***The Purpose of Genesis 1

RV93-02***

We continue looking at the significance of John's declaration in Revelation 4:11, that God the Father is to be praised because He is the Creator of all things. We continue with the series on worship in the throne room.

**Evolution**

We have observed that the foundation of all human viewpoint thinking is the belief in evolution as the explanation of origins. The foundation of all human viewpoint thinking is based upon the concept of evolution. This human viewpoint thinking leads to certain basic spiritual conclusions. It has certain spiritual concepts that are the direct result of human viewpoint based upon the evolution thesis.

One is a concept about God. The human viewpoint is that God is not a personal, infinite being, but an impersonal force which indwells everything material. Secondly, there's a human viewpoint concerning man. Under human viewpoint, man differs from animals only in that he is a more complex life form, but he lacks a soul and spirit in any connection in the form of an image of God. Third, there is an influence on human viewpoint in terms of nature. Nature is seen as superior to man instead of man being lord over nature, to be used by man in a proper way for his blessing. Human viewpoint rejects the corrective revelation of the Bible. It trusts only in the fall in human reasoning a man.

**Creation**

On the other hand, the foundation of all divine viewpoint thinking is the belief in creation as the explanation of origins. This divine viewpoint thinking leads to certain basic spiritual conclusions again. Concerning God, it comes up with the conclusion that God is a personal, infinite being who really exists, and who is separate from the creation. Concerning man, divine Viewpoint concludes that man is made in the image of God, with a soul and spirit, which differentiates him from the animal world. In reference to nature, divine viewpoint concludes that nature is under the authority of man, and is to be used in a responsible way by man for his own blessing. Divine viewpoint thinking accepts the revelation of the Bible, which corrects the disorientation to reality of man's fallen reason.

The relationship of God and creation is very important. We are talking about a God who is personal and infinite – a personal and infinite God. The gods of Eastern mysticism are part of everything under the concept of pantheism. So, they are infinite gods, but they are not personal gods. They are not persons. In terms of Greek and Roman mythology, those gods were indeed persons, but they were not infinite. They were just super human beings. But the God of the Bible is both a person, and He is infinite. He is almighty and all-powerful. This governs His relation to the creation – the fact that he is a personal, infinite being. Remember that most people that you associate with in today's society do not think there is a God out there. If they think that there may be something out there, they do not think that there is a personal, infinite being out there that they face.

**Man's Relationship to God**

The relationship of this infinite, personal god of the Bible to creation may be illustrated as follows: On the one hand, the fact that God is a person relates Him directly to man who is made in that particular facet of God's being. Man is a person; that is, man has personality: intellect, emotions, and wills. In this case, there is an enormous chasm to separate man and God from the rest of creation in terms of animals, plants, and machines, because these do not have personality. So, they are totally different from man. On the other hand, in terms of God's infinity, there is a total, enormous chasm between the infinite God and His creation: man; animals; plants; and, machines – none of which are infinite. They're all finite. They all have limitations. Man is made in God's image of personhood, so he stands with God in that respect. But man is not made (nor is the rest of the creation made) with an infinity.

So, this indicates to us, on the personal side, that man's basic relationship is upward to God – not downward to animals. Man is connected upward to God – not downward to animals. Man's life must be governed by this upward relationship to God, or he will experience trauma or pain. This is the problem in our society. People are trying to relate themselves to animals, plants, and machines, which are impersonal. Of course, that tears their life to shreds. They should be looking upward to tie themselves to God.

Of course, the only way you're going to tie yourself to God is to interject the Word of God. You have to look to this book, the Bible, which has been given as the means for tying man to God. Of course, you have to go beyond that – back to a pastor-teacher. And then you have to go beyond that – back to the local church. That is the whole concept (the whole provision) for spiritual growth and development in the church age. God alone is infinite, so He is separated from man and the rest of creation, which are finite. Only God is independent, and everything else in the universe is dependent upon Him.

**Man's Relationship to Animals, Plants, and Machines**

So, man has also a downward relationship. Here, the relationship is indeed being downward to animals, plants, and machines. Man does share with plants and animals that they are creations, and we have the principles of science that make machines like computers possible. All of that is something that man is related to on the downward side. Those who possess the divine viewpoint of the Bible do not try to understand man, therefore, in these downward relationships, but to the upward relationship – to an infinite God. They don't try to understand man in his downward relationship to animals, plants, and machines; but, to this upward relationship to the living Creator God.

**Man's Relationship to Other Men**

So, a Christian is told to love other believers as those who share his upward relationship to the Creator God. But a Christian is also told to love-nonbelievers as his neighbors, who have a downward relationship to him because they are part of God's Creation. We love believers in a special way because they share our upward relationship to God, and we love them as brethren. We love everyone else who is an unbeliever in terms that they are sharing our humanity. Because we are mutually created by God, we are mutually of great value and of great importance. We love them as our neighbors. The Christian man has an upward relationship by regeneration. He has a downward relationship to all mankind by creation. This is very important, and it enables us to put into perspective the relationship between God and the rest of His creation.

Thus, divine viewpoint sees man with upward and downward relationships. Man is separated from the rest of nature because he has this upward relationship to God as a person. He has spiritual capacities which animals do not have. But that is also part of nature, because he has a downward relationship to that creation that God has produced. So, men and animals have, for this reason, similar physiological features. Because we have this downward relationship to animals, we have lungs like animals have. We have heart and blood and these various physiological features that we hold in common with animals. This is not because we are related to them in some evolutionary link, but because we are related to them by creation.

**Christian Ecology**

That's suddenly important because man is related to the animal world; the plant world; and, the machine world, by the fact that God created all of this. That makes all of this important. Man cannot treat his surroundings with contempt and indifference. Man's oneness with nature by sharing a common creation is the basis for Christian ecology. This is the basis for a Christian's concern with not polluting the environment, and so on. A Christian treats nature with proper esteem, not because nature is superior to man, but because nature is something that God made, and He made it for God's blessings. A tree is not a person. It does not have feelings. However, it is still to be cut down only in terms of good stewardship on the part of people as those who value that tree as part of God's creation. They do not cut it down to waste, but they use it for their blessing.

The spiritual value of nature is seen in the fact, for example, of the resurrection of the physical body of Jesus Christ, and of the ascension of that body into heaven. So, the material creation downward, and the spiritual creation upward – both have infinite value. But God always deals with animals as animals in their place in the creation. He deals with man as man in his place in the creation. There is a big difference between them.

Since the evolutionist believes that things are there only by chance, He cannot treat the creation with esteem, and as having any real value in itself. The Christian is not autonomous, so he deals with other elements of the Christian as one who is governed by the divine viewpoint principles of the Bible. That's why the Christian is sensitive to genuine ecological concerns. Divine viewpoint creationism treats all of nature as having value and purpose with God because it has been made by God.

**The Pentateuch**

Let's explore a little more the significance of what John heard the Father praised for in heaven in terms of the role of the Lord as Creator. The book of Genesis is a very important part of the Bible, because it was brought by God the Holy Spirit, through the human author Moses, in order to establish some very important understandings that were totally absent in the ancient world. The revelations of Moses were in those first five books of the Bible that we call the Pentateuch. The Bible very clearly indicates to us that Moses was the human author of Genesis and the other four books. The account that we have of origins in Genesis was a revelation from God to Moses.

**Liberal Theology**

You know that liberal theology rejects the idea that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. The reason that liberal theology is opposed to Mosaic authorship is because of something they started with Genesis, and then it spread through other books. They wanted to reduce Genesis to a book which was a compilation of various authors who were just describing their own religious experience. Liberal theology wanted to get away from the concept of a supernatural record from God without error. That is because if you treat Genesis as a book written by Almighty God through human authors and preserved from any error, then you have to do what it says. You have to obey its revelation. It speaks, and the issue is settled. The liberals, instead, like to claim that the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, were written by at least four different authors, and then they were bound together as a unit. They claim that these different authors may be seen by four distinct features:

1. **Different Names for God**

They point to the fact that in the book of Genesis, you have different names used for God.

1. **Different Literary Styles**

Then they point to the fact that you have different literary styles. However, this has been brought into question as to whether one can really distinguish that. To some extent, you can. If you get a letter from some member of your family or some friend, usually you can recognize it. If you didn't recognize the handwriting, you do recognize the style: the way this person writes; the way they put words together; and, the phrases they use. So, to some extent that can identify the writer.

1. **Repeated Accounts of the Same Thing**

They also say that there is the insertion of repeated accounts of the same event – the fact that the same thing is repeated. Genesis 1 has an account of creation. In Genesis 2, there is another account of creation. They say that that shows two different people wrote two accounts, and somebody pasted them together.

1. **Varying Theological Beliefs**

Lastly, they claim that there is the fact that there are varying theological beliefs.

We're not going to spend much time on these four criteria except to mention to you that they have, by and large, been clearly demonstrated now to be invalid. This began in the middle of the 19th century, and has been pretty well shot out of the water. So, they are no longer considered significant. However, the consequence of those ideas live with us to this day. Liberal theology still says that Moses didn't write those first five books. You may say to them, "But Jesus said that he did." They say, "Jesus was wrong. He was just a man and he missed the boat." Or they say, "Jesus was simply not trying to make waves. He was accommodating himself to the ignorance of the day."

However, we have found that secular Near Eastern writings use the same features that the liberal says are the identifying marks of various authors. So, what we have found is that the names of God, which are used in Genesis, are also used in secular writings of Near Eastern records that we have from the same time and in the same way. Also, using different styles of writing was exactly the way they used to write in those days. Furthermore, they repeated incidents from a different perspective, and that was exactly the literary style that was followed in those days. Concerning the conflict of theology, that is merely a difference of interpretation and viewpoint – and, in fact, it is not a conflict at all.

So, suddenly you find that there was an original style of writing in that day, and that was followed in the Pentateuch, just as it was outside of the Bible. The names of God are used in distinctive ways in secular literature, just as they are in the Pentateuch. Outside of the Pentateuch, you find that the name of God was "Elohim." This name is used for God in terms of His creative work, such as in Psalm 19:1, where the King James Version has the word "God," and that is the translation of the Hebrew word "Elohim." That verse deals with God as Creator.

The name "YHWH" of God is the name for God as the lawgiver. In Psalm 19:7, you have God referred to under the name "YHWH." In the Authorized King James translation, it is "LORD" (all capital letters). Anytime the word" LORD" in capitals is used in the King James translation, that's telling you that the original name is the Hebrew "YHWH," or is it has been referred to as "Jehovah," though improperly. But whenever God refers to Himself in the name "YHWH," it's in connection with the fact that He makes the rules. He is the lawgiver. Psalm 19:7 demonstrates that. In Genesis 2:16, you have both the word "Elohim" and "YHWH" used: "LORD God." This is used to show that the Creator is also the lawgiver, and you see that connection in Genesis 2:16.

The thing that is evident in the book of Genesis is that Moses proclaimed a concept of God which was diametrically opposite to the pagan view of the gods and goddesses of the time. The pagan deities were always part of the creation itself in some way. They were forces of nature. Yet, Moses describes a God who is separate from nature, and who was personal and infinite.

Pagan stories have come down to us about the origin of the universe, and these stories were not just because the pagans were interested in history. They weren't. They were only interested in survival. So, these stories about the origin of the universe have come down to us out of religious practices designed to keep that universe together, and to keep the gods and goddesses appeased so that everything would go well for the people. The pagans sought to appease their personal gods of nature, just simply to preserve their lives, and to preserve their society. They did this by celebrations where they would repeat these fables of origin, and they would act them out in certain ritualistic ways.

Israel was surrounded by nations which made nature and God the same thing. They were dealing with blind, impersonal forces. Along comes Moses, and he describes a God who is not impersonal, but who is a person; who is living; who is separate from His creation; and, who is infinite – He's all powerful. The primary difference between Judaism and paganism was this concept of the relationship of deity to the material universe. That was what distinguished the Jews from everybody else around them. Israel was to be so distinguished from the pagan nations around them, and there was no way Israel could have this information, and there was no way Moses could write it. He wasn't there to be able to declare how God is different from the concepts of the gods of the pagans about them. It was necessary that God the Holy Spirit revealed to Moses the information about creation in an accurate account to explain to Moses where everything really came from, and then to guide Moses to recording it accurately, and thus for people to know where it all came from and how God is related to the creation.

**Genesis**

Moses, in his record in Genesis 1, had two functions in mind. One was a negative function. The other was a positive one. The purpose of the negative function was to present an argument against the truthfulness of the pagan origin myths. His negative function was to show why the pagans were wrong in what they were teaching. This was very important because the Jews had a strange affinity for paganism. It finally did them in as a nation. They just had an obsession with idolatry. God never broke the back of the Jews toward wanting to worship idols until He put them in that 70-year captivity in Babylon. Finally, after that painful incident, they found their temple shattered and the city destroyed. Finally, when they came back, the people who came back (they and their descendants) never again turned to idolatry. That finally broke that habit among them. But from the time that they crossed the Red Sea (and they asked Aaron to make them that god that they could worship in the form of Baal) to the Babylonian captivity, there was something about the Jew that he just loved to go over and pick up the worship habits of the pagans around them, and to go to idolatry. So, there was, first of all, a negative purpose – to show that the idolatry was wrong, and the pagan myth was deceptive.

There was also a positive purpose in Genesis 1 (in the other account), and that was to present the real nature of God as a personal, living Creator separate from the creation.

**The Negative Purpose of Genesis**

Let's look at this negative purpose first. There is one thing that Moses had to face, and that people face today, and that you will face if somebody knows enough. They're going to stop you in your tracks by pulling out a copy of an ancient record of one of these ancient creation myths. And you're going to read it, and you're going to think that you're reading something that came right out of the Bible. So, let me prepare you. There are similarities between the pagan myths and the biblical revelation about origins. For one thing, there's a literary similarity.

**The Enûma Elis**

One of the outstanding ones that we can use as an example of the pagan myths is called Enûma Elis. The Enûma Elis was an ancient myth from Chaldea, and it follows the same literary pattern that we have found that Genesis 1:2-3 follow – the same grammatical structure. You remember that we pointed out that Genesis 1:2 is what grammatically is called a circumstantial clause. It just describes circumstances that exist. That is exactly the way Enûma Elis begins. Then we pointed out that Genesis 1:3 begins the main statement. That's what we call the main clause, which tells what God started to do when the circumstances existed in Genesis 1:2. That's exactly what Enûma Elis does. It follows exactly that same literary pattern. Well, was the gentleman who wrote the Enûma Elis sitting there copying from Moses' writing? Why did they even follow the same grammatical pattern?" That takes some thinking in answering.

There is also a similarity in content. Both the ancient pagan myths and the record of Moses have a primeval, dark, watery, formless state before creation begins. The Enûma Elis has that kind of a state. Moses has that kind of a condition. That's Genesis 1:2. Everything has been restructured downward and taken apart from what it was in Genesis 1:1. And neither the Enûma Elis nor the record of Moses indicate that God is responsible for that condition of the unstructured state.

**The Enûma Elis vs. Genesis 1**

Both accounts begin with the order of creation itself. That is very fascinating. Let's compare the details and the order of creation between the Enûma Elis and Genesis 1 that Moses wrote by revelation.

1. **A Divine Spirit and Cosmic Matter**

The first thing that the Enûma Elis has is a divine spirit and cosmic matter, which are coexistent and co-eternal. That's the first thing that's described. What does Genesis tell us? It tells us that there is divine Spirit (God the Holy Spirit) hovering like an eagle over the cosmic matter (over the material universe previously created), and that God the Holy Spirit exists independent of it. That is fascinating. We have the same idea in both the pagan myth and in the Scriptures.

1. **A Primeval Chaos**

In the Enûma Elis, a primeval chaos enveloped in darkness is described. What happens in the book of Genesis? In Genesis 1:2, we have the earth described as "a desolate waste in darkness covered with water." The earth is in an unstructured state. That is what we said the Hebrew words "Tohu wa-bohu" ("without form and void") mean. The house has been taken back down, and it's put back into a lumber pile.

1. **Light**

In the Enûma Elis, there is light that comes emanating from the gods. In the Genesis account, there is light created by God.

1. **The Firmament**

In the Enûma Elis, there is creation of the firmament – the canopy of the open spaces of the sky above the earth. In the Genesis account, there is the creation of the firmament.

1. **Dry Land**

In the Enûma Elis, there is the creation of dry land. In the Genesis account, there is creation of dry land.

1. **The Luminaries**

In the Enûma Elis, there is the creation of the luminaries – the sun; the moon; and, the stars (the light containers). In the Genesis record, there is creation of the luminaries.

1. **Man**

In the Enûma Elis, there is the creation of man. In Genesis, there is the creation of man.

1. **Rest**

The Enûma Elis describes how the gods rest, and they hold a celebration. Genesis also describes how God rested from His week of creative labors, and He sanctifies the seventh day.

I think that's fascinating. There is a pagan myth that follows point-by-point right down the line of the genuine record that we have in the book of Genesis, for which John, in this scene in Heaven in Revelation 4, is praising God.

**The Positive Purpose of Genesis**

The positive purpose of Genesis 1 is to establish the truthfulness of the Genesis account. But how are we going to explain these strange similarities between the pagan accounts and the myths? Many of these newer Eastern myths, I'll tell you right off the bat, were written before Genesis was written. So, you can't say they copied it from Moses because the records were written before Moses put his down. You may argue that the similarities were coincidental. That's unlikely. The liberals themselves, as you know, view the world as a closed system – as a system without any divine intervention. So, they claim that Moses did not get this from some intervention of God revealing it to him, but that Moses actually borrowed the myths; he connected them to Jewish history; he cleaned them up of their gross and degrading polytheism; and, he gradually adapted the myths to the higher theology of the Jews.

**Theology**

But this leads to another question: Where do the Jews get an understanding of a higher theology, and the concept of God, so different from all the nations about them? If all that Moses is doing is picking up what the pagans had written and what the pagans thought, why does he suddenly get such a superior theology? And it is superior theology. And why does he have such a superior concept of God?

Well, the higher theology was never to be found among the other nations, and we're not talking about a bunch of slobs. We're talking about the Greeks who produced the tremendous philosophers and all of their thinking. We're talking about people like the Babylonians and the Egyptians who were a very superior people in terms of arts and the sciences. Yet, they didn't come up with a better superior theology. All of the ancient world was steeped in this mystical deception, except for one nation, and that was Israel. There was no connection between Moses and the pagan religions of the Near East. Any religion that even approaches the quality of the Jews' theology, such as Islam, got their information from the Jews. The Jews got nothing from the pagans. The Jews were actually inclined, rather, to conform to the surrounding paganism. They were attracted to pagan religions, and they were constantly in trouble with God because of that. It's not likely that these people would have been moving toward a higher theology. They loved to grovel down there where the pagans were.

So, Israel's theology could only come to them by direct revelation from God. And this theological content is what we have reported in Genesis and the other books of the Pentateuch. And the theological content can be tested by the historical content of the books that Moses wrote. That's what I meant in the last session – that the Bible can be verified by the fact that it touches history, such that we can go back and check on it. We can say, "Yes, the Bible gives us a report of true history. These people really lived. They really did these things. They really were connected to Israel in this way." So, if the Bible is accurate when it touches on historical details that we can verify, then we may conclude that it is also accurate and reliable on theological matters that we can't directly verify.

The reason for the similarities, such as between the Enûma Elis and the book of Genesis, are simply because they both came from a common source. There was a common source of information. The Enûma Elis came down from the Noahic ark. When the Sons of Noah left, they all had the information straight. And as the various groups of people (the various tribal groups) began spreading out around the world, they took with them all of the information concerning creation. They had it. We don't know whether they had it recorded or not, but they had the information, and they had the story straight. But as they spread out, it became distorted.

If you were to read something like that in the Enûma Elis, you would find that while these points follow exactly the points of Genesis, they are presented in terms of mythological creatures – in terms of symbolic ideas that are totally distorted from Genesis. So, what they had here was a common inheritance of mankind from an original source – back to the time that the human race occupied a common area of the earth, and they had a common faith. The early races took this information. They spread out; they modified it; and, they corrected it. Consequently, it was necessary for God to come along and to say to Moses, "Here's the corrected version. You've got the basic outline right, but here are the details exactly the way they took place."

The fact that people had information is confirmed in one place in the Scripture itself in Isaiah 40:24: "Yea, they shall not be planted. Yea, they shall not be sown. Yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth, and He shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away like stubble." They have taken information that they have; they have been rooted out; they have been moved; and, they have been blown about like a whirlwind. And as they moved, they took the information with them, and that information then was distorted.

There are differences between the myths of the ancient world and Genesis 1. There are radical differences in theology. In the pagan myths, there are numerous gods and goddesses personifying the forces of nature. So, they are nature deities. The pagan mind did not distinguish between spirit and matter. All nature is seen as personalities combining divine spirit and cosmic matter in eternal coexistence. So, the sun and the moon were very logically objects of worship, because spirit and matter was not distinguish in the ancient mind. Even when you get to the Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten, who was famed for the fact that he became a monotheist, even Akhenaten conceived of "Aten" the sun god as being a combination of both spirit and matter. He was not thinking in terms of monotheism as we think of a God who is spirit and not made up of material things. He simply picked one of the gods and said, "This is the god we are going to worship." He was a monotheist only in that concept. But even he had the same pagan failure of not distinguishing between spirit and matter.

During the conquest of Canaan by Israel, each city had its own temple which was dedicated to one of these nature gods. Jericho worshipped the moon. Bethshemesh worshipped the sun. And "YHWH" of the conquering Israelites was not a nature God. He stood above and beyond the nature gods, and could humiliate them. In Joshua 9, you have the story of Joshua controlling the sun (and the moon), and stopping it in its tracks. This was a humiliating experience for the nature gods of the moon and the sun in this case. The pagan myths and the rituals were simply not for intellectual curiosity, but to control the society (the world) that they had. The ancient pagans were not interested in history. They were concerned about maintaining stability in the natural world. They conceived of their gods as being part of that natural world. So, they dealt with the natural world under these pagan myths, and under the rituals to keep the gods appeased – to keep these creative forces in check. They sought stability with magic words and religious ceremonies.

So, Genesis is indeed an attack upon the pagan nations, and upon the notions of those pagan people concerning origins. God is not begotten by anyone, but He is the Creator, and He is not part of the creation. Elohim created it all. The Holy Spirit is not seen as being in conflict with some other force, but He is seen in Genesis 1:2 as hovering over the mass of a destructured earth, and being in complete control of it. So, the pagan gods of the sun, moon, and stars are mere lamps in the universe which were shaped by Elohim. They are material; they are not spirit; and, they are nothing.

Genesis is a counter statement, then, to the pagan myths about origin. God made it all with no effort, and with no combat from some equal opposing force. This is one of the things you have in the pagan myth. Somebody out there is always able to fight God. God works calmly, and He produces without any competition. It was God, then, that gave Moses the truth about creation, and thus freed men from fear of the world of nature. When man was freed from that fear, it was possible for a man to step back; to take a look at what God had created; and, for modern science to be born, and for people to investigate and begin enjoying the creation that God had given them.

The book of Genesis, chapter one particularly, gives us an important theology. It tells us, for one thing, about the activities of God. It tells us that He is Creator. God is the Creator above and apart from His creation. The knowledge that God is not coexistent and not co-eternal with creation distinguishes this information. Israel's theology is different from all other religions in the world. It is the difference between human and divine viewpoint, because God is different from the creation.

This is the basis of fellowship between Abraham and Melchizedek, who worshipped God as the Creator of heaven and earth. This is how Abraham spotted Melchizedek as a genuine priest of God. Melchizedek was undoubtedly a genuine and true priest, while surrounded by all the paganism with their myths about creation and origin. Here was a priest of God who was in contact with the living God, and had true information. In Genesis 14:18: "Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the most high God." Abraham has met him after Abraham has rescued Lot, and he's coming back from the battle with the kings.

Genesis 14:19 says, "And he (Melchizedek) blessed him (Abraham), and said, 'Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth.'" That verse indicates to us that this man Melchizedek was in contact with God as the true Creator. He had the information. Immediately, Abraham recognized Melchizedek as being a genuine king priest because he worshipped the Creator and not the creation. Therefore, Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek.

Genesis 14:22: "And Abraham said to the king of Sodom, 'I've lifted up my hand unto the LORD, the most high God and possessor of heaven and earth.'" So, here again, Abraham and Melchizedek indicate that they have a common ground, and in this case (in verse 22), Abraham adds the word "YHWH" for the name of God – the word "LORD:" "I have lifted up my hand unto 'YHWH,' the most high Elohim, the possessor of heaven and earth." He did this to show that the God that he was talking about was the God who makes the rules. He is the God who decides what is right and wrong. He is the God who promised through Abraham that He would establish His kingdom, in time, on the earth.

So, it is fascinating to notice that there are numerous times in the Scripture where people come together who have a contact with the story of creation in a genuine way (in a surrounding where people do not have it), and they recognize each other immediately as being the true believers by that information.

Maybe while we tie this up, we should mention this word to you: One of the most common words for "creation" is this Hebrew word "bara." The Hebrew word "bara" is a word that indicates the creative activity of God. The Bible uses this word only of the creative activity of God. There are other words, however, which are used to describe God's creative work. "Bara" does not necessarily mean that God created out of nothing. Sometimes somebody who knows enough might put you on the spot if you try to say, "I know God created out of nothing by His Word, because that's what the Hebrew word "bara" means. That used to be a common idea, but that is not really the case.

The thing to remember is that other Scriptures tell us that God brought creation into effect out of nothing. But the word "bara" doesn't necessarily mean that, because this word is used synonymously with other Hebrew words which indicate God making something out of something. That is also a work of creation. There are other Hebrew words that imply that the thing made did not originate out of preexisting materials. You can use "bara" to indicate that the thing made didn't exist before, but there are other words as well that indicate that. So, you want to realize that while God did create by His word, that wasn't established by this particular Hebrew word.

For example, Genesis 1:27 says, "So, God created man in His own image. There is the Hebrew word "bara." Man was created in God's image. But Genesis 2:7 says, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground. Here you have a totally different word in the Hebrew, which is translated as "formed." He formed the man from the earth. These are two different Hebrew words, but both of those verses are talking about the creative work of God. So, one verse says that God created, making no reference to the fact that he made a figure of Adam out of the dust of the ground before He breathed life into him. The other word talks about creation also, but it describes how God put man together. Nevertheless, it is a creative act.

I'll just run through this. You may want to look at these sometime yourself. There's another word used commonly: "asah." It means "to make," and it's usually translated as "make." "Bara" is translated as "create." In Genesis 1:21, you have "bara" (created). In Genesis 1:25, speaking of the same thing, you have "asah" (made). In Genesis 1:26, you have "asah" (make). In Genesis 1:27, as we have seen, you have "bara." In Genesis 2:4, in the first part you have "bara" (created), and you have it with "asah" (made). Genesis 1:1 has "bara" (created). You have this same concept in Exodus 19:11 with "asah." Genesis 1:16 has "asah" (made). Psalm 148:3-4 uses "bara" for "created." Isaiah 40:26 also uses "bara." So, the doctrine of creation out of nothing does not depend upon this word, as such, but upon other Scriptures.

To tie this up, the essential feature of the Mosaic faith was simply this: a belief in a God who is the Creator of all of the universe, who Himself was infinite, personal, and separate from that creation.

**The Sabbath Day**

When God selected a symbol to mark his theocratic kingdom, he chose one which displayed Him in what character? When God said to Israel, "I'm going to give you a sign that's going to mark you as a people for all people that ever live," it's interesting that the mark that God gave identified Him in His work as the Creator in the story that had been revealed to Moses. When God selected, what did He select? The fourth commandment expresses what He selected – that on every seventh day, Israel would rest from all labors. That seventh day was called the Sabbath Day, meaning "rest." It was the final day of the week. Why that day? Because it commemorated that, as God had worked for six days in creation, then rested on the seventh, so Israel would rest on the seventh day after six days of work. Every time Israel rested, it was the outward reminder that they were dealing with a God who was the Creator. This was the particular unique sign that identified the people of Israel.

This is taught in Exodus 31:13: "Speak also unto the children of Israel, saying, 'Verily, you shall keep My Sabbath, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.'"

Then Exodus 31:17 says, "It (the Sabbath Day) is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth. And on the seventh day, He rested and was refreshed." This is a very clear indication that it was a sign of God's covenant dealing with Israel in terms of His being the Creator. The Sabbath day is a unique sign, therefore, between God and the Jew. As the rainbow symbolized the Noahic covenant; as circumcision symbolized the Abrahamic covenant; and, as the Lord's Supper today symbolizes the New Covenant (the New Testament), so the Sabbath day symbolized the Mosaic covenant (the Old Testament). By the ritual of the weekly Sabbath, Israel proclaimed to all the pagans about them that they were related to the transcendent God; that is, the God separate from creation who made it all. The pagans tried to manipulate their deities with magic words and magic rituals – incantations of their stories of creation. Israel's ritual was to rest on the seventh day to show that they were under the Creator God who spoke the universe into existence – the one who gave them the Law – the rules – the Word of God.

It is wrong to speak about a Christian Sabbath. It is nonsense. Sunday is not the Sabbath day, but the amillennialists love to speak about the Christian Sabbath. The two words are contrary. Exodus 31:17 says, "It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever." The Sabbath day is a unique sign for the explicit purpose that Moses was thereby given a way to demonstrate to all the pagans that the creation myths were false, and that the true God was the God who had worked in a totally different way.

The amillennialists (when they realize, and they do) that it is a day unique to Israel, then say, "Well, Israel rebelled against God. We Christians are now the true Israel of God." That means that words have no meaning at all because the word "Israel" is never used in the Bible, except for the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is not that this is not just the descendants of Abraham – but the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If you don't have that genetic structure in you, you're not a Jew, and therefore, you did not come under the Old Testament Sabbath system. It is fantastic that when God wants to identify Himself to all the world as the distinct deity, He says, "Here's how you're going to recognize Me. You're going to take a rest day every seventh day, and that commemorates My creation work, and establishes Me as the Supreme Being of all creation – the infinite, personal God: separate and above it; independent of it; but, with all of it dependent upon Me. And you and I are dependent upon that same creative God.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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