

SERMON NOTES
Genesis 1-3
“Foundations of Our Christian Faith”

Intro:

- Did dinosaurs live tens of millions of years before humans – or did dinosaurs and humans co-exist 6000 years ago?
- *What does the Bible say?*

- NOTHING
- We are asking questions that the Bible simply does not answer

- *I have read 100 pages of commentaries on Genesis 1-3 written by the early church fathers – and the subject of dinosaurs or the age of the earth doesn't even come up because it is not addressed in the biblical text*
- Those are questions that have only been discussed in reaction to Darwinian evolutionary theory in the past 150 years
- *Genesis was not written to settle those kinds of questions*
- There is no biblical doctrine of dinosaurs that Christians need to defend or that non-Christians need to believe in order to become Christians

- **Genesis was written with much more significant questions in mind:**
- *Where did the universe come from? How did life originate? Does God exist? Does human existence have meaning and purpose? Does all human life have intrinsic worth and dignity? Who decides what is right or wrong behavior? What is wrong with the world? What is the solution to what is wrong? What is our view of sexuality and marriage? What is our responsibility toward animals and the environment? Why do bad things sometimes happen to good people?*

- All of these questions – and more – have to do with a person's worldview
- *A worldview is a framework of beliefs and ideas and values and assumptions that guides how we interpret the world and interact with it*

- Until recently, the predominant worldview of most Americans was deeply rooted in a Judeo-Christian foundation from the Bible
- *Those days are over*

- Many people today have hybrid worldviews patched together from many different -- and often conflicting -- sources

- *A little bit of New Age Hinduism mixed with a little bit of moral relativism mixed with a little bit of Darwinian evolution mixed with a little bit of hip-hop culture and either secular liberalism or religious conservatism, combined with a dash of Christianity and a generous dose of provincial self-centeredness*
- A worldview is like a roadmap – it can tell you where you have come from and where you are now and where you are heading
- *You can get really lost following a faulty worldview map*
- There is only one Being who can look at the whole world with perfect knowledge of where we came from, how we got here, why we are here, how we should live, where we are heading, what human nature is like, what is true and false – what is right and wrong, and how we can attain eternal life
- *No human intelligence can figure all of that out – only the Creator God can give us a worldview that corresponds perfectly to reality*
- *That worldview is revealed in the Bible – and the essential pillars for a true worldview come from the beginning chapters of the Bible – Genesis 1-3*

I. WHERE DID EVERYTHING COME FROM?

- ***In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth***
- According to the Bible, heaven and earth have NOT existed from all eternity, but had a beginning – being created by God
- Until fairly recently, the predominant scientific view of the world postulated that the universe was eternal – that the universe had no beginning – that the universe has always existed in a steady state similar to what we see today
- *The theory of an eternal, unchanging universe was blown out of the water in the early part of the 20th century*
- Today, modern astronomy and astrophysics have virtually proved the premise that the universe had a beginning
- *And why is that such an important fact?*
- ***There is a direct connection between the universe's beginning and the existence of God***
- One of the basic and most powerful arguments for the existence of God is known as *The Kalam cosmological argument for God's existence:*

- It consists of two basic premises and a logical conclusion:
- Premise One: *Whatever begins to exist has a cause*
- Premise Two: *The universe had a beginning*
- Conclusion One: *Therefore, the universe has a cause*
- Conclusion Two: *The cause of space and time and matter and energy must be Uncaused, Immaterial, Eternal, Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Self-existing – in other words, God*
- The Bible has always taught – and science has now conclusively proved – that the universe had a beginning at some specific point in the past
- **The Bible does not give the age or size or dimensions of the universe**
- Now, biblical data does enable us to suggest an approximate time period for the creation of Adam and Eve – a few thousand years ago
- *But the Bible does not allow us to date the creation of the heavens and the earth in verse one nor the length of time the earth was formless and void in verse 2*
- The Bible does not require us to link belief in a Creator with a certain age of the universe or the earth
- ***The Bible simply tells us that the universe had a beginning – that God is the Cause of that beginning – and that the universe was NOT initially created in fully developed, fully functioning form – (the earth was formless and empty and dark)***
- Scientific evidence supports all of that
- Once you have proven that the universe has a cause of its existence, it becomes virtually impossible to deny that Cause must be an uncreated, eternal Spirit Being known as God
- The Greeks called that Mind behind the design of the universe ***The Logos***
- *Logos is the term John used in John 1 of The Word-made-flesh, Jesus Christ:*

John 1:1 - 3 (NIV) ¹In the beginning was the Word (Logos / Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

- *Where did everything come from? From the creative activity of the Word of God*

II. DOES THE UNIVERSE HAVE PURPOSE?

- Dr. Jacques Monod (French scientist & Nobel prize winner):

“Chance alone is at the source of all creation, pure chance, absolutely free but blind, at the very root of this stupendous edifice of evolution.

--This central concept of modern biology is no longer one among other possible or even conceivable hypotheses. It is the sole conceivable hypothesis. And nothing warrants the supposition or the hope that on this score our position is likely ever to be revised.”

--well, at least he’s open-minded

- **Chance, blind chance, is the reason for everything?**

--Who can actually live that way?

--If true, then there is no meaning or purpose to life // man is nothing special in the universe and there is no such thing as personality or love or beauty or design // there can be no such thing as right and wrong – or good or evil -- or morality or social justice or truth // there can be no life after death // there is no rational basis for any type of religious faith or belief in a higher power // there is no rational basis for hope of a better future

--by definition, chance is random // impersonal // purposeless

-our existence is a fluke rather than a planned outcome - and there is no more significance to our existence than there is to the existence of tadpoles or bats

The 1995 official Position Statement of the American National Association of Biology Teachers:

“The diversity of life on earth is the outcome of evolution: an unsupervised, impersonal, unpredictable and natural process of temporal descent with genetic modification that is affected by natural selection, chance, historical contingencies and changing environments.”

-Or, in the words of the famous evolutionist George Gaylord Simpson: ***“Man is the result of a purposeless and natural process that did not have him in mind.”***

- Thankfully, there is a rational alternative to that depressing view: ***that we are the result of the purposeful and loving and creative activity of God who made us for a love relationship with Himself***
- The main problem with Darwinian evolutionary theory is not the idea of natural selection or changes within species over time
- *I saw a fascinating show on Nova the other night about Darwin and natural selection and DNA and something recently discovered in DNA called switches that can activate or de-activate genetic traits*
- The scientists who study DNA and genetic variations and switches are simply discovering the handiwork of the Creator whether they believe in God or not

- *To say that natural selection and genetic processes are random and purposeless is a philosophical opinion, not a scientific finding*
- The idea of natural selection itself is not a threat to belief in a Creator God
- *Nor is the idea of life being formed through a process that science can explain*
- **Is the birth of a baby a miracle of God?**
- ***Absolutely***
- **Does the miracle of life occur instantaneously or over time?**
- ***Usually about 9 months***
- **Is the process of fertilization and implantation and growth and development of the embryo and fetus a complete mystery – or can scientists and doctors explain much of how the process works?**
- ***Much can be explained scientifically***
- **Does that mean that God is not involved in the process of forming the baby in the womb?**
- ***Absolutely not!***
- **The world does not run on its own**
- ***The universe exists and life continues moment by moment only because of the creative and preserving and governing activity of God***
- **It is NOT the case that God created the world a long time ago and set up natural laws that are self-sustaining so that nature now operates on its own according to these laws that God established**
- ***Without God’s ongoing involvement in what we call natural processes – everything would cease to exist!***
- **We must be careful not to turn God into a “God of the gaps” whose activity is present only in what science cannot explain**
- ***God is actively involved in all natural processes as well as in what we would call miracles or supernatural activity***
- ***In addition to a serious lack of scientific evidence at some points, the main problem with Darwinian evolutionary theory is that it is presented as an undirected process occurring apart from design or purpose or intervention by a divine Creator***
- **When God says in verses 11 & 20 & 24 “Let the land produce vegetation or let the waters teem with living creatures and fish or let the land produce living creatures and animals” – that does not imply that the sea or the earth is able to give life on its own power – rather God is the source of all life and God gives to the sea and the earth the power to be fruitful**

- **Genesis 1 tells the story of God creating the heavens and the earth out of nothing by the power of His word – and of God giving form and function and purpose to what He had made**
- Genesis 1 shows God bringing order to the cosmos – *prior to Day One the earth was formless and void – non-functional* – by the end of Day Six, God looks with satisfaction upon an ordered, purposeful cosmos that is functioning as designed and is providing habitat for the living creatures God has made
- *God's creative activity is described in terms of how the people of that day understood the universe*
- God did not give special scientific revelation to the biblical authors
- *Moses would not have known that the earth revolved around the sun or that there was another continent on the other side of the ocean*
- If Genesis 1 had been written according to 21st century scientific understanding of the universe, the Bible would have been unintelligible to people living prior to the time of Copernicus and Galileo
- *And much of our 21st century science will be obsolete by the year 2300*
- Genesis is not written as a scientific textbook
- **Rather Genesis 1 & 2 were written to show that God made everything just right and He set everything up to function properly within His purposes**
- *The structure and order of the heavens and the earth and all living creatures are not due to blind, purposeless chance – but rather are due to the purposeful and brilliant design of our Creator*

III. WHAT IS MAN?

- **What is man?**
- **According to Darwinian evolution, Homo Sapiens have no special dignity or moral status above that of any other animal species**
- *If you just traced your ancestry back far enough – according to Darwinian evolution -- you would find not only Germans or Swedes, but also more distant cousins such as orangutans, tigers, cows, dolphins, whales, bats and FISH*
- *Many people today get confused as to whether we are nothing more than animals or whether we are gods – or both*
- **According to a biblical worldview, human beings are neither gods nor animals – we are special creatures uniquely created in the image of God**

- Humans are the end goal that God had in mind when He created the heavens and the earth and the sea creatures and land animals
- *God's creative activity in Genesis 1 climaxes with the creation of man – and Genesis 2 fleshes out some of the details of God creating Adam and Eve*
- ***Humans are the crowning glory of God's creative work***
- *We have been created to relate to God in a way that no other animals are capable of*
- Indeed, God appointed us to rule over all other earthly creatures

Genesis 1:26 - 28 (NIV) ²⁶Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Evolutionists say that we are made in the image and likeness of apes

- **The Bible says that we are made in the image and likeness of God**
- God did not merely say: *“Let there be humans”* – but rather:
- *“Let us make man in our image”*
- ***This dignity belongs to every human being by virtue of being human***
- This dignity belongs to the unborn child in the womb // this dignity belongs to the Alzheimer's patient in the nursing home // this dignity belongs to those who are disabled // this dignity belongs to the poor and homeless and to all races
- What is it that makes humans unique among all of God's creatures?
- *Our bodies are made of the same chemicals and material substances as the animals – from the dust of the earth -- the Bible says so*
- So it is not at all surprising that scientists would discover similarities in physical structures and DNA between humans and other animals
- *That does not prove that we are evolved from apes or fish*
- Yet with all of our structural and genetic similarities to chimpanzees, for example – *how is it that chimpanzees cannot do scientific research or compose music or paint a landscape or write a poem or write a software program or learn multiple languages or do algebra or geometry?*

- **How is it that in millions of years of evolving – no other species has ever come close to producing a Shakespeare or a Euclid or an Einstein or a Beethoven or a Michelangelo or an Aquinas or even a Michael Jackson?**
- *Or even ordinary creatures like us who can enjoy such masterpieces even though we cannot create them?*
- And what is the explanation for the fact that all human cultures have religious beliefs and practices – *while no other species – past or present – has ever engaged in any religious practices?*
- **Did our branch of the tree experience a religion gene mutation?**
- *The Lord made man in the image of the Lord*
- **We reflect in human form many of the invisible attributes of the invisible Creator -- Intelligence // Creativity // Spirituality // Capacity to Love and be loved // Appreciation of Beauty // Rationality // Sociability // Linguistic ability // Inquisitive Mind // Capacity for compassion and empathy // Capacity for making moral choices // Desire to search for truth and meaning and purpose in life**
- **Did you ever stop to think that something as simple as caring for a pet reflects your uniqueness as created in God's image?**
- I mean: *did you ever see a dog walking a pet rabbit – or did you ever hear of a chimp taking care of a pet hamster or turtle or goldfish?*
- **Caring for children or the elderly // caring for orphans and widows // caring for the earth and its rivers and oceans // caring for the poor and needy // caring for the sick and dying // caring for the needs of pets and livestock – Not just our religious activities and beliefs – but learning // teaching // designing & making things // singing or listening to music // any scientific or mathematic or artistic activity // observing nature // trying a new recipe // showing love to your children -- All are expressions of our humanity as created in God's image and have meaning and purpose as part of His design and plan for us**

IV. WHAT IS MARRIAGE?

- **We live in a day where there is great controversy and debate over the very definition of marriage**

-many people today would dispute a biblical principle that was widely accepted as self-evident just 30 or 40 years ago - namely, that the foundation for family life is the marriage of a man and a woman

-they would argue that marriage is not required or necessarily even helpful in forming a family and raising children / and that limiting the concept of marriage to the union of one man and one woman is restrictive, narrow-minded, judgmental, intolerant & bigoted

--but if marriage is not the union of one man and one woman – then what is it?

--if marriage can be the union of two men or two women – then why not also the union of three women – or a man and four women – or two men, a woman, and a teenage boy – or whatever any group of consenting individuals wants?

- *Where do we go for answers?*
- When Jesus was questioned by some Pharisees seeking to test and entrap him on the sensitive and controversial subject of divorce and remarriage – *Jesus went back to Genesis to present God’s original design and purpose for marriage*

Matthew 19:4-6 ⁴ **“Haven’t you read,”** he replied, **“that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’** ⁵ **and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’** ⁶ **‘So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.’”**

- *The Christian definition of marriage is not based on prejudice or mean-spiritedness or on some obscure text in Leviticus*
--The Christian definition of marriage is based on the clear teaching of Jesus – rooted in the Creation account in Genesis
--it is there, Jesus says, that we discover God’s purpose for marriage
- *The Creator made us male and female – equal in dignity but with gender differences*

Both males and females are necessary to fulfill God’s purpose in creating mankind
-neither males nor females fully and completely reflect the image of God by themselves - both are necessary

-and neither males nor females can by themselves fulfill God’s purpose of reproducing and filling the earth by themselves - both are necessary

Genesis 2:18 ¹⁸ The LORD God said, **“It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”**

Up till now, everything God had made was pronounced good

-but even though man was surrounded by a perfect environment and was given good work to do, his aloneness was not good

God said: “It is not good for the man to be alone.”

-So God made a helper suitable for him

-God provided man with a female companion and partner and lover

This female helper is described as being a “helper suitable or fit for him”

-it means one corresponding to him in dignity and eminence, yet complementary rather than identical to him

- The story is told that one day God was talking with Adam and told him that he wanted to make a beautiful helpmate for him that was loving, kind, obedient, intelligent and bright, but it would cost Adam an arm, a leg, part of his hip, and one eye.

-Adam responded: “What can I get for just a rib?”

- The Creator made male from the dust of the ground and made female from the flesh of the male – they are of one nature

As Matthew Henry writes: *“Eve was made by God not out of Adam’s head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of Adam’s side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be loved.”*

Nothing could make clearer the equality and complementarity of the sexes.

-and how much this truth needs to be reasserted today

-there is no basis here for the assertion of female inferiority and male supremacy

-nor, as some feminists assert, is there any basis for female independence - as if men were not needed at all

-nor, as some say, is there any basis for asserting that there are no significant differences between men and women

-nor, as some gay activists assert, is there any basis for declaring that same-sex relationships fulfill the same purpose in God’s plan as opposite-sex relationships

The Bible clearly teaches that all human beings are either male or female - and each sex has its own distinct characteristics - physically & emotionally

--Male body parts are not interchangeable with female body parts / male bodies are complementary to female bodies / and likewise, male hormones and emotions are complementary to female hormones and emotions

To meet Adam’s needs for intimacy and oneness, God did not bring to Adam another man or a child or an animal - but a woman

Eve was literally *well-built*, and I suspect Adam was both impressed & aroused

--And the delight of vs. 23 is followed immediately by these words in

Genesis 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

For the purpose of a man and a woman becoming one flesh, God instituted marriage

- John Stott: *“Heterosexual intercourse in marriage is more than a union – it is a kind of reunion. It is the union of two persons who originally were one, were then separated from each other, and now in the sexual encounter of marriage come together again...”*
- ***Marriage is the uniting of male and female – marital intercourse is the reunion of male and female flesh – for woman was taken out of man – flesh of his flesh --and when marriage is consummated in sexual intercourse, the two – man and woman – become one flesh as in the beginning***

V. WHAT WENT WRONG AND WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

- *The world was not always as it is now*
- **The world was created good – but has since been corrupted by sin and death and evil**
- God created humans as free, rational beings capable of making moral choices
- *The well-being of the human race and the well-being of all of earth’s creatures put under man’s stewardship depended on man’s obedience to God’s will*
- ***The disobedience of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 changed everything***
- **God’s image in man has been badly marred by human sin**
- *The glorious man and woman God created in the Garden of Eden are hardly recognizable in all of us today who have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*
- **And all of creation now suffers bondage to decay and corruption and pollution and violence and poverty and death**
- *What went wrong? Adam and Eve wanted to become like gods – deciding good and evil for themselves apart from God’s will*
- ***Man sinned, and death and evil and suffering entered the world***

- **What is the solution?**
- ***Jesus Christ is the Word of God by which all things were made – and He became flesh in Bethlehem 2000 years ago – the visible image of the invisible God***
- **Jesus Christ is called the Second Adam – He is the True Man – the True Image and Likeness of God**
- *God created Adam in His image to reflect His likeness and to rule over His creation*
- Adam sinned and failed to fulfill that calling
- *Adam rebelled against God’s authority and then himself became subject to the rule of sin, death and Satan*
- **Jesus Christ came to earth to restore us to a right relationship with God through His death on the Cross and to renew the image of God in us**
- ***Because Jesus is risen from the dead – He is able to make us spiritually alive as His Own Spirit comes to live within us to give us a new life as new creations – born again to become like God in true righteousness and holiness – so that we can begin to fulfill our calling as image-bearers to reflect the likeness of God***
- *Jesus release the power of His resurrection life into His followers and draws us into His divine life – sharing in His nature to reflect the likeness of God as we live in obedience to the will of God*
- **We are born as humans created in the image of God – but we can reflect the likeness of God only by means of the new birth and the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit**
- **And One day – at the Second Coming of Christ -- God will make everything new**
- **All of creation will be set free from bondage to decay and corruption and death – all of creation will be restored to its original beauty and goodness**
- ***And the children of God in Christ will become fully human and Christ-like and will fulfill all of God’s purposes in creating humanity in the first place***
- **How about you?**
- ***Have you asked Jesus Christ to come into your life to transform you into His image and likeness?***
- ***Are your beliefs and values and priorities consistent with these core truths of a biblical worldview according to the book of Genesis?***
- **Where do you need to make some adjustments?**

Prayer // Hymn # 203 “And Can It Be?”