

# The God of Creation

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Date: 27 September 2023

Preacher: Cory Brock

[ 0 : 00 ] Alright, we are carrying on our series on creation, the doctrine of creation, the theology of creation.

So we did an introductory city group and then we, Jack, let us in an overall view of the theology of creation, why it matters, and then we looked at the doctrine of the image of God in city groups and now tonight we're going to think about the God of creation.

And then in city group next week we'll think about everything else that God made, all the rest of the stuff that God made and why that matters. Okay, so tonight I want to read just the first five verses of Genesis 1 and we'll just have a short time of teaching and then we'll create.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth was without form and void and darkness was over the face of the being and the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters and God said, let there be light and there was light and God saw that the light was good and God 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.

So the very first subject of a sentence in the Bible is God. So in the beginning, not the main clause, in the beginning, prepositional phrase, God, God's the first subject.

[ 1 : 26 ] So the very first main idea that we have in the Bible is God. It's the Hebrew word Elohim. It's kind of a generic term for God, the way we say God in English.

And if you just look across chapter one, the creation story goes from one, one all the way to two, chapter two verse four, the initial creation story.

And immediately we have language like and God created or verse two, the spirit of God covered or if you keep going, you see it says that God said, God saw, God separated, God called, God made, God set, God created, God blessed, God finished, God rested.

So these are all the subject, verb combinations you get across that story. And if you add up the total number of times that God has mentioned in the creation story is 35, right?

More than any other word. How does that matter? So if you count the number of Hebrew words in the first verse, first sentence, it's seven.

[ 2 : 34 ] If you count the number of Hebrew words in the second verse, second sentence of Genesis one, it's 14. If you count the number of times that we're good at beers, it's seven.

If you count the number of times evening and morning beers, it's fill it in for me. Well, 14, that's a good guess, but it's seven.

I tricked you. Now, there are 15 to 20 more facts about Genesis one, one through two, four, just like that, that we could go through.

So if you open up a really good commentary on this, you'll have something that will do this for you and show you even the total number of letters, Hebrew letters in Genesis one, one through two, four is a multiple of seven.

It's somewhere in the five, six, seven hundreds, but it's a multiple of seven. God's name shows up how many times 35? And what is if you divide 35 by seven, what do you get?

[ 3 : 40 ] I'd work it out over. I've forgotten my math. Five, right? So God's name shows up more than anything else. It's five sets of seven and everything comes to us highly constructive in the creation story in sets of seven, right?

And seven across the Bible is a number of perfection, completion really is the number of rest of joy. That's the big idea. God takes his Sabbath on the seventh day.

We'll be looking at that on Sunday night, by the way, in the fourth commandment. It's the concept of the seventh is the concept of rest and joy and goodness and God's name shows up 35 times five sets of seven.

That means that in all the sets of seven that the writer here's most pointing to, he's ultimately trying to get us to look at God the most. God is the main idea. God is the big deal of creation. He is, it is the God of creation, the God who creates. And so creation all about God. So let me just take the next 15 minutes with you to think about some of the things we can learn about God, about God.

[ 4 : 47 ] And we look at creation, we look at the creation story and think about creation. Okay. So what do we learn? First, if you're a Christian tonight, you probably at some point have confessed the Apostles Creed.

So the Apostles Creed is probably the most basic statement of Christian faith in all history. Besides 1 Corinthians 15, 1 of 4 perhaps, but non-biblical statement of faith is probably the most basic. And the very first thing you say in the Apostles Creed is, I believe in God, the Father Almighty Maker of heaven and earth. So the very first thing you confess as a Christian is I believe in God. And the first way I know them is the Maker of heaven. Now it says, I believe in God, the Father Almighty. And so that word Almighty that shows up all across the Old Testament is a word that has been interpreted by the writer of the Creed as a word referencing creation.

So immediately in other words, it's saying that when you look at God and say Maker of heaven and earth, that tells you he's Almighty. The creation makes him, tells us he is Almighty.

[ 5 : 56 ] And Almighty is a word in the Creed that's from the, there's a Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint for Greek readers in the early days of Jesus' time.

He would have read the Septuagint all the time. He quotes from it quite often in the Gospel. And in it, the word for Almighty is pentocratour.

And you see it, if you, you can go Google this later, but there's all sorts of 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th century Mosaic paintings, cave paintings where people will have the cross or something like that.

And it will say pentocratour Christ is Almighty and connecting him to God the Father on the very beginning. Well, the Hebrew word, you know the Hebrew word probably or pentocratour.

The word Almighty, it's the word should die. So when we say God is, El should die, we're saying he is Almighty. And that throughout the Psalms and other places is a reference to the fact that he's creator, he's maker.

[ 7 : 01 ] Heaven is making things is what we use to say. Therefore he is, should die, we're Almighty. Okay, what do we learn?

Very simple. First thing, God is all power. He is Almighty, which means he is omnipotent, totally powerful.

If there is such a thing as power, and there is, you possess some relative power to do things, to make things, to move, to change things, to make an impact. God has omnipower.

He is truly absolutely powerful. Just let that sink in for a moment. God has absolute power.

Absolutely power.

That's the first thing we learn. The second thing we learn, the Almighty, the maker of the earth, is he's incomparable. You can't compare him to anything. If he's all powerful, he's glorious.

[ 7 : 55 ] And glorious means he can't be compared to anything else. So, Psalm 19, Psalm 104, all these Psalms about creation are basically doing this.

They're saying, who is like you? Who could do something like make things from nothing? Is there anything like this? And immediately they're doing that because Genesis 1 is a polemic, an argument.

And it's an argument actually against all the other gods of the ancient world. So we can't do this tonight. Maybe another night. But if you go through Genesis 1 really carefully, one of the things you'll see is some of the Hebrew words that are chosen.

I can't quite see this in English, but the Hebrew words that are chosen are chosen specifically to be arguments against the Egyptian gods or against the Babylonian gods.

So one of the famous Babylonian creation stories, one of the famous creation stories of the whole ancient East, is that these two gods were having a battle.

[ 8 : 58 ] They didn't like each other. And one was the goddess of the sea. And the other god beat her and killed her and cut her, basically cut her open, and from her guts the world, the earth came forward.

And then that immediately says the world is nothing but guts. All of this is just guts. And then because the gods didn't want to have to deal with it, they made humans to be a slave race for the

entire Babylonian image is that humans are slaves of the gods and that the earth is an accident. And actually one of the words for that goddess's name is basically mentioned in Genesis 1, the deep. It's a home. That's just like her name.

And God is the God of the deep. He made the deep. And the deep in the beginning was actually good, not bad. And so this entire thing is saying, he's incomparable. Who is like him? He's so glorious that this creation account stands completely against every other conception of creation that had ever existed in long history.

So it's important to note there were tons of creation accounts. There are tons of creation accounts. And you say, well, how come this one's true? And one of the things we can at least say is that there is no creation account like this one.

[10:21] If you look at this one and then you look at the others, you see that in every one of the other ancient creation accounts, humans are basically a slave race in the earth.

And the earth is basically an accident. And it just exists to pacify the gods pleasures. But not at all what you find here. God is incomparable and he's almighty on it.

All right. That's the first thing, first couple things that we need. Okay. I need to move on. What else do we learn? Third, God the maker immediately, therefore, must be.

The royal king creation. So you look across the Psalms and God is almighty. God omnipotent. God is incomparable to anything else.

Glorious. Unlike everything else. Everything else is just a creature, not like him. He has a different creation. Third, you get the language of God's sovereignty connected to creation.

[11:20] And what does it mean to say God is sovereign? We use that term to mean something like he's in charge. He controls everything. But it's actually a royal concept, right? It's a kingdom concept.

The sovereign, the king. That's what we're saying when we say sovereignty and it's directly connected to creation in a very simple way. And that's that if you make something, if you make something, if you make a song, if you write a song, if you write a poem, if you build something, if you invent something, you own that thing.

You have a good pattern to do it on it. It's yours, right? But if you happen to be the one who made everything from nothing, then your pattern, right, is pretty big.

You have very broad rights over everything that you make, right? You are the king. You are the sovereign. You get to not only say everything is yours, right?

So God is unlike us in that he has a right to direct everything towards himself because he made everything. It really is his, right? So he has a right unlike the rest of us.

[12:24] But the other thing to say about that is that that means that he has the right to define everything that exists, right? So in Genesis 2, God gives Adam permission to name the animals.

And that's part of Adam's royal participation in God's sovereignty. He's given his permission and saying, look, I'm going to let you participate in this thing and you get to name the animals, right? Why? Because God has the right to name everything. And that's why across the Bible, when you put a name to something, it's like trying to clarify its essence, its nature, what it is.

And so this is incredibly important for us. And we said on Sunday, God created marriage. It's one of the things he made. He gets to tell us what it is.

God created humanity. He gets to tell us what we are, male and female, and what we should do. God created the world. He gets to tell us how to live them. God created essences and natures.

[13:30] God gets to tell the lion how the lion should be. God gets to define the orientation and essence of every single thing that exists. He gets to define it. All right?

So here we are, the briefings so far. God is almighty, He's omnipotent, all power. God is incomparable.

And third, God is the royal king, meaning He gets to define everything because He made it. All right? Now, let me bring this on with a few lessons and stop.

I'm not even going to make it the part to the full video, but halfway. A few lessons and we'll stop.

The DNA, the DNA of the modern world that we've been in, the DNA is one of meaning lessons.

We live in an age that's still living in the light of the Enlightenment. The Scottish Enlightenment, very important movement in the 18th century.

[14:30] We have our friends here all in statues on the Royal Mount that were all the main players in the Scottish Enlightenment. And the Enlightenment tried to say that the true meaning of the

human being is to separate yourself from the body and to make their own meaning.

That's the downstream consequences of the Enlightenment. And that means that out of the Enlightenment came an idea that we now call existentialism. Now existentialism is the heartbeat of the modern world.

And it says that if there is going to be meaning in your life, you have to make it. You have to create it. You have to decide who you're going to be and go be it. Amen brothers.

It's the frozen soundtrack. You get to choose who you want to be. You've got to go make your song. Make an entry to your song. If you know the frozen soundtrack, you've got to work that out.

That's the heartbeat of modernity, actually. Now the doctrine of creation comes to you and says the world is not meaningless.

[15:40] But if there is no God, it is. So the Enlightenment's right. If God does not exist, if there is no Creator, if there is no absolute authority, then Nietzsche and Camus and all the others were absolutely right.

That the world is meaningless. God defines natures, essences, what we are, what we do. He defines, you could think of creation almost like a piece of wood that has the grains all moving in the same direction.

And God just defines the direction of the grains. So when you're walking in your life horizontally, when all the grains are vertical, you lack joy.

You lack meaning. You lack purpose. Because you're not actually walking in the grooves of existence, the nature. Your nature is God as the final. Whereas that what we find with the Ten Commandments basically, that's what we look at.

That's the grain. That's what God says life is all about. The world is not meaningless. And it is if you don't have God.

[16:45] You don't have God. So this applies so directly to our current order. Let's get more personal.

Secondly, what this tells us, what places like Rowland's One-Times or Acts 17 is that you can, you can encounter the living God in your daily life in creation.

You have access. If you're a Christian today, especially, you have access to the living God, you have access to the living God by looking for God in the created order.

So Rowland's One tells us that very directly that God is near you. He's so near you. Colossians 1, 15 to 17 says that at Jesus, the Son of God were to move away from you at any moment, stop mediating their existence.

He would split apart into dust at the quantum level and you would no longer be held together. That's how near God is to you. Right now, every single human being, God is holding their existence together by the Word of His power.

[18:03] He's that near creation. And so right here we see in verse 3 that as soon as God speaks by His absolute power, the Spirit of God hovers and the word hover there shows up a few times across the scriptures, but it's the word that gets used for like the eagle hovering over its eggs to protect them.

That's the word, the verb that is shown here. In other words, the same God becomes for us metaphorically immediately like a mother bird. That's the metaphor that's being used, protecting, guiding, instructing, arranging creation.

So immediately you're told God is so powerful and He's so near. He's so absolute and transcendent and yet imminent authority. So close, so close to you.

And it's still that way. God is near you. And so Paul in Acts 17 goes up the area up of this in Marshall and he says, I see that you have been looking for the unknown God, God you don't quite know him.

So let me tell you who he is. In him, all of you, a bunch of people who did not believe, they were pagans. He said, in him, you would have been able to have your way.

[19:23] And he said, God is not far, the Spirit is not far from everyone. That's the next thing he says. God is near. You can draw near. Now we need another day to talk about that more in detail.

We talk about this in grace groups, by the way. How do you draw near to God? How do you draw close to God? That takes, that takes, in one way it's incredibly simple.

And in other ways, the deepest mystery of all, right? Prayer, of course, prayer is one, one of the important means. But God is near you right now. God is upholding your body, your existence, your

life, your soul, all of it right now, no matter what you do.

And so you can draw near to God. A couple more more. It reminds us that creation is not necessary.

Thinking about the God who made the world reminds us creation is not necessary. That's very important. God did not need to do this. He did not have to do this.

[ 20 : 25 ] God is free. So he was free to create or not to create. So unlike the Babylonian story, it wasn't an accident. It didn't spill over out of him, you know, tipping a cup over and there's the world.

All the other creations are like that, but not without God. God created freely because he wanted to. So that tells you two things. And this is it.

One, you don't have to exist. It's very important. God for us. We, I, I say, I do not have to exist. None of us have to exist.

We are contingent, non-necessary creatures. And God made him.

The God who was free to make or not to make. The God who doesn't have to do anything that he doesn't want to do. That means, you know what that means? It means that he wanted to make him.

[ 21 : 24 ] He wanted to. He didn't have to, but he wanted to. You don't have to exist, but you do.

And that means one of the real heartbeats of the story of the creation, I think, and what it tells us about God is in that sevenfold refrain that he is, that creation is good, good, good, good, good, good, good.

That's what it tells us. And that has to mean that the God who stands behind it is good, good, good, good, good. He is good.

And his goodness is basically the exact same thing as speaking of his love. So the fact that he'd be willing to make something and it'd be good, it'd be yours, for you, given over to you.

It means that he made it in love. So here's the age-old question that we'll be doing. The theologians for 20 centuries now have come to the classroom and they've written on the chalkboard, why did God create?

And the smartest of them have said, I don't know. That's the only answer. Yeah, you can also say this. Why did God create?

[ 22 : 43 ] Because he loves you. That's the only thing we can say. And why does he love you? Why did he make the world good? Because he loves him. He said, for his glory, right?

He loves you. His glory loves you. That's the only answer we do. He is a God of love. He is good. He's all-mighty. He's absolute. He's near. All of these things we learned just from reading the first five verses, the first page of the Bible.

Now, if we have more time, we will talk about how creation itself reveals the trinity, the trinity, even in a way without reading scripture, you can already start to see that creation reveals the trinity.

But we don't have time for that. So we'll have to leave it. So maybe some other time.