

“GOD – OUR MAKER”
Psalms 8, 19, 104, 111, 148
Lesson 1
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I really enjoyed preparing for this lecture about Creation. I even went to Kentucky to see the Creation Museum! Ok, I admit my family happens to live in Kentucky, so that's the real reason for my trip!

Our lesson this week is from five psalms which focus on God our Maker-Creator. Creation captivated the psalmists who witnessed the beauty around them and above them and expressed awe for the works of God's hands.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1) When painters, sculpturers, quilters begin creating, they all start with something that already exists. However, **the** Creator is in a category all by Himself because before “in the beginning,” there was nothing to begin with.

You've probably heard the story of a scientist who told God, “Humans don't need you anymore. We can clone people, manipulate atoms, and build molecules. And now, we **too** can build a human out of nothing.” God listened patiently as the scientist challenged Him to who could make a better human being. God agreed and told the scientist, “You go first, but let's do this like I did when I created Adam.” In great delight to show up God, the scientist bent down to get some dirt to make his human. Then God said, “No, no, no. That's **my** dirt. You get your **own**.”

Creation is woven throughout Scripture:

- God said, “I am the **LORD**, the Maker of all things...I made the earth and created man on it.” (Isaiah 44:24; Is 45:12)
- The Lord told Job: I laid the foundation of the earth, gave boundaries to the sea, caused the dawn to rise in the east, spread daylight everywhere. I bring on the night, send rain, make grass grow, direct constellations, create the seasons, give intuition, instinct, and provide food. (Job 38)
- Nehemiah confirmed, “You made the skies and the heavens and all the stars. You made the earth and the seas and everything in them.” (Nehemiah 9:6)
- About Jesus, the Apostle John declared, “All things were made by Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” (John 1:3)
- “He made the earth by His power. He established the world by His wisdom and stretched out the heavens at His discretion.” (Jeremiah 10:12) “He is the Maker of all things.” (Jeremiah 51:19)

The psalms we studied this week contain the most concentrated language about God our Maker and each declares praise for the Lord. The phrase, “Praise the Lord” appears for the first time in the Bible in Psalm 104. In Hebrew, Praise the Lord is *Hallelu Yah* – meaning Praise Yahweh. From it we get the word “hallelujah.” Scholars say the phrase is saying to others, “Hey, there, Praise the Lord!”

I'll touch on this week's psalms and then focus on:

- WHAT God created
- HOW God created
- WHY God created

Psalm 8 was addressed directly to God. "LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (Psalm 8:1) The author, David, opened his psalm proclaiming that God's name is "majestic," meaning "excellent, exalted, great, powerful, magnificent." This psalm is meant to be sung to the Lord. Michael W. Smith thought so when he wrote the song, "How Majestic is Your Name."

Charles Spurgeon said Psalm 8 was the psalm of the astronomer. Thousands of years ago when David was a shepherd tending sheep in the fields, he probably sat on a hillside gazing up at the sky, admiring the beauty of the heavens. (I doubt there was much smog back then!) When David marveled at the greatness of the Creator, he wondered how could the One who created such splendor care about him.

In 1969 another man wondered the same thing. Astronaut Buzz Aldrin stood on the moon's surface and gazed at a sight very few humans will see – space and earth from the moon. During a television interview in space, Aldrin read aloud Psalm 8:3,4 from the King James Bible: "When I consider thy heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon, and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man that thou visitest him?" Three thousand years apart, two different men looked up at the sky and saw the same God.

It's hard to grasp that the only perfect Being loves us as deeply as He does, and yet He "made [us] a little lower than the angels..." We are, "...the crown of His creation." And He gave us dominion over everything He made: "You made [us] rulers over the works of your hands...flocks and herds... animals of the wild...birds in the sky...fish that swim the paths of the seas." (Psalm 8:5,6-8)

A.W. Tozer wrote, "The believer falls to their knees and whispers, "God." The unbeliever kneels too; not to worship but to figure out how things came to be. The believer adores. The unbeliever [tries to] explain."

Psalm 19 is one of the most beloved of the psalms. Perhaps as David continued to marvel at the majesty of the skies, he was inspired to write: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge." (Psalm 19:1,2)

One way God reveals Himself to humanity is through nature, speaking wordlessly through His creation. "Creation has no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth." (Psalm 19:3-4) Have you ever stood in silence listening to the ebb and flow of the ocean; or to the wind howling; or when a storm is raging with thunder? I consider those to be voices of His creation. Creation speaks a language everyone can understand.

We learn that God is also revealed through His written Word, which David called God's law, statutes, precepts, commands, decrees. (Psalm 19:7-9) We don't usually love laws. Laws keep us from doing things that we want to do. For example, did you hear about the man who was irate after he got

pulled over for speeding? He complained to his friends, "It's like the cops don't know the speed limit is different when you're listening to The Rolling Stones."

From Psalm 19 and 111, David wrote that God's law is:

- Perfect; complete; nothing is left out (Psalm 19:7)
- Revives one's life (Psalm 19:7)
- Trustworthy. (Psalm 19:7) God's spiritual laws are like the railing on a bridge; there to guide and protect us.
- Leads to wisdom those who acknowledge their sin. Psalm 19:7
- Gladdens the heart and enlightens spiritual eyes. (Psalm 19:8)
- "More valuable than gold and sweeter than honey." (Psalm 19:10). When we study God's Word, may we all see "gold" shimmering and taste its sweetness.

Psalm 19:14 has served as a model for hymns, prayers, and praise throughout Christian history. David said to God, "May these words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to You, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." (Psalm 19:14) We're to meditate on His Word "day and night" (Psalm 1:2) and "consider all [His] works and meditate on all [His] mighty deeds." (Psalm 77:12) "The words of our mouth" are what others will hear us speak. The "meditation of our heart" is what God hears. Both are to be pleasing to Him.

Psalm 104 follows the account in Genesis of the six days of creation. The psalmist closed his psalm with praise in recognition of the God of Creation: "May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in His works." (Psalm 104:31)

The psalmist of Psalm 111 loved to praise the Lord for the works He had done. "Great are the works of the LORD... glorious and majestic are His deeds." (Psalm 111:2-3) I think God likes show-and-tell. He wants us to enjoy His creations.

There's a great deal of knowledge in this world but not a great deal of wisdom. The psalmist concluded with an oft-quoted verse: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow His precepts have good understanding." (Psalm 111:10) The first principle in gaining wisdom is to have a reverential awe, that is, a holy fear for the Lord. The second is to obey His instructions resulting in understanding of Who the Lord is.

Psalm 148 is a worshipful psalm exalting the name of the Lord and rejoicing in His works. All creation was summoned to worship the Lord. Those who should praise Yahweh were divided into two groups. First, the heavenly realm - everything in the heavens; the heights above, His angels, His heavenly hosts, sun, moon, stars, highest heavens, and waters above the skies. (Psalm 148:1-4) Second, the earthly realm - everything of the earth: sea creatures, lightning, hail, snow, clouds, winds, mountains, hills, trees, animals, birds. All were invited to worship God. (Psalm, 148:7-11)

How could elements of nature and creatures incapable of speaking, praise God? I mentioned earlier that nature can have distinctive "voices" such as with thunder and ocean waves. Consider that **all** creation may have God-given sounds; sounds not discernible to us. Perhaps creation praises God by fulfilling their God-given purposes, such as producing fruit, oxygen, water, causing seasons to change.

The psalmist tells us **why** creation is to praise the Lord: “For His name alone is exalted.” (Psalm 148:13) At the heart of praise is God’s “Name,” that is, His character, Who He is, what He has done. The Son of God taught, “You should pray like this: Our Father in heaven, Your name be honored as holy.” (Matthew 6:9)

The psalmist closed with an awesome promise: “He has raised up for His people a horn, the praise of all His faithful servants of Israel, the people close to His heart.” (Psalm 148:14) The horn is a symbol of strength. God promised Israel there would be a King who would bring them victory. We know Him as the King of Kings and all creation will be rescued by Him.

WHAT GOD CREATED

Consider:

- Breathtaking landscapes: Yellowstone, Grand Tetons, Mt. Everest, Great Barrier Reef
- Various and numerous plants and vegetation. Have you heard of diatoms? There's like 2 million species of them! In a teaspoon of lake water there may be a million diatoms whose job is to make oxygen so animals in the water can breathe.
- The multitudes of creatures in the waters and on land. Our triune Creator filled the planet with diversity in the animal kingdom.
- In a book called, “A View From The Zoo”, the Christian author wrote that God put into existence 4,400,000 different species during the creation week. That's about 51 different anatomies per second, each with its own behavior, unique appearance, and purpose. Although for the life of me, I don't know what God-given purpose there is for mosquitos!

Consider His animals:

I learn a lot about animals from Logan, a sweet nine-year-old young man. He delights in them and always has an animal book with him. When my son asks, “Logan, tell me three interesting facts about any animal,” he might respond with: the lobster has its teeth in its stomach, the female black widow spider is blind, and gorillas burp when they’re happy. Logan knows God made them all. We don’t ask him about dinosaurs if it’s mealtime or we’re likely to go hungry because that’s his favorite subject!

What creativity and intelligence God bestowed upon many of His animal creations! Take dolphins for example. They’re so smart, that in just a few weeks in captivity, they can train people to stand on the very edge of the pool and throw them fish! Spinner dolphins delight me! They jump, spin and tumble in the air for no apparent reason other than they enjoy doing it!

Consider the European water spider. It lives at the bottom of lakes but can breathe air. On the surface of the water, it does a somersault, catches a bubble of air, swims to the lake bottom and spins a web in the seaweed. It goes up and down, again and again, bringing bubble after bubble down until it forms a balloon of air where it lives and mates.

Another example of God’s creativity is the tardigrade. They are smaller than a grain of sand and look like a gummy bear with eight clawed legs. Tardigrades can tolerate temperatures of minus 450 degrees to over 300 degrees F. They can endure atmospheric pressure six times that of the deepest ocean and can live without water or food for thirty years!

Creatures that live in the deepest depths of the oceans are both beautiful and bizarre. I think God smiles and says, "Yes, Maggie, I've known about them long before anyone on earth knew they existed. I'm glad you enjoy them."

Consider His cosmos:

The Believers Bible Commentary says: "No branch of science proclaims God's greatness and man's insignificance more eloquently than astronomy." Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God." "The heavens" are the skies and what we consider outer space. "Up there" is an immense cosmos – a massive number of stars, supernovas, galaxies, innumerable celestial bodies.

Our own Milky Way galaxy isn't a big galaxy and yet it contains at least 100 billion planets and 400 billion stars. Do you feel small yet? The cosmos may go on, and on, dare I say - to infinity and beyond! Because the Lord said, "My right hand has stretched out the heavens." (Isaiah 48:13)

In 2004, the Hubble Space Telescope recorded 10,000 galaxies, each with hundreds of billions of stars, planets, moons, comets, and asteroids. But today, the observable universe contains at least two **trillion** galaxies.

Consider His stars:

If our nearest star, the sun, were hollowed out, 1,300,000 earths could fit inside it. The sun is puny compared to many other stars. Astronomers estimate 10,000 stars exist for each grain of sand on Earth.

"Look up into the heavens. Who created all the stars? He brings them out like an army, one after another, calling each by its name. Because of His great power and incomparable strength, not a single one is missing." (Isaiah 40:26)

Abraham Lincoln said, "I can see how it might be possible for a man to look down upon the earth and be an atheist, but I cannot conceive how he could look up into the heavens and say there is no God."

Consider His human creation:

"Our Maker made us wonderfully complex, knitting together all the delicate parts of our body as we were being formed in the womb." (Psalm 139:14) When God created human life, He breathed His own life into man and man became a living soul. We have an eternal spirit. We can reason, choose good or evil, and love. There's enough evidence in the human body alone to prove we're not a product of random chance.

- We started as a single cell smaller than the period at the end of a sentence. DNA in that cell held the genetic instructions required to make our heart, liver, toenails, eyes, nose, brain, etc.
- Our optical system has 100 million receptor cells in each retina and makes billions of calculations per second from our optic nerve to our brain.
- To regulate our body temperature, our skin has more than 2 million tiny sweat glands. Although, you probably know people who seem to have a lot more of them!
- Our body is supported by more than 200 finely designed bones, connected to more than 500 muscles, and has seventy-eight main organs.

- I haven't even mentioned our lungs, hearing, taste, smell, touch, endocrine glands, immune system.

When God created everything else, He said: "It was good." When He made humans, He said it was "very good."

HOW GOD CREATED

We'll probably never see a help wanted sign that says: "Help Wanted: Creative Assistants to build a universe out of nothing. Contact: God." I can't imagine assisting God place the stars in the night sky and saying to Him, "Lord, could you move that big bright one a little to the left?"

Genesis tells us, "And God said, 'Let there be....'" (Genesis 1) The pre-existing God spoke to nothingness, and it became somethingness.

You've heard of the Big Bang Theory? Well, God spoke, and BANG! It happened. "For at His command they were created." (Psalm 148:5) "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made...For He spoke, and it came to be." (Psalm 33:6,9) "The universe was formed at God's command." (Hebrews 11:3)

I think that while God was creating, He had some awesome background music because Job says, "The morning stars sang together, and all the angels shouted for joy." (Job 38)

I agree with Max Lucado that when creating, "God must have had a blast" because He created:

- The stars in the cosmos
- A eucalyptus tree with rainbow colored bark
- Leviathans
- Sloths
- Dinosaurs
- The lyre bird with the ability to mimic sound including a car alarm, a chain saw, a camera shutter, a chimpanzee, and every bird around him!

WHY GOD CREATED

Why did God create such vastness in the heavens and fill Earth with multitudes and varieties of animals, organisms, insects, flora, and fauna? I wouldn't presume to know all the reasons why God set creation into motion, but Scripture tells us He wants to redeem us and to live with Him for eternity. So, I believe at least one of His reasons for creation is to point us back to Him. "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." (Romans 1:20) The skies alone preach sermons every day. God has presented us with visual aids to show us He is real.

Author Stephen Mansfield wrote, "All nature is God wooing us to Himself."

And God did not just create and walk away. He sustains His creation. Nehemiah credits the Lord, "You preserve them all." (Nehemiah 9:6) Our Maker designed every rule of nature. He "set a boundary" for the waters (Psalm 104:9) so never again would they flood the earth. He told all the

celestial bodies, every element and living thing, just how to behave. The physical laws that hold matter together, keep planets in their positions, and bind people to the earth, are all sustained in and through Jesus Christ. "The Son sustains all things by His powerful word." (Hebrews 1:3)

Theologian A.H. Strong said, "Christ is the originator and the upholder of the universe. In Him it consists and holds together. Christ [established] the law of the universe and makes it a cosmos instead of chaos."

"Every house has a builder but the One who built everything is God." (Hebrews 3:4) Our amazing "house" – Earth – exists because God our Maker is the Intelligent Designer and Builder. Our world teems with complex systems that provide light, air, heat, water, and food to sustain life on Earth. Warren Wiersbe wrote, "Creation waits upon God to supply what is needed. God gives and we gather."

- God placed the sun a perfect distance from Earth to provide just the right amount of energy.
- God gave Earth the perfect angle of tilt. Any more or less of a tilt, there would be no seasons. (For those who live in Southern California, seasons are when humans get to experience changes in weather four times a year!)
- Earth's soil and water provides qualities essential for human and animal life.
- Earth has a protective, life-sustaining atmosphere.

Was it "by chance" that Earth exists as it does? I say, "nay" – God's said it was the works of His hands.

Not only does God keep His physical laws together, He sustains His cherished creation - you and me. David knew that when he wrote, "I cling to you; your right hand upholds me" (Psalm 63:8) and, "Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me." (Psalm 54:4) Creator God keeps planets in their orbits and our hearts beating.

How did you answer the question in the lesson, "How can knowing God is the Creator affect a life?" My answer was that God used creation to show us that He exists, is intelligent, creative, and powerful. And although there's marvelous examples of intelligence in even the tiniest of creatures, only one was made in God's image and given the ability to understand their need for the Savior. The Creator of the Cosmos "provided redemption for His people." (Psalm 111:9)

When David saw God's glory in the heavens, he asked God, "How, why, do You care for mankind?" A Matthew West song, "Me On Your Mind", reminds me of David's question. Some of the lyrics are: "I've read how you leave the 99 to find the one missing and the prodigal son and the part where the father came running to meet him. Did You say that with me on Your mind? Who am I that the King of the world would give one single thought about my broken heart? Who am I that the God of all grace wipes the tears from my face and says, "Come as you are." You paid the price. You took the cross. Just knowing You call me Your child floods my soul with unspeakable hope. Thank You, Lord, that it's me on Your mind."

I believe the story of salvation begins with creation and that God had us on His mind. Jesus came to the earth HE created, and died on a tree HE created, for the express purpose of redeeming you and me. Jesus said, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:10)

I don't know if any other planets are inhabited, but I believe Christ has not been there to die because He was, "...sacrificed once to take away the sins of many." (Hebrews 9:28)

The psalms we studied this week praised God as the Maker of mankind, the animal kingdom, everything in the universe, and it all exists by the works of God's hands.

His works are numerous (Psalm 104:24); they are great (Psalm 111:2); they are powerful (Psalm 111:6); they are faithful and just. (Psalm 111:7)

When we admire God our Maker for "the works of His hands" - praise must follow. So, the next time you're puttering in your garden, or gazing into the heavens, or listening to the ocean, praise the Creator, and tell Him,

"How many are your works, LORD!
In wisdom You made them all;
the earth is full of Your creatures."

Psalm 104:24