

Meet Your Maker

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[0 : 0 0] um cool we're gonna um look to god's word so reading this evening comes from genesis chapter one verses one to twenty five and it's on page three which is actually quite a few pages in so i'll give you some time to find that um okay genesis one in the beginning god created heavens and the earth now the earth was formless and empty darkness was over the surface of the deep and the spirit of god was hovering over the waters and god said let there be light and there was light god saw that the light was good and he separated the light from the darkness god called the light day and the darkness he called night and there was evening and there was morning the first day and god said let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water so god made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it and it was so god called the vault sky and there was evening and there was morning the second day and god said let the water under the sky be gathered to one place and let dry ground appear and it was so god called the dry ground land and the gathered waters he called seas and god saw that it was good then god said let the land produce vegetation seed bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruits with seed in it according to their various kinds and it was so the land produced vegetation plants bearing seed according to their kinds and the trees bearing fruit with seeds in it according to their kinds and god saw that it was good and there was evening and there was morning the third day and god said let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times the days and years and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth and it was so god made two great lights the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night he also made the stars god set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth to govern the day and the night and to separate light from darkness and god saw that it was good and there was evening and there was morning the fourth day and god said let the water team with living creatures and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky so god created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teams and that moves about in it according to their kinds and every winged bird according to its kind and god saw that it was good god blessed them and said be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas and let the birds increase on the earth and there was evening and there was morning the fifth day and god said that the land produced living creatures according to their kinds the livestock the creatures that move along the ground and wild animals each according to its kind and it was so god made the wild animals according to their kinds the livestock according to their kinds and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds and god saw that it was good and this is the word of the Lord.

Almost. Right, great. Welcome to St. Silas. What a joy to see you all. My name's James. I'm on the staff team here and I'm delighted to be here and I'm delighted that you guys are here tonight.

If you were here last Sunday, we kicked off a new series looking at Genesis 1-4 entitled The First Chapters of Everything. You should find a flower on your seat that will let you know where we're going and they'll give you a bit of a steer so you can go to the talks you want to and drop out from the ones that you don't.

Obviously, you'll want to be here for all of them. We're working through this book. This book's at the back. If you want to buy that and get a sneak peek, it's a fiver. You can just put your money in the money pot at the back.

Honesty box there. And it's really helpful and it will be really helpful for you as you think through Genesis 1-4 which has to say so much about our world, about who we are and everything that makes us human.

[4 : 3 8] But before we continue, let me pray for us as we begin. Our Father, we are so grateful to live in your world.

We are so grateful to have you as our good creator that you made everything and that you alone are God and that you've spoken to us clearly.

Please help us to hear from what you have to say to us tonight and may anything that I say that's unhelpful, may that be forgotten. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Great. You'll be helped by having your Bible open and when we come to Genesis 1-4, we read it and we have lots of expectations and questions over the passage.

We might be thinking what's going on in these verses and we might think that we might bring questions of what and how of creation.

[5 : 43] But if we look at it, how it's written, we see that it's very carefully constructed and we see that Moses, the author of it, wants us to see rather than the what and the how but the who of it, who he is describing here.

And we just get a taste of that. So, for example, the days, what days is he talking about there? And we know it doesn't mean a 24-hour period there because verse 4, on the fourth day, he makes the sun and the moon.

So, it's very hard, easy for us to get caught up in our questions without thinking about what Moses, the author, wants us to see here. So, I've got a little skit here.

And so, when we come to Genesis, we need to be aware of whose eyes are we reading it with. So, I've got a picture there. What do you see? What do you see? First impression, first one on the right. A tree. Someone on the left. A river. Yes. Does anyone see a gorilla? Yes. Yes. So, we all see the picture slightly differently.

[6 : 53] And the perspective that we come to the picture and come to these passages in Genesis will determine how we understand and read them. And the author wants us to read Genesis and see that God is awesome and that He is there to be worshipped and adored and loved.

He wants us to believe in God. And so, Hebrews, the book of Hebrews comments on these verses, on these beginning chapters, and the author there says, by faith, by belief, we understand that the universe is formed at God's command.

And so, that what is seen was made out of what, what is seen was not made out of what was visible. And so, when we come to these verses, we need to suspend our disbelief for a second. We need to view them with the eyes of someone who has faith and view them particularly from God's perspective. And when we do that, very quickly, it becomes apparent who the hero in the story is here.

See, the hero is not myself and my questions over creation and that kind of stuff. But the hero that Moses wants us to see here is, did you spot? Comes up, the subject of two out of three verses in the section.

[8 : 13] The hero is God. He wants us to see that God is the hero and that God has made everything. It's all about God and who He is.

And so, the question that we need to ask when we come to this is, who is God? How can I know Him? What does He want me to know? How does He want me to live life?

How does He want to grow in that? And so, that was our first point, that God is there. And so, what we're going to do for the rest of this evening's talk, we're going to work through some points that we are made aware of about who God is.

We're going to learn a bit about who God is. And so, the first thing, God is there, the first thing we see is that God is personal. I wonder if you notice that in this section.

We see God speaking. He sees. He acts. He names things. He blesses things. He does all the things that we might expect to do on a day-to-day basis.

[9 : 17] God is personal. And that, sometimes we think of God as a force, a benign force that is just out there. But Moses wants us to understand that God is a person.

And that He has views on things. He has, He expresses Himself. And He's got a way that we should live.

And so, Francis Schaeffer, who is a Christian theologian, a Christian apologist, he wrote, if anything, God is at least personal. And we see that in these opening verses of Genesis.

And so, when we come to God, we should think that because He's a person and He has a personality, He has personhood, we can't ignore Him.

We can't put Him at arm's distance as a benign force over there. He wants to speak to us. He wants to communicate. He wants to engage with us and engage with our lives.

[10:22] But secondly, we must be wary about making Him a person like us. And we'll think a bit more about that later. And so, we mustn't make Him in our image.

But we must remember that He is, He's got His own personhood, His own personality. And so, we must be wary of not keeping Him at arm's distance, but we mustn't draw Him too close and make Him exactly like us.

The next thing that we see there is He is a God who speaks. I wonder if you noticed that. So, verse 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 29. And He said, God has spoken clearly and loudly and audibly. He is there. He's got personality. He's personal. And He speaks. He's communicated to us. He's got things that He wants us to know and to understand and that Moses is conveying to us here. Just notice there how God acts in the world. I wonder if you picked that up. He acts in the world by speaking. His words are His actions in the world.

[11:37] So, sometimes, when I say stuff, I don't really mean it and I don't expect anything to happen. But when God speaks, stuff happens.

So, we might think, if I were God, we might be someone here who's got questions about the Christian faith and we might think, if I were God, I would make myself more clear to the world. I'd do something spectacular. And God's response is, if I were you, I would pay more close attention to my words and then you will see me act.

You'll see me act in how I change hearts and how I change lives and how I change cultures and society. We've got a taste of that tonight.

We're a very diverse group and we've all got our own stories of how, as we've read God's Word and gotten to know God, He has touched our lives and He has changed our hearts and our lives.

[12:33] And you see this, and the most radical thing that we can do is to simply take God at His Word and to listen to Him in all we think and do and say.

And so you see that with children. What's the best way that you can affect a child's life, change them for the future? It's not, it's simply what you say to them, what you instruct them with, how you educate them and bring them up, how you tell them what's important to life.

It's your words that will affect them more than anything else. And so the great confidence that we have here is that God does speak. We can know Him.

He's spoken to us. We see Him speaking in these opening chapters, acting, creating the world simply by His Word. He is not unknowable. And so God is there.

He's the hero. God is a person. He's personal. God speaks. But just notice there in these opening verses, He's personal, but He's also nothing like us at all.

[13:46] In a word, I've struggled for a word here, but the word I've gone for is absolute. And by there, I mean He's in charge. He's sovereign. He rules everything. He's completely different to everything that we are.

And we see this by where we read, and God saw, and then we notice the thing that He made, whatever that was. It was good. And then it was very good.

And so when God makes things, when He creates things in these opening verses, they turn out exactly as He wants them. He's perfect in His execution of things and how He does things well. And so often when I'm at home and I've been doing a bit of DIY at home, I've discovered I'm a lot better at breaking things down than building things up again. So I do the fun bits and then I kind of like get bored of it.

But when I do try and build something and I imagine what it's going to be, I might bake a cake or something, I put icing on it. Invariably, it turns out nothing like I want it to. So maybe you've watched that TV show, Nailed It, where they try to build those elaborate cakes and it always turns out nothing like the cake they're intending to build it.

[15:03] But that's not true of God. When He makes it, it's perfect. It comes out perfect every time. And so we read, and God said, and it was so, repeated time and time again.

He does the most amazing things here. And He says it, and it happens. He creates things out of nothing by His Word.

He's completely different to us. When He acts, it gets done perfectly. He creates perfectly. And His creation is awesome. It's wonderful, isn't it?

The things that God makes that are so wonderful and wondrous for us to imagine. So I've got some slides there. I wonder if you've seen shooting stars.

Growing up, I used to go up to the Drakensberg in South Africa and see the most amazing shooting stars. And maybe you've seen the Perseid meteor showers in March. I think they are.

[15:59] And it's beautiful. It's amazing. Who would have thought of that? It's brilliant. One of the old, early presidents of South Africa describes how he sat on a hill and he watched a herd of springboks go past, which is a buck, for two hours, two and a half hours.

This huge, uncountable, millions upon millions of these bucks. Amazing. Something that you'll never see today. Completely unheard of. Amazing. And that's what God made.

Created. Beautiful. Maybe you've been to the coast. You've gone to Dunbar or to Tyree or somewhere like that. And you've gone swimming or you've camped there and you've seen the phosphorescence in the night, in the water.

And the water teeming with living things as we read about in those verses 20, 21 there. Let the water teem with living creatures. We see these tiny little bugs there that make it glow.

And it's absolutely amazing. And so when I create things, they often don't turn out as expected. But when God creates things, He does it perfectly, absolutely, with total sovereignty and total control.

[17:14] He does it in a way that we could never act or imagine. And so, just stepping back slightly, we've seen that God is personal and sometimes we make the mistake of thinking He's just like us.

But then other times we overemphasize His absoluteness, His sovereignty, His controlness, and we think that He's unknowable and so we keep Him at arm's distance.

But Genesis won't let us do that. He shows us this God who, Moses shows us a God who speaks to us, communicates to us, but who at the same time is completely different to us.

He's eternal. We are for a moment and then we pass away. He created everything out of nothing.

He's uncreated, whereas we are creatures and we create things out of mud and sticks and iron and that kind of stuff.

He's completely in a different category or realm to us. So, there was a famous philosopher, a French philosopher, who taught us that everything's relative.

[18:26] That was his big idea, Derrida. But the one big thing he said about God that's not often quoted about him, he said, if God is there, because he didn't believe in God, He is absolute.

And the Bible that we meet, the God that we meet in Genesis, is a God who is absolute, who's totally in control. And so, what might that work out for us as we come to the Bible, as we read the Scriptures?

Well, when we read of the miracles in the Gospels, we realize that God can do that because He's in a different category, He's in a different realm.

When we consider the Scriptures and we think about, can God speak clearly? Can I trust the Bible? Well, because God is different to us and absolute, we know that He can speak clearly.

We can trust what He's saying. He is able, because He's God, to communicate clearly to us. And then also, when we think that He's horrendous, like powerful, massively powerful, we can trust that He's able to use that power perfectly in a way that's good and caring and is loving.

[19:46] He's the only one who can yield power absolutely perfectly. So, we've seen that He's the God who's there, He's the God who's personal, He's the God who speaks, He's the God who is absolute.

And then Moses, one of the big things that Moses wants us to see in this chapter is that God is who is the only God. There are no other gods beside Him.

And so, by Moses saying here, the author there, he says God created everything. He's saying He created the big things, He created the small things, He created everything.

He is saying that God is the only God and He is the God of everything. There are no other gods besides Him. There are no little gods somewhere else.

He's the only God of the universe who created everything and rules everything. and there's no ambiguity about Him. He's not in a struggle with darkness or, so there's not a duality like a struggle going on there.

[20:53] There is God in charge of everything who's created everything and who rules it. And that He alone is to be worshipped and adored as creator.

So in those days they had lots of little gods and the idea was that what people used to think was God's creator different realms. So there was the little sea God who made the sea God and there was the little land God who made the land God and then there was the sun God and the moon God

and all the other millions of gods.

But Moses says there is one God who created everything and who is worthy to be adored. We might not have those little gods there but we do have our own little gods that we might worship and adore in our own ways.

So we think of the God of our studies. If I serve at the altar of these studies then I'll get a good grade and a good job and my life will go brilliantly.

Or we think of the God of holidays and experiences and relaxation. If I have a good life being comfortable trying to make my life as comfortable as possible if I make sure I book my holidays early then life is going to go well and then I'll feel satisfied and happy.

[22 : 14] Or we think of the God of relationships and we think if I could meet that special person whoever it may be then my life will go brilliantly and I won't have to worry.

And we worship those little gods instead of worshipping the God who is there who's the real hero that Moses wants us to understand and wants us to meet in these opening chapters of Genesis. And he is the only God that will bring order out of the chaos and darkness in our lives. And so when we worship those little gods we end up being sorely disappointed because they don't satisfy because they aren't God.

They aren't the God of Genesis 1 who made anything. But rather instead we should turn to and trust the God who is the Son the God who is the Son.

And so in verse 2 Moses tells us the author there he describes the opening chapters the opening of creation and how it was now the earth was formless and empty and darkness was over the surface of the deep and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

[23 : 29] And it's formless and it's empty it's wild it's chaotic and it's a dark place. Then God comes into it and he speaks he says let there be light verse 3 and there was light.

And so in our own lives when we think of the chaos and the darkness and the chaos there the apostle Paul goes to these verses at the start of the Bible and he says in the same way when we turn and trust Jesus here's that light that speaks into the chaos and darkness and struggles that we have in our lives however big and scary they might be.

So in 2 Corinthians 4 verse 6 Paul writes for God who said let light shine out of darkness made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Jesus.

And so when we go to Jesus and we trust him and who created all things so he was with God when he made all these things right at the start he was the wisdom of God there and when we trust Jesus so Jesus will order and create calmness in our lives and we'll grow in trust and obedience and dependence on him.

And whenever we've strayed from God's ways whenever we've rejected him the promise of the Bible is that Jesus died in our place for our sins to bring us to know God to know this God who's the great God who created everything and who is worthy to be worshipped and adored.

[25 : 19] Great. Let's close and pray and then we'll head over to the Lord's Supper after this but let me close and pray for us. So Heavenly Father we pray that we would trust and know that you alone are our God that there are no other gods beside you that you alone are worthy to be worshipped that you created all things that you created order where there was chaos and darkness help us to turn to you in your Son help us to trust Jesus day by day to bring our hardships our sufferings our sinfulness to him in lots of ways help us as we drink drink his blood and eat his flesh in the bread and the wine and may that be a sign and a remembrance to us of all that Christ went through on our behalf to bring us to know you and to be loved and adored by you.

Please help us to worship you as we share this communion this Lord's Supper now in Jesus name Amen.