

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Life is full of questions, especially the big three: How did the universe get here? How did I get here? What happens when I leave here?

For millennia, humanity's best and brightest have been answering those questions, and their current best and brightest answers ... are really depressing.

Evolutionary theory states that the universe just sort of happened, sort of evolved, sort of self-directs itself to higher and higher levels of complexity. We are the recipients of four billion years of blind luck. I came from an amoeba and when I die I return to the mud.

That's bleak. It throws out the key to understanding life, because it throws out the Lord of Life. Life's big questions have no good answers without the ultimate answer – God. How can I possibly understand me, where I am, and where I'm going, without first understanding the One who made it all?

So to catch a glimpse of who God is and how **God is the answer** to life's big questions, we get to go back to the beginning – the beginning of time.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (1:1). First big question: How did the universe get here? First big answer: God created it.

In the beginning, there is nothing except God. God has no boss. No obligation to anyone. No personal need to create anything – God doesn't get lonely or bored. So everything that he creates is simply for his glory.

His glory is like no other, because he is like no other. God is triune. That is the fancy theological term we use to describe God's nature. It means "three-in-one." There is one God and he is three persons. The Father is God (John 20:17). The Son is God (1 John 5:20). The Holy Spirit is God (2 Samuel 23:2-3). But there are not three gods, there's only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4).

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all work together in the beginning. Obviously God the Father is there, creating. So is God the Spirit, since **the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters (1:2)**, protecting his creation and preparing it for what comes next.

And God the Son is what comes next. Yeah, Jesus is here; he's all over the place. Whenever God speaks, every time God says, "**Let there be**" (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24), Jesus is there.

This is a mystery of the Trinity: When the Father speaks; it is the Son at work. The Apostle John explains it like this: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.² He was with God in the beginning.³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:1-3).

And look at what has been made! God creates light on the first day (1:3-5), sky on the second day (1:6-8), land and seas and vegetation on the third day (1:9-13), sun and moon and stars on the fourth day (1:14-19), and all the animals on the fifth and sixth days (1:20-25).

Why? Why'd he do it? It's a good question, because it's obvious that none of this is really the point. God doesn't start the Bible with creation just to show you his power or explain where it all came from. No, when he gets to the end of the sixth day, then he lets you know why he created the universe.

All of it is a frame for his masterpiece; a home for the crown of his creation. **Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock, and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" (1:26).**

Did you notice the change in God's behavior? He doesn't say, "Let there be man." He says, "Let us make man." This final creation is also his greatest, and God wants you to know his deliberation and care in making it.

So who is he talking to here? Himself. This is another mystery of the Trinity. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit decide within themselves to make humanity in the image of God.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (1:27). Second big question: How did I get here? Second big answer: God created me.

We are not here by chance. We are special and unique creations of God. Humanity was originally created in God's own image – nothing else in all creation can claim that!

What does that mean? What is the image of God? It does not mean that we look like God looks on the outside. God is spirit, he doesn't have a body, he doesn't look like anything on the outside (John 4:24).

God's likeness is to be holy, just as he is holy. The Apostle Paul says that we were "created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:24). To be in God's image means to be righteous and holy.

God didn't create humanity flawed, but flawless. Not pretty good or kind of nice, but perfect, just like God. The man and the woman were human replicas of what God is like – their intellect, emotions, and will were in perfect agreement with God.

And here's why: **God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (1:28).**

They were God's visible representatives on earth to manage the earth for God. Do you understand what that means? The creation account is not about power, it's about love. In his infinite love, God creates all this goodness simply to provide for humanity.

The Creator takes tremendous care to create the perfect home for us, and it was perfect. On the sixth day **God saw all that he had made, and it was very good (1:31).**

Of course, you don't have to look very far to see that we do not live in a perfect world. Soon after God created, sin entered (Genesis 3). Now we see and hear and touch and feel the effects of our broken planet and our broken souls.

Light hurts your eyes. The skies grow gloomy and black. The waters flood. The sun burns. The creatures kill. You look at his face and see a broken heart. You walk past endless rows of gravestones. You read hurtful emails. You hear whining voices and bickering in your own family.

And it's all our fault. Because of the fall into sin, we do not inherit the image of God. We inherit the image of our sinful parents (Genesis 5:3). All holiness has been lost (Romans 3:23).

Our desire to be gods, to be independent and do what we want is the cause of all the problems on this broken planet. You choose your words. You choose how to react. You choose how to treat people. And then you find that choosing sin does not create a world that is **very good (1:31).**

So, what is the answer to this problem? **God is the answer.**

The same Father who says, "**Let us make mankind in our own image (1:26)**", also says, "Let us restore man to our image." But here's the kicker: He doesn't say that *after* humanity loses his image, he says it *before* he ever even creates humanity!

The Bible teaches that the Father "chose us in [Christ] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight" (Ephesians 1:4). "This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time" (2 Timothy 1:9). The Father is a giver – gifting us with his one and only Son!

That same Son who shouts into the darkness, "**Let there be light (1:3)**", shouts from the cross, "It is finished!" (John 19:30) He is "the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). Jesus enters the world he created to rescue the people he created and restore the image he created, but we lost.

We were broken, corrupted, sinful, but the Son shares our humanity to change that – to purify what is corrupted, to forgive what is sinful, to restore what was lost! The Son who creates life, who is life, gives his own life, so that "whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). The Son is a giver – gifting us with his Holy Spirit!

That same Spirit who **was hovering over the waters (1:2)**, hovers over the apostles on Pentecost (Acts 2:3), empowering them to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19), including you. The Spirit is a giver – taking the Father's choice and the Son's work, packaging them up, and delivering them to you through faith.

That same triune God put his name on you when he baptized you (Matthew 28:19). You are his own dear child, and nothing else in all creation can claim that! (Galatians 3:26-27) Now Father, Son, and Spirit work in you, so that you can put off your old self with its sin and "put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:24).

So ... if that is what life is like while I'm here – living as God's visible representative on earth, striving for righteousness and holiness – what about the third big question: What happens when I leave here? Well, listen to this: **By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy (2:2-3).**

Third big answer: You rest with God. "Pastor, that's crazy! What does a Sabbath-rest have to do with my death?"

Everything. The New Testament promises, "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9). The rest God enjoyed on the seventh day is the rest he welcomes you to when you leave here. He welcomes you to it while you wait.

You see, on the Last Day God will make us a new heavens and a new earth (Revelation 21:1) – a restoration of our perfect home, a place where all the sights, all the sounds, all the senses are **very good (1:31)**. A place where "there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Revelation 21:4).

May our triune God – Father, Son, and Spirit – bless and keep you until that day! Amen, amen, amen!