

## Genesis 1:1 - 2:3

History has **value**. When we study the **mistakes** which were made by people in the **past** we can learn not to **repeat** them. When we study the **good things** which were done by **God** in the past, we can learn to look forward to **more** of them. The Book of **Genesis** is a book of **history** - the **earliest** history which **exists** - the history of the very **beginning** of our universe. The very first words of the Bible tell us, "*In the **beginning**, **God created** the heavens and the earth*" - and He did it **perfectly**. Even though His perfect world has fallen victim to the ravages of **sin**, this creative work of God still has **value** for us today. **What Can We Learn From God's Creation?** It certainly has **historic** value, because it reveals to us something which we would have no other way of **knowing** - that is, what God **did** "*in the **beginning***" - before there were any human **eyewitnesses**. But it also has value for the **future**, because God tells us in His Word about a **new** heaven and earth which He has prepared for all those who put their trust for salvation in His Son, **Jesus**. The way that God made the heavens and the earth we **live** in, can only deepen our **desire** for the **new** heaven and earth which is yet to come.

In the beginning, at the time of creation, God the Father **existed** - and so did God the **Son**, and so did God the **Holy Spirit** - **one** God in **three** persons - a God who has **no beginning**, and who has **no end**. The very first verse of the Bible tells us, "*In the beginning, **God** created the heavens and the earth.*" Verse 2 of our text tells us, "*the **Spirit** of God was hovering over the surface of the waters,*" and on the **very first day** we're told, "*God said, 'Let there be **light**,' and there was light.*" At the beginning of John's Gospel he tells us that those words "*God said*" refer to **Jesus**. He wrote, "*In the beginning was the **Word**, and the Word was **with** God, and the Word was **God** ... Through him **everything** was **made** ... The Word became **flesh** and **dwelled** among us. We have seen his **glory**, the glory he has as the **only-begotten** from the Father, full of grace and truth.*" So, all three persons of the Triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - were **present** and **active** in the creation of the universe.

But **how** did He carry out that work of creation? The **first** thing we learn from God's creation is that He has almighty **power**. God made things which **didn't exist**, to come into being at His **command** - by the **power** of His Word. By the power of **Jesus** - the eternal **Word** of God - God caused the universe we know to take **shape** over the course of six 24 hour days. God divided each day into two parts - **day** and **night** - just like the days we have **now**.

The creation also shows us God's great **wisdom**, as He continues on each successive day to further **develop** His creation in an extremely **orderly** way. On the **second day** He gave us the **sky** - our **atmosphere**. On the **third day** He separated the **dry land** from the **water**, making the **continents**, and the **rivers** and **oceans** - and then **later** on the **same day** He put **plants** and **trees** on the land. On the **fourth day** God made the **sun**, **moon**, and **stars** - providing light for the **day** and light for the **night**, and at the same time giving a way to measure the passing of **time**. On the **fifth day** God put **fish** in the **water**, and **birds** in the **air**. And then on the **sixth day** God created all the **other** animals - the **wild** and **domestic** ones - along with all the creepy, crawly things. And God wisely made every living thing with the ability to **reproduce** - each according to its own **kind**.

But then, **later** on the sixth day, came the **crowning masterpiece** of God's creation - human beings - **man** and **woman**. God **made** these unique creatures in a very unique way. The first **man**, Adam, was formed from the **dust** of the ground, and then God breathed **life** into him. The first **woman**, Eve, was formed from Adam's **side**, and then God **brought** her to the man instituting the world's first **marriage**. **Both** man and woman were made in the **image** of God. To be made in God's **image** doesn't mean that they physically **looked** like God. That's **impossible**, because God is a **spirit**. Rather, they were made to **be** like God in **character** - **holy** and **pure** - living in perfect **innocence** and **peace**.

Another thing we can learn from God's creation is His great **love**. God **blessed** Adam and Eve with a beautiful **home** in which to live - the Garden of Eden. And He supplied that home with **everything** they would need to live their lives. God also gave these special creatures great **privileges** and **responsibilities**. We're told, "*God said, 'Let them have **dominion** over the **fish** of the sea, and over the **birds** of the sky, and over the **livestock**, and over **all the earth**, and over **every creeping thing** that crawls on the earth.'*" Human beings were to be the **stewards** or **managers** of everything which God had made. Unfortunately, we haven't always been the **best** stewards of God's creation - starting already with Adam and Eve. Nevertheless, when we make **mistakes** in the way we take care of God's universe, we need to try and **correct** those mistakes as best we can.

With that final creation in **place**, Moses goes on to tell us, "*The heavens and the earth were **finished**, along with everything in them. On the **seventh day** God had **finished** his work that he had done, and he **rested** on the seventh day from all the work he had been doing.*" That sounds a bit **strange**, doesn't it? The all-powerful God **rested**. But it's not really as strange as it may **seem** to be. God **rested**, not because He was **tired**, but because His creating work was **finished**.

God saw everything He had made, and it was exactly the way He **wanted** it to be - total **perfection**. He **also** rested in order to give **us** a **pattern** to follow. In the Third Commandment God said, *“Six days you are to **serve** and do all your regular **work**, but the seventh day shall be a sabbath **rest** to the LORD your God. Do not do any regular **work**, neither you, nor your sons or daughters, nor your male or female servants, nor your cattle, nor the alien who is residing inside your gates, for in **six days** the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them, but he **rested** on the **seventh** day. In this way the LORD **blessed** the seventh day and made it **holy**.”*

This **perfect** world which our Triune God **created** doesn't seem like the world we **live in** today, with all of its **diseases** and **illnesses**, and with all of its **dangers** and **perils**, and with all of its **violence** and **corruption**. There's a good **reason** for that. It's not because **time** has passed, and things have just **naturally** started to fall apart. This **world** and the **people** of this world are not like God's original creation because of **sin**. Sin has ruined **everything**. Precious metals have been turned into **false gods** - **idols** for people to worship and serve - uranium and plutonium are used to make **weapons** of mass destruction - **tornadoes** and **hurricanes** and **earthquakes** and **floods** unleash their devastating fury all over the world. The Apostle Paul described it in Romans, chapter 8, with these words, *“All of creation is **groaning** with **birth pains** right up to the present time.”* In other words, the world is anxiously **waiting** for the arrival of **Jesus** on the **Last Day**.

And Paul goes on to say, *“And not only **creation**, but also **we ourselves**, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, **groan inwardly** while we eagerly await our **adoption** as sons, the **redemption** of our body.”* Sin has ruined our **lives** here on the earth. We are not what God **intended** us to be. We've **lost** the image of God, and we're no longer **innocent** - we're **guilty**. We **long** for a **new** beginning, a **new** heaven and earth, and only **Jesus** can make that **happen** for us.

Actually, He already **has** made it happen. **Jesus** - the same Son of God who **created** all things in the beginning - took on human flesh and blood to put Himself under the **law**. He then lived a **perfect life** here on the earth, so He would be able to **offer** that life as the **perfect sacrifice** which the heavenly Father demanded to **pay** for our sins. When **we** came into this world, Jesus led our parents to have us **baptized**, thus **connecting** us by **faith** with **His** life, death, and resurrection. And Jesus **continues** to send the Holy Spirit to us through His Word and Sacrament, to keep us **strong** and **united** in the Christian faith. Our sins are **forgiven**, and we have a **new self** living within us - a self which strives to be **like God** in righteousness and holiness.

All these things should make the **seventh** day in today's text - the day of **rest** - all the more **precious**. It's so **important** for us to set aside one day **every week**, to **rest** - to rest our **minds**, and our **bodies**, and our **souls**. It's a day to **worship** our **Triune God**, and to **thank Him** for the wonderful **creation** which He has given to us, and for all the **other blessings** which He showers on us day after day. And even when it sometimes **feels** as though life here on the earth is **out of control**, and getting **worse** by the minute, we need to remember what Jesus has promised us about that life of **perfect peace** which still lies **ahead** for us. Near the end of his book of prophecy Isaiah **described** it for us. He wrote, "*The former things will not be **remembered**. They will not come to **mind**. Instead, **rejoice and celebrate forever**, because of what I am creating ... The sound of **weeping** will not be heard in her again, nor will the sound of **crying** ... Even **before** they call, I will **answer**. While they are still **speaking**, I will hear ... They will not **harm** or **destroy** anywhere on my holy mountain.*" Sounds pretty **wonderful**, doesn't it? Our eternal life in **heaven** will be a life of perfect **harmony** - a life where we will **rest** from all our labors, and where we will experience the **love** and **beauty** of our **God** and **Savior** in all His **glory**. I can hardly wait! Amen.