

CREATION (Do you not know?)

Sermon, December 2019

I got Cynth to read the foretelling of Jesus' birth from Luke chapter 1, rather than the account of his birth, because Gabriel so powerfully explains how the virgin birth could be possible. Not surprisingly, Mary asked Gabriel, "How could this be since I am a virgin?" And Gabriel said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."

No woman can have a baby on her own, nor can any man. Two woman in single sex relationships cannot physically have their own baby, neither can two men. The baby they have through a stranger's sperm in the case of two woman is not their own baby, neither is the baby born from the men's sperm from the womb of an unrelated woman the baby of the two men. Regardless of how much those women or men love the baby it is physically impossible to be their physical offspring. But Gabriel said, "For nothing is impossible with God."

In focusing on 'baby Jesus' at Christmas, we focus on his weakness, his vulnerability and his normal human physicality. He had to grow like any other human being. But the fact that he was born at all was through the power of the Most High God for whom nothing is impossible. And that is what I want to focus on this morning. Nothing is impossible with God. Nothing is too difficult, nothing is too big.

The God who created Jesus is the God who created all things; the God who created the earth and the heavens.

I'm going read scriptures taken from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Colossians and Hebrews, running them together as a continuous text.

Do you not know? Have you not heard?

The Lord is the Everlasting God,

the Creator of the ends of the Earth. ISAIAH 40:28

He who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people and life to those who walk on it. ISAIAH 42:5

He [the Lord Almighty] made the Earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding. JEREMIAH 51:15

[Jesus] the Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities: all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. COLOSSIANS 1:15-17

... In these last days [God] has spoken to us by his Son [Jesus], whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. ...about the Son he says, "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands." HEBREWS 1:2 and 10

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen is not made of what was visible. HEBREWS 11.3.

God is Creator of all things and he created them through the Son who came to earth as Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, Saviour of the World. The very one who created the earth, the universe, the heavens, chose to come to earth to live, to suffer, to share in our experiences and to die for us. That is the full extent of the awesome miracle of Jesus.

If you reject the account of Creation in Genesis 1 and 2, you also reject the description of Jesus in Hebrews:

...through whom [God] made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. HEBREWS 1:2b-3a.

Earlier this year, I decided to check out the theme of creation through the Bible. I looked up key words in concordances: CREATOR, CREATION, CREATED, MAKER, MADE, FORMED, FOUNDED, ESTABLISHED, WORKS AND WORKMANSHIP. And I came across references in unexpected places as I read the Word. I found references to the Creator or to creation in 32 of the 66 books of the Bible. So far I have found 117 references. They are in 17 books of the Old Testament and 15 books of the New Testament. If you discount the Genesis account of God the Creator, you discount references in

EXODUS, DEUTERONOMY, 2 KINGS, 1 AND 2 CHRONICLES, NEHEMIAH, JOB, PSALMS, PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES, ISAIAH, JEREMIAH, AMOS, JONAH, ZECHARIAH AND MALACHI.

You also discount references in MATTHEW, MARK, JOHN, ACTS, ROMANS, 1 AND 2 CORINTHIANS, EPHESIANS, COLOSSIANS, 1 TIMOTHY, HEBREWS, JAMES, 1 AND 2 PETER AND REVELATION.

AND YOU ARGUE WITH JESUS. In Mark 13:19 Jesus himself spoke of "the beginning when God created the world."

If I combine the first words of Genesis with the first words of John's Gospel, this is how it reads:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life and that life was the light of men. GENESIS 1:1-2 and JOHN 1:1-4 interlaced.

You see, as far as John was concerned, his Gospel account of Jesus starts with Creation, not with Jesus' birth. When God came down to earth as a human, he came down to his Creation. He came down to rescue what he had made and which was spoiled, corrupted by sin. And that sin was rebellion against God himself.

If we continue in John 1, he writes:

The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of a human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. JOHN 1:9-14A.

It describes the continuing process of Creation. God becoming flesh, man being born again of God.

We can sometimes have a rather one-dimensional view of the person of Jesus, as Saviour and Friend of Sinners. Praise God he is our Saviour and our Friend! But he is more than that. He is the exact representation of God in his glory. When I read the reference to Creation in Hebrews 1:10, I noted that it quoted Psalm 102:25, so I turned back to read it there in the psalms. In flipping over one block of 550 pages I turned straight to it. This is what it says:

In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

Immediately after, I turned to Jeremiah 51:15 to read another reference and in one block of 176 pages I turned to the verse. Two coincidences? I don't believe that: I believe God was underlining the importance of this truth.

He made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding.

GOD IS CREATOR.

God is both creator or maker and redeemer or mender. Only the maker can mend the world's sin. If you buy a new car, it comes with a warranty. If something goes wrong and it needs a new part or a repair, the maker will replace or repair it at no cost to you, under the terms of the warranty. But the warranty will stipulate that if you use an unauthorised mechanic or try to fit a pattern part (that's one that tries to copy the original maker's part) the warranty is invalidated. The maker won't touch it. Only the maker can fix it. Only the Creator of mankind can fix mankind's sin.

As followers of Jesus, followers of the Way, we need to hold to the Word of God and believe what it says, believe what he says. And not embellish it. At times the Church has been like the proverbial ostrich sticking its head in the sand by denying what science has discovered. So, for example, the declaration in the seventeenth century that the world is a globe not a flat circle was regarded as heresy by the Roman Catholic Church. People such as Galileo discovered that the Earth revolved around the Sun, not the Earth-centric view of the Church. They discovered tides, comets, orbiting planets and mountains on the moon. It took until 1992 for the Roman Catholic Church to formally declare the scientists were right! But those discoveries in no way contradicted the Bible's account of God the creator. Nowadays the areas of contention are over the start of the universe, the

age of the world and the process of evolution. I don't find any need to argue with scientists about the age of the world or how dinosaurs fit into evolution because the Bible doesn't tell me those details. All I know is that God did it by speaking and I can leave it at that. It takes faith in God's word to do that. I do know that God created the Universe and I do know that I am not descended from an ape but have been created in the image of God. The beautifully simple description in Genesis states that God Created by his Word. He spoke it into being and he did it in six stages. For God a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day, so we don't know how long it took. God hasn't told us anything more. Time didn't exist anyway until God created day and night. Our argument is weakened when we try to go beyond what the Bible says. There are things I can't explain and I don't have a problem with that. There are things scientists can't explain either and there are varying degrees of integrity in their glossing over the gaps and in the conclusions they publish.

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command so that what is seen is not made out of what was visible. Hebrews 11:3

Note that: **at God's command.** It is the same way that God heals now. It is the same way that he creates new organs in miraculous interventions in answer to prayer. Because God is still creating. God is still Creator. He has never changed. He has promised to do it again!

Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. ISAIAH 65:17

Is the issue for some Christians, perhaps for you, that Creation was made out of nothing visible? Well, if you are born again in Christ, God came into your body by nothing visible: his Holy Spirit. We believe in Jesus through nothing visible. He said,

"Blessed are those who have not seen yet have believed." JOHN 20:29b

We believe in what we haven't seen. We are blessed.

Paul wrote to believers in Corinth:

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 the glory of God in the face of Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:6

God made his light shine. Where? In our hearts.

Two verses earlier, Paul wrote:

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God. (v4)

We need to pray that God will open the eyes of unbelievers. In fact we need to pray specifically ourselves for individuals, taking authority over the spirit of blindness, praying in light where there is darkness.

Don't let this world pollute your own thinking and your own faith. Creation is not just some kind of legend for simple, uneducated people. People such as Jesus, Paul, and John declared God's Creation, as did David, Solomon, Isaiah and Jeremiah. There are top scientists who also believe in God's creation. All anointed with the Spirit of God.

The Spirit that came upon Jesus in the form of a dove was the same Spirit that he gives to us as believers. This is how the Spirit is described in Isaiah 11:2

The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of power,
the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

Remember: wisdom, power and understanding were three words used to describe how God created. We need his Spirit to operate through us now, with wisdom, with power and with understanding. O come Holy Spirit!

God rested on the seventh day but he is still creating. He is still creating NOW! When he answers prayer he creates what we can't. And he plans to create a new heaven and a new earth. But that's a separate message. For now, Jesus has said:

I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. JOHN 3:3,5-6

THAT IS CREATION.

Paul writes:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17.

What counts is a new creation. GALATIANS 6:15

So this Sunday, if you have not been born again by the Spirit of God, through faith in Jesus Christ the Saviour of the World, I urge you to turn to him and pray. Please feel free to talk with us. Maybe today is the most significant new start in your life, to become a new creation.