

The God of Creation, Day 4

Genesis 1:14-19

(preached Pine Grove 2/11/18; Sunday PM)

Introduction

Let me give you some interesting statistics about our universe...

Let's start with the moon..

Its diameter is the same as the distance across the United States..

So if the earth were the size of a grape, the moon would be a single green pea...

The moon is roughly 240,000 miles above the earth..

So if there were a road up to the moon, and you drove along that road at 60 miles an hours, you would start driving tonight and get there by August 1...

Unfortunately, there are no places to take a restroom break in that 5.5 month drive..

So be prepared...

Though the moon is a lesser light, it still dominates the nighttime sky...

When it is full, it is 2500 times brighter than the next object in the night sky, which is the planet Venus.

Now, let's move to sun, which is 93 million miles away.

If there was a highway to the sun and you averaged 60 miles an hour, you would arrive at the sun in 176 years.

Now the sun is huge.

If the earth were a single grape, the sun would an incredibly big beach ball about 4 feet in diameter...

However, since the sun is much farther away than the moon, it appears to be the same size as the moon in the sky.

Thinking of its brightness, the sun is incredibly bright even enough to cause eye damage from 93 million miles away...

However, 93 million miles is nothing in terms of the size of our universe..

If we move to the next star system beyond our sun, we have to travel 25 trillion miles...

Now that is beyond our ability to comprehend but if the sun were the size of a penny and placed on this pulpit,

the next star would be in Birmingham Alabama over 350 miles away.

And that is just the next star system closest to earth...

Considering that our galaxy is made of our 1 billion stars, the size of our galaxy alone is mind numbing...

And then consider that our galaxy of 1 billion stars is just one of 100 billion galaxies within the universe..

The farthest object ever seen in our universe is a galaxy of stars called GN-z11...

Is is 32 billion light years away...

A light year is hard to imagine but it equals 5.9 trillion miles..

And this object known as GN-z11 is 32 billion light years away and was discovered in 2016 by the Hubble telescope...

Yet it is clear that there are objects beyond that galaxy...

Simply put, we live in an incredibly large universe...

And that universe is filled with some incredibly large and bright objects...

And all of that filling of outer space took place on day 4 of creation...

Let's read about it in Genesis 1:14-19...

14 Then God said, "Let there be [s]lights in the [t]expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years; 15 and let them be for [u]lights in the [v]expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. 16 God made the two [w]great lights, the greater [x]light [y]to govern the day, and the lesser [z]light [aa]to govern the night; He made the stars also. 17 God placed them in the [ab]expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 and [ac]to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. 19 There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

For the last few weeks, we have been looking at the supernatural act of creation...

Where God created the entire universe out of nothing...

There were no starting materials..

There was no big bang...

There was no evolution..

It was simply God doing what God does and that is create through His unmatched power...

Now the world has rejected that idea wholeheartedly.

They have clung to the foolishness of a big bang and random chance where life crawled out of a miry muck and began to take shape in the form of a single cell that eventually began a complex human being..

And though the proof of that is lacking, it is the best they can do to explain where we and the universe around us came from...

But that Big Bang Theory and Theory of Evolution are all that a person is left with if they reject the supernatural creation of God in the beginning...

And in their mind darkened by sin, looking foolish is better than submitting their lives to the God that created them...

Sadly, many Christians join their foolishness due to their lack of trust in the literal interpretation of Scripture...

Some Christians think that God must submit to science so they simply see a God driven evolution from single cells to complex people...

Yet, that is their only alternative when you devalue the word of God and elevate the discipline of science of the God of science...

On the other hand, we stick to the word of God since God was the only One around at the creation of the universe..

And God's word tells us that God created the entire universe in six consecutive 24 hour days before resting on the 7th day.

So we have been looking carefully at end of these days in the opening verses of the book of Genesis...

Day 1 saw the creation of a watery sphere that was covered in darkness but all of it was hovered over by the Spirit of God..

Day 1 then saw the creation of light which God separated from the darkness to give us a day and night on day 1..

Day 2 saw the creation of the earth's atmosphere and outer space as God took a portion of the watery ball and pulled it out in all directions...

The space between the water left behind and the water pulled away gave us the sky of our own planet but also gave us the huge volume of space beyond our planet on day 2...

This led to day 3 where God took the remaining water on the earth and gathered it in one place and pulled the mountains and dry land into one place, so that we had most likely a super continent and a super ocean at the end of day 3...

Then, God brought forth plants and trees from this fertile earth on day 3...

The trees and plants would contain seed that allowed them to reproduce more of their own kind, and that was important because there was much space to fill on the land..

And we stopped there last week at the end of 72 hours of creation...

That brings us to day 4, and what we find is that God is continuing this idea of filling up his creation because verses 14-19, God fills up outer space in a day...

Now remember as we have approached the book of Genesis, my aim is not to cast doubt on what God did but to use Genesis to reveal who God is...

And we have seen so many incredible truths about God in just 3 days of creation...

You can see them here on the screen...

- I. Day 1 - God is Eternal (1)
- II. Day 1 - God is Three in One (1)
- III. Day 1 - God is Creator (1)
- IV. Day 1 - God is a Shaper (2-5)
- V. Day 1 - God is Near (2-5)
- VI. Day 2 - God is Powerful (6-8)
- VII. Day 2 - God is Purposeful (6-8)
- VIII. Day 3 - God is Sovereign (9-11)
- IX. Day 3 - God is the Giver of Life (12—13)

Tonight, though there are many aspects of the glory of God on display here, I simply want to day 4 to remind us that

X. Day 4 - God is Supreme (14-19)

And here is what I mean by that...

In the book of Romans, Paul opens his letter to the church in Rome with incredible insight into the fallen nature of man...

Let's start in Romans 1:18..

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth [l]in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident [m]within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not [n]honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and [o]crawling creatures. 24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for [p]a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed [q]forever. Amen.

What Romans 1 tells us is this..

People are so in love with their sin...

And their minds are so darkened by their sin that they can't see the existence of God in creation...

In other words, unbelievers can look in a telescope and see the vastness of space or they can look in a microscope and see the complexity of the human body...

But neither the complexity of the body or the wonder of space will cause them to worship the God who created both..

Instead, they will worship their own body or they will worship objects in space...

And how do I know that?

Well, sun worshipers go back as far as the very beginning of time..

The height of sun worship was in Egyptian culture, but nearly every culture has shown evidence of sun worship...

In fact, there are people in US today who worship the sun as their religion...

There are also an incredible list of people who worship the moon as well...

And then there is star worship in the form of astrology and listening to and making decisions based on the movements of the stars..

All of this are examples of how people reject worship of the Creator and would rather worship the creation...

Now, if you are Israel in 1500 BC, you have seen this false worship in the Egyptian culture...

You have lived among it..

But now as God gives the creation account to you through Moses, God wants to be clear that He created all these things that people wrongly worship...

And the point is clear to Israel...

The sun is not to be worshiped, but the Maker of the Sun is worth of worship..

The moon and stars are not to be worshipped, but the Maker of the moon and stars is meant to be worshipped.

Listen to what God told Israel in Deuteronomy 4:19-20..

19 And beware not to lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven. 20 But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, from Egypt, to be a people for His own possession, as today.

So when we get to day 4 of creation, it clearly serves a purpose of filling the incredible vastness of outer space, but it is also a statement to Israel in their day and us in our day that God is supreme...

We don't worship dogs or trees or rocks or stars or the sun...

We are called to worship the Creator of all those things and that Creator is the God of day 4...

But let's take a closer look at day 4 to see the details of this incredible day...

Verse 14 simply says...

14 Then God said, "Let there be [s]lights in the [t]expansion of the heavens

Now, we know there is already light in these opening hours of creation...

In verse 3 on day 1, God said let there be light...

But now in verse 14 on day 4, God said let there be lights..

And the idea is that God is going to create objects that give off light in the expansion of the heavens...

And these heavenly objects have a purpose in creation..

In fact, according to the verses that follow, these objects in the expanse have 3 purposes...

The first purpose is found in verse 14..

14 Then God said, “Let there be [s]lights in the [t]expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night

So one function of the sun, moon, and stars is to separate or divide the day from the night..

Now, day and night already existed by the time we get to verse 14..

If you remember back to day 1, God had created a temporary light source or He allowed His own glory to serve as temporary light source on the very first day of creation..

But now, God gives us a permanent light sources in the sun, moon, and stars to divide the day from the night...

And remember the idea of division is an ongoing theme in the book of Genesis...

God divided the waters above from the waters below on day 2..

God divided the land from the water on day 2...

And the picture of God dividing day from night is quite important in terms of who God is...

He is God of division....

He is going to divide good from evil...

Holiness from sin...

Righteousness from wickedness ...

And Wisdom from foolishness...

For now, God simply desires to divide day from night, and that is how the earth has operated ever since...

But not only are the sun, moon, and stars acting as dividers...

They are also acting as rulers..

Look at the rest of verse 14..

14 Then God said, "Let there be [s]lights in the [t]expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years;

You see, the sun, moon and stars serve as governors of our time...

Let's start with the idea of a day...

Our days are governed by the creation and placement of the sun..

As earth rotates around an axis, a complete rotation takes 24 with respect the placement of the sun

Then let's move to a month...

Our months are governed by the orbit of the moon around the earth...

Each orbit of the moon takes 27 days which gives us a framework for our months...

And then we move to a year...

And a year is simply the time it takes our planet to orbit the sun..

John Andrew reminded me today that I have taken 44 trips around the sun...

Which is interesting way to tell the that I am 44 years old..

So there you have how the sun and moon rule our calendar and dictate our time...

The text says that these lights serve as signs for the days and the years, but also notice that these lights serve as signs of the seasons...

Since God designed our planets on an angled axis, the sun's distance from the earth varies at different times in our 365 day orbit around it...

When portions of the earth are closest to the sun, they experience summer and when portions of the earth are farther away, they experience winter...

In that regard, the sun serves as a sign for the seasons...

They tell us when it is time to plant crops in the spring and harvest crops in the fall...

Some people ask about the weeks of the year...

If the days come from the sun and moon, and the months come from the moon, and the years come from the sun, how do we get a week consisting of 7 days?

Well, it comes from the fact that God created it all in 6 days and rested on the 7th day...

And guess what, every culture has a calendar that contains weeks of the month and year...

And though they may not worship the God of the Bible, they acknowledge his existence based on their use of weeks...

So, the lights of day 4 were designed as signs to rule our lives...

Now many people ask...

Are there other signs to see in the sun, moon, and stars?

Well, the Bible doesn't say that here or anywhere...

Yes, the moon will turn blood red in the day of the Lord, but it won't be a sign of what is coming, but a sign of what is already there...

Yes, the stars will fall from the sky, but again, that won't be a warning but an indication of God's judgment already coming..

Yes, the sun will be darkened, but it won't be sign of what is coming but a sign that the tribulation is already there...

Yes, God used a star for a sign at the birth of Jesus...

Yes, the sun grew dark at the crucifixion of Christ..

Yes, there are other astronomical events in the Bible, but they were signs to read but signs to declare what had already happened....

Sadly, Nancy Reagan and even Ronald Reagan used astrology and the study of the stars as signs of which decision to make....

And there have been lots of others who point to the skies and tell us to look at the signs...

You only need one sign to know what is coming and you dont look up to the sky to see it, you look down in your Bible to read it...

God has given us a sign of what is coming and it is called the Word of God..

Jesus even that a wicked and adulterous generation looks for signs....

These verses simply tell us that the lights of heaven are signs of the seasons, years, and days, and we need to be content to leave it there...

A final purpose of these heavenly lights is found in verse 15..

15 and let them be for [u]lights in the [v]expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so.

So the sun, moon, and stars are dividers of day and night...

They are rulers of our time...

And they are also givers of light to the earth...

Though we take it for granted, earth would be a very dark place with the sun, moon, and stars...

I am often reminded of how much I depend upon light when we lose power, especially at night..

It is amazing how dark a house can become when the sources of light in the home can't come on...

We used to fish a lot of night tournaments, and if you ever fished on a new moon, it was incredibly dark even on Lake Murray which has houses all along the shoreline...

I can't imagine a world without the sun moon and stars to give us some light...

And then we can't forget the heat that comes from light....

Without the presence of sunlight, it wouldn't only be dark but very cold as well...

We don't think about the practical purpose of putting sources of light in the heavens, but God did...

And so the lights of the world, the sun, the moon, and the stars are dividers, rulers, and givers....

They separate our day from night...

They govern our time..

And they serve as lamps in our universe..

And the end of verse 18 simply says..

God saw that these lights were good, and there was evening and morning a 4th day...

Conclusion

Let's finish with a couple main ideas of day 4 tonight ...

#1 - God is Supreme.

While the practical purpose of day 4 was to fine tune the days and establish the seasons and years of the earth, I think day 4 was also a reminder to Israel that God was supreme over all that they could see...

When they looked up to the hot and bright sun, they didn't see powerful force to be worshipped...

They were simply reminded that their God was the Creator of it..

When night fell and the moon and stars shown above their head, they weren't overwhelmed by all that was out there...

Instead, they were overwhelmed by a God who created all of it...

The same should be true for us..

Creation declares the glory of God, but it does not call us to worship it...

Instead it calls us to worship the Creator of it.

#2 - *The Earth is special.*

I want you to notice something in the end of verse 17...

God placed the lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth...

I think that is quite important...

The earth wasn't created for the sun....

The sun was created to serve the earth..

Same with the stars and moon..

The earth wasn't created for them..

They were created for the earth...

Now this is important for a couple reasons...

First, there is this thinking that the earth is just a rock floating in the vastness of space....

That we are just an accident on in a solar system and just a speck in the middle of nowhere..

And the thought is this...

If we are just a rock floating in randomness, then there is problem no purpose to this life and probably more life out there.

And you add to that view, the fact that we rotate around the sun on an outer arm of the spiraling Milky Way galaxy...

And people just seem to use all that to discount a God who is concerned for us...

But remember that all of outer space came from the waters of the earth being pulled away in all directions...

Which would mean that we are at the center of all of outer space...

And that seems to be confirmed here by the fact that these heavenly lights are made for the earth...

And you begin to get the proper sense that the earth is not random but special in the creation of God...

Now, that doesn't mean that we worship the planet, but it also doesn't mean that we think we are just a speck in a pointless universe...

Instead, we see a focus of God upon this planet....

But even more than that, we are going to see a focus on the humans of this planet....

We aren't random accidents on a random planet rotating around a random star in a random solar system in a random galaxy of space...

Instead, we are the pinnacle of God's creation designed to give the God of creation His glory as we worship and adore him...

That is our purpose in this universe...

To bring glory to God and to enjoy Him forever...

Let's finish with a look at Psalm 8, which speaks to this idea..

3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,

The moon and the stars, which You have ordained;

4 What is man that You take thought of him,

And the son of man that You care for him?

5 Yet You have made him a little lower than God,

And You crown him with glory and majesty!

6 You make him to rule over the works of Your hands;

You have put all things under his feet,

7 All sheep and oxen,

And also the beasts of the field,

8 The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea,

*Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.
9 O Lord, our Lord,
How majestic is Your name in all the earth!*

Look, to see our planet as the center of the universe and ourselves as the pinnacle of God's creation is not self-centered or prideful....

And the reason for that is that God sees this planet and the people on it as the pinnacle of His creation...

I get so tired of people saying that humans are intrusions on this planet...

We are not intrusions into the world, we were put in the world by God to govern his creation and bring glory to Him in the process...

So we better get busy doing just that..

Let us pray...