

2. The Glory of Creation (2007)

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[0 : 0 0] Well, turn if you would to Genesis 1, either in your Bibles or on the sheet there. And as I said, we'll break in the middle for another hymn this evening.

But our subject tonight is the glory of creation. Now last week we began our study in Genesis by asking questions of the text. In particular, the key questions.

What is its purpose? Who was the message for? What really is the subject of these verses? And the most obvious thing of all is that it was certainly not written and could not possibly have been written primarily to critique 21st century science.

Or to provide fodder for the rather fruitless discussions that sometimes are had about the age of the earth and so on. That's quite clearly not why these verses were written. It would be totally anachronistic to think so.

But no, Genesis was first written, as we believe, by Moses, who was God's great prophet for his people Israel during the time of the exile and the wandering in the wilderness.

[1 : 0 8] And Moses is teaching Israel as God's people about the God that they already know. That is the God who is their great redeemer, the one who has brought them out of Egypt into freedom and life.

And the God who has brought them the hope of a glorious future in the promised land. But what he's doing is telling them more about the God whom they do already know. More about who he is and what he does and what he's like.

And so God, the Lord, is the subject of everything. Genesis 1, as we said last time, is all about the God of creation. And its purpose, above everything else, is to lead us to bow before his person.

And to bow before him alone, no other God. Genesis tells us that he, that the Lord, the God of the Bible, is the creator of heaven and earth.

The creator of all things. And that he is and he alone. And so Genesis is, first of all, polemic. That is, it's a frontal assault on every other view of the world that there is.

[2 : 1 8] Every other creation myth and story of the ancient world is swept away. And this is proclaimed to be the truth. And that means, as we said, that the world is not governed by chance.

It's not a by-product of celestial goings-on among the gods in the sky. Nor is it pure chance of a bunch of atoms just happening to come together and produce the world.

The world, as we know it, is not governed merely by sex. It hasn't come into being by some bizarre unions between gods and goddesses in the heavens, as the ancient peoples thought.

And therefore, sex, for them, was a thing to be worshipped, just as it is today. No, says Genesis. Neither is human history and human fortune governed by mere luck, so that human beings are enslaved by charms and rituals and offerings to capricious gods and spirits.

No, all of that mumbo-jumbo is just swept aside by the opening chapter of the book of Genesis. And Genesis declares that the world is created by a sovereign God, a God of power and of might and a God of purpose.

[3 : 31] So the world that he has created has meaning. And therefore, human life has meaning. And human life has value, just as everything else God has made has value.

And as we said, that's a wonderful comfort to us, isn't it? Because we know that our God is the maker of heaven and earth. Nothing but nothing can be outside his control.

But also, it's a real challenge, isn't it? Because this is the God who will brook no rivals, not in the world and not in our hearts. God of creation reveals himself for a purpose.

And that is that we should bow to his person and to him alone. You shall have no other gods before me. That's the great message of the Bible. But today, as we look at Genesis 1 a little more, we need to see that the way that God reveals himself in the story of creation is not only to reveal the God of creation, but also is to fill us with awe at the glory of his creation.

We're to be led not only to bow to his person, but we're to be led also to rejoice in his praise. Psalm 95 that we sang and read part of last week begins telling us, doesn't it, to worship, to kneel down before the Lord our maker.

[4 : 54] But we're not to do that grudgingly. We're not to do that coldly, with dull hearts. Never. The psalm begins, O come, let us sing to the Lord. Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come to his presence with praise and thanksgiving. Let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise. And that's what Genesis chapter 1 is meant to produce in us a sense of awe at the sheer glory, the wonder of God's creation.

To lead us to rejoice in his praise. And that purpose, I think, is obvious just when we begin to look at just how we are told the story of creation here in Genesis chapter 1.

Now this chapter is such a remarkable literary masterpiece. It's such a theological treasure trove. We could literally stay in this chapter for weeks and weeks. But there's so much else to look at in the story where we couldn't get anywhere if we did that.

So we can't. I'm going to get some books on the bookstall that will be helpful to you if you want to spend more time delving into this chapter. But tonight I want to focus mainly on verses 1 to 27.

[6 : 03] And I want to draw our attention to three things. First of all, this. That God has carefully ordered the world that he has created. Second, that he's ordered creation primarily for the sake of humanity.

And thirdly, that he has ordered it gloriously to manifest his beauty as well as his extravagant bounty towards us.

So first then, God has ordered carefully the world that he has created. You can't read through Genesis chapter 1 without being struck by the care and the precision and the order of everything that God has done in creation.

And I think it's for that reason that the very structure of the account is a part of the message itself. It's not just haphazard. It's not just a summary that says, God created everything.

And then just a kind of random list of a whole bunch of things. No, it's absolutely not that. It's quite the reverse. Now, I've printed out this sheet for you so that you can see how carefully this account has been ordered by Moses.

[7 : 14] And the intricacy of the structure of the account speaks very eloquently of the intricate and the detailed order of every single facet of God's created order.

But just look briefly first at the form of the whole chapter. First of all, you have verse 1 there at the top. It's like a title. It's like a summary. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

In a sense, there's no need for more, is there? That's it. That's the message. But there is more. And verse 2 homes in on the earth. Now the earth, it says.

It's to draw our attention. Now look, let's look at the earth. That's the realm of humanity. That's where people live. That's where we who are reading it live. And so that's the focus. And the focus, you see, is all on the ordering that takes place from a primitive chaos to a mature and a harmonious and an ordered cosmos.

So in verse 2, you see, we have darkness and the watery deep. We have an entity that's without form. It's void.

[8 : 28] It's empty. But in chapter 2, verses 1 to 3, we have a completed cosmos. We have heaven and earth. The formlessness has now been fully formed.

And the empty void has been filled with all the host of them. Thus, the heavens and the earth were finished. That's the forming. And all the host of them filled.

And we have a place of rest and of peace and of blessing and of holiness. And verse 3 says, God blessed the seventh day and he made it holy. Now what a contrast is there in that structure to all those pagan Babylonian and Egyptian myths.

Gods fighting and struggling in the sky. Totally unplanned fallout creating earth just as a chance byproduct. And totally in turmoil. Men and women at odds with the gods.

The gods fighting with the monsters. All kinds of stuff like that. What a total difference in Genesis chapter 1. No, here is plan and purpose and creative ordering and harmony.

[9 : 36] God does it all. And he does it effortlessly. And he does it just by speaking. And he creates a perfect, beautiful order. Everything we are told is in its place just as it should be.

So that the chaos of verse 2 of chapter 1 is utterly resolved into a picture of the cosmic peace of chapter 2 verses 1 to 3. And if you look at the verses in between, the bulk of the chapter, can you see how all the focus is on such perfect ordering?

First of all, there is a deliberate ordering that draws attention to God's powerful word that answers and overwhelms all the problems that are laid out in verse 2 of chapter 1. So, look at chapter 1 verse 2 again.

The earth is without form. It is engulfed in darkness. It is engulfed in the deep, the waters. And it is void. It is an empty, barren waste.

Well, pretty grim. But that is not all there is. You see, the spirit of God is hovering over the waters. Well, what is going to happen? What can this God do?

[10 : 48] Will this God be able to do anything? Does he have to fight these forces of chaos and darkness and so on that the pagan mythology thought were such dark powers and held the world in thrall?

Is there any possibility of this God ever achieving anything against darkness and chaos? Well, the answer is very obvious, isn't it? The chaos and the darkness of the empty deep are not God's foes.

They are his subjects. And at his word, as we sang, chaos and darkness heard and took their flight. And with one act, verses 3 to 5, darkness is dealt with.

God says, let there be light. And we have the dawn of day. And with two more acts, the waters are dealt with. Day two, first of all, a vertical separation of the atmosphere above and the waters below.

And then day three, a horizontal separation, producing land. And then with three more acts, in days four, five and six, the emptiness is filled again, all by the word, a simple command of God.

[11 : 54] And God said, and God said, and God said. And so it was. Just the way it was. And all the three problems of verse two are totally resolved.

Just with the word of God. The darkness is gone. The waters are separated. And the emptiness is filled. Just with words.

And to be exact, if you count the red lines there, you'll see it's ten times, God says. Ten words. And God creates. Quite a significant number, isn't it, for a people who have just been at Sinai and have received from the Lord?

What? The ten commandments. Literally, the ten words. The words of God's covenant. You see the pattern? There's one command on day one, one command on day two, and then two on day three.

And there's one command on day four, and on day five, and then four times commands on day six. And that brings us to the second feature of this deliberate ordering of the days.

[13 : 02] You see, there's a correspondence between these two triads of days, between days one to three and days four to six. Notice again, the descriptions of the earth in verse two.

Formless and void, or empty. There's an alliteration in the Hebrew. Tohu vabohu. Formless and void. Well, you can see on days one to three, forming the formless, by God's word.

And then on days four to six, filling of the empty. And there's even more careful parallelism than that. You can see day one, God creates light, and day four, the lights that give light.

Day two, the sky and the sea are separated. Day five, he fills the sky with birds and the sea with fish. And day three, land and vegetation come forth, the food.

And so on day six, he fills the land with animals and man to eat the food. Now that parallelism in this chapter is so obvious that, of course, it's been recognized since the very, very earliest days of the church.

[14 : 11] And it's there for a clear purpose. It speaks of the deliberate and the delightful order of the creation that God has made. Now there are all sorts of other features.

You begin to notice if you study the text carefully, you'll see that, for example, the number seven is clearly very significant. It's not just that there are seven days. There are seven times, God says, and it was so.

Seven times, God says, God saw that it was good. Seven words in the Hebrew in the very first sentence. Twice seven words in the very second sentence. The number ten, the number three, is obviously significant.

Ten times, God says, and God said. Ten times, according to their kinds. Apparently, in the first four chapters of Genesis, you find the name of God seventy times.

Exactly. Now there are many more, but all of these things suggest that the overwhelming focus in the creation account is not so much actually on chronology, but it's on order, it's on design, it's on purpose, it's on care, in everything that God does, laying out his created order.

[15 : 23] What God says will be, and it will be in the exact place God wants it to be. Now, none of that means that the days of creation can't be simple 24-hour days, but of course, it does mean that I think to be taken up merely with chronology actually is to miss the main point of the message, and that is that we're to see and to understand that God has created this world with design, with order, and that it's under control, and that it's good, and that it's wonderful because God is the maker of everything in heaven and earth.

Now let me just draw your attention to some obvious implications of this. First of all, because God did create an ordered world, that means that human beings like us can investigate the world and observe it and make discoveries about the world and base assumptions upon it, upon the things that we see and that we discover, assumptions about its predictability and about its order, and therefore, we're able to harness the knowledge that we gain from these observations to enhance our lives.

In other words, what I'm saying is because God created an ordered world, science is possible. If the world wasn't ordered with intelligence and design and stability, if it was all just chance and chaos and disorder, that would not be so, would it?

No, it wouldn't. If it was all pagan mumbo-jumbo, things happened according to the capricious whims of the gods and all that sort of thing, well, you'd never dare get in a car, would you?

Far less get up in an airplane. You'd have no idea whether the airplane's going to stay in the air or not. If everything was totally random and chance and chaos, how would you know?

[17 : 22] But no, science is possible precisely because of the order of God's creation. And of course, science as we know it was born out of a Christian world view.

You all know the saying of Kepler, the great scientist, we're thinking God's thoughts after him. And science, when you think about it, depends, doesn't it, upon the order and the predictability of an ordered cosmos.

And it's the Bible that gives us confidence because God is the sole creator that the same natural laws that we observe here on earth will be the same all the way through the universe, all through our solar system and beyond.

It's the Bible that gives us confidence to send rockets to the moon because God is unchanging and his faithfulness is the guarantee that we can depend upon the world that we see to be the world that we see.

Because of God's faithfulness and his created order that planes won't simply fall out of the sky because the law of gravity changes tomorrow or the law of flow dynamics or whatever it is that keeps planes in the air.

[18 : 32] But they won't change. See, Christian faith was the womb for modern science. In fact, it's radical scientism, the kind of ideas that it's espousing nothing but randomness and total chance, that must be the enemy of true science, mustn't it?

The goalposts of reality will randomly shift. How can we have any sure foundation at all for the empirical sciences? Well, we can't. No, it's the order of creation that makes science possible.

Second, it's the order of creation that makes security possible for human beings. Striking, you know, how anxiety and fear of global catastrophe is such a mark of modern secularism, isn't it?

Just as it was in ancient paganism. They worried that capricious gods might plague this world and plunge it into chaos, plunge it back into the darkness and the deep, that waters would once again engulf the earth, that no one could have any control over the future of their world.

That's not so different today, is it? Global warming is talked about as the greatest catastrophe, the biggest issue facing humanity. And newspapers are full of fears of chaos, rising waters, melting ice caps, rising deserts.

[20 : 00] But no, says the Bible. This world is established, it shall not be moved, says Psalm 93, because God has created it an ordered world on firm foundations, as Psalm 104 says.

In fact, Jeremiah tells us that his creation is an act of covenant. It's a promise that God cannot break. Jeremiah 33, 26, If I have not established my covenant with the day and the night and the fixed order of heaven and earth, then I will reject the offspring of Jacob and David my servant.

You see what God's saying, rejecting his people is impossible, as impossible as the fixed order of creation that he's made being destroyed. It's God's covenant promise.

So we don't have to live in fear of cosmic disaster. We can have security. Of course, that doesn't mean that there won't be floods or droughts or hurricanes or things like that.

Nor does it mean, of course, that we can just misuse the planet and misuse our resources, that we're not responsible for things. Of course not. Genesis 1, in fact, tells us precisely the opposite.

[21 : 12] We're to steward the word well for God. But it certainly does mean that no Christian can be obsessed with climate change as if it really were the biggest issue facing the human race.

Of course not. In fact, if Christians were to jump onto that bandwagon and forget the real issue for the human race, which is the judgment to come when Jesus Christ returns, and the gospel that alone can save us from that, then that would really be a tragedy and a disaster.

But no, God made an ordered world. He has made a covenant with the fixed order of heaven and earth, says Jeremiah, and we can have security.

We need not be terrorized either by ancient pagans or by the modern pagans. We can have science and we can have security because we have an ordered creation and a faithful God.

Well then, God ordered the world that he created in Genesis 1 exudes that divine ordering. But, the ordering is not just arbitrary. It has a focus and that brings us to the second thing.

[22 : 27] God has ordered his creation principally for mankind. The principal focus and indeed the climax of the creation account is the creation of mankind.

It's very obvious in many ways. It's the last creative act from day 6. It's the longest part of the text. The only place where God announces beforehand, let us create. And only after man's creation is things pronounced not just good but very good.

And we'll come back next time particularly to the creation of man. But tonight, I want you to see how the whole of the rest of the creation account is also ordered with a particular focus on humanity.

That is to say that the Bible's view of the created world is anthropocentric. It's human-centered. Now that, of course, is the total opposite, isn't it, of some, not all, but some enthusiastic green campaigners today.

Those who think, and there are those who think, that the world would actually be a better place without human beings at all. And therefore, in their value system, it's animals and even insects and even plants who should take precedence over human beings in this world.

[23 : 46] And even at the extreme end of such movements, you find people who will murder, murder human beings for the sake of animals and even plants. Now again, let me see, the Bible is very, very clear that human beings have a responsibility for the world not to abuse it.

But it's also very clear that the created world, the created order, is created principally for man. And that purpose also dictates the way that the Bible reveals that truth about creation to us here in Genesis 1.

See, Genesis 1 is presented as laying out for us the prerequisites of an environment for human beings to inhabit and in which they can enjoy their purpose.

their purpose of reflecting God's sovereign rule as his image and as his representatives and of relating to God their creator as the only creatures in his image and the only ones who therefore are capable of doing so.

So if we look at the first triad, the first three days of creation, we can see that they lay out that essential environment for man. It speaks of the creation of time and of space and of sustenance.

[25 : 04] The essential elements for human existence. On day one, the creation of light is the creation of time, isn't it? Now, Einstein's theories will tell us the same thing, I think.

It's all beyond me to understand that. You need to speak to a physicist like George Wagner after the service to explain all that to you. But time is essential, isn't it, for the very possibility of relationship.

We know that in the most obvious and mundane sense. Building a relationship takes time. And if man's chief end is to glorify God, to enjoy Him forever, to know Him, to love Him, to have relationship with Him, we need time.

And so God creates time. Essential for that. And space, day two, let there be an expanse. Now again, Einstein and all these clever people will tell us that these two things are carefully and totally intertwined, aren't they?

the space-time continuum and all that sort of thing. But it's just basic. We know there must be space to exist in. Think of a very personal and simple example of an expectant mother.

[26 : 13] She's creating space as the weeks of her pregnancy go on, isn't she? Space for her growing baby to inhabit. And sustenance, day three.

A place to live where there's sustenance, where there's food, the fruit of the earth. Now all of these things, you see, are clearly pointing on to day six, to man's creation. And day seven, for his communion with God himself.

But that's one principal reason, I think, why God reveals this to us according to a weekly timetable. It's because it's focused on the nature and the purpose of man as God's image.

He's created to image God in creation as a workman ruling the world for God. And day, day, well, day is the realm of man's work.

I wonder if you notice that in verse five, the first mention of day in Genesis one actually doesn't refer, can't refer, to a 24-hour day. It refers to daylight, the light he called day.

[27 : 15] And what's daylight for? Well, if you're reading Psalm 104 during the offering, you'll see that verse 24 says, when the sun rises, man goes out to his work and to his labor until evening.

Day is when God is at work. And so day is when man, God's image, is at work. That's why also I think there's such detail on day four in the creation of the sun and the moon, the light, as we're told, to govern the day and the night.

Day four is the central day, isn't it? Again, there's great symmetry in that direction in this passage. Day one begins with the creation of day. Day seven climaxes with the day, the seventh day, the day of rest.

And right in the middle is day four. And if you examine those verses, 14 to 19, you'll find that there's intricate parallelism in those verses. I won't go into it here, but do you see that right at the center is verse 16.

It tells us why the two great lights are there. They're there to rule the day and the night. In other words, day and the regulation of day is central to Genesis chapter one.

[28 : 32] They're there to mark out the days and the times and the seasons for man. Now, the chief times and seasons that are referred to here are not what we think of as spring and summer and so on.

Rather, of course, to Moses' readers it was obvious. He meant the days and the seasons of the great festivals of Israel. Passover, Tabernacles, Pentecost, and of course, above all, the Sabbath.

In other words, the times and seasons for man's relations to God. And God creates a world with an inbuilt order and rhythm in both space and time that in everything is centered upon mankind who are to reflect God's rhythms of work and rest.

The day when man works like God and the day of rest when man rests in communion with God. So man is to rule.

He's to have dominion over all the earth under God. under God. But do you notice man does not rule the heavens. No, God has put the great lights to rule there.

[29 : 39] That is, to govern the life of man on earth according to God's celestial timetable. So we're to be dependent on him. God is the Lord of time and we are not.

And the very pattern of the seven day week is built into the order of creation to remind us of that. to remind us that our chief purpose as human beings lies beyond even this creation.

It lies in God himself. We're made for him. We're made as his image to commune with him. We're made for worship. That's why Psalm 90 that I think we quoted from this morning speaks about man being formed from the dust of the earth.

But from everlasting to everlasting you are God. So he says teach us to number the days that we might have a heart for wisdom.

The wisdom that understands who we are ultimately made for. For God. And that means I think that whether you see these days of creation as figurative or indeed as actual 24 hour periods in which everything was created I agree with Robert Godfrey who says this they are not a timetable for God's actions.

[30 : 53] But they are a model timetable for us to follow. God has ordered his creation for man in order that man shall seek God and know God and rejoice in relationship with God.

Now just think about some of the implications of that. It means that the very order of creation with its inherent patterns of time of work and rest of day and night of labor and Sabbath they point to the purpose of it all.

That human beings are both to reflect God's own nature in the world in the pattern of our lives in work and rest and above all we are to relate to God our creator enjoying communion and fellowship with him in his rest.

That means that there is to be sure a realm of responsibility and of work that is basic that is intrinsic to our humanity. That means that work is not a necessary evil.

It's what God has made us for. It's a challenge isn't it for Monday morning? That God has made us to work to image him. But certainly that is not all we're made for.

[32 : 09] We're also made first of all and above all for God himself to share his Sabbath rest. Now we'll speak more about that next time but it does mean doesn't it at the very least that we as human beings as Christians we cannot be people who worship our earthly work can we?

As if our earthly work was all that there was was all that was important even if we're doing it to glorify God. No. There must be time for God built into the rhythm of creation.

Now whether you're a student about to start studying at university or whether you're somebody that's engaged in a career even a career you love even a full time Christian career you need to know that.

That is not your object of worship. And if we needed reminding of that God has revealed a weekly pattern such that no more than six days can possibly go past without the very calendar reminding us of the gospel of our calling to stop and to turn our eyes upward to God our maker to remember that we're made not just for work with him but for rest and for enjoyment of him.

God has ordered his world for man that we might know him that we might find our true purpose in him alone. So next time you look up and you see the sun or you see the moon remember that.

[33 : 37] That's why they're there as lights to remind us of the times and the seasons to point us to the calendar to tell us that God is the Lord of time that he's created us in time yes to work and to image him but above all to bow down and to worship him.

And that's in a way the only reason why we have a sun or a moon. Think of that. Well perhaps not quite the only reason that brings me to the last thing which really must be brief.

God has ordered the world gloriously for human beings. God has created not just an essential environment for mankind in which to live and in which to relate to him.

He's created an environment of extravagant beauty of wonder of delight. In a sense when you look at this creation story there's no need is there for verses 4 to 6.

In days 1 to 3 he's created everything we need space and time and food sustenance. Why didn't he stop and at the end of day 3 create man there and then? Well the answer must be it's because this God is the God who does exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we could ever ask and imagine.

[34 : 57] He's the God of extravagance of exuberant overflowing glory. He's the God who goes further who does more who gives more. He's the God of glory and therefore he has a creation of glory.

Just let me summarize briefly in four words that help us catch something of the glory of this creation. An A, B, C and D. First abundance. Verse 20 he says let the water swarm with swarms of living creatures and so he does with the birds and with the animals not just once and for all but ongoing again and again multiply he says fill go on filling the heavens and the earth.

God creates abundantly he's a God of overflowing generosity. What does that mean for us who are his images? Well surely Christian people will be people who image this God won't we?

We'll never be parsimonious and mean and niggardly. Surely we'll want to be generous and overflowing with abundance in everything that we do. Abundant in our work abundant in our praise abundant in the joy in our relationships.

That's what Jesus was wasn't it? He came he said that you might have life and have it abundantly. This is a God of abundance.

[36 : 28] Beauty this God of Genesis 1 is an artist. He's not just content with an environment that man can exist in and survive in. He decorates it with breathtaking beauty for our joy for our appreciation.

Look at verse 14 again. Let there be light he says for times and seasons. Well he only needed one could have been a fluorescent tube. But this God he lights up his handiwork with a hundred billion stars in our Milky Way alone.

Can you believe that? And a hundred billion more galaxies beyond. Do the math as our American friends would say.

The end of verse 16 surely must be one of the most understated clauses ever written in the history of the world and the stars. The beauty think of it the sheer loveliness of this creation and everything else.

Think of the rugged grandeur and the beauty of the mountains. We were up walking yesterday in Argyle and just the sheer beauty. I said to the girls as we were coming back along the road why do you think God made all of these mountains and these trees and beautiful colours and the burns and the streams?

- [37 : 46] And he said I don't know and I said so that we could enjoy it today. And that's what the Bible tells us. Think of the coastlines and the valleys and the rivers and the diamonds and the gold and the beautiful things that come out of the ground.

Think of the wonder of a sunset over water on a clear summer's day. Beauty. This God has given us a beautiful home.

He's a God of beauty. Beauty in abundance. And surely then Christian people must be people who love beauty. Isn't that right? We won't be content with ugly things.

With a bear and with sufficient things only. We want to image our beautiful God. Our God would never be a fluorescent tube in the middle and no pictures on the wall. Never.

He'd have halogen downlighters everywhere. Beautiful paintings all over the place. Building development team, I hope you're listening. He's a God of abundance and of beauty.

- [38 : 52] And see, of creativity. He not only creates, but he builds creativity into the creation itself. Look at verse 11. Let the earth sprout vegetation.

Be creative. Verse 24. Let the earth bring forth living creatures. Create. Verse 22. Be fruitful and multiply and fill.

There's a self-propagating creativity set loose in the world that God makes. And in humanity too. Verse 28. Be fruitful and multiply. Be creative like the creator.

So, of course, Christians can't despise creativity in the arts and in architecture and in music and in literature and so on and so on. Sometimes they mistakenly have.

But no, God is an artist. And he's put all of these things into his world to reflect him. And above all, he's put it into men and women so that they might reflect his creativity and wonder.

- [39 : 59] And he wants that creativity in you and in me to be unleashed and to be appreciated. He wants us to be people who create beauty out of chaos. Mind you, we do have to say that it's God's creative pattern that must dictate what is creative beauty and what is real art.

It's his form and his order and his beauty that we seek to see in these things. Not formlessness and voidness. I sometimes do think that some modern art is more *tohu vabohu*, chaos and formlessness than anything else.

But real art, oh yes, God is an artist. He's creative. Finally, diversity. That's surely what the emphasis that is repeated about separating is all about.

There's diversity, there's contrast everywhere in God's creation. Light and dark, land and water, sunlight and starlight, male and female. And the command to be fruitful and to multiply and fill the earth seems to imply the opportunity for further diversity and further richness to enrich the created order.

Well, the biologists will tell us of the almost infinite diversity. of the created order. They'll tell us of the ongoing natural selection and greater and greater diversity that happens among the species.

- [41 : 27] Well, I think if we read Genesis chapter one, that's what we ought to expect. Not natural selection, of course. God's purpose for a wonderful organic diversity that's built into his creation.

He's a diverse God and he puts diversity into our world. Of course, it's ordered and limited by God. The diversity comes from something that's already been created.

I don't think he's talking about an amoeba turning into human beings or anything like that. Again and again we have this phrase, within its kind, each according to its kind. But within each kind, whatever that is, according to our modern classification, God builds in ever-increasing diversity.

He's a God who loves that. Just think of the contrast to the awful assimilation and the conformity of the communist blocks of Eastern Europe.

You ever been there and seen the buildings? Formless blocks. Everybody conformed to be exactly the same. But this God is a God of diversity. Diversity in personalities.

[42 : 37] Diversity in gifting. diversity in everything that he's made. And this is our God and that is his creation. Order out of chaos, yes.

Time and space and sustenance for man, yes. But more than that, abundance and beauty and creativity and diversity.

This is a message, friends, about the sheer glory of God's created order. glory of God. And it's given us to lead us to rejoice in his praise.

That's why I ask you to read Psalm 104. It's a poem of praise, rejoicing in the glory of God's creation. So let me finish by reading a few words from the end of the psalm.

May the Lord, says the psalmist, rejoice in his works. Who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke. I will sing to the Lord as long as I live.

[43 : 41] I will praise my God while I have being. May my meditation be pleasing to him for I rejoice in the Lord. God himself rejoices in his creation.

Behold, it is very good, he says. And he calls us as his people to join him in that rejoicing. That's what it means to understand what this is all about.

To join the praise of our God for the glory of his creation.