Gen 1:14-27

We are in Genesis chapter 1. To review, I stated at the outset there are only two world views that explain the origin of our universe, and the multiplicity of life forms we see today. The most prevalent view is the secular postmodern world view which holds that all life is the product of random forces. The universe started from an unexplained and self-appearing infinitesimal point of unimaginable mass and energy and exploded into being at which point time began and the material world came into existence. Life came into being with a random organization of molecules to form unique structures that had the ability to self-replicate. These structures adapted and assumed greater complexity as time progressed, then differentiated themselves into different forms which today now manifest themselves as all the various life forms we see around us. Note the ingredients of your existence; you are a material being, the product of a long history of chance molecular associations and mutations, some good, some bad, which now has produced you. The concept of a soul or conscience is a social construct. It exists in your head because it was inculcated by the social environment in which you grew up as a mechanism to get along and survive. Your existence is explained only by chance and time. When you die that is the end. A thinking person would ask, "Why are you alive then? What is the purpose of life? The honest postmodern response is there is no purpose. It is all meaningless. Therefore meaning and purpose have to be self-defined. Your destiny is self-determined. There is no truth outside of yourself or what your culture decides is truth. Because you are material, and hence no different than any other living creature save for your larger brain, you have no moral claim on being "better" than any other living thing. Order within society is dependent upon personal and collective power, therefore ethical, and moral decisions are relative, and accountability is only to those with greater power than you. If we could reduce this view to its foundation these are the suppositions upon which it rests,

1. Life is random.
2. You are material in nature.
3. Conscience, morality, and ethics are all relative social constructs to facilitate our genetic perpetuation.
4. There is no objective truth outside of yourself.
5. Meaning is self-defined.
6. Order and relationships are dependent on collective and personal power.

This is the world view the majority of the western world now embraces. The theistic world view, the view the western world once embraced, has now been discarded. But just because it has been discarded does not mean it is not true. Quite the contrary, truthful things are often discarded when those truths get in the way of our will. But here we are. The theistic world view claims there is an eternal God who has no beginning and no end who created the world and all life upon it. He not only created it, but he now also sustains it, and is sovereign over it. He designed it for a purpose. It is not random. He gave it design, order, and beauty. There is a beginning to it and an end. Genesis chapter one is the God given record of how he did it, and the pinnacle of God's creative act was the creation of man and woman as noted in verses 26-31 and which the whole chapter builds up to. God has a special purpose for man, to have dominion over all the other things God created. We are to be his regent. Therefore our meaning and purpose in life is centered in what God made us to be. Our purpose is not self-defined or self-

determined. This world view claims God gave us his moral law through revelation. He revealed it to us. Thus truth is objective. It is true whether we agree to it or not. It is outside of us. Therefore truth is not a social construct. God also endowed us with a soul; that part of us that has rationality, mentation, emotion, and a conscience that discerns his objective moral standard. We are therefore moral beings, accountable to God for our choices and actions. We are created as God says, in his image. Image means to reflect. We reflect His creative genius. Our relationships and social structures are to reflect God's moral order. They are not power based. This is the theistic world view to which we hold and which is in direct opposition to the post modern one.

But here is a word of warning. Many who claim the theistic world view as their own have imported some of the post modern view. And this is most evident it trying to rationalize the creation narrative of Genesis 1 and 2 with what modern science teaches us. What do I mean? Some Christians hold to the idea of theistic evolution. In other words, God created the world but then set in motion the process of evolution and here we are. Others claim God created, but the Biblical times are wrong since we have documented evidence that man existed way before the Bible account.

But you cannot rationalize the WOG. We must take it as God wrote it. When our understanding of science and the Bible conflict, we must remember something about science. Science is based on the testing of facts. Science gathers data. We then make inferences from those data points and test that inference. If that inference accounts for the facts and makes predictions that are consistent over time, we accept it as truth. But sometimes new facts become available that challenge the inference. If the inference can account for the new fact –we still regard the inference as true. But if it cannot account for the new fact –we have to change the inference and in a sense the truth of what we once knew to be true. So it is with Genesis one. The WOG is true. Our understanding of the facts must be seen through this lens.

Last week we covered the first three days of creation and today we will cover the remaining three. What I want you to see with the whole of these days is God is leading up to the creation of man. God is getting everything ready for the end of the chapter when he culminates his creative act with the formation of man and woman. We have noted each day of creation follows a similar pattern:

a. The first step is the introductory creative word, *and God said*. This is vitally important as creation is a function of God's word. He says and it comes to be.
b. The second step is the declaration of His will, *Let there be*.
c. The third step is the fulfillment, *and there was*.
d. The fourth step is the action itself, *and God made*.
e. The fifth step is the act of naming or blessing, *and God called*, or *God blessed*.
f. The sixth step is God's evaluation containing an expression of satisfaction, *and God saw that it was good*.
g. The seventh step is one of termination, *and it was evening and it was morning* followed by a number.

The Fourth Day, 14-19.

Vs 14a, *Then God said, "Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night*.

In the first three days of creation there are three separations:

a. Light from dark, (vs 3).
b. The atmospheric waters from the terrestrial waters, (vs 6).
c. The land from the sea, (vs 9).

Here in verse 14, we have the fourth: the separation of the day from the night. God creates lights to separate the day and the night. The word *lights* is inclusive of all the heavenly bodies (the stars, sun, and moon). Stars give off light, but it is a different light of the first three days which was from God himself.

Vs 14b, *Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years.*

The purpose of the lights are given in verse 14b. They are to be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years. Their purpose is to serve four functions:

a. Let them be signs. Ps 19:1 says they declare the glory of God. Jer 31:35-36 says they are a sign of Israel's perpetuity.
b. To mark the seasons. With the creation of the sun and the earth orbiting the sun, we have four seasonal events: two solstices and two equinoxes which mark the four seasons.
c. To mark the days. We have the creation of the sun and moon.
d. To mark the years. As the earth rotates about the sun, we can mark the time as measured against the stars of the night, and the change of the four seasons.

Vs 15, *Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth." And that is what happened*.

Verse 15, is the fulfillment of God's declaration of verse 14.

Vs 16, *God made two great lights—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars*.

Verses 16-18 expand on the general commandment given in verse 14. God specifies two bodies, the sun and the moon, to rule or govern, the day and the night.

Vs 17, *God set these lights in the sky to light the earth*.

Verse 17 simply emphasizes verse 15. God places the stars, the sun, and the moon into the heavens for the purpose given in verse 18:

Vs 18, *to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good*.

The word govern here means to oversee, to rule, and exercise dominion.

Note the parallel to the first day. On the first day God separated the chaotic darkness of vs 2 with his glory light of vs 3.

Here, describing the fourth day in verse 18, God separates the light and darkness of these created bodies (the sun and moon). This is the fourth and final separation which Genesis 1 describes.

Vs 19, *And evening passed and morning came, marking the fourth day*.

We now have the conclusion of the fourth day.

The Fifth Day, 20-23.

Vs 20*, Then God said, "Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind*."

The fifth day of creation parallels the second. On the second, the atmospheric waters were separated from the terrestrial waters. So now on the fifth day, both spaces are filled with creatures: fish and all the other life of the sea is created for the terrestrial waters and birds are created to fill the skies.

Vs 21, *So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good*.

Verse 21 records the creation of both the creatures of the sea and air. Note again they produce offspring of their own kind. In other words, variation can occur within a species, but one species cannot become another.

God was pleased with what He had created and again, as in past days, He called it good.

Vs 22, *Then God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth*."

Verse 22 is the first recorded saying of God to his creatures. He blesses them. To bless means to favor. God commands them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the seas and the earth. When God creates it always leads to abundance.

Vs 23, *And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day*.

Verse 23 marks the end of the fifth day and now we move the sixth.

The Sixth Day, 24-31.

Two major creative acts are accomplished on the sixth day, the creation of the animal kingdom and the creation of man.

<u>Animal Life, 24-25.</u>

Vs 24*, Then God said, "Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals." And that is what happened*.

The purpose of the sixth day parallels the third. On the third day the land and sea was separated, and vegetation was created. Now on day 6, we have creatures filling the land.

The phrase, "*let the earth produce*," means the creatures were formed from the earth as 2:19 also makes clear, *So the Lord God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky*.

Note three categories of animals were created.

a. *Livestock*: some translations have cattle, but this category is best thought of as domesticated animals.
b. *Small animals that scurry along the ground*: some translations have creeping things. These would include both large and small animals with no legs or short legs that move close to the ground -i.e. most reptiles and amphibians.
c. *The wild animals*: this refers to every other creature not mentioned in the other two categories.

Vs 25, *God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good*.

Verse 25 records the creation of all these creatures and again they are to follow the pattern of producing offspring of their own kind, allowing for variation, but not the changing of species.

Note again God was pleased with what he had made and called it good.

<u>The Creation of Man, 26-31.</u>

Vs 26a, *Then God said,*

Then God said, as on the third day, there is more than one thing created on the sixth day. God first created the animal kingdom, and now He creates man. Man is created last as man is the high point of God's creative work.

Vs 26b, *Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us.*

The phrase *let us* is in the pleural indicating God exists as more than one personality.

The word human beings, is the Hebrew word *Adam*, which means man and becomes Adam's name.

Note man is made in God's *image, to be like us.* The word *image*, means imitation. Man was made as an imitation of God. The phrase *like us*, again notes this idea, while the word *us* denotes God's pleural personality. This phrase, "*in our image, to be like us*" alone warrants a month worth of sermons, but let me summarize in just a few words. We were made to be an imitation of God; a visible expression, a reflection, and a manifestation of who He is. Like a great piece of art, we reflect and manifest the talent, creativity, and beauty of the artist. In other words. You get some idea of the artist, by looking at the art.

This image manifests itself in three ways (from Got questions.org)

a. There is a likeness Mentally. We were created as rational, volitional agents. In other words, we have reason and choice, which reflects God's intellect and freedom. Anytime someone writes, calculates, invents, analyzes, composes, or uses any of the amazing rational functions of our brain, we are proclaiming our mental likeness.

b. There is a likeness Morally. We were created without sin, and hence were pure and innocent. God called us good. Though now marred by sin, we have an inherent moral compass hard wired into us. Whenever we write a law, do a wrong and feel shame, praise good behavior, or lament the moral failings of someone or society, we reflect our moral likeness.
c. There is a likeness Socially. We were created for fellowship; initially with God and then one another (the creation of Eve). This reflects God's triune nature and the communion God enjoys with Himself. When we have coffee with friends, get married, or relate to others at work, we reflect our social likeness.

This likeness therefore gives man a uniqueness apart from all other creatures (from Josh McDowell Ministries). We are unique,

a. In Position. Because we have God's likeness, we are above every other part of God's creation.
b. In Value. Because each one of us is created by God, and bears God's image, we are infinitely valuable, of equal worth, and deserving of dignity; and because we are God's regents, any attack on a human being can be viewed as an attack on God himself.
c. In Purpose. Because we higher (mentally, morally, and socially) than any other creature, we are given the unique purpose of stewarding all the rest of creation. This is noted in verse 26c.

Vs 26c, *They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth,[c] and the small animals that scurry along the ground*."

Verse 26 outlines man's purpose: he is *to reign over* all the other creatures. The word *reign over*, also means dominion. Note man's purpose as ruler is a consequence of being made in God's image. Because man is in position and value greater than the other creatures, He is given authority to rule over them.

This idea of dominion is also mentioned in Ps 8:4-8, *what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them?[c] 5 Yet you made them only a little lower than God[d] and crowned them[e] with glory and honor. 6 You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority—7 the flocks and the herds and all the wild animals, 8 the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and everything that swims the ocean currents*.

Vs 27, *So God created human beings[d] in his own image. In the image of God, he created them; male and female he created them*.

Verse 27 records the fulfillment of verse 26. Verse 27 also notes a gender distinction. Humanity is created as two distinct entities, men, and women. Both equally bear the image of God. This means they are both intrinsically equal in worth, in their rights, and in their call to exercise dominion in God's name over the earth (from the Image of God by Glenn Sunshine). We could spend much more time on this subject, but in the interest of time we will move on.