

God Pronounces that His Creation is Very Good

Genesis 1:28-31

Genesis 1:28-31: *“Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” 29 And God said, “See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. 30 Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food”; and it was so. 31 Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”*

Background Notes

The crowning act of God’s creative work was the creation of Man. Adam and Eve were created on the Day Six of creation week and then God rested on the seventh day. What a wonderful and beautiful and concise account of the creation week we have in this first chapter of the Bible! We believe that it is the true account of creation, because Genesis 1 is part of the inspired Word of God.

Did you know that there are other ancient accounts of creation? Did you ever hear of the Enuma Elish? Enuma Elish is an ancient Babylonian and Assyrian account of creation. It was recorded earlier than the Genesis account of creation in the Bible. That is, it was recorded before the time of Moses, the writer of Genesis. Critics of the Bible love to point this out, and say that Moses borrowed and copied from Enuma Elish. Therefore, the later Biblical account of creation is only the “Hebrew monotheistic spin” on earlier legends.

Now there are some similarities between Enuma Elish and the Biblical account, such as the earth was at first a mass of water, then came the firmament, and then the stars were formed after the formation of the earth. There are some similarities, but there are many differences between Enuma Elish and the Biblical account. Enuma Elish is polytheistic and teaches, for example, that matter is eternal and that man was created as a result of a fight between the gods!

How do we answer the claim of the critics that Moses borrowed and copied from the earlier Enuma Elish? We believe that even though Moses wrote the biblical account in about 1500 BC, later than the writing of Enuma Elish, we believe that the biblical account is the true account. Moses was inspired by God to write Genesis, including the creation account. Moses may have had some earlier written sources to work with -- **true** sources, which even predate Enuma Elish. However, the fact that there are some similarities between the Genesis account of creation and the account in Enuma Elish is to be expected. It doesn’t indicate that Moses copied or borrowed from this earlier pagan account. No! Both accounts are

based on the actual historical event of creation week. Enuma Elish is the distorted pagan account, while the Bible is the true inspired account.

Doctrinal Point

1. God said that the ruler of His finished creation was Man.

Verse 28, *“Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”* Right from the beginning, mankind was put in charge of the earth. This meant that man could develop and use the earth’s resources. This cultural mandate is the biblical basis for science and technology. Notice from verses 29-30 that both man and animals were vegetarians, or herbivores, before the Fall. In the beginning, man’s dominion did not include permission to kill animals for food. Man was only given permission to eat meat after the Flood -- check that out in Genesis 9:3.

When God gave mankind dominion over the earth, He didn’t mean that man could do whatever he wanted to the earth and its resources. No! To have dominion meant to care for the earth and its animals and its natural resources. Man was never given permission to indiscriminately chop down all the forests or ruthlessly hunt down all the animals or carelessly pollute the atmosphere. Certainly not! So, environmentalism is good -- but extreme environmentalism is not! There is a biblical basis for taking responsibility for the environment. However, to take that to an extreme and say that you can’t chop down a single tree or use a single animal for food (or something like that) --that would be an unbiblical extreme. Mankind was given responsibility to care for the earth. What a great and responsible position man has -- dominion over the earth!

Listen to the words of Psalm 8:3-9,

“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 are mindful of him,

And the son of man that You visit him?

5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels,^[a]

And You have crowned him with glory and honor.

6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands;

You have put all things under his feet,

7 All sheep and oxen—

Even the beasts of the field,

8 The birds of the air,

And the fish of the sea

That pass through the paths of the seas.

9 O LORD, our Lord,

How excellent is Your name in all the earth!

I'm also reading Psalm 115:16, "*The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD's; but the earth He has given to the children of men.*"

Now we know that because of sin and the Fall, the earth is no longer subject to man as God intended it to be. People have abused His high calling of having dominion over this earth in many ways, but there is coming a day in the future when the whole earth, and the universe as well, will be subjected to the perfect Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. When He returns, the messianic aspect of Psalm 8 will be fulfilled. Read Hebrews 2 in this connection. When the Lord returns and sets up His glorious kingdom here on the earth, we will see this first Doctrinal Point carried out as God intended it. God said that the ruler of His finished creation was man.

2. God said that the condition of His finished creation was good.

In fact, God said that it was *very good*! Look at verse 31, "*Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.*" As God looked down on His creation, He was pleased. It was very good! Everything was beautiful and harmonious. There doesn't seem to have been a jarring note in the whole universe.

Now let me ask you a question. Do you think that God could have made such a statement if He was looking down on an earth that was covered with layer upon layer of geologic strata containing a fossil record of millions and millions of years of death? And not just peaceful death, but violent death -- a fossil record of violent death resulting from millions of years of tooth and claw survival of the fittest? That's what you have to believe if you accept theistic evolution or progressive creationism, or any other geologic age/ day = age theory, including the gap theory. I think that Genesis 1:31, this verse alone, completely eliminates any of those theories! The Scriptures, such as Romans 5, clearly indicate that death came into the world as a result of *man's sin*. Romans 8 clearly indicates that man's sin resulted in not only *man's* death, but death in the *animal* kingdom as well. Read Romans 5 and 8. Genesis 1:31 strongly suggests that death was completely foreign to God's finished work of creation: "*Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.*" The condition of His finished creation was very good. Death came in as a result of the Fall of Man.

Practical Application

Let's worship God for His wonderful creation!

Just last week I was in the staff lounge at Emmaus Bible College with a couple of my faculty colleagues, and we were disgusted because some tiny ants had gotten into the doughnuts that we were going to have for our coffee break. Some

of us ate them anyway -- the doughnuts, that is -- well, maybe we got a few ants in there too! But the whole conversation turned in the direction of the worship of God when we began to talk about the marvel of the brain of those tiny ants, and what they could do. You see, man thinks he is so great when he comes up with a chip smaller than the size of a postage stamp for the brain of a computer. Well, think of the size of the tiny ant's brain, and yet what it can do. It's amazing! Those tiny ants are a part of God's wonderful creation.

Did you know that God's wonderful creation will be one of the themes of our worship of God forever? In Revelation 4:10-11 we're given a glimpse of worship around the throne of God, *"the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:*

*11 " You are worthy, O Lord,^[a]
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist^[b] and were created."*

We will worship God forever for his wonderful creation. Why not now? Let's worship God for His wonderful creation!