

## “GOD’S FINELY-TUNED CREATION” (Genesis 1:3-25)

We’re continuing our study of the early chapters of Genesis, and the nice thing about Genesis is how easy it is to find – it’s page one of the Bible. So you can turn there with me as today we look at the six days of creation. When I was in grade school, I joined the school band played trombone – not so much because I loved the trombone, but because my older brother had played trombone, so we already owned one. At our first band concert, all our parents and grandparents and friends gathered to see what we had learned in band class – which wasn’t much. We squeaked and honked our way through the first half of the concert, and then – right in the middle of a song – our band teacher – Mrs. Huffman – waved her conductor’s baton and had us come to a dead stop. What is she doing? Is she going to put the audience out of their misery? She stopped us – right in the middle of the concert – to tune our instruments. We, of course, could not tell that anything was out of tune, but Mrs. Huffman had a finely-tuned ear and was a stickler for being in tune. After ten minutes or so of having to tune our instruments in front of everyone, we resumed the rest of our concert in tune, but not sounding that much better.

Even professional orchestras must be in tune with each other to sound good, and for various reasons, instruments can become flat or sharp. When I tune my guitar, I have a little tuner that tells me how to either loosen or tighten my string to get the right pitch. As I was reading our passage this week this idea of fine-tuning came to mind in thinking about God’s creation of the world. I looked up the word “fine-tuned” in the dictionary it said, “Precisely adjusted for the highest level of performance, efficiency, or effectiveness.” If your car is not running at peak performance or efficiency, you take it in to get a “tune-up.” A sports team that is performing at an optimum level is said to be fine-tuned.

In Genesis 1 we see the amazing account of how the world came to be, and the remarkable order and design God embedded into creation. Although sin will enter His perfect creation in Genesis 3, someone said that there is a desire embedded deep inside us that longs to live in the idyllic world that our ancestors, Adam and Eve, enjoyed. It’s the kind of world that God will recreate in the future and the world we are looking forward to returning to. Knowing the world as it was originally meant to be helps us understand God’s purpose and design for creation so that we might tune our lives according to it.

Verses 3-25, which we’ll look at today, describe the six days of creation. We’ll actually will look at six and a half days of creation, and wait until next week to look at the creation of man at the conclusion of day six. But before we walk through these verses, it’s important to know three things about them. First, **they tell how God takes what is formless and empty in verse two, and forms it and fills it in verses 3-25.** In verse 2 we read that prior to the six days of creation the earth was “formless and empty.” Formless means it was desolate and unshaped. It was like a piece of clay that had yet been formed into something useful by the potter. God created the raw materials for the earth, but the raw material did not have any order or design or functionality.

Empty means that the earth had nothing on it – no inhabitants. When you put formless and empty together it describes an earth that is unshaped and unpopulated. The raw materials are there, but there’s no mountains or trees, and there are no animals or people. It is barren, desolate, and empty. In verse 3 God begins shaping and populating – forming and filling the earth.

This forming and filling is laid out in beautiful symmetry where God in days one, two, and three forms the world – and in days four, five, and six He fills it. On day one, He makes light – and on day four He creates the sun, the moon, and the stars to give light. On day two God forms the sky and sea, and on day five He fills the sky with birds and the seas with fish. On day three He forms the land and vegetation and on day six He fills the land with animals and human beings. Forming and filling – shaping and populating.

The second thing to know about the six days of creation is that **there is debate as to how we are to interpret the word “day.”** The traditional, straight-forward meaning of a day is a 24-hour solar day – but other Bible scholars say that the word “day” can refer to a much longer period of time, and view the six days of creation as being day ages of thousands or millions of years. They will point to verses like 2 Peter 3:9 that says that a day to the Lord is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day. The age of the earth is mystery no one can definitively define, and I’ve listened to countless hours of debate over the subject and I think it’s something we’ll never know for sure, because none of us were there.

But the best way to interpret the meaning of the word “day” in Genesis 1, as with any other word in the Bible, is to simply look at the context in which it is used. The most normal way to read the word “day” in Genesis 1 is that of a normal 24-hour solar day. Added to this is that the phrase “there was morning and there was evening” after each day of creation, and the most normal way of understanding that is that it’s a 24-hour day. Then there is the fact that we later learn that the creation days are meant to be a pattern for work and rest – we are to work six days and rest on the seventh. Sometimes Monday seems like a million years, but all these things argue strongly for a literal, 24-hour day. When these six days took place can be debated, but this is the most normal reading.

The third thing we need to know about the six days of creation is that **the description of each day follows a repeated pattern.** 1) There first is a **pronouncement**: “And God said.” Everything that comes into being at creation comes simply through God speaking. He speaks and something happens. Most of Jesus’ miracles came as the result of Him speaking something... He says to the wind and the waves, “Peace, be still.” He says to Lazarus, “Come forth”... and whatever He speaks happens. It reveals His sovereign authority and power over all things.

When you and I speak, things may or may not happen. This is especially true when you speak to your kids... “Let your room be clean,” and depending on your child, it might become clean or it may remain in chaos. A policeman or your boss may speak and command you to do something, and you do it, but no one can speak something that does not exist into existence. Only God can do that, and that is supreme authority

Over 2000 times in the Old Testament we see the phrase, “The Lord said,” or a variation of the phrase. This is what makes the Bible different than any other book – it is God’s Word. If God can simply speak something into existence, then we should take every verse of scripture seriously, as it claims to be the words of God. In each day of creation, when God speaks, it immediately happens. You would not think theistic evolution – the belief that God created everything and then allowed an evolutionary process to slowly bring about life. That simply doesn’t jive with Genesis 1 where God speaks and it’s done.

2) After a pronouncement begins each day, it is followed by a **result**. God says, “Let there be light,” and there is light... “Let there be sky,” and there is sky. He simply speaks it into existence.

3) Once something is brought into existence, there is then a **separation** – He separates the light from the darkness, He separates the sky from the earth, the land from the sea, and separates the plants and animals into different kinds. There is great order and design to God’s creation – He is making a functional place where life and growth can thrive.

4) After the pronouncement, a result, and a separation, there is an **evaluation** in which God surveys His creation and pronounces it “good.” It’s just what God wants it to be – there is purpose and harmony and order in His creation.

5) Then there is a **naming** of what God has created. He calls the darkness “night” and the light “day,” and the atmosphere “sky” and the dry ground “land.” Naming shows ownership and sovereignty. God made it and He names it.

6) Finally, there is a **summary statement** – “And it was evening and morning, the first day... the second day,” and so on.

With these things in mind, let’s walk through the six days of creation to see what happens, and what it means for us to live according to God’s design. **DAY ONE**...verses 3-5, 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.

Imagine functioning in a world without light. Some of you have lived, or know people who have lived, in Alaska in the winter where there is only 5-6 hours of daylight each day. Not only can you not get things done, but long periods of darkness lead to depression, and the suicide rate in Alaska is twice the national average. Without light, nothing can grow or survive. Light is fundamental to our existence.

What’s interesting is that God brings light into existence on day one, but it’s not until day four that God creates the sun, moon, and stars to give light. What are we to make of this? Some think that the light on day one comes directly from God, which makes sense in that God is described in the Bible as light and one who dwells in brilliant light. In the world to come, Revelation 22:5 describes the eternal city of the New Jerusalem as having endless light without the sun or moon, for the Lord will give it light. Another view that makes sense is that on one day one God creates the sun, moon, and stars and then assigns them their function on day four – which fits the pattern of forming and filling.

Light becomes a major theme in the Bible. After Adam and Eve fell into sin, humanity is described as dwelling in spiritual darkness. 2 Corinthians 4:4 says, “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel” (2 Corinthians 4:4). Ephesians 2 says before coming to Christ we were dead in our trespasses and sins – there was no spiritual awareness. Our focus was completely on this present world, the here and now, and there was no thought of life beyond this life or where we would spend eternity. Without light all of us would remain forever locked in darkness, but Jesus came to be the light. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

After bringing forth light, God separated the light from the darkness. He called the light “day,” and the darkness He called “night.” Right from the beginning God designs a rhythm to life – there is daytime when we work, and nighttime to sleep and refuel. There is order and design.

**DAY TWO**... Verses 6-8, 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. In day two God turns His attention to the waters in verse 2 that covered the unformed earth. Just as He separated the light from the darkness, He now separates the waters. He does this by calling for a vault to be placed between the waters. Other translations call it an expanse or a firmament – all of which refer to the sky and space.

Some of the water He put under the vault and some He put above the vault. This appears to be describing the water cycle where you have the oceans and lakes and rivers below the sky, and water vapor in the clouds above – and both are separated by an expanse of air. Later, on day four, God places lights in the vault of the sky. Again, we see forming and separation.

**DAY THREE...** Verses 9-13, 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 fruit 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 trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

All this shows that God is getting the earth ready to be populated, and life cannot thrive or function without land. Water is fun to play around in, but you can't live in it, you can't build on it, and you can't function in it. So God creates land. He's also getting the land ready to provide food for those who populate the earth. On days one, two, and three God forms and shapes, and then on day four He begins to fill and populate the earth.

**DAY FOUR...** Verses 14-19, 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, and 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.

The light that God created on day one now becomes visible through the sun, the moon, and the stars. These heavenly lights will also mark the seasons, the days, and the years. Before watches, ancient people marked time by watching the sun. The earth is perfectly fine-tuned to rotate right on cue, and shows and order and rhythm to God's creation.

The sun and moon and stars are some of the most majestic features of God's creation. Psalm 19:1-2 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.” There is something about looking up into the sky on a clear night and being overwhelmed with the sense of wonder.

Isaiah 40:26 says that the Lord knows each star in the heavens by name. Although we can only see 2,000 or so stars with the naked eye, astronomers tell us that there are about 100 billion stars in the average galaxy, and there are one hundred million galaxies in known space. I don't even know what that means, but it's a lot. Einstein believed that with our telescopes we have scanned only one billionth of space.

Astronomy holds some mind-blowing examples of how incredibly finely-tuned the universe is, and if it is just a little out of tune, we'd die. For example, the sun has a surface temperature of 12,000 degrees Fahrenheit. If it were any closer to the earth, we'd burn. And if it were any further, we'd freeze.

Scientists say that everything in our universe is spinning. Countless billion of atoms and electrons are spinning in the universe, and if you change the speed in any way – slow it down or speed it up – it will either implode or explode. It has to be constant. Our planet earth, tilted at 23 ½ degrees precisely, spins on its axis 1000 miles per hour, but change the angle or change the speed, and we all die. But now take this spinning earth going 1000 miles, and it revolves around our sun 66,000 miles per hour. But then our solar system within our Milky Way galaxy is going a half a million miles per hour. So we are going 1000 miles per hour, our earth is going around the sun 66,000 miles per hour, and our solar system is going a half a million miles per hour. And you change the speed of any of those things and it either implodes or explodes. It falls apart.

The universe is filled with example after example of preciseness that cannot be explained by random chance. When you look up into the sky and consider how perfectly ordered it is, its unfathomable to think that there is not a creator, and Psalms says that only a fool says there is no God.

**DAY FIVE...** Verses 20-23, And God said, “Let the water teem 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 teems 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.

It is not until day five that God creates conscious or sentient life. The word sentient is a Latin word that means the capacity to feel, sense, and perceive. Plants and trees and grass are not sentient, but now God creates birds to populate the skies, and birds have the capacity to move and see and hear and smell and taste.

And He creates all kinds of living things in the sea – both the huge whales and sharks and dolphins to the smaller fish. Just as the sky is glorious and full of mystery, so are the oceans. Scientists estimate that 91 percent of ocean species have yet to be classified, and that more than eighty percent of our ocean is unmapped, unobserved, and unexplored. All this shouts how big and powerful and magnificent our creator is. He holds the whole world in His hand.

Don't miss the little phrase that says that God created both the birds and the sea creatures “according to their kind.” The same phrase will be used on day six when God creates the animals according to their kind. Macroevolution teaches that in the evolutionary cycle, one species changed over time into another species... a fish evolved into a reptile, and a reptile evolved into a bird, and so forth, until an ape evolved into a man. As we talked about last week, there is not one single example of this kind of thing happening. There are, of course, changes that happen with the same species through cross-breeding, but there is not change that takes place among different species. Just as the Bible says, God made each according to their kind.

Don't miss the fact that God is making boundaries – He's setting limits – there is sky and earth, there is land and sea, there are separate kinds of animals – the world has great order and design. This principle of boundary and limits will be seen later in chapters 1 & 2 in the distinction between genders – male and female – and the boundary of marriage between one man and one woman. As creatures of God's creation, we can either rebel against His boundaries and live outside them – which leads to chaos – or we can embrace them as part of His well-ordered perfect design and enjoy His blessing.

Speaking of blessing, for the first time – one day five – God blesses His creation, and says to the birds and fish, “Be fruitful and multiply – fill and increase the earth that I've created.” God desires flourishing. He wants the entire earth to radiate His glory, and we get to be a part of it.

**DAY SIX...** Verses 24-25, And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the 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.

With the same pattern, God then fills the land with all kinds of living creatures and critters. Moses groups them into three broad categories: 1) livestock, such as sheep, goats, and cattle; 2) creeping things, such as insects, worms, and reptiles; 3) and the wild animals, such as lions and bears.

Imagine a world without animals. We love animals – we marvel at them. We go to the zoo to see the all the interesting and intriguing animals. We stop at the elk reserve up in Reedsport to take in the beauty of these creatures. We love our dogs and horses – almost as much or more than we love people. God is filling in His creation with every imaginable joy and variety. Creation started on day one in black and white – with a formless, empty earth – and by day six it has burst into a technicolored wonderland. All that’s left is the crowning jewel of God’s creation – you and me – that we will look at next week.

What are we to take away from these six days of creation? How do we apply it to our lives? I suggest we apply it by asking ourselves two questions...

Number one, **am I taking the time to revel in the wonder of God’s creation and worship Him as creator?** We live in a wonderland here on the coast, and it’s easy to get so used to the beauty that we forget that God is declaring His glory in every feature of creation. It should lead us to worship Him – not worshipping creation, but the creator.

Number two, **am I in tune with God’s creative order?** It’s very obvious that in the six days of creation there is a definite order and design to God’s creation, and the fact that God calls everything in His creation “good,” speaks to the fact that it is a perfect design. It’s perfectly tuned – right down to the speed the earth rotates – it has perfect pitch. It’s clear that God created boundaries and limits for our life on earth – He separates things into distinct categories – whether it is earth and sky, or land and sea, or fish or land animal – there are boundaries and limits God places on us – not to pen us in, but to bless us and prosper us and make us thrive. When we rebel against His boundaries, there is chaos. When live within His limits, there is blessing.

Being in tune with God means that we understand that once sin entered the world – and we all participate in that sin – the world has been out of tune. The grand story of the Bible is that God sent His Son into the world to restore it and make it possible for us to be made right with God. Getting back in tune with God means that you acknowledge your sin and the fact that Jesus came to die for your sins, and by faith you trust Him as your Savior from sin. Only then will live make sense, and only then will you be in tune with what God created you to be.