



OPENING DISCUSSION

- 1 Consider the pictures below. Both show the United States of America, but how does our perspective change from one to the other?



- *The first picture is more an idea than it is reality. It's a map of the US that is totally removed from its natural setting and context. The map shows no oceans or other land masses. It shows theoretical boundaries of states, but not everything is drawn to proportion (note how small and out of place Alaska is in the first picture compared to the picture of the globe).*

- 2 Nothing exists in isolation. As with the pictures above, when you isolate things, you tend to create an idea of them in which they are removed from the various aspects that make up and/or influence them. How is this sometimes the case with the first chapter of Genesis?

- *While from a Christian perspective, Genesis, as the word of God, certainly does set parameters for scientific investigation and understanding of the world, Genesis 1, itself, is not a science textbook. The bible is not a science textbook. It's something very different, and if take Genesis 1 or any part of the bible is taken out of its context we can come to false conclusions.*

- *Example: Consider the false conclusions that have been drawn in the past concerning Joshua 10:13 which reads "So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jasher. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day." Up until space shuttles were sent into space and astronauts were able to see first hand that the earth revolves around the sun, there were many theologians who argued that Joshua 10:13 was proof that the earth was the center of the solar system, because it explicitly states that the "sun stood still." What was the problem with this understanding of Joshua 10:13?*

- ✚ *Genesis 1 is different from Joshua 10 because Genesis 1 does state the "how" of God's miracle of creation: For example, we are told that God spoke and creation came into being. We are told He did this in six, 24hour days. We are told that plants and animals were created in various "kinds," separate and distinct from one another. We are told that man was a unique and special creation, fully formed and made in the image of God. Yet, at the same time, Genesis 1 retains much mystery about all this miraculous work. While there is much evidence in the world for these assertions, the text, itself, gives us few scientific premises. We believe them to be true because God's Word says so. Indeed, the text itself, is more concerned with telling us about the plan and purpose of God in creating all things. Therefore, a Lutheran approach to this text—and all of Scripture—will*

maintain the same distinction. This means that as we study Genesis chapters 1-11, while we can speculate about “how” God accomplished various aspects of creation or “how” He accomplished the flood and the implications all this has for science, the truer and more important discussion will always be “what” all this means—what it means for a sinful world and for us as sinners.

Hebrews 11:3

By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

Read Genesis 1:1-4

- ③ The words of Genesis 1:1-4 really do sound fantastic and amazing. But to dismiss it as anything but truth, calls into question everything else the bible says about salvation. Indeed, is it possible to be a Christian and believe in Jesus for salvation, but not believe in the truth of Genesis 1? Or when it comes to how the universe was formed and where life came from, can we just let science provide those answers even if those answers contradict or reject biblical assertions? Hint: The answer is NO! But why is the answer “no”?

† *The Bible is thoroughly _____ . Even though our salvation doesn't rest on Genesis 1, Jesus is a vital part of Genesis 1. See John 1:1-5 & 14, also Colossians 1:17.*

† *Consider also all the ways these first few verses and the first few chapters of the Genesis are rich with baptismal theology: Creation/ new life, the flood which drowns sinful man, the ark which saves Noah and his family/ and how all this relates to holy baptism which drown the old Adam and put us into Jesus Christ.*

- ④ When we read the creation account in Genesis 1 we typically focus on what it says about the world and about us and our place in the world. While these are important aspects of the text, it is of equal importance what this text has to say about God. What does this text say about God?

† *God is _____ all things*

† *Creation ex nihilo – out of _____*

Colossians 1:15-18

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

† *From first few verses we see evidence of the _____*

- *“Elohim”*
- *“Spirit of God”*
- *“Let us” verse 26*

✠ *Seven times in Genesis 1, we are told that God creates everything “good” out of the “to-hu ba-vo-hu” [without form and void], verse 1.*

➤ *The difference between how modern society uses the word good and how God uses the word good is staggering. In our day and age, it’s not uncommon to hear good being used to describe a new craft beer or an entertaining sitcom or the latest pithy tweet by a celebrity. However, the biblical use of the Hebrew word tov (good) does not mean merely ‘pleasant’ or ‘pleasurable’. It means capable of, or presently engaged in the process of, or destined for completely fulfilling the Divine purpose for which it was created.*

Genesis 50:20

And you, you intended evil against me, but God intended it for good [tov], in order to keep a great many people alive.

Psalms 23:6

Goodness [tov] and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.

Read Genesis 1:3-5

5 It goes through walls and can travel at the speed of 186,282 mph yet can be slowed to a paltry 38 mph in ultra-cold gases. It carries electronic information for radios and TVs, but destroys genetic information in cells. In the form of x-rays, it can penetrate soft flesh and create an image of bones. It bends around buildings like waves and squeezes through pinholes like particles, but ricochets off tiny electrons. It travels at a speed that is thought to make time stand still. It's light. And although we know it primarily as the opposite of darkness, most of light is not even visible to the human eyes. From low energy radio waves to high energy micro waves and gamma rays, light zips around us, bounces off us, and yet can go through us. Without it we couldn't perceive the universe and everything in it, and yet science understands almost nothing about it. So what is the source of the light that God speaks forth in Genesis 1?

1 John 1:5

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 How do we understand the last three words of verse 5 which reads “the first day?” Does Genesis teach that creation happened in six, 24-hour days?