

Genesis 1:1–2:4a

Trinity Sunday

Lessons for the Day: Genesis 1:1–2:4a; Acts 2:22-36; Matthew 28:16-20

In the Beginning—and Even Now—He is God

June 7, 2020

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

Dear Friends in Christ, and fellow redeemed:

In April of 1992, scientists announced, with great enthusiasm, that NASA's cosmic Background Explorer satellite had gathered new data regarding the big bang theory of the universe's origin. Scientists had become increasingly critical of the theory, but this new evidence seemed to give increased credibility to the big bang. Carlos Frank, an English physicist, said: "*This is the most exciting thing that's happened in my life as a cosmologist. What these people have found is what I would call the Holy Grail of modern cosmology.*"

Nowhere in the press releases was there any mention of God. Why would they mention God, when much of the scientific community—not to mention much of population in general—assumes that the universe and our world gave birth to themselves, and now continue on their own under natural laws? God is usually not spoken against; He simply is ignored.

That is why it is good for us, on this Trinity Sunday, to pause and give special thought to the God whom we worship and adore. As people of faith we believe that He is God from eternity, and that it is He who formed our world and the entire universe. We also know that He still is God; the true God who is present in the midst of His creation, and that He has worked to bring redemption to sinners like you and me. He who created us has saved us, and will give us life with Him forever. This is the God whom we worship.

Many years ago, David wrote in a psalm: *The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."* (Psalm 14:1 - ESV) In some ways, people don't want to be foolish—and so they still have a tendency to believe in some sort of 'higher power'. This, of course, does not mean that they believe in the God who has made Himself known in the Word He has given to us. It doesn't mean that they believe what David wrote in another psalm: *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.* (Psalm 19:1 - ESV) It does not mean that they believe in the Triune God, the only True God. No, people tend to fashion gods in their own image. We design for ourselves gods who meet the criteria and specifications we have set. In a society that focusses on evolution, even god is a product of that evolution, rather than being the Eternal God, who is the source of all that exists.

I have gone to several Creation / Evolution debates over the years, and at all of them, the same question is raised by one of the pro-evolution people at some point in time: "Where did God come from?" I notice that they never question where the gasses and dust that were necessary for the supposed 'big bang' comes from. They assume that these just always existed. But that is exactly what the Scriptures give as the simple answer about God: "He always was". In the epistle to the Hebrews we are told: *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.* (Hebrews 11:3 - ESV) There are two important realities in that verse. One is that the true God can only be known by faith—the faith that the Holy Spirit works in our hearts. The second is the fact that God is before all things. He is before all matter, before all time, before all space, before any of the things that are even necessary for the big bang. Everything, from the very existence of space itself to the smallest molecule of matter that exists, comes from the creative power of God.

Right from the beginning of creation, the true God makes Himself known as the Triune God. Our text today tells us how *the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.* (Genesis 1:2 - ESV) We hear again and again how God said, "*Let there be...and there was*", as God created all things through His powerful word. Christ is the Living Word, through whom the Father created all things. John tells us: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.* (John 1:1-4 - ESV) And when God creates man, He says: "*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*" (Genesis 1:26 - ESV) In the beginning, God revealed Himself as the Triune God; the God of wonders beyond our understanding.

As history unfolds, God to reveal Himself as the Triune God—as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is the God who is beyond all understanding—wondrous and marvellous in His glory, which fills the heavens. When we come together in worship, we come in reverent awe, as we seek to comprehend the great glory of the Lord. But we also rejoice in the God who is near to us—the God who is our loving Father, who cares for our lives each day. We rejoice in God the Son, who is our Saviour and brother,

and who gave Himself on the cross to bring us out of sin and death and into the Kingdom of the Father. We rejoice in God, the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us to comfort us, assure us and bless us with faith and life.

This is the God who put His name on us in our Baptism. We remember and rejoice in that name whenever we make the sign of the cross. This is the God who was, who is and who always will be. This is the God whom we confess before the world—the God of love and mercy; the God of truth and righteousness; the God who is just and holy; the God who is over all.

St. Paul told Timothy: *Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness.* (1 Timothy 3:16 - ESV) I can't say that I truly understand the mystery of the Trinity. But by faith, I know that this is the True God. What really is mysterious is that this great, awesome and marvellous God should be concerned about us! The mystery is that God is patient enough to deal with this world and its sinful people. The mystery is that God loves you and me with such an everlasting love that He willingly gave His Son to save us. The marvel of a God who can create the beauty, the intricacy and the ordered perfection of our world is beyond all thought. The very vastness of the universe boggles the mind. But that is nothing compared to the marvel of the God who continues to be our God and who reveals Himself as our Saviour. Why God doesn't walk away from the people who have no regard for His holy will astounds me. Why He doesn't simply abandon us to our fate surprises me. Why He puts up with the world where so many ignore Him amazes me. Yet He continues to work for our good. Jesus say: *your Father who is in heaven...makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.* (Matthew 5:45 - ESV) We can complain about all the things that are wrong in our world. We may wonder about the pandemic or the racial tension or the natural disasters that have plagued our world. In so many ways we see so much chaos. But that chaos would overwhelm us if we did not know the preserving, loving, giving care of the God who created the world and still preserves it. He is the One who brings order out of chaos.

But it is at the cross that the greatest marvel of God's grace and mercy are made known. In our Old Testament lesson, we are told: *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."* (Genesis 1:27, ESV) Sadly, being a wonderful reflection of the glory of God was not enough. One of the greatest ploys of the devil is to do what he did to Adam and Eve—to make us think that we can be "like God", or that we should be our own god. Our beautifully created world is ravaged by the evil that we bring upon it as we abuse creation. It is troubled by wars, by racial strife, by broken families, and our own personal selfishness. These are the things that come from our efforts to be our own god. These are the things that happen when we forget the God who was in the beginning, and still is today.

But God didn't forget us. In Christ, God comes to redeem us. Jesus comes to live among us, even taking upon Himself our human flesh and blood. He experiences life in this sinful world, but lives the holy life that is His as God. Then, in an event beyond all human understanding, He surrenders that life for us and for all mankind, letting Himself suffer and die to bear the punishment we deserve. He pours out His life to bring forgiveness to our lives. He destroys the very power of death in His resurrection so that we may rise to life in its fulness with Him. He marks us with His name in Baptism; He watches over us and intercedes for us; He gives His angels charge over us to care for us. He does all this because He is the God who created us. He is the God who is with us. He is our God.

In the hymn, *How Great Thou Art*, the hymn writer says: *O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder Consider all the works Thy hand hath made, I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, Thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed; Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee, How great Thou art! How great Thou art!* (LSB 801, st. 1) That great and glorious God is before all things and sustains all things. And He is still God. He is the God who is living and active, who is at work in us. He isn't just some "higher power". He isn't the cosmic force of the Star Wars movies. He isn't the nasty judge who simply wants to get even with us. Yes, He will judge and He will hold people accountable for the things they have done against His holy will. But He is also the God who opens His arms on the cross to save us. How true are Paul's words: *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.* (Romans 11:33-36 - ESV)