



I. Review

- ✦ Genesis 1-3 is the prologue to His-story, the account of the formation of an elect people, Israel. Israel is God's answer to what happens in Genesis 1-3.
- ✦ Genesis 1:1 teaches that God is the creator of everything (Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11; Isaiah 41:4; John 1:1-3). The one God of Israel is the true God of every people (Isaiah 45:22-23).
- ✦ Genesis 1:1-3 and 3:8 unfold foundational elements of trinitarian theology. There is one God (the Father), with a Spirit and a Word that proceeds from him.

II. God's Good Creation (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31)

✦ Material things are not evil.

The earth and the seas, the vegetation and trees, the stars and the sun and moon, the fish and the birds, the land mammals and the creeping insects, and human beings are, declared by God, to be good.

Paul refers to this declaration in 1 Timothy 4:1-5. Everything created by God is good.

Christians should be people who rejoice in science, medicine, engineering, art, music, technology, psychology, and environmentalism (Gen. 1:26-28, Pro. 12:10).

We are **vicegerents** of the creation.

This certainly means that science and faith are not in opposition. Christianity lays a foundation for the scientific endeavor by asserting that there is an intelligent mind behind the universe. The universe is governed by laws that can be discovered. C.S. Lewis wrote:

"Men became scientific because they expected Law in Nature, and they expected Law in Nature because they believed in a Legislator."

✦ The incarnation of the Word.

Jesus coming in the flesh is God's stamp of approval on the material world! (1 John 4:2-3)

Irenaeus of Lyons (130-202) emphasized that through the incarnation, Christ is restoring and sanctifying all of creation. Christ sums up what it truly means to be human.

*"[Christ] became what we are so that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself."*¹

The word of God restores and sanctifies all of the creation so that God can dwell with man and man can dwell with God. (Ephesians 1:9-10, 4:9-10, Col 1:15-20)

✦ Three options for "it is made holy by the word of God and prayer":

¹ *Against Heresies*, Book 5.

1) God's pronouncement in Genesis 1. 2) A pronouncement over food. 3) "The Word of God" is the gospel and its effect on creation. "Prayer" is the reception of God's goodness in creation with thanksgiving (Eph. 1:9-10; 4:9-10; Col. 1:15).

In Jesus Christ, we reorient our relationship to creation with thanksgiving and prayer. We are invited back to the garden, where we receive everything as a gift from God.

What about when Paul says, "*Put to death therefore what is earthly in you*" (Col. 3:5)? Or when he condemns those "*with minds set on earthly things*" (Phil. 3:19)? This means having an orientation toward the world that makes created things an idol. Here is a principle: **Don't seek pleasure in what you cannot be thankful to God for, and don't condemn yourself for enjoying what God has not forbidden.**

- ◆ God will deliver creation at the second coming of Christ (Romans 8:18-25).

Our relationship with the natural world is affected by sin. Our hope in the gospel is a physical resurrection that will impact the entirety of creation.

III. Goodness in Creation is from Goodness in God

Goodness is **ordered being that brings forth unity, beauty, and fullness (blessing)**. Evil is something like **disordered being, which brings forth destruction, hideousness, and suffering (death)**.

We see God's goodness in his bringing order from chaos, and in the beauty and the bounty of the Garden of Eden. The garden is the place where God and man rest together in abundance and peace. The content of goodness is described in **Jeremiah 31:10-14**. It includes peace, abundance, and beauty. Joy, dancing, and comfort with the absence of oppression, striving, and war. In God's house, "people shall be satisfied."

The goodness in creation leads us to the goodness *in* God. Sin distorts our desires so that we seek to satisfy our desires independently of God and make the gift our god instead of the giver.

Goodness comes from within the being of God. He blesses the creatures, gives them abundance, and satisfies their desires (Psalm 34:8-10).

How does it impact you that God is good and that he desires to bless you?

Do you perceive spiritual things as good and material things as bad? How has Genesis 1 challenged that perception?