Genesis and our God of Order – 060522

“Show me a person’s view of origins and I will show you the person’s view of God, they are that closely related.” Jeremy Thomas

I. Introduction

II. The Sanctity of Language

III. The Stability of Language

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Last week I challenged myself and all of you to assess our beliefs and presuppositions, or the things we assume to be true that give shape to our beliefs.

Are we working from the assumption that the Bible is complete truth and that we need to approach it that way?

Or do we believe the Bible must be subject to our logic and reason, which means that it must be proven to us?

What this comes down to is that either God’s written word is the judge, or I am the judge.

There is nothing neutral.

There is no middle ground. In order to accept God’s word, we must first accept its authority.

If we are unwilling to accept the authority of God’s word, we assume authority over it.

All of this can be boiled down to: Do you believe the Bible is true, in spite of what you think? This is super challenging, since there are things contained in God’s word, much of it actually, that run counter to what we believe.

We talked last week about our propensity or subconscious desire to suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

That is the influence of our flesh.

We also have an active enemy who prowls about like a roaring lion seeking to devour us, and constant pressure from a sin-indulgent world that is circling the drain and trying to suck us down with it.

Do we hold to the truth of the Bible only when it is convenient, or when it serves our purposes? Do we trust God’s word only when we already agree with it?

What about when it rubs us wrong?

What about when it goes against what we have traditionally believed?

As I pointed out last week, we have to recognize our preset notions, our presuppositions, and get our minds right.

This all serves as a defense against the war being waged against us.

The war for the control of our hearts and minds.

Our points of application last week were to recognize God’s authority, kill our unbelief, and to trust in the truth.

How are we doing with that?

Once we begin to recognize and trust in the truth of God’s word, we see that our feet are on solid rock.

Things stop shifting beneath us.

In other words, we begin to feel confident in what we believe. We begin to know things.

Not just think things but know things.

Last Sunday I told you that I was setting up my next shot.

I’m doing that again this week.

When we really begin to understand the deeper truths of God’s word, it goes a long way in helping us interpret the world around us, and the world inside of us.

When we begin to see the world more through God’s eyes, we are changed.

So last week we were confronted with our bias and presets regarding the authority and truth of God’s word.

This week we will see that God not only created everything, but that he set it up in an orderly way and gave us tools to make sense of it all.

We’ll also see what happens when we decide to do things our own way.

Remember back to the beginning of this Genesis series.

I told you that “Origins Determine Conclusions.”

Okay. So What?

Well, what if I give you two options regarding origins.

SLIDE 2

1. “In the beginning, God…

2. In the beginning, Gas…

One of these origins begins with intent.

It begins with intelligence, clarity, thought, a meticulous plan, information, and sharing of information, which means it is personal.

It begins with efficacy, or the ability to produce in order to intentionally bring something into being.

That is called creation, by the way.

By definition, it must be orderly.

Within it there must be accountability and responsibility.

The other origin is vague.

It is random and unclear.

It is chaotic and incidental.

There is no cause, thus no intent.

It is impersonal, with no guidance or reason.

It is predicated on pure chance.

Within this system there can be no accountability, and thus no responsibility.

Everything is volatile and unpredictable, since it began with an explosion or chaos.

If origins determine conclusions, what will each origin produce?

Intentional orderliness or chaotic chance?

Now, let me ask you this.

Under which system would you rather live?

Is the way you live and the way you think connected to one or the other of these origins?

Are they intertwined?

Do you still believe in luck or chance?

Do you believe everything has a purpose, or do things just happen sometimes with no intent or reason?

Do you think your path and destination are unknown?

Do you believe truth can be truly known?

Do you believe there is one truth, or are there many, and are they relative to different people and the situations they find themselves in?

Interesting, huh?

Please open your Bibles to Genesis chapter 1.

Before we read, it is widely accepted that Moses wrote these words as a narrative.

Where did he learn these things?

They would have come from Adam himself.

This is mind-boggling to consider, since in our unbelief we tend to view Adam as mythical.

Let’s read the creation account again.

See if it has taken on more meaning in your mind.

**“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2The earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.3Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. 4And God saw the light, that *it was* good; and God divided the light from the darkness. 5God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day. 6Then God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” 7Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament; and it was so. 8And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day. 9Then God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry *land* appear”; and it was so. 10And God called the dry *land* Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that *it was* good. 11Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed, *and* the fruit tree *that* yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed *is* in itself, on the earth”; and it was so. 12And the earth brought forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed according to its kind, and the tree *that* yields fruit, whose seed *is* in itself according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good. 13So the evening and the morning were the third day. 14Then God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; 15and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so. 16Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. *He made* the stars also. 17God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that *it was* good. 19So the evening and the morning were the fourth day. 20Then God said, “Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens.” 21So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good. 22And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” 23So the evening and the morning were the fifth day. 24Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, *each* according to its kind”; and it was so. 25And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good. 26Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” 29And God said, “See, I have given you every herb *that* yields seed which *is* on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. 30Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for food”; and it was so. 31Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was* very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.**

Okay.

I’m going to ask what seems like an elementary question here.

We have just reviewed the creation narrative.

We see the order, and the thought that went into it.

How was it created, and how was the truth of creation delivered to us?

It was written, but before it was written, it was spoken.

How did this creation of which we are a part become?

We see in Genesis 1:3 and that God spoke it into being, and then it was revealed to us through language.

Order, Organization, is directly related to language.

Have you ever considered the importance of language?

The Word?

God seems to regard it highly.

Nothing is written in the Bible accidentally or incidentally. Every word counts.

SLIDE 3

Hang on here.

Let’s go for a ride.

We see that God spoke.

We see that once God created light by speaking it into existence, he called it Day, and the darkness night.

He began speaking and naming.

Now, let’s look at two verses and start connecting doctrines.

First, we have John 1:1-5.

You all know this one.

It’s about Jesus.

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”**

Next up, we have Colossians 1:16-17, which also speaks of Jesus.

**“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”**

We know the persons of the Trinity have different roles or functions.

I don’t know much about this reality, but it is clear that God created through His word, that Jesus is the word, and that Jesus is the creative force, or the Creator.

Think about this the next time you want to use the name of Jesus loosely, or if you hear someone else use it as a curse word.

That Word, “Jesus,” holds all things together.

“In Him all things consist.”

We should be more careful even speaking it.

I say all that to say that language is of God, and that language is extremely important to Him, so it must also be to us.

We could go farther and say that language is sanctified, it is holy.

Romans chapter 1 tells us that all that can be known of God is clearly visible in His creation, but also we know that He reveals His truth to us in the same way He created, through language.

Furthermore, He named and categorized things, and taught us to do the same, because He is a God of order and He wants His revelation to be clear to us.

God is a God of order, and to understand this we must start with language, because language controls everything else.

Jeremy Thomas writes, **“You cannot talk about any subject, I don’t care what the subject is, pick any subject you want to, you cannot discuss that subject, talk about it, think about it or act on the basis of your thoughts about it unless you have already established basically a view of the universe, a view of yourself, a view of truth, and a view of language. You can’t start without presupposing things. This goes for the Christian and the non-Christian.”**

What Jeremy is talking about here is that God uses language as one of the building blocks for understanding.

Everything is based on language, or the Word, if you will.

This means that learning and understanding is dependent on and subject to, you guessed it, Jesus. All things consist in Him, remember?

When you read Genesis and observe that God speaks and classifies or categorizes things, think deeply about what is happening.

Did you know that we as His highest creation are programmed to learn language and categorize everything for the purpose of learning and understanding?

Have you ever observed a little child learning to talk?

How is it that they can conceptualize something, learn the name of it, then learn to categorize it so they can make sense of things around them?

Linguists have no idea how this happens.

Babies have no prior context for learning.

Dr. Mortimer Adler states, **“Do you realize that every one of us have performed the greatest intellectual act we will ever perform for the rest of our life by the time we are six years old?”**

He is referring here to the accomplishment we have all achieved in learning language.

It’s a miracle!

God has designed us intellectually to learn language.

Think of a child. A toddler.

The child is looking out the window at a Golden Retriever.

 “What’s that?” She asks.

Mommy answers and says, “That’s a dog.”

This may happen several times, and then one day the child looks out the window sees a poodle, and says, “Look Mommy! A dog!”

The child may have never seen a poodle, but she knows it’s a dog.

If the child sees a cat, she most likely will know that’s not a dog.

How is this possible?

God preprogrammed our minds to assign meaning to words, understand the context in which a certain word is given and discern between different kinds.

This ability is amazingly purposeful, and not accidental.

There is built into all of us a need to classify.

We classify again and again; we can’t talk without classifying.

And that means that the universe around us is classifiable and that is SO IMPORTANT because that it is one of the preconditions for knowledge, that the universe around us is classifiable.

We can learn and advance intellectually based on the reliability of classification and on the intransigent meanings of words.

Remember the two origins?

God and gas?

One is reliable and unchanging, while the other is random and changeable.

When this second origin is your basis of perception, you begin to believe that everything is random and changeable, including language.

Over time you begin to believe that you can change language to suit yourself.

Do you see where I’m going here?

We have arrived at a place where a grown, professional politician cannot define the word woman, or properly identify what it means to be one, when any two-year-old child can easily identify a woman or a man, because they know the difference.

But now that we have awakened and are so much more intelligent, we have arrived at a place where there’s no telling what someone is, and people, college graduates, genuinely believe that a man can give birth to a child or can nurse a baby.

This has become the value of a college tuition bill.

That’s okay, the student doesn’t have to pay for it anyway.

We do.

In more ways than one.

It is jaw droppingly incredible, but here we are.

We now live in a world that has smeared the meanings of words to the point where no one knows

what anyone means anymore.

Communication and learning have ceased.

Words no longer have authoritative power and the ability to create order.

Why is this so destructive?

Because God is coherent and orderly, and we see that by His emphasis on language, on His word.

He used language to create, and to establish stability.

When we view scripture, in this case the creation narrative, we can see that God not only created an environment for us, but He also intended for us learn about it and understand it.

We can know what it is we are looking at and dealing with.

As God created, He began naming. In verse 5, He named light.

In verse 8 He named heaven, and in verse 10 he named the earth and seas.

This means that the universe was designed to be describable by language.

SLIDE 4

Once God named these things, and once He created Adam, what is the first task He gave Adam in Genesis 2:19-20?

It says, **“Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *was* its name. 20So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field.”**

Isn’t this interesting?

The first thing we see God and Adam doing is using language to make sense of things. Observing, naming and categorizing.

Look again at Genesis 1:4-5. God observes, categorizes, and names.

Aren’t these things the basis for the scientific method?

Is this not how we learn? God wants us to know our universe!

He made it for us.

In order for us to be fruitful, multiply, and tend it, we must know all we can about it.

How else can we know that God is a God of order?

Well, if we look carefully at how He created everything, we can see that there is a logical plan that plays out. What is the order of creation?

SLIDE 5

First Heavens, then Earth.

An expanse, and then our place.

Or a place for our place, and then our place.

His light filled the universe, and then He divided it.

Then He shaped our planet, our place and filled it with plant life.

Then He created not light, but lights.

Bodies that reflect the light of His power and glory.

Next He created animal life, and finally, mankind, His crowning achievement.

So to recap, He created a space for our place, then He made our place, then He made our place habitable, gave us all we need to thrive, then took His time and care and created us, placing us in the environment He prepared for us.

Who did this?

Did the universe create itself?

Did mankind create itself?

Did YOU create yourself?

Who created all this?

Scripture tells us that Jesus did it.

This calls to mind John 14:2.

**“In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were* not *so,* I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.”**

We should read these scriptures and be encouraged.

Jesus cares about us, and He is taking care of us!

Nothing about Him is haphazard or reactive.

Earlier, we mentioned that God named His light, and then later created lights.

What is the purpose of these lights?

Not surprisingly, they are a function of His order, and of His care for us.

God is helping us organize.

Genesis 1:14-18 says, **Then God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; 15and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so. 16Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. *He made* the stars also. 17God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that *it was* good.**

The seasons, the calendar, and the rhythm of our daily lives are determined by these lights that God set in the heavens.

Amazing!

God is truly a God of order, and He established order for us.

One final point of order that I’d like to point out from the Genesis record of beginnings has to do with something we’ve already talked about quite a bit, but that will figure strongly in the weeks to come.

This is the idea of kinds, or categories.

SLIDE 6

As we see early on in Genesis, God is naming and categorizing.

The earth at first is formless and void.

He divides light from dark, water from land, and earth from sky.

He then gives Adam the task of naming and categorizing all that God had made.

In the act of creation, God uses the word “Kind” repeatedly.

The word is used ten times from Genesis 1:11 to 1:24.

Do you think it matters to God that these things be separated and kept apart?

We will dive headlong into this two weeks from now, but it is no coincidence, nor is it incidental that God says of mankind that “Male and female He created them.”

Genesis 1:27

He made them of the same substance, completely equal, but completely separate, each with their own reproductive capabilities, strengths, roles, and ultimately, each with their own curse to deal with.

As for all other living things, God organized them into kinds, and made the animals so they could not cross certain barriers.

This is how God saw fit to organize things, so we ought to honor that.

We see from scripture that God is orderly, and that He set the universe and us up to operate in an orderly way that submits to His intentions.

 Now let’s see how this is going.

 Let’s say you are going to have a large group of people assemble for a purpose.

 Okay. Let’s pretend there is an apocalypse of some sort.

Let’s say you find yourself in a movie-type situation where you are one of maybe a thousand people left on earth.

Somehow, all of you survivors have come together here in Wheatland, and you are in the only structure left standing, the brand-new Agri-plex.

Thank goodness for our tax dollars, huh?

Anyway, you are gathered together.

Now what?

Let’s say the only habitable place left on earth is a two-mile radius from the Agri-plex.

No one can go off on their own.

You are all thrown together.

What must happen?

Bear in mind, this group is from all over the earth.

How would you get it together?

How would you organize?

Wouldn’t you first have to establish a means of communication?

Next would be the establishment of roles or jobs, and then leadership?

If repopulation was to happen, what then?

Could people just to whatever with whomever?

No, probably not.

You see, God set the template for us, and it would be best to follow His blueprint.

It would be best for people to get out a Bible and see what to do next.

These are interesting thoughts, but especially in light of what is happening in the developed world these days.

People have decided that there is no need to follow God’s plan.

Look around.

Witness the result.

A vast majority of people either discount the existence of God outright, or they disregard the

 things He commands if they disagree with what the individual wants for themselves.

This includes His organizational plan and His means of organization, language and contextual meaning based on what is.

The result is that we can no longer understand one another.

There is no common ground.

There is no concrete basis for understanding.

What does it mean nowadays if someone says they are a Christian?

What does it mean to be a man or a woman?

When is a human being a human being?

When is the age of consent?

Is consent even a requirement for sexual activity?

Who are you or who is anyone else to tell me what I am or what I’m not?

Why would you insist that I pay my student loans back?

Who are you to define God for me?

Who are you to determine whether or not I belong in prison?

The list goes on and on.

We are witnessing a world of people who have abandoned God in favor of Self.

So here’s my question for you.

Are you submitting to God’s order?

 Have you placed yourself under His supervision and judgment?

Here are three things you can do to ensure that you are submitted to the order that God has established:

1. Seek the counsel of the Lord - **“Come now, and let us reason together,”** Says the Lord…” Isaiah 1:18

2. Respect and Obey the Lord - **“Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all.”** Ecclesiastes 12:14

3. Keep faith in the Lord - **“Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.”** - 2 Corinthians 13:5

These are all good application points, but on a basic level, I would ask that you understand that our God is a God of order, and if we refuse to submit to His order, our lives will be chaotic and messy.

Origins determine conclusions.

Now, you may be sitting out there and something is getting to you.

You are thinking about Jesus.

Let me tell you.

He is thinking about you.

Jesus wants you to be brought back to God the Father.

God’s word tells those of us who have put our trust in Jesus “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” (Ephesians 2:13).

You may have been thinking about how your life has been anything but orderly.

Maybe things are a mess.

I’m telling you now, decide today to get out of your own way and let Jesus take your life over.

To repent means to recognize your sin and turn away from it.

Repent and turn your face to Jesus.

Do it today.

He can restore order and peace in your life.

Talk to me afterwards, or any other Christian you trust that you know.

Just don’t wait.

**Communion (Ask ushers up)**

As a church we do two ceremonies, or ordinances. These two ordinances are both symbolic reminders of what Jesus has done for us on the cross. They are water baptism and communion. They are not mystical practices. They hold no special transformative power. There is no magic here. We simply recognize the transformative, redemptive work of Jesus on the cross by a public display of faith (water baptism), and by private communion with Jesus. As we partake in communion today, I would ask that you refrain if you have not yet trusted Christ, or if you need to get things right with Him. This is a time of reflection and seriousness. As we ready ourselves today to eat and drink in communion with Jesus, let’s remember to step away from the old and into the new. Let’s renew our commitment to walk in holiness and righteousness because He loves us and has given us new life.

Ask the Elders to distribute the bread. Wait until everyone has it. When everyone has it, ask that we all pray silently and come to the Lord with open, honest hearts.

1 Corinthians 11: 23 – 30

“…the Lord Jesus on the same night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

Pause while people eat.

“In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”