

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” These first words of the Bible reveal something profound, wonderful, and incomprehensible to our human reason. Our human thinking is darkened by sin. This darkness not only can’t comprehend these words of Scripture. It also rages against them. The natural mind is diametrically opposed to these first words of Scripture. Because fallen man wants to conceive of a reality without God. Just as Adam and his wife thought they could cover their nakedness and hide from God, those who think they are wise imagine the same thing. They imagine that they can speak of a beginning without God. But these first words of the Bible, right off the bat, set the record straight. In the beginning God was already there. As Psalm 100 says, “From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.”

These words are echoed in the beginning of John’s Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.” These first words again reveal something profound, wonderful, and incomprehensible to our human reason. Here is revealed to us the very Character of God. He is with God, distinct from the Father. Yet he is himself God, one with the Father. John calls this Character the Word. Solomon called him Wisdom. The Lord possessed him at the beginning of his ways. He was with God in the beginning, always his delight, always his Master Craftsman, creating all things with him (Prov 8:22). Or as John says, “Everything was made by him, and not one thing that was made was made without him.”

Here we find that God is not, nor ever has been, alone. Even before anything else existed, and God was all there was, he was not alone. The Father’s love has always begotten and possessed the Son, whom John calls the Word. And the Spirit has always proceeded from the Father and the Son.

The darkened mind of human nature hates these words of Scripture. This is why Darwin’s false doctrine of evolution has become the standard orthodoxy of this secular age over the past century and a half. The teaching that the world evolved over billions of years is just one of many myths fabricated by man. When the Holy Spirit first inspired Moses to write these first words of Genesis, there were already creation myths from the Egyptians, Babylonians, and others. And while they have different stories, they all have one thing in common. For all of these creation myths, the world came about because something went wrong. A unity was broken, chaos was caused, and there was nothing the mythical gods could do about it. There were popular ideas about how creation came about when John wrote as well. The great philosopher, Plato, spoke of a god who is bound to create without any freedom. Creation just spills out of him by necessity. His student, Aristotle, saw the world as eternal, and he viewed God as an impersonal, uninvolved principle who just gets things moving. Creation is again seen as an accident, a random chance, or a fixed necessity. No personal God, no loving Father, no Master Craftsman – this is the best our darkened minds can imagine.

But the Bible does not speak of some impersonal force, some random chance, a kind of static energy. This isn’t some generic god, a mere first principle or fate. No, this is the living and active God. The Bible reveals to us exactly what was happening in the beginning of everything. God, the great I Am, the living Father with his only begotten Son, who has life in himself, was creating the heavens and the earth.

This means that we are not random accidents. No one is unplanned. No one is a mistake or an oopsie. As Psalm 139 sings, you are fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps 139:14). God knows your most inward parts. Before your substance was even known, he knew you and wrote everything about you in his book. And here, in his book, in his Holy Scriptures, he reveals to you how he knows you.

It makes sense that fallen, sinful man would see creation as a mistake or an accident. Ever since our fall into sin this is how we see the world by nature. Sure, we can recognize good things. But our view of what is good is stained with the evil of our sinful nature. The best we can do is downplay the darkness of sin or pretend that it doesn't exist. Folks imagine that the world can simply join together in a common brotherhood. In the meantime, they ignore the selfish desires of their own hearts. They think they can give birth to a new age through their own political and social maneuvering. They are blind and darkened by their own pride.

But God didn't ignore sin. He didn't sit idly by while his creation was corrupted by the fall of Adam and his wife. He immediately jumped into action. He promised that the Savior would be born of a woman to overcome sin and the devil. And he gave to man and woman certain afflictions to remind them of the suffering this Savior would have to endure. When God spoke of this Descendent, he was speaking of the Word who was with him the entire time.

God created everything by his Word. This means that he spoke everything into existence. He said, "Let there be light," and there was light. But it also means that he created everything with his Son. And just as God's words will not fail in what they set out to do, so his Son does not fail in his mission either. Just as this Word was his willing Coworker in creation, he was just as eager to do exactly what the Father promised he would do for poor sinners. He was eager to be born of a woman and bruised in his heel, crucified and crushed for our iniquities. This is why John also calls him the Life and the Light. He doesn't ignore the death and darkness. He faces death with his perfect life, and he overcomes the darkness with his magnificent light. He would not return to his Father empty handed. He who was with God and was God himself from the beginning does not second guess his mission. He binds himself freely to what the Father says with a perfect and unchanging will.

While the world tries to give birth to all sorts of dreams on how to fix creation, they rely on their own darkened reason. They rely on their own desires. Some seek to be liberated from the bonds of creation, so they embrace all sorts of sexual perversions. Others come up with more wholesome solutions. They emphasize the importance of family, but they don't sanctify their homes with the Word of God. We can complain about how Christmas is attacked by atheists and secular leftists. We can bemoan the fact that Christmas is overtaken by marketing to eager consumers wanting to spend their money. Of course we would prefer a more wholesome portrayal of Christmas. Of course, we should value it as a time to be with family and friends. But if that's all we treat Christmas as, then we are only treating it as a myth, and we are no better than those who attack or exploit this holy season. If we lose sight of the living Word who was in the beginning with God and in the beginning God, then it doesn't matter how family friendly we make our festive celebrations. We are only exchanging one myth for another myth.

But God isn't a myth. His Word isn't a myth. His works are not just stories. He created man in his own image, because he always desired to live with man, just as the Word was always with God. When the Son of God was born of the Virgin Mary, this was not a story detached from history. It was the fullness of time, the fulfillment of all history. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. John records this, and as an eye-witness he tells us, "We have seen his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

If we rely on our own desires, then we will treat Christmas like a mere sentimental feeling, and we will give birth only to some festive myth. But those who believe his Word – those whose darkened hearts have been overcome by the light of Christ – they have not been born from perverted desires, a devotion

to family traditions, nor by any vain and empty desire of man. No, they have been born from God himself. They have been given faith by the Holy Spirit in their baptism. They are born through the Word who was born of the Father from eternity and of the Virgin Mary at the fullness of time.

The Word, who is the eternal God and Creator of all things, became flesh. He appeared in Bethlehem as a Virgin's Son, wrapped in clothes, lying in a manger. These words are profound, wonderful, and incomprehensible to our human reason. But they also overcome our human reason. They overcome our doubts, our fears, our guilt, and our sin. These words from the Scriptures about the Word made flesh shine through the darkness. When you are in the night of temptation, battling a guilty conscience, they remain your light and your life. They teach you that not only has God created you, but he has become your brother. And he is loyal to you. His blood, spilled for you, he gives to you. His place with the Father he shares with you. As eager as he was to create us with his eternal Father, to take our flesh as his own, to bear our guilt, and to return to his Father with his work of salvation complete, he is just as eager to keep your faith burning by his precious Word, to remain with you in death, and to raise your lowly flesh to be with him forever. To know this Word is to what it means to have a merry Christmas, no matter how dark the sin and death around us seems. It is to have confidence that God will keep his promise to you, just as he has from the beginning. Let us pray:

[O Lord,] if I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me,"
Even the night shall be light about me;
Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You,
But the night shines as the day;
The darkness and the light are both alike to You.
For You formed my inward parts;
You covered me in my mother's womb.
I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Marvelous are Your works,
And that my soul knows very well. (Ps. 139:11-14)

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.