

September 9, 2018

Lesson 1: God Created Plants and Animals

Scripture: Genesis 1:14-25

Context:

Last week's lesson focused on the beginning of the creation narrative as God created the universe. Reading between the lines, one got a sense of the order that came with God putting the planets and all the galaxies in their place. Regardless of all the theories of how it was done, the point was that God created the world.

Today's passage moves onto the specific formation of the earth. The dome of the sky came about and there were stars for the night and the sun for the day. These specific parts of the creation story echo other creation stories from the ancient Near East describing how the sun and the stars came into being.

The next part of the passage moves to the focus of what composes the earth that has been made. In this case there is the creation of the sea animals and the birds that fill the skies. The waters and the sky become the living place for the first animals to inhabit. As they live, they are to procreate and create more of their kind to populate the earth.

Following the creation of the sea animals and birds comes a full day for the creation of the animals. All things that crawl from the tortoise to the cow that will help a farmer come into existence. Every type of animal will fill the earth and will have their place. And God sees that all of it is good.

All this culminates on the fifth day, showing not a literal number of days, but the fact that God continues to make things on God's time. There is an order by which God takes chaos and transforms it. The land had to be there before the animals. The solar system had to be there before could be oceans and mountains on the place we call earth. There's a beauty in how the creation story covers it all.

Application

Growing up in south Alabama, I feel like I've always had a love for the wildlife that surrounds us. It doesn't necessarily correlate to hunting as much as it does for the appreciation of wildlife that surrounds us. I love seeing the herons fly while kayaking down a river, or seeing a deer on a morning run. Squirrels and chipmunks can always entertain just in watching their interaction with the world around them.

When we read this passage, we are reminded that God has created all the animals around us not just for hunting and fishing, but to also give thanks to God. These animals, just like us, are created by God and show how incredible God makes all things. They are beautiful right down to the individual markings on their fur.

As we read this passage, we are also reminded that there is an order to each part of creation. Genesis 1:14 states: "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will mark events, sacred seasons, days, and years." Time has always been an important part of how humans do life together. We even see it in the Christian calendar. The liturgical calendar coincides with the Western world's seasons. In the summer and fall we have ordinary time where life is simple and there's an order as people go on vacation and then get back to work. Farmers will tell you that summer and the beginning of fall have the best rhythm for work with the sunrises and sunsets giving

them direction. In the winter that begins in December when the days are colder and there's less sunlight, we celebrate the incarnation of our Lord remembering the light that came with Christ being born. Even in darkness, there is light. In the rest of winter and the coming of spring, we have Lent where we remember that sacrifice that Jesus made for us and how he draws us closer to him in his passion and death. Those days seem to correspond with cold fronts and rainy spring days. Then, in later spring, just as the flowers begin to bloom and the animals come out of hibernation, we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and new life that comes.

Perhaps that is one of the reason the creation story continues to give us hope today. We are reminded that there are seasons of life and that the same God who lights up the sky is the one who will accompany us in those seasons. How will you give thanks to God for the seasons of life and the beauty that surrounds you?

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