



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The LORD Almighty--Creator (Isaiah 40:12-14)

JANUARY 31, 2012

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Weekly Bible Study Schedule

- **Tuesday, January 31, 7 AM in HHR #5**
-Breakfast Provided
- **Tuesday, January 31, 8:30 PM in Room #301**
(Speaker Pro-Tem's office)

One of my sons and I love to watch nature shows. We love to learn how the things of this world interact with each other. It is truly amazing how all creatures interrelate with and depend on each other. If an element is missing (for whatever reason) in a particular system, it can be detrimental to the survival of many.

After wading through the evolutionary worldview of the majority of these programs, the facts brought out by the scientists are truly points of praise to God who created these things. In the passage we are examining in this study, God's power in creation is exalted and His wisdom in creation is magnified. Therefore, may these verses come to mind the next time you watch a program or read an article concerning the amazing features of the world we live in—may your heart be filled with praise as God's power and wisdom is unfolded.

INTRODUCTION

In Isaiah 39, the prophet prophesied concerning the upcoming disciplinary captivity the people of Judah are about to enter. In chapter 40, though, Isaiah proclaimed God's word to these future captives that God will not abandon them, but will bring a future restoration beyond the years of captivity. This restoration will come from the mighty hand of God who tenderly takes care of even the weakest in their nation (Isaiah 40:10-11).

In this passage, Isaiah looks at God's creative work. If the people had any doubts as to the ability and knowledge that the "promise-giver" may possess to accomplish His word, these rhetorical questions provided the answer.

Isaiah 40:12-14 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, And marked off the heavens by the span, And

calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, And weighed the mountains in a balance And the hills in a pair of scales? Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has informed Him? With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge and informed Him of the way of understanding?

I. THE POWER OF GOD IN CREATION (40:12)

As in verses 10 and 11, Isaiah is using *anthropomorphic* language to illustrate the work and greatness of God in verse 12 (an *anthropomorphism* is a figure of speech in which human characteristics—hands, feet, eyes—are attributed to God to help in understanding Him and His work). He described the work of a carpenter as he described God's work in creation: measuring out the amount of water to put in the seas, calculating the dimensions of space, determining how much dirt He needs to make the earth and putting the mountains on a scale to see how big He wants to make them.

By comparing God to a master builder, Isaiah vividly illustrated the greatness of God's power and ability. Imagining something so big that it can use the span of His hand to mark off the immensity of space is mind-boggling. As scientists today probe deeper and deeper into space, it should produce in the mind of man the incredibility of God's handiwork. Along these same lines, picturing God pulling up the Rocky Mountains or the Himalayas and dropping them on a scale to measure their weight also shows His immensity and strength.

IN THE BABYLONIAN ACCOUNT, THE CREATOR GOD, "MARDUK" HAD TO SEEK COUNSEL FROM "EA," THE ALL-WISE GOD. THEY HAD TO WORK AS A COMMITTEE. BUT ISRAEL'S YAHWEH WAS NOT ONLY POWERFUL IN CREATION, BUT ALSO EXHIBITED MUCH WISDOM.

Isaiah painted this picture for the children of Israel as a reminder of the greatness of the God who is promising to deliver. The children of Israel would already know how God created the universe from the inspired account given to them by Moses (Genesis 1-2).¹

CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS & STAFF: TUESDAYS @ 7AM, HEARING ROOM #5

LEGISLATORS: TUESDAYS @ 8:30PM, ROOM #301

TRUMAN BUILDING: THURSDAYS @ 7AM, 4THFLOOR CAFETERIA

PROCLAIMING THE GREATNESS AND GLORY OF GOD IN THE MISSOURI STATE CAPITOL

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First of all, they would have known that God created *ex-nihilo* or “from nothing.” When we “create” something, we must use some thing in order to form whatever we are “creating.” But this is not so with God. Paul wrote that Abraham believed God who “gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist” (Rom 4:17b).

Secondly, God not only created from nothing, He used no instruments in His work of creation. Isaiah 40:12 is poetically illustrating what God did in creation. He did not pour out the waters in the palm of His hand, like a well-seasoned chef, to figure out how much water He should put on the earth. He did not literally use a measure to measure out the dust of the earth or a scale to weigh the mountains and hills. These phrases are used to show the greatness and immensity and power and ability of Yahweh God.

Let’s rephrase that for God did use an instrument—His Voice. In the creation account of Genesis 1, there is a recurring pattern. Genesis 1:3 states “Then God said...and there was...” Verse six states, “Then God said...” and verse seven follows “and it was so.” Verses 9, 14, 20, 24, 26 all repeat the same refrain, “Then God said...” Now, it is true that God created the living creatures of the earth from the earth (Gen. 1:24; 2:7) but the dirt itself was first created by God by His word alone.

By a word, was the matter of the heavens and the earth framed;
By a word, things separate themselves from the rude mass into their proper forms;
By a word, light associates itself into one body, and forms a sun;
By a word, are the heavens, as it were, bespangled with stars and the earth dressed with flowers;
By a word, is the world both ceiled and floored: by one act of his will, formed the world, and perfected its beauty.²

Lastly, when God spoke that which He spoke, it appeared instantaneously. In Genesis 1:3 is says, “And God said, ‘Let there be light...’” The Hebrew language follows this literally with “and light was.” In verses 7, 9, 11, 15, 24 it simply reads “and it was so.” The power of God in instantly creating something out of nothing with simple the sound of His voice (which really wasn’t necessary for a thought would have been sufficient) is beyond our ability to grasp. All we know is that we cannot do the same or even come close.

Isaiah is reminding the Israelites who will soon be living in a land filled with many gods and idols that the God who is promising to deliver them is none other than the God who created all things. Jeremiah declares the same assurance, ‘*Ab Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your*

great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You... (Jeremiah 32:17).

II. THE WISDOM OF GOD IN CREATION (40:13-14)

Isaiah continues with the *anthropomorphic* language by asking who God had as a director, consultant, counselor, or professor. It seems rather absurd to imagine God sitting in a classroom taking notes or working as an apprentice to learn the things He needs to know to create the universe.

It was a fitting reminder, though, in light of Israel’s captivity. Israel was about to be taken away to Babylon whose ancient writings held a creation story (there are many accounts of “creation” found throughout the writings of the ancient world. In the Babylonian account, the creator god, “Marduk” had to seek counsel from “Ea,” the all-wise god.³ They had to work together as a committee to form the world. Israel’s God, *Yahweh*, not only powerful in creation, had no need for counsel or input from others in order to construct the complexities of the universe.

God’s wisdom is seen, firstly, in the variety of created objects. The old Puritan, Stephen Charnock wrote “How great a variety is there of animals and plants, with a great variety of forms, shapes, figurations, colors, various smells, virtues and qualities.”⁴ One nature program that I watched with my son was all about spiders. I was amazed with how many kinds of the eight-legged creatures there are on this earth. They were of different sizes, abilities, looks, features, etc. And that is just one type of creature!! When one thinks about the many types of birds, plants, animals, fish, insects, stones, dirt, minerals—the greatness of God’s wisdom is on exhibition.

The creation also demonstrates His goodness. God could have easily made every spider a brown recluse, every tree an oak tree or every person look like me. Instead, He exhibits His goodness by giving so much variety for people to enjoy.

Along these lines, God’s wisdom in creation can be seen in the beauty, order, and situation of the creation. For example:

- The sun is just hot enough and the earth far enough from the sun that we neither burn-up nor freeze.
- If the ocean’s depth or the thickness of the earth’s crust were only a little greater, all oxygen would be absorbed and life would be impossible.

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- Porcupines and a particular type of bacteria depend upon each other for food.
- Eels breed in the deep ocean near Bermuda and die there. Their offspring, who never see their parents, return unflinchingly to the shores from which their parents came; whether that is Europe or America.
- The inner ear of a human is about the size of a pea (1/4 inch across) and it picks up vibrations sent in by the middle ear on microscopic fibers, each of which picks a different pitch of sound. The inner ear can hear about 15,000 key pitches.⁵

These are just a few examples of the exactness and inter-dependence found in the balance of nature. To think this all happened by a non-entity called “chance” is foolish. Instead, it illustrates the wisdom and greatness of God who only spoke and all came into being in the precise place necessary for all things to thrive.

Lastly, God’s wisdom is seen in the order of His creation as recorded in Genesis 1. He created in such an order that it is simply impossible to take the man-made theories of the beginning of the universe and perfectly mold them into the Biblical record. Neither evolution nor the Christian version called “theistic evolution” fit into Genesis without first cutting and pasting, thus destroying, the text of Genesis. When one uses that process, he or she is drawing the conclusion that the wisdom of man is needed to compliment or even correct God’s revealed word.

But that position is simply not tenable. There are only two honest options: God is correct in the account He gave to Moses; or He is wrong. If He is wrong, then the Genesis record needs to be totally discarded rather than being corrected by men.

It is quite patronizing to God to think He needs our input from all our scientific discoveries so that we can have a proper understanding of what He did in creation. Rather, it is best to understand that the order and manner in which God created the heavens and the earth stands on its own. It magnifies His wisdom for there is nothing we can add or do to His testimony to make it complete.

Psalm 104:24 O LORD, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all...

CONCLUSION

Isaiah the prophet sought to encourage the people of Israel by relaying to them the promise of God that one day their nation will be restored. After a

time of discipline for their rebellion against Him, they will be delivered. This reminder of the power and might of their God who gave them this promise is necessary because they will be taken away and will dwell in the land of a very powerful nation. It would be easy for them to get discouraged and doubt whether or not they could be delivered—the odds would be heavily against them. But God, through Isaiah, based His promise on His eternal word (Isaiah 40:8) and powerful, compassionate arm (Isaiah 40:10-11). This is backed up with the reminder that God is the One who showed His might and wisdom in the creation of the universe.

As was stated in an earlier study, this understanding of God sustained Abraham when God gave His promise to him of having a son at a very old age (Romans 4:17-21). This understanding of God was being used again to give great hope (not wishful thinking, but anticipation for a future event) to a people who were in captivity.

Now, let’s bring this into the 21st century. As a believer stands before the coffin of another believer, what gives assurance that this is truly not the end? How can he or she know that one day they will be reunited, never more to be separated by the grave? Is it just wishful thinking? Is it only a word given by someone untried and unproven? NO!! It is the promise of God to raise the dead and give eternal life to His own (1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 14:1-3; Revelation 20-21). It is a promise given by the same God who created the heavens and the earth; who showed His power over the grave by raising His Son, Jesus Christ, from the dead.

Some of you may have read this far with a skeptical eye and don’t believe what has been written—either in this study or in the Bible itself. Regardless of what you may believe, this same God who created the heavens and the earth with much wisdom and strength is the God who is calling you to repent. The Apostle Paul faced such people as he reasoned with the philosophers of Athens on Mar’s Hill. In his discourse, he told them of the God who created all that they know Who has placed people in their time and place so they may seek Him even though He is near to all (Acts 17:22-29). Paul continues by proclaiming to these men, *Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead* (Acts 17:30-31).

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God, who created the universe by His mighty word and in all wisdom, is still calling people to repent, to turn from their sins, and to follow His Son, Jesus Christ. If you do not do this, friend, the same God who promises life to those who follow Christ has also promised a judgment upon those who do not—as seen in the above passage. Do not scoff or put off any longer. Repent and believe—you will find life and great assurance in the powerful and wise Creator.

And do not forget to praise. God created all for the glory and honor of His name. Therefore, as I stated in the prologue, use the facts discovered by scientists as points of praise to God. Sometimes in a passage like the one we have examined, we concentrate on the question: “so what?” that we miss the exclamation “Wow!! God is great!!” Praise in and of itself is worthy to answer the “so what?”—be sure to praise the Creator when we are exposed to something new that amazes us.

¹ The point of this study is not to “prove” creation. The Bible does not “attempt” to “prove” creation; it simply teaches that “God created the heavens and the earth.” As we have already established in other Capitol Commission studies, the Bible is the inspired, inerrant revelation of God. There is nothing in the Hebrew text of Genesis 1 that suggests the creation account should be understood as allegory, figurative or poetic. It was written as a historical narrative account. Therefore, we conclude that God created in six literal, 24-hour days, as written in Genesis 1. I know there are contrary arguments by Bible-honoring scholars, but all other positions have serious inconsistencies with other areas of Scriptures. It is more accurate to the text to understand the Genesis account with a literal/grammatical interpretation.

² Stephen Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God* Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1996), 43.

³ Raymond C. Ortland, *Isaiah: God Saves Sinners* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2005), 244.

⁴ Charnock, 43.

⁵ I am indebted to my Old Testament professor, Wilbur Fields, at Ozark Christian College in Joplin, MO for these and numerous other examples of the amazing intricacies of nature. These examples are taken from his unpublished class handout “Why We Believe In God or Footprints of God.” More such examples can be found at the excellent web site of “Answers in Genesis” at www.answersingenesis.org.