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Presentation Transcript
Bible Stories for Adults, Part 2 – Creation Story
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Our title today is *Creation Story*. It's the second in our series on *Bible Stories for Adults*. Today, we're going to read the creation story using the ground rules we put in place during the first presentation in this series, so that you can see how it works.

By way of review, here are the seven rules that we covered last time in short form:

1. The Bible is where God communicates to us. He does that through Jesus Christ, the Word of God. So this is isn't something written by man. It's a book that *God* inspired. And, if you read it believing that He inspired it, then it can help you.
2. The Bible internally tells us that it is perfect. That means it follows logic and reason. The rules of logical thinking can be applied to it and it will stand up.
3. Don't confuse what people say with what God says, even when people are talking about what's in the Bible. In this series, we're not going to quote any commentaries. We're just going to read what it says and see what we can make of it.
4. The Bible tells us it's a guide for living. So when we read an account in the Bible, we're going to look and see what we can take from it to guide our lives in the present.
5. The Bible is three stories in one – actually *within* – three stories *within* one overarching story. The overarching story is that it is about our salvation and how God is guiding us toward it. The sub stories are: 1) Within it, that is the story of how things got the way they are now and how God is going to fix everything; 2) the story of how God has dealt differently with people in the various times or ages that been passed or will be in the future; 3) the third one is how God is changing all of us from the way we are now to the way we will be when He has completed us.
6. To understand the Bible at any given point, just ask, "What the point?" What is He trying to teach us at any given point? Why is that important? Because we get all sucked off on the minor points and we wind up trying major in the minors when we just need to read what it says and it will become a lot clearer. And finally:

7. We will approach all these stories with the understanding that God knows everything and we only now what He lets us know. So that's very important. That's the attitude that we need underneath all of our reading.

So, the creation story – Genesis 1:1 through 2:3.

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

So right off, let's ask what the point is of verse 1. What did He mean when He said, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth?" Well, if you had said this to someone – maybe to me – what would you want me to learn from it? Well, you would want me to learn that God created everything – the massive expanse of the universe and this earth. Now, if we go out on a dark night and look up at that expanse – if we believe God created it all – what do we learn about God? Well, here's some things to think about: He's not like us. He's way better, smarter, more powerful, knows a lot more, and, if He made it, He must, in some way, be above it or at least outside of it. In fact, David said almost exactly this in the Psalms when he said, "The heavens declare the glory of God."

Now, we all get to choose to believe what it says or not. But that's what it says. Paul also said that if we, looking up at the night sky, don't believe there is a God and that He is awesome, then we're without excuse. There's no other answer for it. And, if we come to a false conclusion about that, we've laid aside logic and reason on behalf of our own interest. And that's not me quoting myself or someone else, I'm just referring to the Bible and what God says about Himself in it. So I've not broken any of the seven rules and look how much we've learned. We just read it. Verse 2:

V-2 – *The earth was without form and void and darkness was over the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

Now these words, *without form and void*, they're translated literally from the root Hebrew to mean chaotic and empty. So after God created the heavens and the earth, He went to work on the earth, so that it was orderly and filled with something besides emptiness, if I can put it that way. And He tells us that the Holy Spirit – and that is the spirit of the Father and the Son – hovered over the water that covered the earth.

So let's notice now that the picture has changed. As we read this, we are transported in our minds' eye over the surface of the earth, which was, at that time, covered with water. Wow! That's pretty awesome, isn't it? In a way, God is taking us right down to where He did the work. And He's letting everyone who's willing to be a witness, in their minds' eye to some of what God has done. He's allowing that.

So what can we learn from this verse – beside what we've already learned? Well, we learn that the Holy Spirit hovered over the waters. That is the power of God, isn't it? So, if we just look at

it, we see that Spirit poised over the earth's surface, and we can ask, "What's He getting ready to do?" I mean, that's the point, I think, of what's there. We know from what we read next, that God was getting ready to go to work on the earth. So, there's some work here that He's going to do. We can learn from that that God does things in stages often. And He's a planner and a worker. He created the heavens and the earth, and then He went down to the surface of the earth. That's the story He's telling us. Right? How does God do that? Well, He's everywhere at once, so of course He's there.

V-3 – *And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.*

Well, does that mean there was no light until that very moment? Well, you have to remember, in the story, that we're on the surface of the planet watching what's happening. So it could mean that it was dark down there. And, if the universe had already been created, then there would have been a lot of light coming from all the suns that He'd created. Right? The light wasn't allowed, for some reason, to be on the surface of the earth – the water – at that time. So, when He said, "Let there be light," it's like me opening the curtains in the morning in my house, and saying, "Let there be light." Well, there was light outside, but not in the house until I opened the curtains. So it's possible that He was just letting the light through whatever was covering.

Now, I've made some suppositions here. If I'm wrong, we'll find out about it later. But just reading the story, I think, if you thought about any other person talking about something they'd done, you'd probably come to similar conclusions. So that's the picture that we have, isn't it?

Also, it's important to realize, or think about, the fact that we do not know how long it was at this point since verse 1. It doesn't tell us. It doesn't say, "God created the heavens and the earth, and then right after that, let's go to the earth's surface and see that it's dark and chaotic and empty." It doesn't say that. It doesn't tell us how long it took. Now I know a number of theories, probably, have come to your mind about all this. Just set them aside. We're just reading what the Bible says, so that we can take in what the Bible is telling us – human ideas aside.

Okay, so now there's light. What can we learn from this? Well, the very first thing God did was allow light to the surface. Right? That's what it says. A lot of good things start to happen when there's sunlight. And here it comes:

V-4-5 – *And God saw – verse 4 – that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.*

So that's how it would appear from the earth's surface. So that's very good that we can think about it that way. And, just as a general principle, and in many specific ways, light is good. Jesus said, "Men love darkness, because their deeds are evil." God talks about Jesus as the Light of the world. You can't see to get the sliver out of our finger, so you move closer to the light at the window. Light is good. Well, how was it that God separated the light from the darkness? Well,

from the surface, it might not seem obvious, but we now know that the rotation of the earth separates light from darkness on the earth's surface, don't we? – the rotation of it – sun on one side, moon on the other.

And then it says, "The evening and the morning were the first day." Well, what do you mean by day? Well, this is the question mark? The word for day in the Hebrew means a twenty-four hour period, but it also can stand for longer periods, such as the Day of the Judgment or the Day of the Lord – same word – or "each day is as a thousand years," it says, "to God." So, if you take it literally, it would mean a twenty-four hour period, but it doesn't say it's literal. It doesn't translate the word meaning something else. So we just don't know.

So what do we do with question mark? Well, we keep reading the Bible and see if the Bible, rather than some guy in a theological think tank somewhere, will show us the answer. If we don't find the answer, then we have to show patience – be humble and say, "I don't know" – until Jesus explains it to us later.

So what does it mean when we have a question that's not answered? Well, it can mean several things. It can mean that it's not important right now, or maybe not relevant to the point that God is making, so just move past it. Keep your eye on what he's trying to teach us at this moment, instead of getting bogged down in some question we have about it.

So what can we learn from this business about light – if we don't know whether it really was just a day or longer? Well, we can learn that God's a very clever Being. He makes intricate plans that work many different ways at the same times, accomplishing many different things all at the same time.

So now we have a planet with sunlight flooding the surface, which is covered by water, during the day and dark at night. Right? That's what it says. Then it says in verse 6:

V-6-8 – *And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. And God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.*

So people have really puzzled over this one. These two verses are some of the hardest ones in the whole story. But it looks like it's telling us that, originally, there was a layer of water in the air between the ocean below and the sky that turns up toward space. We might say, "Well, that most ridiculous thing I've ever heard." Well, if you think that, come to New Mexico for one of our thunderstorms, and you'll see millions of tons of water dropped out of the sky in just a few minutes. So, really, what's this all about? Is it translated correctly? If it is, where did all the water go? And what was the purpose of it? Remember what to do with questions? Are these questions relevant to what God is trying to teach us in this passage? Is this a technical treatise on the

science of the creation? No, it's not. It's a story about what God can do and what He has done – not how He did it. So what are we to learn from it? See, these questions are not relevant to what He's saying, so that's the rule I'm applying. He knows more about creating a planet – making it a fit habitat for humanity than we do – and we learn that He can do whatever He wants when He wants the way He wants to do it. So, there's lots to learn, that so many people have not learned yet, about Bible study and how to look at what is in it. If you know these things, you're in a very small group. Verse 9:

V-9-10 – *God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together in one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. God called the dry land earth and the waters that were gathered together, He called seas. And God saw that it was good.*

Okay, so now we have dry land. So do you see a progression here? It was done in stages. That's what we're being told.

You know, you think about the way things grow in the earth, and the way humans develop. It's all done in stages. God works that way. That's how He does stuff. So some land was raised up out of the water, or the ocean bottom deepened to show some of the land under the water. So there's another step in the well-thought-out plan.

So what else can we learn? Well, when you have stages of things, that means you have a plan. Right? God is a planner. He makes plans. And these plans make sense. And He has the power to bring them to pass – unlike us, quite often.

Now, so that you're not bored, we will skip the parts about the vegetation, and the fish, and the birds, and the land animals. Those things all follow the same pattern, raise the same questions, and teach us the same thing. God does good things the way He wants to. So let's jump down to Genesis 1:26.

V-26 – *And then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish in the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*

Who's talking? Why is He talking? Who is He talking to? If He was just by Himself, why would He be talking? See, up to this point, we thought there was only One down on earth, but the word for *God* here is *Elohim*, which can imply more than one and yet the same kind – God. So who would *they* be – “let us...?” Well, one we know is the Word. John tells us that, right? The One that became Jesus Christ. But we are also told that He created it all at the behest of Lord of Hosts – God – the LORD God, He's called in the Old Testament. So yeah, they were both there, working as one toward one goal. Again, I'm just reading what it says. They were both there, talking to each other about it – when there are choices to be made.

So what's to learn here? Well, it isn't just Jesus who is involved in our lives. And we're created to be *like* God. What that means exactly is not explained here, but, if we look at what we're like, and what we look like, and some of the descriptors of God, it could be that, in some way, we look like God and are also like Him in many intrinsic ways. That just seems clear. God planning to give to man control over all that He has created teaches us something about us and about God. Number one, we're important to Him, but not that we're powerful – but special. We're His. So, He's also letting us know that we have a chance to make Him ours. We're His and He's ours, if we want it to be that way. Verse 27:

V-27 – *So God created man in His own image. In the image of God He created him. Male and female He created them. Now Jesus said, “There are no males and females in the Kingdom,” so that’s an add-on to explain that we’re created that way now, but that’s not a part of being God’s image. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” And God said, “Behold, I’ve given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.*

Now, of course, we moderns are burdened with the alternative view of how everything came into being. At first science thought that we came from simple life forms, but now that science has learned there's no such thing as a simple life form, they've had to change their approach. The more they're able to look into the tiniest creatures – into their internal parts – we see infinite complexity, only limited by our ability to see in more. So, the more that we're able to look into the tiniest of creatures and into their internal parts, we see infinite complexity. So science has discovered that DNA contains data – information used to produce life as a pattern. And they have discovered machines within organic cells that have wheels and gears and levers. Just telling you what we know.

So now, what a problem! Where did this data come from? And who designed these levers and wheels and gears inside these little “simple one-celled creatures?” Many of them, hilariously, have proposed that it came from space aliens long ago. So what does that approach prove? Well, to me, it proves that no amount of evidence will prove that God created the universe. It only proves that they won't ever accept it. It's so funny to me. In a way, they *are* right – the data that causes the problem did come from outside of this world, didn't it? And we have the book to prove it! But saying that, they will not accept it. It reminds of the time that Paul went to Mars Hill and saw the idol that was dedicated to the unknown god. He used that as a hook. When he talked to them, he told them he was going to reveal the unknown god to them. Brilliant! “You say space aliens are responsible for the data in our DNA? That they created us? I'm going to show you who they were!” Well, the majority didn't believe Paul, and they won't believe us either. But that just shows you how...you know, they had this theory that explains how life

existed without God, and when they found out it didn't work anymore, they just the theory, so that, in their minds, it couldn't be possible. Verse 31:

V-31 – *And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*

So, if we just read what it says, we can learn something incredibly encouraging. God saw everything He created – that would include humanity, right, because they'd been created by this point – and He said it was *very good*. So God makes good things. You're one of them. He has big plans for you.

Let's read one final thing God made to end this story. It's in Genesis 2:1 through 3.

Genesis 2:1-3 – *Thus, the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day, God finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. And so God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it, God rested from all His work that He had done in creation.*

So *holy* means *to be set apart to be special*. And He made it special by resting on it. Does God *need* to rest? No. So why did He do that? Well, it doesn't say here, does it? But we know that from the creation, the seventh day is, in some way, special. And the Bible story will go on for thousands of years before we find out why God rested on the that day. But at this point, rest assured, we have not heard the end of the seventh day. It's going to be explained later.

Well, that's all for today – the creation story. What's the point? Do you know it now? Is there need in understanding what God wants us to learn for us to get all upset about evolution, or the big bang, or any ideas of people? I do think those things are interesting to think about, but we shouldn't confuse them with what the Bible says. We all have our ideas, but, if you're reading the Bible, you want to know what *God's* ideas are. And He's not worried about how it happened. He's busy explaining to us *what* happened and *why*. He created the universe. He created us. And He thinks it's good. But how can He look at what's going on now and think it's good? Well, He doesn't. But the Bible story is all about why He did it this way and how He's going to fix it all. He's going to right every wrong, execute justice, extend grace, and restore the planet. And those stories are all included in this book, but they're for another day.

Until next time, this is Bill Jacobs for LifeResource Ministries, serving children, families and the Church of God.