

Pastor Janneke's Page

Faith Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD

July 22 & 23, 2017

Reading God's Word and Reading God's World

The relationship between Scripture and Science

This summer, our Sunday Bible study is focusing on God's creation. I'd like to use this page to share with you about what we've learned so far and what is still to come. I find it helpful to begin a discussion about creation and evolution through the lens of our "worldviews." A worldview is a comprehensive perspective about life. The biblical worldview sees life in light of God's ongoing work in history. We can summarize this worldview in 7 C's: **Creation**, **Corruption** (humanity's fall into sin and the subsequent curse upon creation), **Catastrophe** (the great flood), **Confusion** (humanity divided at Babel), **Christ**, **Cross**, and **Consummation** (Christ's return on the day of redemption to restore us and all creation).

Creation is the foundation of the biblical worldview! God's creative work is described not just in the first chapters of Genesis but in every portion of Scripture. Jesus Himself and the inspired authors of Scripture all speak with one voice about God's hand in creation. For example, look just a few verses after today's O.T. reading: "*Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: 'I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself'*" (Isaiah 44:24).

This verse is a great example of how Christians understand our origins from a biblical worldview. On the other hand, a "materialist" or secular worldview sees everything as the result of "natural", unguided processes. Supernatural creation, miracles, and life after death are ruled out within this worldview.

These vastly different worldviews are clearly incompatible. It should be noted, though, that people operating from *both* worldviews study the *same* physical world. Whether you see everything from a biblical worldview or a secular one, you're looking at the *same* physical evidence/facts, but these worldviews differ greatly in *interpreting* that physical evidence.

So instead of asking, "Do the 'facts' indicate that special creation or natural evolution accounts for our origins?" a better question is, "Which *interpretation* of the facts is truthful/better?" To answer that question, Christians turn *first* to God's Word, His completely truthful account of both our creation and redemption, the past and the future. We trust that Christ is the divine Word or *logos* (John 1:1) who accounts for the "data" or intelligent information found in all of creation, from our DNA to the earth's elements to the laws of nature.

We trust God's Word when He shares the Good News of our redemption: "*He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of*

His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13-14). We likewise trust God's Word when He explains that Christ is not only central to redemption but to all creation: "*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.*" (Colossians 1:15-17)

Christ holds everything together! What an awesome way the apostle Paul summarizes our biblical worldview! By the way, later this summer I'll provide copies of the book *In Christ All Things Hold Together: The Intersection of Science & Christian Theology* with Bible study goers. Please let me know if you'd like one!

Speaking of science, what role *does* it have in the life of the Christian? We believe that science is the process of discovering and describing God's world—*reading God's world*, you might say. Scientists have an important vocation (a calling from God) to use their studies and their knowledge to make discoveries, develop treatments, technologies, and much more to help and care for their neighbors and for all of God's created world.

Today's scientists are standing on a foundation largely built by the Christian scientists of the Early Modern Era, such as the Lutheran astronomer, Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), who discovered the laws of planetary motion. However, what was once a vocation *motivated* by faith has largely become a profession with no tolerance for faith. Since the Enlightenment or "Age of Reason" in the 18th century, scientists have sharply distinguished science and faith, so much so that science now receives nearly religious devotion and adherence (termed, "scientism") while Christian faith is treated as outdated superstition. Instead of trusting in the Lord, many put greater trust scientific theories or explanations.

Science is practiced by fallible human beings, and while science has many important contributions to offer society, it can *never* be 100% trustworthy in the same way as God and His Word. Christians can gratefully receive the modern benefits of science while at the same time viewing science with biblical and reasonable discernment. (The world also needs faithful Christians to train for and serve in scientific vocations!)

We will continue our study of creation on July 23 ("meet your Maker"), Aug 6 (the fossil record), Aug 13 (the age of the earth; evidences of creation), Aug 27 (stewardship of God's creation), and Sept 3 (recreation – enjoying God's creation). Please join us for Bible study this summer and please visit with Pastor Aker or me with your thoughts and questions about God's creation!

Peace in Christ,

Pastor Kory Janneke