

Although the focus of this series of sermons is on creating beings in God's image, so far we have not really said much about the humans singled out for God's special project.

- ◆ We've talked about the two different dimensions of time, one where God dwells and one in which humans are to dwell.
- ◆ We've talked about how the Trinity is a community of beings within the Godhead grounded in love and relationship.
- ◆ It is God's dream to share this unique relationship of love with His created beings, summed up in the statement, "Let us make man in our image".
- ◆ We've talked about the rebellious angels who exercised their freewill, left their first estate and were banished to this earth.
- ◆ And last time we talked about the creation event where God created order out of the chaotic wasteland that existed on the face of the planet making it habitable for the various life forms with which He populated the earth.
- ◆ We looked at this process through a functional lens rather than a materialistic one.
- ◆ The emphasis was on the functions God puts in place for the inhabitants of the planet rather than a scientific explanation of how He brought them into existence.

We now return to the creation account.

- ◆ As we read in Genesis 1:2, the account of what God did begins in verse two where we find a description of the pre-creation condition of the earth.
- ◆ ***Genesis 1:2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.***
- ◆ What we find, and this is significant, material is already present; we have an existing planet covered in water and obscured in darkness.
- ◆ The words "Tohu" and "Bohu" are used to describe the planet as a wilderness or wasteland that is uninhabitable and in a present state of chaos that lacks function or order.
- ◆ This creation account given to the Israelites does not give any indication of how the planet or the cosmos came into existence.
- ◆ We know God brought the cosmos into existence, but again the bible is silent on the process He used or what transpired prior to the Genesis creation account.
- ◆ However, after the care and precision taken by God in positioning the earth in the habitable Goldilocks zone we talked about earlier, this verse's description of the chaotic state of the earth doesn't seem to resonate very well with what we discussed.
- ◆ How do we reconcile this chaotic state of affairs with the belief that the Creator God has the ability to call the universe into existence just by His word, yet now we find the earth which was "***formed to be inhabited***" in this chaotic condition? (Isaiah 45:18)

We need to look at this question in more detail as it may shed more light on the question as to the source of evil in our present world.

- ◆ And it is now to that question that we return to the confusing scene of Genesis 1:2, and ask the question, "How did the earth come to be in such a state of chaos and disorder?"
- ◆ Of course this is one of those areas where we need to tread carefully as we can't read too much into this ancient and obscure past. We simply don't know.
- ◆ However the pre-creation condition of the earth has given rise to a couple of theories which attempt to explain how God's good creation ended up in the chaos of Genesis 1:2.
- ◆ Speculation centers on one of two events.
- ◆ The first theory why the earth is in this chaotic state is as the result of the devastating impact the spiritual war between God and the rebellious angels had on planet earth when Satan was cast down to earth from heaven (Revelation 12:7-9).
- ◆ Genesis 1:2 describe the chaos that resembled the morning after the battle.
- ◆ Or to take it one step further, if it wasn't the result of the spiritual battle, it came about as a result of Satan and his demons being imprisoned on this earth in much the same way our earthly prisons become hotbeds for violence and mayhem.
- ◆ Speculation regarding a second cause involves a cataclysmic natural event such as the one that occurred about 65 million years ago that caused dinosaurs to become extinct.

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- ◆ While there are several theories as to the cause of their demise, the fossil record has led scientists to believe a huge comet or asteroid six to 12 miles wide slammed into the region that is now part of the eastern coast of Mexico which at the time was covered with water.
- ◆ The impact of this object would have caused something equivalent to what we today call a nuclear winter following a thermonuclear exchange.
- ◆ Darkness would have covered the entire earth for many months, due to the huge amounts of vapor and dust that were thrown into the atmosphere and the earth would have sunk into a deep freeze while the dust hung in the air.
- ◆ A global wildfire would have destroyed half of all living things and water would have been poisoned in most places.
- ◆ In any event, the account of Genesis 1 describes God's renewal of the earth's functions bringing order out of chaos.

Although these are only theories, there are a number of benefits that make them worth considering.

- ◆ In subsequent developments, God gave the newly created Adam and Eve a couple of curious commands.
- ◆ First, "to subdue the earth" (Genesis 1:28) and second, to "keep" or "guard" the garden (Genesis 2:15).
- ◆ Later on we have the appearance of the menacing serpent that tempts Adam and Eve to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
- ◆ These commands would seem puzzling unless there was forces at work in opposition to what was going on in the newly created garden.
- ◆ These become more apparent as the story progresses.
- ◆ Another benefit of these scenarios is it avoids running into conflict with modern scientific theories concerning the age of the earth estimated to be 4.55 billion years old.
- ◆ The time span between God's original creation of the universe and the renewal after the subsequent destruction allows for a wide range of possibilities which removes the pressure to reconcile the Bible narrative and modern scientific theory.
- ◆ The break between these two events allows for the millions of years of fossil evidence revealed from geological and paleontological discoveries.
- ◆ These discoveries point to a landscape dominated by flesh eating dinosaurs, volcanoes, earthquakes and other natural disasters.
- ◆ One has to ask the question, did the presence of the now deposed Satan and his demons have something to do with fashioning this terrifying "red with tooth and claw" landscape.

This scenario introduces another reoccurring theme in scripture.

- ◆ There are times when God allows evil to run its full devastating course before finally stepping in and destroying the source of the wickedness.
- ◆ We have the example of Noah's flood where the wickedness of man had become so depraved and pervasive, God had to take the drastic step of obliterating its source and starting over again with righteous Noah's family (Genesis 6-8).
- ◆ It's interesting that in both cases, floodwaters were used to bring an end to the wickedness engulfing the earth (Genesis 1:2)
- ◆ We also have the example of Sodom and Gomorrah where evil was allowed to run its full devastating course before God finally stepped in and wiped out it's source (Genesis 18:20-19:29).
- ◆ Bible prophecy predicts a time at the end of history when the "dragon, that ancient serpent who is the devil and Satan" who has been locked up in the "bottomless pit" for a 1000 years will "be released from his prison" and will once again be allowed to wreak wickedness on the inhabitants of the earth (Revelation 20:1-2,7-8).
- ◆ However, this is the devil's and evil's final desperate act.
- ◆ But in this case, before evil is allowed to run its full course that would result in the annihilation of humanity, God steps in and destroys him and his followers in the lake of fire.
- ◆ ***Matthew 24:21-22 For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. ²² "If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.***
- ◆ Never again will this vile creature plague the cosmos with his loathsome evil.

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- ◆ And as was the case back in Genesis 1, the Lord will create a “new heaven and a new earth,” one without any evil or wickedness of any kind (Revelation 21:1).
- ◆ Throughout scripture there is this pattern of creation to chaos to renewal.
- ◆ God steps in to restore order out of the chaos created by evildoers.
- ◆ But as to the question about the cataclysmic event which brought an end to the pre-adamic landscape of the dinosaurs, could it be possible God used this event to bring an end to this demonic inspired terrifying “red with tooth and claw” landscape in the same way He brought an end to the evil in these other accounts?
- ◆ This chaotic carnivorous world by all accounts seems incompatible with the nature of peace, love and perfection of the Creator God and instead points to a cosmic rebel who now misuses his power to corrupt God’s good creation.
- ◆ Regardless as to how this chaotic landscape came about, it would have been necessary for God to bring an end to this chaos before creating man.
- ◆ We will come back to this thought later when we discuss the subject of “natural” evil.
- ◆ However what we are left with is a scenario where there is a powerful cosmic rebel who is still confined to God’s good earth into which God is about to create mankind.