

Genesis 1:1-2; Romans 1:20a
In the Beginning: God!
WRCoB 9.4.22

One day a child asked her fundamentalist mother
The question, "How were people made?"

She responded, "Well, Adam and Eve made babies
Then their babies became adults and made babies
And so on and so forth."

The child then went to her very progressive father
And asked the same question
"How were people made?"

And he answered, "We were first apes, then we evolved
To become like we are now, humans."

She went back to her mother
And told her that she had lied to her!

But her mother replied, "I did not!"
"Your father was talking about his side of the family!"

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The Holy Scriptures, this book we call the Bible
Begins with a faith statement.

It is simple, yet majestic
Profound yet perfectly clear
Unapologetic and straight to the point

1

**Genesis 1:1 NIV In the beginning God created the
heavens and the earth.**

Faith in God begins with these ten words.

We may argue about how God created

Whether a day in the Creation story is a 24-hour period
Or an eon, or a geological period

We may argue whether it happened
Through the theory of evolution or creationism
Or maybe some combination of the two

But I doubt we here would have any trouble agreeing
It was God who did the creating.

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The Bible is an account that begins with God.
And throughout shows God's mighty works in history
And ends with God.

It is a record of God's relationship with God's creation
And most notably with humankind.

The foundation of Christian theology begins right here
In these first ten words
With the awareness that God was God
Before creation was creation.

That creation wasn't just a cosmic accident
That the universe didn't just explode in being.

But rather the heavens and the earth
Were created by God with intention and purpose.

That's a wonderful thing to believe!

That there is design and meaning in the universe.

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Now having said that
I don't believe the Genesis 1 is a science lesson.

I don't think it needs to be taken literally.

To me, it is a poetic take on the wildly fantastic truth
That God's intention, design, purpose, and methodology
Is intricately wrapped and woven into Creation.

I believe science and the Christian faith are compatible.

We do not have to choose one or the other.

In fact, science has helped shed new light
On ancient Scripture.

For instance, we read

2

Psalm 104:5 NIV He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved.

Well, we know for a fact, the earth does move, don't we?

Because of science, we no longer believe in geocentrism
The understanding that the earth
Is the center of the universe
And everything revolves around it.

Copernicus proved in 1543
The sun is center of our solar system.
The earth revolves around it.

So that now when we read passages like

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Ecclesiastes 1:5 CEV The sun comes up, the sun goes down; it hurries right back to where it started from.

We read it knowing our understandings have changed.

St Augustine as early as 400 AD
Understood the possibility that creation is not fixed.

Things change.

Quoting from Alister McGrath

In an article from Christianity Today

Concerning St Augustine's view on creation:

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Augustine draws out the following core themes: God brought everything into existence in a single moment of creation. Yet the created order is not static. God endowed it with the capacity to develop.

Good summation on contemporary scientific thought.

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Now some churches say if you believe in God
You can't believe in evolution.

The secular world says if you believe in evolution
You can't believe in God.

Tim Keller, retired pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian in NYC
Wrote an article entitled
Creation, Evolution, and Christian Laypeople.

In it, he argues we don't have to choose

Between an anti-science religion or an anti-religious science.

For today's millennial, that's a breath of fresh air!

Keller, is an evangelical Christian
Who believes Genesis 1 should not be taken literally.

He quotes from Edward J. Young, a Hebrew scholar
That the account of creation in Genesis 1
Is written in *exalted, semi-poetical language.*

It has a certain Hebrew cadence to it
With repetitions and refrains.

Keller wants to draw new believers to faith.

And he believes you can do so
Without having to compromise their faith
Or their scientific worldview.

Keller believes too many people reject the Christian faith
Because of the demand to believe
The creation account as historical.

Tim Keller's conclusion?

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Christians who are seeking to correlate Scripture and science must have a "bigger tent" than either the anti-scientific religionists or the anti-religious scientists.

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So then, what do we do with the story of creation?

Write it off as antiquated
Since we can't depend on it
As the actual historical account of creation.

Discard it as a piece of nonsense?

Absolutely not!

It's a wonderful story that conveys basic truths
In a beautiful literary fashion.

I believe there are many truths found in the Creation account

The first truth found in Genesis 1 is this.

Before there was creation, there was God.

God is not the product of Creation.

But rather Creation is the product of God.

Another truth is that it was God who did the creating.

That it wasn't just some weird cosmic accident.

Still another basic truth is that the apex of creation
Was the creation of humankind
Created in God's own image.

And that we are to be caretakers of God's creation.

And another really important truth is
That what God created God called good.

That Creation in its original form was perfect
Until we humans got involved.

And lastly, the truth is that we can discover God in Creation.

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**Psalm 19:1 NIV The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim God's handiwork.**

Theologically speaking, this is known as general revelation
The belief that God can be discovered in creation.

An example of general revelation is today's text.

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**Romans 1:20 NLT For ever since the world was created,
people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything
God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—
his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no
excuse for not knowing God.**

Another example of general revelation
And by far my favorite
Is found in the Book of Job

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Job 12:7-10 NRSVUE

**7 “But ask the animals, and they will teach you,
the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
8 ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you,
and the fish of the sea will declare to you.
9 Who among all these does not know
that the hand of the Lord has done this?
10 In his hand is the life of every living thing
and the breath of every human being.**

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And so, between creationism and evolution
How do we make a choice?

How do we stay faithful to Scripture
Without rejecting scientific evidence?

Francis S. Collins, director of the National Institute of Health
And head of the Human Genome Project
Says you don't have to choose.

Dr Collins is a Christian and a scientist.

In a book entitled
*The Language of God:
A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*

Dr Collins reconciles his Christian faith with scientific theory.

9

*God is the author of all truth. You can find [God] in the
laboratory as well as in the cathedral. [God] is the God of the
Bible; [God] is the God of the genome. [God] did it all.*

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I believe we can incorporate faith and science.

I believe we can harmonize the two
Without denigrating our position on either.

The following five affirming statements helps me.

I got the idea for these statements from the organization
American Scientific Association.
A group of evangelical Christian scientists.

10

1. Not contrary to science, we can accept the Bible as divinely inspired, trustworthy and the authority on matters of faith and practice.
2. Also, not contrary to science, we can accept a God who is found in three natures, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. Compatible with science, we can accept Jesus as God's fullest expression and our redeemer and the author of new life.
4. Compatible with our faith, we can accept God's creative order and presence in the universe and accept the findings found in scientific investigation.
5. Compatible with faith and science, we accept our responsibilities in God's creative order as caretakers of creation through science and technology to further the common good for all humanity and the whole world.

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In the beginning, before there was anything, there was God.

And God, in God's infinite wisdom and supreme powers
In an unfathomable and phenomenally spectacular way
Spoke and the universe came into being!

And it was absolutely perfect!

It was absolutely incredible!

Filled with complexities and intricacies
Beyond our comprehension
And beauty beyond our imagination.

God spoke and out of God's mouth
Came quarks and galaxies.

And God saw all that was created
And God called it good, so, so, so, good

And God created humankind in God's own image.

And God loved us so.

Just ask the animals
They will tell you
They will teach you

Who among us does not know?

The hand of the Lord has done this!

In God's hand is the life of every creature
And the breath of all humanity.

And all of God's people say . . . Amen!