

XXXIII. Timeless Truth for Timely Topics in Biblical Perspective

What Does the Bible Say?

“Developing a Christian Mind, Part 3”

Genesis 1 and 2

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I'd like to start by looking at Psalm 19:1–6 which says [1] *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. [2] Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. [3] There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. [4] Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, [5] which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. [6] Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.*

This is our third study in developing a Christian mind. What does the Bible say about developing a Christian mind? This is so important that my own conversion was directly related to a man who had encountered a very difficult situation with the death of his wife. His intentional interpreting of it, not to deny his grief but to inform his grief, in a God-centered, Christ-honoring, Bible believing, Spirit-filled way was actually used for my conversion. I had not seen people who saw life that way, with such clarity and that was one of the things that God used most profoundly for me to be converted. This Christian mind declares how we live our life in and for Christ.

So I want to remind you of this statement that is guiding us through these five studies or so, that we're doing in developing a Christian mind. The statement is to live a faithful and effective Christian life style, a Christian must develop a Christ-centered, Bible framed, Spirit-filled life view, propelled by a life-consuming life love with all of it all being saturated by persistent prayer. In other words, the love of Christ constrains us and leads us to a life view that informs our lifestyle. We are led by the Spirit to be guided by His Word as we see life, interpret life and make decisions in life.

The life view answers four framing questions. Why is there something rather than nothing? Why are some things right and some things wrong? What things are right and what things are wrong? Who or what determines the things that are right and the things that are wrong? As you answer these four questions and grow in your Christian world and life view, it is actually filling in a number of things; theology – who is God, anthropology – who is man. John 17:3 says [3] *And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.* Theology is the knowledge of God. When you know who God is now you begin to know who man is because we are made in His image – anthropology. So what is a Biblical theology and a Biblical anthropology?

Then there is epistemology which means how we know what is true. How can we know that what we know is something we ought to know, because it is true? Other things are false. That leads us to soteriology and that means the doctrine of salvation. How can man made in the image of God as we learned the truth of what sin is and does, knowing wrong, be right with God? That leads us ultimately to eschatology – where is everything headed? Where is it all going in the sovereign purposes of God? As we work our way through this world and life view those answers are going to start filling in. We start filling some things in as we move along in this study. This all has a personal impact on our life.

We not only had the four framing questions but we have four personal questions. Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? Basically there are two life views out there. There is a man-centered life view and a God-centered life view. The man-centered life view is the sovereign self where I will determine who I am, where I came from, why I'm here and where I'm going. We see it today with the absolute irrationality of how we declare what gender we want to be. The sovereign God has already declared what gender you are and that is obvious biologically, by DNA and there is a reason those two genders are there, because of who God is in creation and how He has made us to bear His image.

A dear friend reminded me of that in the humanist manifesto the number one article is atheistic Darwinian evolution. You have to destroy the doctrine of creation to believe this and you have to embrace the imbecility that nothing made something? Or that there was something and the something is eternal – time, space and matter. So it's not a Someone that is eternal but a something. Then you have to embrace the nonsensical notion that the something ordered itself into perfect order. Please tell me one time in all of history that something (that you don't know where it came from) ordered itself into something. It never orders itself. The second law of thermodynamics that always runs down and out and it doesn't run up. If you cut loose a rat on that piano keyboard I promise you it won't sound like a song. If you take pick up sticks and drop them they won't fall down in a particular order. If you take your watch apart, put it in your pocket and shake it, you'll never hear it tick. Those things just don't happen and that's why the doctrine of creation is absolutely crucial. Now why am I here and where am I going?

To understand this world and life view there are five things that are essential. One is creation and then you go to the fall. How did sin get here? Then you go to redemption. How can sin be defeated? How can men who are wrong with God be right with God? Then comes providence. How is a broken world sustained? Why doesn't it just fall apart? People who don't know the Lord and God's common grace is removed from them, what happens? They will fall apart. Our kids are growing up in a time where people are telling them if you can just be famous, wealthy and powerful you'll be alright. Go to the most famous, wealthy and powerful people and tell me about their lives. Go see their rate of suicide. Go see how much they spend on therapists who take their money but don't help them, because of their man-centered world and life view. Not only do our lives fall apart without the sustaining hand of God but the creation would fall apart without the sustaining hand of God. Then we go to the consummation and find out where it all is headed to. Is it moving toward something or are we just in circular existence? What goes around comes around. Or are we in a linear existence where there is a beginning and an end and the end is actually the beginning of a non-ending life. So how are we to live in light of that?

I believe of those five the most essential is creation. I know some of you are probably thinking it should be redemption/the Gospel. You wouldn't have a redemption without a creation. You wouldn't know that the Creator would get you right with Him if you didn't know the power of the Creator. So you have to start with creation. That is why the Bible starts with creation. It doesn't start with Romans 1:16 but with Genesis 1 and 2. God doesn't explain Himself, where He came from because God is and He explains where we came from. Then He tells us where sin came from and then where redemption comes from. Then He tells us where it is all headed in that one Book that has expanded into 65 more books – this glorious doctrine of creation.

That's why when we do our great creeds like the Nicene Creed or the Apostle's Creed we start with... I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. My world and life

view starts with the Triune God as my Creator. He is not only my Creator but He has created everything that is seen and unseen. It all exists because of Him. So the essential world and life view is creation, fall, redemption, providence and consummation and when you come to this essential element of the creation there are five essentials of this essential element that are non-negotiable. So what are they?

We just read in Psalm 19 that the creation shouts that there is a Creator. The voice of the Creator is seen in the creation. Day to day speech pours forth and every rising and setting sun declares who He is. Paul tells the church at Rome that the Creator has been revealed in the creation. We can even see His eternal power and Divine attributes in the creation but that we are also made in His image. Man suppresses the truth in unrighteousness, why? It is because of the fall. We will get to the fall but for now we will look at the creation itself.

The creation reveals God. God reveals Himself two ways. One is in general revelation which is in creation. Two is in special revelation and that's in His Word. Psalm 19 gives you the general revelation in the opening verses and then in the following verses it gives special revelation of how God reveals Himself in His Word. We start with how God reveals Himself in creation and then how He reveals Himself in His Word. What does the creation say about the Creator and creation, and then what does God say in His Word about the Creator and creation? We will do some selective reading by starting with Genesis 1.

Genesis 1:1–2 says [1] *In the beginning* (the start of time), *God created the heavens and the earth.* [2] *The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.* God made everything in and through His Son so we have the doctrine of the Trinity in its incipient form right here. There is God the Father who is Maker of heaven and earth. Everything is being made through the Son for in Him and for Him all things were made. Then there is the Spirit of God that is hovering over, superintending this creation. Then there are the six days of creation through the rest of the chapter.

Genesis 1:26–31–2:1–3 says [26] *Then God said, "Let us* (implies that God exists in plurality) *make man in our image, after our likeness* (He will make man singular with plurality as well). *And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

[27] *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.* (In other words, it requires both male and female to properly image the Triune God of glory.)

[28] *And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."* [29] *And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.* [30] *And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food."* *And it was so.* [31] *And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*

[2:1] *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.* [2] *And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from*

all his work that he had done. [3] So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

On the seventh day God does something different than on the other six days for He does something that sanctifies it. He blesses it so that it is not a work day but that it is a day of rest and renewal. So God has now made all that exists in the heavens and the earth.

The last thing He makes is man in His image and He gives man three tasks – have dominion over the creation, subdue (work) the creation and thirdly, be fruitful, multiply and fill it. On the man's first day he is to rest and it is declared holy, as he will enter into six days of labor after that day of rest.

Genesis 2:15–25 says [15] *The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. [16] And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, [17] but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*

[18] *Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” [19] Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. [20] The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. [21] So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. [22] And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. [23] Then the man said,*

*“This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man.”*

[24] *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. [25] And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.* There was no guilt or shame in this creation because there is no sin in God's created order.

This is not a second creation account for this is a focus upon the man and the woman and how God creates them. He creates the man from the dust of the ground and breathes into the man so that he becomes a living being. Then the man starts about his task which was to have dominion over the creatures. So he goes to work. He starts naming the creatures. When you name something you have authority over it. In baptism here that is why we have ‘father, name your child’ and then the father gives a blessing as well. To name shows authority and a name is to define. So man is God's vice regent over His creation and he has authority, but there is not a single one that can complete him even though it is not good that he is alone. That was the only thing God said was not good, for man to be alone. As the man is exercising dominion, no animal fits the man to join him in the task of having dominion, being fruitful and multiplying and subduing the creation and bringing order to it in the garden.

So God causes a sleep to fall upon him. Man who now is incapable of fulfilling his task alone, now from his side comes the reflection of –ish, the woman. He wakes up from his sleep and say ‘dating is over – wooman.’ As I have said before, she is not taken from his head for she is not over him and not taken from his feet for she is not under him. She is from his side and made to fit alongside of him. She is the helper, completer. She now bears the name of Jesus, the

Second Person of the Trinity, in the name of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said “When I go away I will send to you the other Helper.” The woman becomes the bearer of the work of the Spirit of God and the Son of God, alongside, the completer of the man. They are married and it is in that context of marriage that they are to enjoy the sacred gift of sexuality. Biologically, emotionally, spiritually they have now been made to be one. One plus one equals one as they leave and cleave together. Therefore out of that comes the blessing of procreation to be fruitful and multiply.

Now he has the completer. He can subdue the earth and go to work on it. Now he can have dominion for he has his co-laborer, his completer with him. Now they can fill the earth and obey the Lord but the Lord says “I will give everything you need to eat so there is a tree of life upon your obedience and there is a tree of good and evil that you are to stay away from. You are not to transgress My commandment.” He has given them three positive things to do and one negative thing. If you eat of that tree then death comes but if you obey comes life. God enters into covenant with Adam and his help mate. With Adam He enters into covenant with all of Adam’s seed that would come from him, the head of the human race. So this is the revelation of the doctrine of creation.

So what are some of the essentials that we see here? There are five essentials and the first thing to learn about creation is that it is Ex Nihilo which means out of nothing comes everything. So it’s not that nothing brings something or something brings something but it is Someone that brings something out of nothing. God by His spoken Word brings everything into creation and He does so in the span of these six days.

I do not believe that one of the essentials is that you have to hold to a seven day twenty four hour interpretation of this text. Now, having said that I actually do believe this. I am one of those existing Neanderthals that actually believe in a young earth and I believe there was a 24 hour period of creation but in Genesis 1-11 the word ‘day’ is used four different ways. When you deal with the text, I believe because of that, we have some freedom in terms of how we interpret that statement of ‘day.’ Is it a 12 hour period, a 24 hour period, a season or a designated era? All four of those ways are used in Genesis 1 through 11. Therefore I don’t believe I can demand that you have to adopt the young earth, seven days position. I think there is some freedom there and our denomination has affirmed that but you don’t have freedom in terms of where everything comes from. God speaks it into existence by His Word. Out of nothing came everything because of God who spoke it and when He did that means we hold to a historic Adam and Eve. Our original parents, Adam and Eve, existed. That is the human race.

This world and life view is so important to me. Right now in our denomination we are working through how we can address the issues of racial prejudices and any complicity we have had in the past to properly confess our sins in these matters. I think that is right and that we ought to do those things. We need to be sensitive to them and appropriately confess our sins. We have ministry of reconciliation but I do not believe we will ever get the answer to this issue until we first of all remember two things.

One, this imposition of racial categories is a Darwinian paradigm. It does not come from the Bible. The Bible does not have multiple races but it has one race called the human race, made in the image of God. Microevolution has produced color tents, facial and bodily features that are different but they are not different races. We have multi-ethnic and multi-nationalities but not multi-races. Until we get a Biblical world and life view I don’t think we’ll ever do enough to handle this thing.

Secondly, we need to realize that in Jesus Christ no matter what your ethnos or background we are one in Christ. So we have Adam as the originator of the human race and we have the Second Adam as the Originator of eternal race of His people from every tribe and nation who are one in Christ, with no hierarchical relationship. Those two things have to be realized and that's why world and life views are so important. So we have a historic Adam and Eve.

The third essential is that we have a covenant of creation. God made a covenant. A covenant is a superior entering into a contractual relationship with an inferior. That contractual relationship says here are the stipulations to the covenant with obedience here is the blessing and with disobedience here is the curse. God enters into a covenant with Adam with three stipulations – subdue the earth, be fruitful and multiply and have dominion/rule over the creation as My vice regent. Then He gives two other stipulations, one is positive and one is negative. I will give you the tree of life with a blessing upon your obedience but you must not disobey Me and eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil for that is transgress and sin will bring death. Adam is the mediator of that covenant. Obedience is life. God made him to live forever. I didn't make this body to wear out or this creation to wear out. I made it to be forever but if you disobey that will bring the curse of death with all of its brokenness, groanings and separations of death itself.

The fourth essential is that means it establishes the federal headship of Adam. In other words, Adam represents us. The Bible says, by a man came death because that man (Adam) brought sin. What does that mean about me? When Adam freely sinned in the sovereign plan of God, you did too. You were in Adam. You participated in that sin. When he sinned you sinned. The original sin was my sin as Adam sinned. We see an example of this in Neil Armstrong when he landed on the moon. When he came off the step onto the moon he said "This is one small step for man and one giant leap for mankind." Armstrong was representing all of humanity for when he landed on the moon all of humanity landed there too. So it is a leap forward for mankind. Then he did something else to further solidify our understanding. He went over and put a flag on the moon. When he landed there, commissioned as the representative of the U.S., every citizen landed there. He represented us and planted the flag and therefore we were there in him.

Adam is our federal head. This is very important because God will make another covenant with another Adam and that Adam is Jesus. When He obeyed guess who else obeyed? You did. When He paid for your sins He took all your sins. He was your Federal Head. He took your place, in not the covenant of works, but in a covenant of grace where He worked for you. So this is important that we establish this from the creation.

The fifth essential from the doctrine of creation is the creation ordinances. That is God built certain laws. An ordinance is a law. There are certain creation laws established by the Creator in the act of creation, and if you disregard them, you have sinned against God and that brings death because they are the law of God. There are certain creation ordinances that are crucial.

Here they are; one, is work. God made you to work. Work is not a part of the curse. Thorns and thistles in your work are part of the curse. I think when we get to the new heavens and the new earth we will work but there just won't be any thorns or thistles. When Booker T. Washington was interviewing people as they came in Ms. Davidson would hand them a cloth and tell them to dust things while they were waiting to see him. Thirty minutes later Mr. Washington would come in and take the dust cloth to see if there was any dust on it. He would go around and see what you did and if you didn't do any work he would dismiss you. He said 'You're a first

generation freed slave, do you think you're coming here to get educated so you can control other people to do work?' That was one of the evils of slavery, when a whole race of people thought work was something to get out of and make other people do it for you. He told them he would teach them how to work and how to create work for other people. He got that from a Christian world and life view.

At Piedmont Park Booker T. Washington gave that great speech where he told the African American looking on and the whites that were around there, 'Lay down your bucket among each other and go to work.' Within three years this man had ex-slave owners out there with the children of the slaves that they had owned on a work day and built buildings together. To this day you can go and see those building that they built together. He showed them the dignity of work. Work is something that is a blessing and dignity of God. It is a creation ordinance.

Rest is also a creation ordinance. That means you have the principle of Sabbath and week. Every place you go no matter how primitive the nation there will be a weekly structure. I wonder why? Maybe there was a prototype that they all started with. Every primitive tribe also has a holy day. It is not a God honoring holy day but it's a holy day. You don't find primitive tribes without religion that may not be a God honoring religion, without a weekly structure or without a holy day. So God's creation ordinance is the weekly structure. I would support a Blue Law for the Sabbath day. I believe it's a creation ordinance. I would not make people go to church on that day but I would say that it is good for our community to rest one day a week. God made us that way. Works of necessity, works of providence, I understand but God made us to do that.

What was the law called when all the businesses closed on Sundays? It was called the Blue Law and it started in Charlotte, North Carolina in the great revivals of the 18th century. Those blue stocking Presbyterians just shut down and all were invited to worship on the Lord's Day. You didn't have to go but you were invited and you could at least rest on that day for that's how God made you. They were called Blue Laws because the blue stockings Presbyterians had produced them. Men like John Belk and Mr. Ivy in the Department stores even when I was kid, on Saturday night would drop the curtains on their windows at 10pm that said 'go home, you need to get ready for the Lord's Day.' They would never think of opening on Sunday. I remember a much easier culture to live in during those days. It was slower, with rest and being able to spend time with your family. Rest is a creation ordinance.

Marriage is not a social invention. It is a creation ordinance. It is one man, one woman for one life. Sexuality is a creation ordinance. It is a gift of the Creator to initiate a marriage, to refresh the marriage and to procreate within the marriage. Sexuality is only within a marriage. Heterosexuality outside of marriage brings death. Any sexual activity that violates the marital economy of one man, one woman for one life whether it's polygamy, same sex or any other codified irrational immorality, brings death. It is how the Creator made us to exist.

Do you realize, if by God's grace in the coming generation, men and women only had sexual relationships with their husband and their wife in the context of marriage, every sexual transmitted disease would be gone. They just found out that the recent virus they've discovered, the Zika virus, is transmitted sexually and so they are trying to figure out a way to stop the spreading of this virus. I have a great idea, quit having sex outside of marriage. The idea was that there was a public health problem which there is but actually there is a moral problem because when you break God's law, God's law is going to break you. Sexuality is a part of His law.

There are ten things you just learned about God and creation that will make up your life view from these essentials and I will give them to you in the next study. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for Your Word and the privilege to think Biblically, to think Christ-centered and Bible-shaped in a Spirit-filled way that we don't live by intuition but by revelation of what You have revealed in creation and what You have revealed in Your Word. So we start with the majesty of our Triune Creator God. Teach us how to live as those created in Your image for I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

Xxxiii. Timeless Truth for Timely Topics in Biblical Perspective

What Does the Bible Say?

"Developing the Christian Mind, Part 3"

Romans 1:16-34

To live a faithful and effective Christian LifeStyle, a Christian must develop a Christ-centered, Bible-framed, Spirit-filled LifeView propelled by a Christ-consumed LifeLove saturated by persistent prayer.

LifeLove – LifeView – LifeStyle

FOUR FRAMING QUESTIONS

- I. Why is there something rather than nothing?
- II. Why are some things right and other things wrong?
- III. What things are right and what things are wrong?
- IV. Who or What determines the things that are right and the things that are wrong?
Theology-Anthropology-Epistemology-Soteriology-Eschatology

FOUR PERSONAL QUESTIONS

- I. Who am I?
- II. Where did I come from?
- III. Why am I here?
- IV. Where am I going?

THE ESSENTIAL FRAMEWORK OF A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

CREATION – FALL-REDEMPTION –PROVIDENCE – CONSUMATION

THE ESSENTIAL FRAMEWORK OF A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

CREATION

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth."

ESSENTIALS OF THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION

- I. Ex-nihilo

- II. Historic Adam and Eve
- III. Covenant of Creation/Works
- IV. Federal Headship of Adam
- V. Creation Ordinances
 - Work–Rest–Marriage/Family-Sabbath/Week

LIFE TAKEAWAY

- 1. Creator
- 2. Sovereign
- 3. Transcendent
- 4. Immanent
- 5. Spirit
- 6. Sustainer
- 7. Gracious/Patient
- 8. Righteous/Judge
- 9. Knowable
- 10. Savior of Sinners