for them we'll look at in Genesis 1, and he is revealing to them God. And he's going to begin today by telling us about God the Creator.

So, what we're going to study today is that the Creator – that's our subject – created – that's our verb – creation – that's our object. That's what we're gonna look at tonight. That the Creator created creation. Okay?

Now, philosophically and scientifically, there's no way to come at a concrete conclusion as to how creation came into existence, because no one was there. No one was there at the beginning to see what happened. So we can hypothesize and speculate through philosophy and science what may have happened. The only way that we can know what truly happened, though, is not through speculation, but through revelation.

The only person that was there was God. And so, it's God who tells us how creation came into existence. Hebrews 11:3 says that by faith we know how the world was made. And what we see in Genesis 1:2 is that the Holy Spirit was there in creation, bringing order. And that it's the same Holy Spirit that inspires the writers of Scripture to reveal to us what God says and how God has worked.

So, the only reason that we know, the only reason that Moses knew how creation occurred is because the Holy Spirit was there, revealed it to him, and then inspired him to write it down, and then illuminates our understanding so we might understand what Genesis has to say.

And so my concluding statement is this in my introduction: As we read the creation account in Genesis 1, it is not primarily an exhaustive, scientific text. It does deal with matters of science – creation and matter and life and such. But that's not its primary function.

Galileo said it well. He said, "The Bible is not preeminently concerned with telling us how the heavens go. The Bible is, instead, most concerned with telling us how to go to Heaven." That's Galileo's point.

And so, as you read this, it will not answer every question you have about how the heavens go, but it will point you to the God who will bring you into Heaven. And that's the point of the book.

So, we're gonna jump right into it. Okay? We're gonna read Moses' great work, three-and-a-half thousand years after it was written. And we're gonna see where creation comes from, who God is, and how he's worked in history. And it begins with this great verse that you've all heard – and sometimes we've heard it so much, that it can sound like the Pledge of Allegiance. We don't pay careful attention to what it means.

But, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Now, I'll explain this to ya, but it's gonna take a while. Okay?

(Laughter)

There's a lot here. This is a packed verse. God doesn't waste any words, and he starts off with a packed sentence. "In the beginning –" okay, we gotta start with beginning. The first question is, "How old is the earth?" How many think the earth is really, really old, like the scientists do, 4.5 billion years of age? Okay.

How many of you think it's very, very young, 6 or 10,000 years of age? How many of you won't raise your hand, 'cause you're afraid I'm gonna get

you now? You're all chicken.

(Laughter)

Okay. There you go. Okay, now. So, the scientists say it's very old. They do radiocarbon dating, and they say, "Well, the earth is about 4.5 billion years old." The Christian theologians say, "Well, if we tally up all the generations of people in Genesis 5, we can work back and say that the earth is 6 to 10,000 years of age." Is it young? Is it old? Which is it?

In here it says, "In the beginning –" and the Hebrew word for beginning is "reishit," and reishit means "at some point."

(Laughter)

Doesn't say. Just does not say. Now, we can infer an old earth. We can infer a young earth. God says, "I made it." When? Doesn't say anything, just quiet. "I'm God."

(Laughter)

"I ask questions." It just doesn't say. It doesn't say how old the earth is. Now, on the elder board, the leadership team here, half think that the earth is old, half think that the earth is young. I think that the earth is old. Now, we probably all will change our position, but we'll still disagree, and half will think it's young, and half will think it's old.

And my point is this: You can think it's young or old, and that's okay. You're still welcome here. We love you. Now, some people say, "Well, it looks old." It does. I've looked around. It looks kinda old. I agree with that.

(Laughter)

So, they say, "Well, why is it so old?" "Well, it looks old," some say, "because God made the earth mature like he made Adam mature. He didn't start off as a zygote and then grow up. He's just a guy – Adam. And so, when he made a tree, he made a tree with rings that looked old. Maybe he made the whole earth mature. If God's big enough to make a planet, he can make a planet look mature."

Okay, possibly – doesn't say that, but it's possible. Others say, "There was this really big flood, starting in Genesis 6, that compressed all the geological layers so that the earth now looks older than it is." Possible – we'll get there when we get to Genesis 6.

Or maybe the earth is just really, really old. And I believe that's what's saying here. At some point, in the beginning, God made – it doesn't say when. Maybe God made it to look mature. Maybe God has worked and the earth has been here for a really long time, and it wasn't 'til later on that God made the man and the woman and started with human history.

We're gonna get into that. That's basically my position – and yours, if I convince you.

(Laughter)

If I do a really nice job. So, "In the beginning." Now, what we do find is that history has a beginning point. Okay, and this is important. There's a philosophical argument for the existence of God called the Kalam cosmological argument. I say big words so you'll think you're paying me for a good reason.

(Laughter)

The Kalam cosmological argument says that we know that there's a God because we have time. And if we have time, it means we must have had a beginning. And to have a beginning, there must be someone or something eternal before time that begins time. Okay, you all look like you just drank milk past the pull date, so let me break this down for ya.

(Laughter)

I'm gonna be 34 here in just about a week. I'm gonna be 34 years of age.

[Applause, cheering]

My mom's here. She knows that I had a beginning. Right? She was there. And that beginning was the place where we started tracking my chronology – first birthday, second birthday, third birthday, fourth birthday. I have chronology because I had a beginning. The reason, philosophically, why we have time is because there was a beginning.

If there isn't a beginning, there's no reference point for time. We don't have minutes and hours and days and months and years, unless there was a beginning as a reference point for our chronology. We'd live in eternity, as God does, which is separate and apart from time.

So, before there was time, there was the eternal God who has lived forever, and he caused the beginning to occur, and then we had time. God made time. "In the beginning," also denotes that there will be an end. The book leans into the future. The beginning echoes the end.

Some of the Hebrew scholars and the Jewish scholars say that when you hear beginning, that the end is hanging in the room. It's very, very important to know that. At the end of the book of Genesis, in Chapter 49, verse 10, which we will hit in about a year –

(Laughter)

Okay, when we get there, I'll point this out to ya, so remind me. But, when we get there, it talks about the Lord Jesus coming in the last days as a King with a scepter of rule in his hand. So, the beginning echoes the end. And Jesus says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end." And so, Jesus is the sum total of both. So, there we go. We're one word in, flying now, we're really moving.

So, "In the beginning, God—" Okay, now we'll stop right there and talk about that. God here, the name for God is Elohim. There are two primary names for God used throughout the book of Genesis. How many of you have been in a college class where they said, "Oh, there's multiple authors," and maybe even they're talking about multiple gods in the book of Genesis, cause they use the word Yahweh, or Jehovah, and Elohim. How many of you have heard that?

Okay, it's very, very simple to explain this. There are occasions where the book uses the name Elohim for God, other places it uses the name Jehovah or Yahweh. When it speaks of God universally in relation to the earth and all the people and the animals, people who believe in God and people who don't, it uses the general word, Elohim.

When it speaks of God's relationship with his people that he loves, it uses the word Jehovah or Yahweh. In the same way, you will refer to me as Pastor Mark. Okay, at least to my face. You may call me other things when I'm not around, but for the sake of the argument, you will call me Pastor Mark. My children don't. They call me dad, cause I don't lead a freakish cult where they all need to follow me around the house and call me Pastor Mark.

(Laughter)

So, you will call me Pastor, and they will call me dad. There's a general name for me, and then there's a special name for those I'm in particular relation with. It's the same with God. Elohim is his general name. Yahweh or Jehovah is for those who love God and know him, and that is a personal name.

And what it says right here is that in the beginning there's God. The Bible assumes that God exists. It just says, "God." What God is saying is this, "Prove me wrong. The burden of proof is on you. I'm God."

(Laughter)

"If you disagree, give it a shot."

(Laughter)

That's why Psalm 14:1 says, "The fool says in his heart, "There is no God.'" The Bible assumes God, puts the burden of proof on everyone else to disprove his existence. And so, God just declares that he exists. And we should take God at his Word. He tells that he exists. It's declared from the beginning. In the beginning, this great, wonderful, glorious God, who is the object of history and our affections and our faith did something — he created.

Now, the Hebrew word here is "bara'." There are two primary words for creating or making that are used in Genesis 1. You don't see this in your English translation of the Bible because we just use the word create. But there's two different and distinct words here, and understanding both of these words is important for you to understand what's going on in Genesis 1. I would say very important.

Bara is where God makes everything out of nothing. He creates it in its original fashion. The second word that is used, and again, this is all in your notes is "asot." And asot doesn't mean to make it for the first time, but to prepare it for use.

For example, let's say we lived out in the country and I decided I was gonna make myself a bed. I'd go out and chop down a tree, and I'd build a bed frame, and I'd build a mattress, and I'd make my bed. There you go. I made a bed. Now, a couple days later, when it was all messed up, and the sheets were all over, and it was a mess, I would then make my bed. You see the difference?

One is where it's created, the other is where it's prepared for use. "Bara" is where God created the earth. Through the rest of Genesis 1, God's going to "asot" the earth. He'll make it like you make a bed. He'll get it ready for human life. He'll get it ready for you and me. God makes everything, and then he gets it all ready for us. Just like if you buy a house, then you gotta set it up so you can move in.

God built the earth, and then he's gonna set it up so that we can move in and we can live here. So, in the beginning, God bara'd. And what this does, this shows that life comes from God. That matter comes from God. That the earth comes from God. That creation comes from God. The evolutionists are wrong. We don't spring from nothing by nothing for no reason. The impersonal does not make the personal. Nothing does not make something.

That which is chaotic does not produce that which is organized. That which does not have intelligence does not produce that which has intelligence — that comes from God. We come from God. Creation comes from God. And we do not hold here as a church the position of macroevolution. Okay? This is something that's very important.

We do hold the position that microevolution is certainly tenable. That a frog could adapt to its environment. So, you could have a green frog or a brown frog. Right? But a frog doesn't grow up and be a linebacker.

(Laughter)

Right? Like my wife and I have four kids, and you're gonna see this repeated in Genesis. This begat this, each after its own kinds. When we had our four kids, it wasn't like, "Well, do you think it'll be a berry or a goat or a kid?"

(Laughter)

~~You just know~~ You just know what you're gonna reproduce. You know? Oh, it's a kid. Praise God. Man, I just hate goats. I was hoping we wouldn't have one."

(Laughter)

Each begets after it's own kind. And God created the earth, and this – you're gonna look at this as we get into it, but this idea of macroevolution is a hypothesis stated by a gentleman named Charles Darwin. How many of you have been told that the title of his book is The Origin of the Species? Okay, this is what they tell ya. That's what I was told in college, The Origin of the Species.

Actually, the name of his book is a lot, lot longer than that. It is The Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life. Penned in 1859. What he's saying is this. Certain animals are superior and destroy the inferior animals. Certain races are superior and destroy the inferior races.

They don't tell you the whole title for the book, 'cause they want you to be atheists and evolutionists, but not racists. They're tricky.

(Laughter)

Kinda like that guy who shows up in Genesis 3. They're tricky like that. They only tell ya bits and pieces, and they don't tell ya the rest. Okay?

(Laughter) [Clapping, Shouting]

So, we don't believe in evolution. We believe that God created, and God created intelligently and orderly. And we thank him, and we praise him for it. And what did he make? Well, it tells us that he made the heavens and the earth. Now, the literary profs. will tell you that this is amerism. That means everything. When I look at somebody and I say, "From head to toe." You say, "Well, what about the belly button?" It's in there. It's between the head and the toe.

(Laughter)

Okay? It's in there. If I say on a ship, "From stem to stern," well, that's in there. Well, what about, "from beginning to end"? What about the middle? It's in there. This is the junk drawer for everything. Okay? When you look out and you – let's say you go out and you stand on the beach, you see the sky and the earth, the heavens and the earth. That's what he's talking about – everything. "The sun?" Yes. "The monkeys?" Yes, the monkeys.

(Laughter)

"Well, good, 'cause I love the monkeys." Well, good, good, good. Yeah, the monkeys are in there. The dinosaurs are in there. The trees, the plants, the rivers, the sun, the moon, the stars, it's all in there. He made everything. "What about the monkeys?" I told ya, he made the monkeys, too.

(Laughter)

He made all of it. This means everything. At some point in time, the great eternal God made everything out of nothing. He did it all. That's what God did. That's what it's trying to communicate to us. Now, this is the summary of creation. I believe at this point there are mountains. There's a sunrise. There's a sunset. There's animals. There's plants. There's rivers. The earth is set up. The only thing the earth is missing – human life. It doesn't have the man or the woman yet.

And so the next verse tells us the condition of creation at this point, before the man and the woman come. "Now, the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the water." Huge issues rises up here. What does formless and empty mean?

Okay, what does it mean? We'll talk about this. It's really important to drill down on this, because most translations and Bible commentators will tell you that it is here, echoing the language of ancient, non-Christian, Greek cosmology. The thought of the Greeks was that everything started as chaos, that God straightened it out, and he organized it, and he made it into cosmos. That's what they will tell you.

And they will say, "Oh, that's what it's talking about." I don't think it is. I don't think it is. I don't think we should take our understanding of Genesis 1 and 2 from non-Christian Greek cosmology that came long after the fact of Genesis. I believe if we keep reading our Bible, we find the same words used in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Deuteronomy, and we should look at how the Bible uses those words to figure out what this means.

It's important, practically, because some people will say, "What this was is basically a huge hunk of mud." Okay, that's my scientific definition, but a huge hunk of mud. There was gases and matter and mud and water and the swirling vortex of chaos. And then God, like a potter with clay, shaped it all into creation, made it orderly. I do not believe that that is what it is saying. Because what Hebrews 11:3 says is that God created out of that which did not preexist.

It's the theological doctrine of ex nihilo that God makes out of nothing. God doesn't make out of a hunk of mud. God makes out of nothing. Some of the good Bible commentators, like Luther and Calvin, will even tell you that this is a big hunk of mud that God created out of. Well, if he did, then he

contradicts Hebrews 11:3, which says he made out of nothing – not out of a hunk of something.

So, what does it mean, that it's formless and empty? The first English translator, William Tyndale, I think he was onto something when he called it "formless and void." I think he was onto something there. And as we realize how this word is used through the rest of the Scriptures, what we see is this. We see that it usually refers to barren, uninhabited wasteland, like a desert. That God made the earth – mountains, trees, stars, animals – but it was like a barren wasteland. It was like an empty desert.

Some animals could live there. Some plants could live there. But a human being, if just dropped there, with no 7-11, couldn't live there.

(Laughter)

Right? There's just nothing there. There's certain parts of the earth right now, if we just dropped you out of an airplane, that where you would die, 'cause there's no food. There's no water. There's no shelter. You can't live there. It's not built for human life. I believe that's exactly what he's talking about, because he's writing to a nation of a few million people that are in what place? A barren, empty wasteland. They've been walking around for 40 years. God has to provide their water. God has to provide their food, because otherwise, they'll all die in the desert.

So, Deuteronomy 32:10, it uses one of these same words to describe the land that they were in. God is speaking to them and saying, "You guys know how much it is unpleasant to live in a barren, desolate wasteland. You're trying to get to the Promised Land. That's how the earth was before God fixed it for us, before he set it up for human habitation and human life. I believe that's exactly what it's saying.

Now, a lot of the modern commentators don't agree with me, but this interpretation, friends, is as old as Augustine. This is a very old interpretation. I am very old school, very, very, very old. I'm into antique, vintage theology. I believe that new ideas are usually heresies. And I believe that God has been speaking, and people have been reading the book for thousands of years, and that we just do well to stick with those who love God and have carried on our faith faithfully.

And what has happened in present, modern years, is science has just given such a beating to Genesis that we just keep coming up with all of these theories, trying to defend and deflect ourselves. And I think sometimes it's good to go back to pre-scientific times and look at what faithful people got just from reading the Bible without having to defend themselves from all of the arguments against them.

And as we read guys like Augustine, we learn that they believed early on that the earth was made, that animals existed, and plants and trees and everything else, that it wasn't habitable for human life. And so, what God did is he made it ready for us, cause he loves us. And that's what it's talking about. That's all that it's talking about.

The point is that God is getting ready to bring us into human history, that God loves us very much, that God is preparing the earth for our life because he cares for us. We don't have to live in a barren wasteland. We get to live in a good creation. And it says that this happened at night.

Now, the earth was formless and empty. Darkness was over the surface of the deep. Again, the Holy Spirit is there. So, it's the Holy Spirit who inspires Moses so that we know what happened. This issue of darkness – people really get confused by this. It's like, "There was no sun. Oh, my gosh, no sun. No sun. What happened?"

Was it dark last night?

Response: Yes, yeah.

Did you think anybody took the sun?

(Laughter)

You didn't look up and go, "It's gone. Oh, no! We gotta find it. Where did they put it? Those kids – those junior high kids – they just –"

(Laughter)

The sun was there. People say, "Well, it said it was dark. There's no sun." It was night. "Oh."

(Laughter)

That's all, it was night. The earth had existed for an indefinite amount of time – animals, plants, trees. God begins his work of "asot," preparing creation for us so that we could live here – at night. He pulls a swing shift. That's all. God just pulls a swing shift.

(Laughter)

It's just night. 'Cause some people say, "Oh, well, here the light that came out then must be the light that comes directly from God." Maybe, but it just seems like it was night. And then God does something on the first day. He begins his work on a Sunday. And here's what God says on Sunday. And it's – here's the thing, too. We're gonna deal with six days of creation – right up to the creation of man and the woman. We believe – all the elders believe it – these are literal six days – literal days.

When it says, "and there was morning and evening, day one," that's a day. That's a day. That's one day. Exodus 20:11 and the Ten Commandments also says that for six days God worked, and on the seventh day God rested, so we should have a seven-day week that has six days of work and one day of

Sabbath.

The Bible says repeatedly that there was seven literal days – six days of God working, one day of God resting. We believe it is, indeed, very, very literal days. And what we're gonna deal with here is God's first work on Sunday. And I wanna back up real quick, before we jump into it. I want to tell you this: God doesn't make something every single day of creation. He doesn't. Some days he makes something. Some days he speaks and declares it to be separated, which it, indeed, happens, and some days he just speaks and tells us why he made something that already existed from Genesis 1:1.

The point is not that God makes something every day. The people who take that approach to Genesis are looking, going, "What did God make here? What did God make here?" God didn't make something on every day. But what he did do every day is he spoke. That's the point. The picture of – is God as a prophet and God as a poet and God speaks every day of creation – that is indeed what he does. And I can't prove it. This is my hypothesis that we won't know 'til Heaven.

I have this curiosity. I wonder if God's saying creation into existence? I think God is beautiful and poetic. When we hear the words of the man in Genesis 2, the first recorded words in human history, the man who is the image bearer of God sings. Zephania 3:17 says that in the new creation at the end of time, God will sing over us. What we know is at least God is a prophet, and the power of his Word goes out and it does its work. And I wonder if he wasn't singing creation into existence as a poetic song that proceeded from his great and glorious, perfect imagination. I don't know. We'll find out when we get there.

But the point is, God speaks every day. He doesn't necessarily create something every day. And on this first day, what you're gonna see is this: He doesn't so much create as he does explain and separate. God said on Sunday, "Let there be light," and there was light. Now some people say, "This is where God made light." Well, maybe – maybe. I'll admit that. But I think it was nighttime, and God speaks, and there's a sunrise.

I think the point here is this, that God is not this absentee landlord, who's distant from his creation, but God's intimately involved, that God's the one who makes the sun rise. And again, I'm speaking metaphorically. I know we rotate around the sun. I'm not a hillbilly, redneck scientist. I know.

(Laughter)

But I'm saying, from our perspective, the sun rises, and God is the one who gives us the sunrise. Do you know that every day, I believe the sun rises because God says, "Sun rise." I don't believe we're in a closed, mechanistic universe, like a big machine that God wound up and went on vacation. That's the God of deism. Our God is a loving, personal, involved God. He's separate from his creation, but involved in his creation.

He makes sunrises. He makes leaves turn colors in the fall. He makes that cool breeze that you and I love now on a crisp evening. That's God. God does that. God makes that happen. God is the one who is involved in the affairs of human history and creation. And here, he makes the sun rise. Next time you see a sunset, praise the Lord. Next time you see a sunrise, praise the Lord. That's a gift from God. It's something that he gives to us as a great, great gift.

And he causes the sun to rise on a Sunday, and he begins his work on a Sunday, the same day that the Lord Jesus rose from his grave. God always begins his best work on Sunday, at the break of dawn. God saw that the light was good. He separated the light from the darkness. God is here separating things. You're gonna see this in Genesis. God separates things by his Word.

He called the light "day," the darkness he called "night." There was evening. There was morning. That is the first day. Okay, we'll come back to this issue of light when we hit Wednesday, and I'll give you three options there.

The next day is Monday. First day, sunrise. God establishes day and night and 24-hour days, so we'll have good rhythm in our life, because he loves us. Monday, God speaks again and here's what he says: "God said, 'Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water.' So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. God called the expanse 'sky.' There was evening. There was morning – the second day."

Okay, here's what it is – people go, "The water, the water, the water – huh?" Okay, let me explain it to ya. This is why I get paid good money. Okay, now, you look out. Let's say you're standing there, you look out and you see water. You get that? Like if we all went down to Golden Gardens, you look out and you say, "Well, there's water." Okay, that's what he's talking about. The water below.

This could be seas, rivers, this is water on the earth. What's – you look out – what's the water above? Clouds. You guys live in Seattle. You know this. Right?

(Laughter)

You know that there's water up there, too. Right? When you see the clouds roll in and they're all dark and heavy and ominous, you look and say, "It is gonna rain."

(Laughter)

Yes, it is, because there's water in the sky. Now, there's water in the clouds. There's water on the earth. And he says, "There's expanse in the middle," and he calls the expanse "sky." So Moses is looking out – I don't know how Moses got this information. I wonder if for him if it wasn't like watching a film?

You kinda get that impression, like “Hi, I’m God. Have a comfortable seat, get some popcorn, I’m gonna tell you how this all happened.” Right? It’s like Moses is sitting there, watching this. “Okay, it’s dark, sunrise, nice, clouds, sky, water, looking good.” And it seems like he’s giving us the blow by blow of a movie he’s watchin’. I don’t know for sure how Moses got this information, but it’s like he’s seein’ it. It’s like he’s witnessing it. So, we have to use our imagination to see it as well.

God started on a cloudy day – water above, water below, sky in the middle. Okay? And he doesn’t make anything this day – doesn’t tell us that he made anything. He separated on this day. That’s what he did.

Now, every day of creation it’s God speaks, creation obeys him. He evaluates it, and he declares it to be – what? It is –

Response: Good.

Good – except for Monday. God doesn’t say Monday is good – look at that.

(Laughter)

It doesn’t say that.

[Cheering, Applause]

All of the days are good, except for Monday.

(Laughter)

Even in God’s work week, he’s like, “Monday – you can have Monday.” I think that’s funny.

(Laughter)

So, when you wake up tomorrow and you hit your alarm, and you’re just, [Grumble, mumble] – you’re biblical. You and God are on the same team.

(Laughter)

Monday’s not a good day. The other day’s are good. Now, Monday’s not a good day. And here it’s not that Monday’s evil, though your Mondays probably are. It is that nothing was made for the benefit of mankind – the man and the woman – on this day. So, there’s nothing good necessarily for us that comes out of Monday. That’s the point.

So – but it’s good comedy, so, I’ll take what I can get. Tuesday, here’s what God does: God speaks again on a Tuesday. Okay? We’ll read this, “And God said, ‘Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let the dry ground appear.’ And it was so. God called the dry ground ‘land,’” – when we talk about land, it appears over 400 times. Land is spoken of more than 400 times in Genesis – a very important theme – “and he gathered the waters and he called them ‘seas.’ God saw that it was good.”

Next section, we’ll read the rest. “Then God said, ‘Let the land produce vegetation:’” – here it’s not that God creates vegetation, but the land produces it. There are some things that the land produces by virtue of God’s command. And then in Genesis 2, we’ll see that God makes us with his hands, that he’s intimately involved in our creation in a way he’s not involved in anything else. We have a closer relationship to God – “seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.”

“And it was so.” You see that everything obeys the Word of God. “The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds, trees bearing fruit with the seed in it according to their kinds. God saw that it was good. There was evening, and there was morning – the third day.” There’s Tuesday.

Okay, now what happens is this: There’s two different perspectives on what is this land. Some people say that the whole earth was covered in water, and here God brings land out of the water. I don’t hold that position. You can. I don’t know. I just don’t see it that way. Because back in Genesis 1:1, God bara’d – made everything, the heavens and the earth. “What about the land?” Yeah, that’s in there. God made the land.

What I think he’s dealing with here is not the sum total of all the land on the earth, but a particular chunk of real estate – the Promised Land. He’s gonna tell us in Chapter 2 the boundaries for the Promised Land – that piece of real estate everybody’s still fighting over today, and we’ll get into that when we hit Genesis 12 and 15.

But I think what happens is this: Animals have been living, plants have been living for an indefinite period of time, maybe a short number of years, maybe billions of years. I don’t know. And then God is going to make the man and the woman. But before he can put them on the earth, the earth is not yet ready.

So, God sets up the days, evening, mornings – so we’ll sleep and work. God sets up the rain so that we’ll have the kind of climate that will enable us to have life. And then God wants to start with us somewhere – a piece of real estate to begin. And so he brings up out of the water the Promised Land. A chunk of real estate to begin with.

And God is going to prepare that piece of land to put the man and the woman on. And I believe the seas around that would be like the Sea of Galilee, or the Dead Sea – just bodies of water that God gathered together, and God brought the land up out. And what God is going to do then, he’s gonna make

the man and the woman, and he's gonna put them on that chunk of land.

And again, what has happened in Genesis to this point is that what we're not talking about, necessarily, is a panoramic view, like one of those pictures from the moon of the whole earth. What God has done is he's told us that panoramic picture in Genesis 1:1. And now, if he were a film maker, this is where the camera hones into a close-up to show us that God's getting a chunk of real estate ready for a man and a woman.

He's preparing a special place just for the man and the woman. And for the first good chunk of years on the earth, we didn't leave this general area. It wasn't until the Tower of Babel in the city of Babel in Genesis 11, that we'll get to in a few months, where we were scattered and left this basic area.

For the first more than 1,600 years of human history, people lived in this geographic area. So, it makes sense to me that God's focusing on where he's gonna put the people. Because at this point, nobody's living in places like Texas.

(Laughter)

I don't know if anybody should.

(Laughter)

But the point is, in Genesis 1, God's not going, "And Texas," – Texas is not in the picture, because nobody's gonna be there for a really long time. And so God's starting to show us where he's beginning his work.

The land comes out, and some people then say, "And then God made all the trees and the plants." That's not what it says. God made the trees and the plants back in Genesis 1:1. The animals had been eating whatever was already in creation, that there would have been plants and trees pre-existent. It only tells us here that there's two kind of things that were made, and I want you to see it. I want you to see it here because it's important to know.

It says right there in verse 12, "The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kind and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kind." God made two things on this day – fruit and berries. You like berries?

(Laughter)

God made the berries. "Marionberries?" Yep. "Blueberries?" Yep. "Raspberries?" Yep. "Blackberries?" Yes. God made the berries on Happy Berry Tuesday. Do you like fruit?

Response: Yes. Yeah.

Yeah, fruit's good. We're pro-fruit. That's our theological position. We are pro-fruit.

(Laughter)

God made the fruit. God made the berries. God made the trees with the fruit. God made the shrubs with the berries on Tuesday. Why? Cause that's what we eat. We didn't eat any meat. We didn't have steaks until after the flood, over 1,600 years later. I'm glad I'm born later.

(Laughter)

Before that, what you and I would have eaten is vegetables, berries, fruit, and the milk from whatever we could milk. Now, I don't live on a farm, so I'm not sure what you can milk. I'm assuming a cow and a goat. There may be other things you can milk. Whatever we could milk, we could drink that. I don't think we were all vegans. I think milk and berries and fruit and vegetables. That's what we had for a really long time.

So, what God does, God causes the land to come up. Do you like cobbler?

Response: (Laughter) Yes.

I – just thinking about it. Man, without Tuesday, we don't have cobbler.

(Laughter)

That's an important day. If you make a cobbler, praise the Lord, and make me one. That's what I want you to remember out of Tuesday. I love cobbler, too. Cobbler with vanilla ice cream. It doesn't even matter what kind of berry. Cobbler with a berry in the middle, and ice cream on the top, man.

(Laughter)

Just think about that for a minute. We gotta hurry. I gotta go home.

(Laughter)

That comes from Tuesday. So, when you eat fruit, you eat berries, think, "God made berries and fruit for me 'cause he loves me." God brings the land out, and he says, "You know what? The animals got food to eat, but there's nothing for the people. I gotta make fruit and berries." So, we get fruit and berries on Fruit Berry Tuesday. That's what it is. God loves us and set it all up for us.

And this also negates macroevolution. Right? You see at the end of verse 12, "according to their kinds." You're gonna see this represented – this is

gonna be said many times in Genesis 1, that the berries made berries, and that the monkeys made monkeys, and that the people made people, and that the berries didn't make people, and the people didn't make berries – each after its own kind.

We, again, don't believe in macroevolution, that one species becomes another species. They can't even find the transitional forms between the species, so it's still nothing more than a hypothesis. Genesis says each makes according to its kind. So here, berries and fruit – Happy Tuesday.

Wednesday, God continues his work, getting everything ready for us. Isn't it nice of God to set everything up? I'm gonna make you – I'm gonna give you a great place to start. You're gonna start in a wonderful place because I love you so much. And that's the point. Here he goes on – here's – oh, here's Wednesday. Wednesday's the big issue over the sun and the light. There's a big debate over this – when did it happen?

"God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.' And it was so." We'll read the next section as well, 'cause they're all related to Wednesday.

"God made two great lights – the greater light to govern the day," – the –

Response: Sun.

You're smart. "– and the lesser light to govern the night." The –

Response: Moon.

See, we can do this. We can do this, Mars Hill. He also made the stars. We'll talk about that in a moment. "God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. God saw that it was good. There was evening, morning – the fourth day."

Here's the big debate. The big debate is, when did God make the sun? Some people say you gotta go over here to Genesis 1:1. Over here in Genesis 1:1 some people say, "God made the sun in the beginning with the heavens and the earth." That's my position. Others say, "No, no, no, he made it on Sunday when he said, 'Let there be light.'"

Some people say, "No, he didn't make it either of those day. Before that, there was light. That's why we have morning and evening, and that's why we have plants and evenings that need light, but the light didn't come from the sun; it came directly from God, as in the end, Revelation tells us the whole new creation will be illuminated not by a sun, but by the glory of the Lord Jesus. So, maybe it was God bringing light." Maybe.

They will then argue that the sun didn't come into existence until Wednesday. My position is, God made the sun in the beginning. On Sunday, he started with a sunrise, and on Wednesday – I'm not gonna pretend to be a Hebrew scholar and get into all the details of it with you here, but I believe Wednesday what God is doing is not creating the sun, the moon, and the stars, but telling us that he created the sun, the moon, and the stars.

And he uses the same word, bara', that goes all the way back to Genesis 1:1. And I believe this is an explanation of what he did in Genesis 1:1. Here's my point: God made the sun, the moon, and the stars.

Response: Amen.

He did. Now, what most people don't know is – if they don't know who God is and that he's made everything, they worship what he's made. Romans 1 says that we either worship the Creator or creation. And if you don't know that God made the sun, you might worship the sun. If you don't know that God made the moon, you might worship the moon.

And if you don't know that God made the stars, many people do worship the stars. Astrology, paganism, the new age, radical environmentalism – people worship what is made rather than the Maker. And I believe what God is doing here, he has made everything. And so that the man and the woman, and so that all men and women will know that he made it and that we're to worship him, not what he's made, here he declares his intention.

What he says is this, "I made the sun, the moon, the stars." So, when people look up, they go, "Oh, that's amazing. I'm gonna worship the stars." "I made them." "Oh, oh, sorry."

(Laughter)

"I guess I should worship you." "Yes." Now, that's the point of Wednesday. The point of Wednesday is that God made the sun, the moon, and the stars, that we should not worship those things, that we should know that they're gifts to us from God, and we should thank him and worship him for giving us this light.

And here's the point of it. The point of it is that God sets up not only creation and not only our diet – he also sets up our schedule. He makes daytime so we can work. He makes nighttime so we can sleep. He makes seasons so that we can live. And God is going to set up a seven-day week, with one day of Sabbath.

God not only cares about where you live and what you eat, he cares about your time and that you get time to sleep and time to work and time to rest. This is a God, who when he sets up creation for you, does so perfectly, and thinks through all of the details – not just the basic trivia of our lives, but he's involved in all of it because he loves us thoroughly and fully.

And I believe that is the point of what is going on Wednesday. God is getting everything ready for us, and he's telling us what he's done and why he has done it, so that we will love him and thank him and worship him.

The next day is Thursday. "God said, 'Let the waters teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.'" Birds. "So God created the creatures of the sea" – fish – "and every living and moving things with which the waters teem, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was indeed good."

The next section of verses concludes Thursday. "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful, increase in number, fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.' And there was evening, there was morning – the fifth day."

Two positions on this: one, that it's talking about the whole earth. If so, this is where God puts fish in the sea and birds in the air. That is possible. My position, again, I believe that it's focused in on a chunk of real estate that the dimensions are given of in Genesis 2. This is the Promised Land, and that God has just brought the land out of the water, and he's just formed the seas, and so what he needs to do now is put the birds in the air and he needs to put the fish in the sea.

So, I don't believe that this is where fish and birds come into existence. I believe this is where they're brought into the Promised Land. So, if the seas were just made, there's no fish in 'em. So he says, "Fish, you go in the water." He's just brought the land out. "Now, birds – you pull in there and live in the trees and fly overhead, and you're gonna habitat there." I believe that's what's going on.

Is it possible that God made the fish and the birds for the first time there? It is. But again, "In the beginning, God mad the heavens and the earth." "In the beginning," Genesis 1:1, God made everything. That would seem to include the birds and the fish.

So, the question is, is God filling up all of the earth with birds and fish here, or is he just getting this chunk of real estate ready for the man and the woman that he loves, and he's setting up their environment. I believe that's a more likely case.

But the point of it all is God's intense love to prepare everything for us in a thoughtful, responsible, necessary way, 'cause he's such a good God. And that's the emphasis of what comes down here on Thursday.

Beautiful, though, verse 22, "God blessed them." This word then appears from this point forward over 80 times in the book of Genesis – more than any other book of the Bible. That the focus here is on God, who is good, and God who blesses. Blessing usually, in Genesis, is referred to in terms of fertility. The birds can reproduce. The animals can reproduce. The fish can reproduce. They're blessed.

It's why the first words to the man and the woman will be, "God blessed them, and said to them, 'Be fruitful.'" Fruitfulness is blessing. I'll tell you what, guys, we are a blessed people. You see all the kids running around here? That's blessing – not burden. People who don't know God think that children are burden. People who do know God know that children are blessing. Children are blessing.

Do you love kids?

Response: Yeah, yeah.

Do you love kids? God loves kids. Children are blessing.

[Applause]

Right?

You pregnant ladies, you don't feel blessed. Right?

(Laughter)

You feel big. You don't feel blessed, but you're blessed. When we see women who are pregnant, our mindset needs to be the same as God – blessed, blessed, blessed. Okay? Blessed.

[Applause]

Men, when you see your wives pregnant and cute – blessed. You're blessed. You're household's blessed. You're family's blessed. Our church is blessed. We are a blessed people. We are blessed because God is the God of life, and when life come forth, that's a blessing, and we celebrate that.

We're a church that embraces life because God is a living God. And through his blessing, life produces in its own kind. And people make more people, and that's a blessing. And here, God blesses the animals, and they get to reproduce, and they're fertile, and they're blessed as well.

God is the God who blesses. I tell you what, guys, we are a blessed people. We started as just a couple people. We're thousands, great building, wonderful people, people falling in love, getting saved. People getting jobs. People having kids. People making friends. People meeting Jesus. People undergoing life transformation. People encountering God. We're blessed. God's the God who blesses.

And here, he blesses the animals. And when he makes us, he's gonna bless us. And God is the God who keeps on blessing. And this is one of the great things I love about Genesis. Sin comes. Death comes. Folly comes. Rebellion comes. God keeps blessing. God can't help himself, because that's who he is. He's a good God who blesses, and he refuses to lose. So, he's gonna bless until it's all better, and that's the kind of God we're dealing with in

Genesis.

He sets everything up as a blessing. And he makes us, and he blesses us. And everything in our life that God gives us is a blessing. And the only time that sin and chaos and disorder come is through sin, but then God still blesses through that. We'll get to that – that's Jesus.

Friday – “God said, ‘Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds:’” again, back to this issue of kinds, “Livestock –” Any of you grow up on a farm? My dad grew up on a farm. He's here. I didn't grow up on a farm; I grew up in a city. I think livestock is like cattle.

(Laughter)

At least, that's what I see on TV. I don't have any pets. I think livestock – aren't livestock animals that can't protect themselves, so you gotta protect them? Like, if you put a goat up against a coyote, it's over. Right? Like if you put a cow up against a lion, we don't even need to like take bets in Vegas on that. We know how that's gonna go down – bad for the cow. Right? Because the lion or the coyote is a wild animal, and livestock is – well, it's animals that you gotta keep an eye on. You gotta lock 'em up in the barn, or you gotta put 'em in a pen.

Now, we need livestock because if you live on a farm, you gotta have animals – beast of burden to help plow your field and clear your field and do your work. You can also get milk and such from certain livestock.

So, what God's gonna do, I believe the animals all existed before this, but now God's gonna make livestock, because the man and the woman are coming, agrarian society, gonna live on a farm – need a cow.

(Laughter)

Okay? I think that's the point. So, too, we're pro-berry, pro-cow.

(Laughter)

“‘Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground,’” – small animals – “‘and wild animals.’” Roar.

(Laughter)

“‘– each according to its kind.’ And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kind, the livestock according to their kinds, the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it indeed was good.” It was good. Okay?

Again, we didn't eat meat yet, so we're not eating these cows. [Snap]

(Laughter)

But these cows will help us plow our field. It'll help us to grow our crops, vegetables, clear the land for fruit – whatever needs to be done, the animals will help us. Animals are given as blessed gifts from God to help human beings live good life on the earth.

Okay, let me – let me say this now. God set everything up. Right? The earth exists. It's not yet ready for us. God brings out a chunk of land, sets it all up, “Here's your food. Here's your 24-hour day. Here's your seven-day week. Here's your berries and your fruit and your milk, and here's your cow, and here's your farm.” And it's all set up for the man and the woman.

I have one question at this point. This is a theological controversy. Okay? And I'm not selling it, but I'm kinda selling it. So, don't send me any e-mails, I just wanna think it through with ya. Death – does death exist before sin enters the world? How many of you think, “Yeah, death exists.” Plant death or animal death before sin enters the world?

How many of you think, “No, there was no death 'til sin entered the world.” How many of you think, “I will not raise my hand, 'cause he is gonna get me, and forget him, I'm just gonna wait for the answer.”

(Laughter)

Well, here's my thought. Some people say, “There was no death until sin entered the world,” and they'll go to Romans and they'll say that the wage for sin is death. Now, that's true, we believe that. But that's only referring to human death. “Because of one man's sin, the whole race fell,” Paul says, also in Romans.

So, because of one person's sin, all people die. Because we're all sinners, and so all sinners die. But was there plant or animal death before sin entered the world? I think, “Yes.” I think, “Yes.” Okay, I'll give you a couple reasons. One, what do livestock eat? I mean, you have to tell me; I grew up in the city. Some of you say grass. I'm gonna go with that, that sounds good.

(Laughter)

Let's say cows eat grass. If a cow eats the grass, does the grass die? Yeah, it's in the cow, not in the ground. So hypothetically, we could say that is dead grass. Right? If you're in a cow, you're dead. It's just a general principle we're gonna stick with here.

So, if the grass is alive and goes in the cow, the grass is dead. How about during the changing of the seasons? If a leaf falls off a tree, is it dead? Yeah,

yeah. How about God tells Adam in Genesis 2 to work the garden and take care of it, to prune it, because otherwise the garden doesn't look much like a garden. If everything grows forever, it's a little cluttered.

So, Adam would be out pruning the things in the garden to keep it all in order. Well, when he cut a limb off a tree, would it die? Well, yeah. So, there's plant death. I think we can assume that plant death is not a problem. How about animal death? It doesn't say either way. It doesn't say either way. What we do know is that there's no human death until Adam sins.

But here's my point, Adam and Eve were not built immortal and eternal. They were built mortal. We'll get into this in Genesis 3. But Adam and Eve were kept alive by partaking of – what? The Tree of Life. Now, work with me here. Death came when they got kicked out of the garden and could no longer partake of the Tree of Life. It seems like the only way they continue to live forever was partaking of the Tree of Life.

~~SA is so much likeing God kickd that on the garden and couldn't partake of the Tree of Life, then death set in.~~

alive is by eating of the Tree of Life. Did the animals eat of the Tree of Life, or were they mortal, too? That's my question. And it doesn't say.

When I get to Heaven, this is on my short list of things I wanna ask. That and why I'm not tall.

(Laughter)

And so those are my questions – and why I can't eat carbs. Those are my three primary questions when I get to Heaven. And so, the question then becomes, if the animals could have died, and the plants could have died, then what you may actually have here is that plants and animals, and sun, the moon, the stars, the land – everything was made in the beginning, and that over an indefinite period of time, maybe a short period of time or billions of years, the life – life existed, and animals died, and plants died, and everything worked along.

And then there wasn't any human beings until a short time ago – may 6 to 10,000 years ago. I think that's probably accurate. God made a man and a woman, Adam and Eve. We all trace our descendants from them. And that they didn't die until they sinned and they were kicked out of the garden, and they no longer could partake of the Tree of Life.

And we die because we don't partake of the Tree of Life. But think about it; the beginning echoes the end. What shows up in the end? The Tree of Life. In the new Heaven, the new Earth, the new Jerusalem, there's a new garden at the end in the new creation. And in the middle of it is the Tree of Life, of which we will partake forever and live forever. So, we will not die in Heaven. And that's the way your Bible's put together.

Now, I wanna drill down on the details. Monday, Tuesday – Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. Okay? We've set it all up. We've come all the way up to the creation of the man and the woman, which we'll hit next week. You and I can disagree on the details. That's okay. It's okay.

But the point of this is that God was preparing the earth for human life. He was creating an environment in which we could live and thrive and flourish. That we could have joy and food and work and play and rest and love and relationship. That God is preparing a place for us.

This is important. And I wanna tell you why this is important to me. As God sets everything up, I want you to see that your Bible is put together in a circle. That human history is a circle. The way the Greeks tell a story is beginning, middle, end. The way the Hebrews tell a story is beginning, middle, beginning. It's like Fight Club or Sixth Sense.

(Laughter)

Right? It's like the good movies. Right? And you go, "Oh, I got it now." We go back to the beginning, and then everything in the middle makes sense. That's how human history is put together – beginning, middle, beginning. In the beginning, there was God. We were created by God to live in a garden that was set up for us so that we could love and live and have joy – live in harmony with animals, plants, and God.

Then we sinned, and we were kicked out of that garden. And the rest of the Bible swings around with redemption through the Lord Jesus, who comes into creation as a man. God becomes a man and redeems human beings and creation. What we see then is that the first two books of the Bible are about creation. When we get to the end, Revelation, the last two books of the Bible are about the new creation. Beginning, middle, beginning.

And that there was a Tree of Life there. That people are happy with animals and God and creation and good order. And it will be that way in the end. That God is working everything out so that you and I will get back to the place that we were supposed to be before we sinned. That God is a good guy who blesses, and he won't lose.

No matter how much we ruin his good creation and we vandalize his good shalom, he is still gonna bless and redeem and love and fix and clean up our mess, so that in the end, we will be back to that place that he originally intended for us – a glorious garden. We will love each other and be with God. We'll enjoy the sunlight. And we'll hang out together in harmony with one another and the animals.

The point of this in Genesis 1 – and here's where I want to build on this. Okay? And I want you to think it through with me. This is where I just get so fired up. What is Genesis 1 about? Is it about the berries and the fruit and the monkeys? It's about the Lord.

All this is, is God setting the stage. He's then going to bring out the man and the woman. But ultimately, it is God who is the playwright. This is about him. Let me tell ya why I believe this is so. Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God –" That's what Genesis 1 is about – God.

Let me tell you what we've learned about God, just from Genesis 1. Bear with me. God is eternal. And he exists outside of time, before time, and he

creates time. We learned that God is independent, and that the rest of creation, including you and I and the sunrise tomorrow, is dependent upon God.

We also see in Genesis 1 that God is the living God, and that life comes from God. That there is no life apart from the living God.

Response: Amen.

What we also find out is that God is powerful. So powerful that he can make creation out of nothing, without assistance, help, or resistance. That God is that powerful. What we also find out is that God is transcendent, unlike the new agers and the hyper pagan environmental spiritualists, and those who are pantheists, or panentheists, or monists. That God is not part of creation. God is not creation. God is not bound to creation. That God is holy and separate and other, and that he brings creation into existence. And he can involve himself in creation at any point and at any time in any way. But God and creation are different. And we worship Creator, not creation. And we belong to God.

[Applause]

What we also see is that God is beautiful. This is one of the greatest overlooked attributes of God. I remember sitting down one time – I read like 27 systematic theologies on the attributes of God, and only one said that God was beautiful. Friends, when you look at creation, you gotta remember the psalmist who said that the heavens declare the glory of God. That the handiwork tells you something about the painter. That when you look at creation – we have color because God loves color. We have sound because God loves acoustics. We have changing of seasons and temperatures because God is a God who loves beauty.

God made light. God made shadows. God made colors. The next time you hear a song, the next time you enjoy a good meal, the next time you appreciate a strong embrace, the next time you take your shoes off and you walk on cool grass – that was a gift from the beautiful God, who wants you to live a beautiful life in his good creation.

Response: That's right. Amen. Right.

It's a gift from good. That's why atheistic cultures and societies that deny God, their architecture reflects their ideology. They live in sterile, cold surroundings that are functional, but not beautiful. And they die there. Meanwhile, we live in the good creation that God made.

We also find out from Genesis that God is sovereign. What that means is that he is the highest authority. That God rules over all that he has made, and that God doesn't answer to anyone. God is not overwhelmed or overcome with anyone or anything, and there is nothing beyond God. There is nothing higher or greater or better than God. That God is the Sovereign, and what he wills comes to pass even through sin that we create.

And we also see that God is a prophetic poet, who speaks. And when he speaks, his Word goes out. And his Word changes things. And it brings order. And it brings life. And it brings goodness. And it separates. And we see the powerful Word of God the Prophet.

That's why it's so important that you and I are people who believe in the Word of God. People who when we hear his voice, as Scripture says, "Do not harden our hearts." That when God speaks to us through his Word, that we realize that faith comes through hearing the Word of God. And we, like creation, respond rather than reject when God speaks to us. God the Prophet is so important to understand.

We also see that God is good, and that everything God makes is –

Response: Good.

Good. And sin, and death, and chaos does not come until Satan and human beings in league with Satan bring sin into the world, bring chaos into the good creation of God. That God makes everything good, and God is a good God.

We also see that God is gracious, and that he blesses. Has he blessed you?

Response: Yes.

He's blessed me. God began with the blessing of the animals. God blesses over 80 times in Genesis. And God's still blessing today. He's a good God, who blesses us. And he's a King who rules over all creation.

Now, the reason this is important for your beginning, middle, beginning of history is that what begins in Genesis 1:1 continues today, and it culminates in eternity. Let me set this all up for ya. And this is where I just get happy.

(Laughter)

Okay, in the beginning, God made the heavens and the earth. You and I sin. God comes into his creation, and Paul says that he makes us – what? New creations. New creations in Christ.

[Applause, Cheering]

In the end, what is God gonna have in store for us in the end? A new creation. A new garden. A new place for God's people to dwell in goodness, blessing, love, light, and joy. It's Heaven. God made the first garden. He's making us new creations in Christ. And he is preparing for us this new creation to enjoy, together with him forever.

Response: Yeah. [Applause, Cheering]

The second thing we learned, God goes before us. Okay? In creation, Genesis 1:2, everything was made before it was ready for us. The Spirit of God moves forth into the earth, and he prepares the earth for the making of the man and the woman. Dear friends, when the Lord Jesus Christ was killed upon his cross, the veil that separated people from the presence of God on the earth was torn from top to bottom, from God to us. And at that moment, the Spirit of God was unleashed in power upon the earth.

Today, the same Spirit that went forth into creation to prepare it for us goes before us into the earth, preparing our days in advance. God knows your tomorrow. God is already out ahead of you. God is already working on your tomorrow. That he is out ahead of you, in love for you, preparing your future so that it will be orderly as he intends.

Response: Amen. [Applause]

You need to believe that God is a good God, and that he goes before you, so you wake up with courage. And passion. And boldness. And faith. And hope. And love. And joy. That it's not just up to you. That you are not on your own. That the same God who brought the earth into existence is going before you to prepare your life, so that it, too, will be declared good in the sight of God.

Response: Amen.

In addition, what we see here is that God is the God who loves to bless. He blessed us in the beginning. Friends, he blesses us today. And when we get into his eternal kingdom, that new creation, as his new creations, it will be nothing but blessing forever. It says that God will wipe every tear from our eyes. That there will be no death or sorrow or mourning – just blessing, as God originally intended.

And we see that it is God who separates. And for those of you who are not Christians that are joining us here today, we love you. We welcome you. We embrace you. But take my words to heart. In the beginning, it was God in Genesis 1 who separated day and night, land and sea. It is today the work of God in our lives that separates who we were and who we are becoming. Our old nature and our new nature. Our sin and our salvation.

It is God who is separating what we have done from what we will become. And in the end, it is God who will separate those who belong to him and love him into Heaven, and those who do not into hell. There will be a final day of separation that is coming upon us. God has brought you here today, if you are not a Christian, so that you would worship the Creator, not just the creation. That you would know that God has a name, that God has a face, and that is Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Response: Amen. That's right. [Applause]

That he has come into history, and he loves us, and he saves us. And his intention is to work everything out for good, to bring it all back to that place where there is us and God – no sinners, no sin, no death, no chaos, no confusion. That to do that, God must separate those who love him and those who don't.

We implore you today to worship the Lord Jesus Christ – the Creator has a name and a face – so that when that final day of separation comes, that you will join us in this new creation.

Response: Amen.

That's what we want for ya. Additionally, here's where it all begins. And this is where I get so fired up.

(Laughter)

God creates everything, and then to get his work done, what does he do? What does he send forth? His Word. His powerful, irresistible, irrefutable Word. God's Word goes out. As Isaiah says, "It accomplishes the purpose for which it is said. Nothing can resist the powerful Word of God."

The Word of God goes out on what day, dear friends?

Response: Sunday.

Sunday! Sunday, the day of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. God speaks at daybreak on Sunday. His Word goes out and brings life. We sin and die. Jesus Christ, the Word of God, comes into human history, and on daybreak on a Sunday, he rises from death as the beginning of the new creation.

Response: Wow. [Cheering, Applause]

We are invited today to respond to the Word of God that goes out. To have our faith built by the hearing of the Word of God. The reason we gather on Sunday – it's the day that God began his work in creation. It's the day that God culminated his work in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It's the day that he's still working on us, preparing us for our eternity, just as he prepared creation as a gift for us. That the Lord Jesus Christ is now alive and well. That after his resurrection, he ascended into Heaven.

And what is he doing today, dear friends? He is preparing a place for us.

Response: Amen. [Cheering, Applause]

He's preparing a place for us. New Heaven, new Earth, new Jerusalem. We'll be the new creations in Christ who walk into this new creation that God has made. Meanwhile, we get together on Sunday, the day that God began his work and sent his Word forth, and the day that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, got out of his grave.

And what we do is we open the Word of God, and we let the Word of God explode into our lives, to bring life where there's death, to bring order where there's chaos, to prepare us so that we might see God face to face. So, now we respond. We respond as creation did – obediently, triumphantly, fruitfully, joyously, gladly.

That's why Revelation 4:11 says, "We worship God because he made us to." The right response to understanding the Creator is to appreciate the creation, to enjoy the creation, and to praise the Creator.

Response: Amen.

That's what we're gonna do tonight. You're gonna sing. You're gonna give your tithes and offerings. You're gonna confess your sins. You're gonna partake of communion, remembering Jesus' body and blood shed for our sin. We're gonna sing. We're gonna throw a nice party. We're gonna celebrate, because God's Word has gone forth.

God's Word is doing its work. God's Word is changing lives. God's Son has come to redeem us, and we have the sunrise at the beginning, we have the resurrection of the Son in the middle, and we're longing for an eternal Sabbath – that seventh day – that eternal day of rest that is promised for us. And in the meantime, these are our days of work on the earth.

Response: Amen.

I love you guys. Happy birthday.

[Cheering, Applause]

We'll pray, and call the band up, and have a little party.

(Laughter)

Lord God, we are so grateful that you have made this planet for us. It's a great one. We wouldn't trade it in for any of the alternatives. This is a planet that was perfectly prepared for us, from the seasons to the weather to the food to the air to the water – everything is tailor made so we could live.

And God, even as Romans 8 says, "Under the strain of the curse, it's still beautiful." We long for the day when it is liberated from the bondage of sin, brought forth into its glorious perfection so we might see it as it originally was.

And Lord God, in the meantime, we thank you for your Word. That you reveal to us things that we could not know through speculation, like where we come from, where we are going, or why we are here.

God, thank you so much that you speak to us. I pray that we would hear you and respond in obedience as creation did, leaping to life as part of your creation, Lord God, responding with fruitfulness as a blessed people.

And God, as we go into our time of worship, our tithes, our offerings, our song, our sin, our hopes, our dreams, our fears – Lord God, may you send your Spirit into this room, as you sent your Spirit in the days of creation, to fill us. To make us new creations. To shape us and perfect us into the people that you seek for us to be, so that one day, at the end, when all is said and done, we enter into that great new creation and we see the Lord Jesus Christ face to face, we will hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant," just as creation was declared good in Genesis 1.

God, we love you. We now do that for which we were made. We worship you. Amen.