

CREATION AND EVOLUTION
Sermon series: “God on Trial –The Case for Christianity”
September 23, 2018 Genesis 1: 1-5
The Church of the Covenant

Anytime you have a sermon title like “Creation and Evolution” you know you’re basically about to offend most people in the room. I’m not trying to offend; I’m trying to get us to think; I want to stir up conversations in the car going home from church; maybe a conversation with a friend over coffee sometime this week. I know that the best adult ed class I ever had was the ride home with my parents after church when we’d slice and dice the preacher’s message (whom we loved by the way) and analyze it and critique it. I learned more from those conversations with my parents than I did in three years in seminary!

But this sermon had its Genesis, so to speak, when the Director of the Hubble Telescope, that is basically a super large telescope positioned out in space, that has been observing the universe for more than 20 years, came to speak at the men’s group of a former church of mine. Picture this –a sumptuous dinner of meatloaf, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, and apple pie a-la-mode, laying heavy on my stomach. Me, overly tired from a very long day. Me, sitting at the head table right in front of the speaker. Me, zoning out in major nap mode. Speaker, turns out all the lights to show slides of the universe from the Hubble Telescope. Me, about to go comatose in a major food coma; you know, when your head starts bobbing and weaving, you catch yourself in mid-fall, your only thought is “Gee, I hope I don’t pass out, my head hits the floor, and it has that loud sort of hollow watermelon sound when my fat head has impact with concrete.” Please, Jesus, not that!

Even through my meatloaf induced coma I remember him saying this. Did you know that the universe is expanding exponentially? And it is expanding from a center-point? Did you know they believe there is an “edge” or limit to the universe? Do you know that they are preparing the next Hubble Telescope to go out beyond Pluto in order to “see” the edge of the universe? Do you know that matter at the edge of the universe is speeding up and going faster and faster? Do you know that they believe that what happens in black holes, it eats light and matter and is imploding in on itself, they believe one day this is what will happen to the entire universe, that it will get to the limit of the explosive power, the “Big Bang” if you will, that began the universe at its beginning, and will collapse in on itself? The movement of matter is what creates time, so the implosion of matter, causes time and light to cease...The universe becomes one giant black hole...That’s what the Director of the Hubble Telescope told us...There is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending of all things.

What God tells us in the very beginning of the Book of Genesis is that, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...God said let there be light and there was light and God saw that it was good...”* (Genesis 1: 1-4) The story of Genesis is a story of God being the first

causality; God is the One who sets all things into motion; God's power is the creative force that brings everything into being in the beginning. Indeed, there are not just random, impersonal forces at work in the world that bring everything that has being into being; no, there is a purposeful cognitive rational being that brings everything into being that has being. The first cause antecedent to all causes is God. HE is the "Maker of Heaven and Earth" as the Apostle's Creed attests. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" is how Genesis puts it.

And then people get off on all kinds of tangents and bunny trails. Was the earth created in 6,000 years or in 6 billion years? Was it created in 6 days or 6 eons? Honestly, I don't think this matters as to the validity of either science or the Bible. The Bible says: "*With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*" (2 Peter 3: 8) Do I believe the Lord could have created everything in six twenty four hour earth days? Yes. God can do pretty much whatever God wants to do. Do I believe that one day for God might be one billion years? Yes. Our God is an immense God not limited by our temporal understandings of time. Timing isn't the issue of Genesis, the One who is the Maker of Heaven and Earth, that is the issue.

If you really look at the creation story as outlined in Genesis, by the way, it pretty much follows the created order as science understands it. God creates the basics, the heaven and earth and light and the seas, and then moves up "the food chain" if you will to create higher and higher levels of creation until finally and ultimately creates humankind itself. Just consider that people who lived 3,000 years ago, people who were pre-literate, pre-writing and pre-science, basically got the ordering and sequencing right even according to modern science? That's pretty profound evidence that demands a verdict.

You can believe that evolution indeed occurs within separate categories of creatures. An animal may evolve thicker fur in a colder environment or larger ears to better hear predators. But the problem with it is how does something cross the lines of species, how does an invertebrate, something without a backbone, evolve into a vertebrate, something with a backbone? And by the way if we impose a strict burden of scientific proof on proving an invertebrate evolving into a vertebrate, we cannot do it. We cannot prove beyond a reasonable shadow of a doubt that creatures can evolve that way. It is at best a theory. You stretch my credulity, my ability to believe, that a jelly fish can evolve into a raven. By your own standards science PROVE IT. But you cannot. So it takes MORE FAITH to believe in a random impersonal process than it does to believe in a process guided by the hand of the Creator.

What is more, things do not in life evolve from lower to higher states of being. Consider our wonderfully and fearfully made bodies, complex, the eye itself a miracle of engineering. But one day this body will die. It will decay. It was dust and it returns to the dust. It devolves not

evolves from a higher state of being to a lower state of being. Right? That's life and that's death. So is God the Maker of Heaven and Earth? Or are there just a random series of processes at work, impersonal and unknowing?

"The fool says in his heart there is no God". (Psalm 14: 1) The Apostle Paul in the Book of Romans writes: *"Ever since the creation of the world (God's) invisible nature, namely his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse...Claiming to be wise, they became fools..."* (Romans 1: 20-23) The Apostle is saying, you ought to be able to look around you and see all that has been created and know that there is a GOD. You are without excuse because every creature has seen the creation. You may claim to be wise, but if you really look at the created order you could not possibly believe there is no GOD so you remain a fool.

So back to the Director of the Hubble Telescope. So there I am bobbing and weaving in the front row about to make a spectacle of myself in front of the men's group. The Director then says, "I began life as an atheist or at best an agnostic." But the more and more I study the great detail of the universe, as I begin to understand how it was created "in the beginning" my conclusion from my scientific observation is that there absolutely must be a God who created all that is and could ever be. And then he added, "And it was then just a short leap of faith to becoming a Christian as well." It was then I sat up. It was then I woke up. This wasn't just a nice program about space. This was a testimony of a very intelligent man who came to faith because he had observed the universe and concluded that only a personal, alive and living God could be creator initiator and sustainer of a universe like ours.

So, you the jury, are again out. Was the universe created by God, did a personal living entity create all we see and know? Or is everything we see and know just the byproduct of random impersonal forces? We probably remember the old saw: "If you gave 1,000 monkeys 1,000 typewriters and gave them enough time they would eventually come up with Shakespeare." My dear Mother, an English teacher who loved Shakespeare and could quote it chapter and verse might say this then: "This above all; to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not be false to any man." (Polonius' advice to His Son, Hamlet Act I, sc. 3, William Shakespeare) No matter how many monkeys, no matter how many typewriters, and no matter how much time, no monkey can write Shakespeare. And God Himself alone is Creator of Heaven and Earth. Amen and Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*