

Time of Grace Ministry
Satan's Slippery Slopes: A Six Day Creation?
Isaiah 40-45
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Pastor Michael Novotny

Where did we come from? As a people, the human race, did God actually make us? And if so, how did he do it and how long did it take? Those are really important and hotly debated questions that have really important answers for your life. Pastor Jeske's going to wrestle with those questions and much more coming up next on Time of Grace.

Pastor Mark Jeske

Think just a minute about the way it is in which we mark time in large chunks. And have you ever given much thought as to how those things came to be? Why do we mark time the way we do? The most obvious unit of time marking is the day, right? Pretty short term. We're all in the middle of a day right now. How are days defined? Well, that's no need for rocket science; probably third grade science class will help you figure that out, right? The earth is spinning. God made the world and then kind of just like spinning a basketball on his finger, he just kind of went "whoosh," and the entire ball in the sky goes round and round and round and never seems to run out of energy. An astonishing miracle. You cannot do that with a basketball. I don't care how good you are, you cannot make it sustain that twirl but God can because he must give it just a little push or a puff of his mighty wind once in a while. So that's how long it takes the earth to spin once on its axis so we call that a day.

A year is a way of marking time, isn't it? How does a year get determined? Well, there Mr. Sun also figures, doesn't it? Our ball is not only spinning like this, it's also moving like a rock on a string around the sun in a kind of an elliptical - not purely round; but kind of oval orbit - around the sun. And it takes 365 and 1/4 days of spins to get all the way around back where we started again. That's where our seasons come from; the tilt of the earth also shifts a little bit. So the sun and our planet's relationship to the sun help us to track the concept of year. Every culture, even non-Christian cultures, get day and year.

Now it gets a little fuzzier. We also mark time by months. Where on earth did months come from and what moron decided that they were going to have such lumpy numbers of days? Well, my heart goes out to the morons that invented our month calendars because it's really hard to make everything work out. Twelve is a nice even number. In fact, some of the most leading stargazers of the ancient world were in the Middle East.

Who invented weeks? Where did weeks come from? And do you know what, they didn't come from anywhere; there are no discernible, easily figure out-able batches of ways of subdividing the month. Even though everybody can see moon cycles, this idea of roughly 28 or so days was known in all cultures. But breaking it down further than that, the people were all over the place. In fact, the Romans for a while, tried to have an eight-day cycle and that didn't work too well so it kind of broke apart and faded away and nobody even talks about that anymore.

But in fact, the idea of week was actually invented by God. And in the very first chapter of the Bible, in the beginning of chapter two of Genesis, God laid out the idea of week. He worked for six days and then rested, not because he was beat, not because he had expended so much energy he now needed some time to kind of puff and blow and kind of chill a little bit, watch some TV, and have a sit down in his easy chair, and kind of get his breath and take a nap. But he set up a rhythm partly to encourage us to realize we don't have to work all the time; he set up the idea of resting. But even more important, he set up the idea of that seventh day as he set up the cycles of morning and evening. Genesis over and over says, "It was evening and it was morning." Evening, morning, evening, morning. So clearly, these are 24-hour days where God has set his big basketball in the sky, he set it spinning on his finger, and now he began to click, hit his clicker, as he started to measure and count the days. And he said, "On day seven, I'm resting. Not only to provide you a chance to take care of your body and kind of refresh yourself but even more importantly, for you to set aside time to refresh your relationship with me. That seventh day is going to be our time where we celebrate the relationship you have with me. My love and favor gushing out of heaven onto you."

And to make sure they got it, when God was setting up rules for his Old Testament children, he had to treat them like children who needed structure. So what he did was he made it a rule that on that seventh day, you could do no work or the barest minimum of work. If you're tending animals, if you're milking cows, you cannot take a day off of milking cows. I don't know this from personal experience but farmers have explained it to me so I'm taking their word for it. So that doesn't count; that's like minimum things you have to do. But you were not supposed to walk very far, your food had to be prepared a day in advance. He did not want women running around; he wanted them to have time for their families and, even more importantly, time for him. And the idea of that seventh day, the Sabbath in Scripture, shines like a light through the entire book and symbolizes the sweet relationship that we have with our God because of the gospel of Jesus Christ that restores us to a wonderful, sweet fellowship and relationship with him. That's why the old Saturday rules about not working really don't apply anymore to New Testament Christians as a law or rule hanging over your head. If you want to shovel snow or cut the grass or clean the house or do laundry on Saturday, you just go right ahead. The way you and I celebrate Sabbath today is by setting aside time and energy to give God the worship he deserves and to pay attention to his word and carve out time for him; to listen and hear his voice and let him grow and strengthen our faith. That is how we honor the Sabbath of the Lord today.

This thing, this first week, was more important than just God setting up another unit of time for us that really, now today, all cultures have found really helpful; it's way more than that. In fact, the other cultures found it so compelling that it spread all over the place. The Chinese had a seven day week, even though they probably didn't know that it came from the Jewish ancestry, our common humanity, of Adam and Eve; they didn't know that they had a seven day week. Crazy enough, until the middle of the 1800's, everybody knew that stuff; that God had set up the origin of the human race and set up that first week. Even the atheists and agnostics, of whom there were plenty before the 1850's, knew that stuff. And they could deny it but they felt faintly foolish and not very smart by doing it. There have always been people who've blown off what they knew to be the truth but they knew it was the truth deep down inside. It was not until Charles Darwin published "The Origin of the Species," in 1859 that now intellectuals had a way

to explain the complexity of the universe, the origin of the human race, in such a way as to leave God out of it and they flocked to Darwin like crazy in a very short time. His revolution, one little book, started a revolution that has pretty much taken over academic life in high schools and colleges today and in post-graduate study. Charles Darwin's triumph is almost complete.

Just to give you a little point of view on it from somebody who loves Darwin, Dr. William Provine is a professor of evolutionary biology at Cornell University, a leading scientist in the life sciences, and has regularly debated with people who believe in intelligent design; that there were - there actually was a plan to the way things developed. It wasn't just blind coincidence, stuff didn't just happen. It wasn't a string of amazing coincidences. It was design. And William Provine has dedicated huge amounts of energy and his own formidable intellectual ability to challenge intelligent design and to say, in fact, it was not true.

Here's what he said about the real impact of Darwin. Are you ready for this? He wrote this: "When Darwin deduced the theory of natural selection," you know, survival of the fittest, that the changes needed to take simply, tiny, little organisms to get to the unbelievably complex and brilliant thing that you are today? "When he deduced the theory of natural selection to explain the adaptations," meaning the mutations or the improvements and advances in complexity, "to explain those adaptations in which he had previously seen the handiwork of God," - see, Darwin himself grew up thinking, "Oh, God designed everything and God was the prime cause. He made everything." "He knew, Darwin knew, he was committing cultural murder." That's pretty much what it was, wasn't it? Darwin murdered an entire Christian worldview in Europe, which has largely been now transplanted to our culture, to the new world.

"Darwin understood immediately that if natural selection explained adaptations and evolution by descent were true, then the argument from design," intelligent design, "is dead and all that went with it, also dead, is the existence of a personal god." In other words, the only consistent Darwinist is an atheist. Free will is dead. Life after death, that idea evaporates; there is no such thing. Immutable moral laws. In other words, accountability to God who has a set of absolutely true principles that govern every human being, that's all gone; out the window. We are now sovereign in our own little worlds. We are accountable to no one. If Darwin's right, Dr. William Provine says, we are accountable to no one as long as we obey the laws of our place we're living and stay out of jail and respect the power of the police and respect our laws, we are accountable to no one and can do whatever we want; set our own standards and ideas of right and wrong.

And, he said, Darwin also killed any idea of ultimate meaning in life. In other words, life is meaningless. If you make up your meaning or have no meaning whatsoever, you can live any way you want because you're just another animal. There's nothing unique about people. You are just cousins of the whales, elephants, hippos, mosquitoes and everything else. You're just another variation of animals. This should come as a surprise to nobody, least of all to Christians, that when people are told you are nothing more really than an animal, then they act like animals. Is that a shocking concept? It shouldn't surprise anybody. If you tell people they're just animals, they will act like just animals. If you tell them they're accountable to no one, they will act like they're accountable to no one. If you tell people there is no meaning in your life, you can choose whatever meaning you want - you can define good and evil in any way you want - why should we be surprised when people define a good agenda for their day as packing, loading up their belt

with every weapon they can carry and shooting up a public place? Why should we be surprised in the least when people are given only that to have in their heads about their own identities and have zero accountability to a creator?

In fact, God has a completely different point of view and the pages of Scripture record it. Here's where I see an immense danger because Darwin's triumph in academia has been so overwhelming, the people who trashed the ideas of creation and intelligent design have all the coolness and this is a terrible danger. I want you to think about this for a minute. It's cool to destroy people's myths. It's cool to kick down fences. There is coolness in being a rebel, isn't there? There is - it's cool to do anything you want. People naturally want to throw down any sort of restraint, don't they? And right now, the atheists and evolutionists have the coolness. Christians, sometimes when they make noise in public, look like dopes and they sound like antique Bible-thumping back wizards who are not able to articulate the fact that absolutely creation is far more intellectually defensible than the stunning and impossible string of coincidences needed to explain life without a God. Am I right?

Now here's the danger: Some people who are Christians and want to be viewed as intelligent and want that coolness, try to have it both ways. So they will take the chunk of Scripture you heard shortly ago where God's six days of creative eruptions are announced and they'll say, "Well, those really weren't 24 hour days. Those were long eras. Those could have been billions of years long. So God was sort of overseeing and maybe giving a nudge here and there to the process of natural selection." And I have got some very dear friends of mine who are very brilliant people who are strongly committed to that point of view. They do not see that by trashing Genesis 1, they have broken apart the integrity of Scripture and have put at risk their very salvation. I read a very decent learned Bible scholar who said, "Well, let's not - let's not fight over this; this is a non-essential teaching of the Bible. You can let go of the first 10 chapters of Genesis without any real harm done. It's the rest of it that matters; you still have Jesus." I am here to tell you, do not let Satan steal your confidence in a six-day creation; not a six-billion or 60 billion year string of random and evolutionary coincidences because everything's connected.

In your service folder for today are just a few examples of the fact that creation is taught not just in the first chapter of Genesis. If you've got a Bible handy and you can turn your pages fast, stay with me. Isaiah 40 is just one example: "To whom will you compare me?" says the Holy One. "Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens. Who created all of these?" Well, they're the result of a big bang, aren't they? A gigantic, random explosion and they're simply the cooling off fragments of a gigantic explosion. "He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls for each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing."

Does that sound like cooling off fragments of a gigantic explosion? If you trash the first 10 chapters of Genesis, you've just eviscerated the prophet Isaiah. He says it again in 42:5: "This is what God the Lord says - the creator of the heavens who stretches them out and who gives breath to its people and life to those who walk on it." God said, "I think I made you. You are not the result of blind coincidence." Chapter 43:1: "This is what the Lord says - he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel. 'Don't fear, I've redeemed you; summoned you by name. You

are mine.'" He's not just watching us scuttle around or crawl around like little ants. He loves us. He made us to have a relationship with him. He made us miniature versions of himself with a brain that could think and he gives us his software to install in our brains so that we have a value system, so we have our bearings. We have a gyroscope to know if we're upright or tipping over. A gyroscope to know if we're right or wrong and everybody has got that conscience in his or her head because we are made to be like him.

Chapter 43:7 says, "Everyone who's called by my name whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." Dr. Provine is right; anybody who follows Darwin has killed, has put to death, this worldview; has declared war on it. Chapter 45:12: "It's I who made the earth and created mankind of it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshalled the starry hosts." When he was giving the 10 commandments and he was explaining the rules about not working on Saturday in Exodus 20, it says, "In six days, God made the heavens, earth, sea, and all that is in them," and he said it again in Exodus thirty-one. If you trash the first part of Genesis, you have also now gotten out your scissors and you have begun to take the book of Exodus apart. You even mess with Christ himself because in Mark 10, while Jesus was explaining about marriage, he said, "In the beginning, God made them male and female." So Adam and Eve are not just old wives tales or fairytales to teach a lesson like Aesop's fables. Jesus said they're real people. The book of Romans builds its entire line of argumentation about what happened to trash the spiritual condition and destiny of the human race and how was it rescued. By one man, sin entered the world, and death by sin. In this way, death came upon all because all - sinned, thank you; because all sinned. By one man. Then he said, "But by the second Adam, all have been justified." So if you trash the first 10 chapters of Genesis, you've also trashed the book of Romans and the entire New Testament message comes apart as well.

This is at risk in the world you and I have to live in. I'm not going to try to shame or embarrass anybody here but I have a fairly good supposition that some of you walked into worship this morning, personally, privately, believing in evolution. And I really want to challenge you to reexamine the foundations upon which those ideas are based. I really invite you to let God speak to you and let his powerful word tell you what really happened. Not to try to push you around but so that you will be able to fight off Satan's temptation to steal from you your confidence in where the world came from. If there was really no Adam and Eve, if Genesis 3 - and if you get rid of Genesis 1 and 2, then all the rest of it goes, too. Then there was no Adam and Eve, no newly created man and his brand new spanking wife. They got married - she got married on her birthday of her actual birth day; they both did. If you get rid of them, you have no explanation where evil came from. And if you get rid of them, you are also trashing the words of Christ and the testimony about Christ. It's all twined together. Don't let Satan steal your confidence in a six day creation.

And I know what this means; it means you might look not cool because the Darwinists own the coolness. The elites, the intellectual elites in our country, view people who believe in a six day creation as hillbillies; as people not worthy of being on their intellectual level. Laugh it off. Whose approval do you crave? Whose opinion of you matters most to you? Let me challenge you to let God's opinion of you matter more than what your intellectual peers might say, the people you work with or the place where you're studying or the people, the boss, you're trying to impress to get a promotion. Stand up for what you know to be true. And I'm not saying you've

got to go around demonstrating with placards or taping messages all over the place; you don't have to go around and start on a personal little crusade. What you do need to do is inform yourself why believing in a six day creation actually is not only intellectually acceptable, it actually happens to be the truth and it has your feet on solid ground. It also helps you keep your confidence in the only place where you know for sure that you have a Savior, Jesus Christ. The only way you know for sure that the God in heaven, the great power that's up there, loves you personally, knows your name, has washed your sins away, and has a plan for you to live eternally where you will cheat death and come out of your grave. The only way you know that is because Scripture says that Christ has been risen from the dead and all who trust and believe in him alone will rise as well.

This is what is at stake. Don't let Satan steal your confidence. You can say with absolute confidence every time you say it: I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth, of all things seen and unseen. I believe that and I hope you do, too. If you do, say "Amen."

Pastor Michael Novotny

That is such an important message that Pastor Jeske just shared with us. So many things that we value in our culture, like the dignity and worth of every human being, the fact that no matter how beautiful or how ugly, how weak or how strong, how smart or how challenged you are when it comes to academic things, your life has worth and value; that's why we care about the least of people. It all comes back to creation; that God our Father made us, he created us in his image, and we are the crown of his creation.

Would you please join me and pray?

Dear Father in Heaven, we are so grateful for the fact that we are not an accident. You created us. In the beginning, you created the heavens and the earth and you breathed breath into us so that we would be unique people. We're the crown of your creation. We are no accident and, therefore, there is great meaning in our lives. And heavenly Father, there are so many people who are going through work and life; they're dating, marrying, having children, wondering what this world is about. I thank you for the fact that creation gives each day meaning; that whatever we do in your name, it matters to you. That our lives matter to you; not some cog in some process, God. We are the people that you know and that you dearly love.

I pray every day that when we look in the mirror, we would see someone who is created by a perfect heavenly Father and that through faith in Jesus, we are your children. Please bless us all with great worth and value. Help us treat other people in the way that you say they deserve to be treated, as also fellow parts of your creation. God, fill us with great love for each other and help us be a light in this dark world. We pray this all in Jesus' name, Amen.

With Time of Grace, I'm Pastor Mike Novotny, and because in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, his grace, his purpose, your meaning, and it all starts now.



TIME OF GRACE®

Satan's Slippery Slopes: A Six-Day Creation?

Study Notes

Isaiah 40:25,26: ²⁵“To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?’ says the Holy One. ²⁶Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.”

Isaiah 42:5: “This is what God the LORD says—the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out, who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it.”

Isaiah 43:1: “But now, this is what the LORD says—he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: ‘Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.’”

Isaiah 45:12: “It is I who made the earth and created mankind on it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshaled their starry hosts.

Points to Ponder

1. Summarize what the Bible tells us in Genesis chapter 1 about the creation of the world. How many days did God take to create the world and everything in it? What did he do on the last day?
2. Read Isaiah 40:26. If you reject creation in the book of Genesis, what does this passage also tell you?
3. Read Mark 10:6-10. If you reject the creation account, what does this mean about what Jesus says here?
4. If you reject what the Bible says about creation in the first chapters of Genesis, what slippery slope does it lead you down? How are creation and Adam and Eve connected to the other parts of the Bible?

5. Why can you have complete confidence that God created the world in six days?

What God says in his Word is what matters, not the other human opinions and theories out there. You can be confident that God created the world in six days because he said he did. Picking apart the creation account leads to discrediting other parts of the Bible, including the very words of Jesus. Satan would love to lead you down that slippery slope. Be aware!

What else does God say?

Romans 11:35,36: “Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?” For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Hebrews 3:4: Every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.

Homework for Next Week

Read 2 Peter 1:16-21.