

Introduction to the Bible [series 6]: Creation

The creation account in the book of Genesis is not a history of the world as we understand history today or a scientific explanation how the world originated. It is a theological meditation that God created the world. The narrative is in the form of story telling or like an unfolding drama explaining the love and will of God in creating the universe. When we say story telling doesn't mean untrue; the truth behind the narrative is that God created the world. Creation signifies God as the cause of what exists. But God does not owe himself to any cause. He is not cause at all. God is by definition the uncaused reality, because he is eternal and perfect. The world is radically dependent on God as source of all beings, yet remains distinct from God.

The chapters in Genesis 1-11 [written between 1000-900 BC] are called an all inclusive conception of the pre-Israelite universal history of the world and mankind, a "primal history" of history. It was a reflection by the biblical author on the contemporary mythologies encountered by Israel, especially in Babylon. *These chapters are Israel's answer to the question of the origins of the world and human race, derived from her unique experience of God.* Creation accounts explain that *all of humanity had received a religious character at creation.*

In Genesis 1-11 man is the noblest of all creation, nonetheless man is in revolt against creation. God's creative purpose is undermined by man's evil, an arrogant attempt 'to be like God', to dethrone God and enthrone himself. Genesis 4-11 paints a bleak picture of man's atrocities and sinfulness. However characters like Abel, Enoch and Noah are promise of a better future for the world. The covenant with Noah is a promise of God's continuing support for his creation.

Biblical creation account emphasizes:

- The transcendence of God: The world is not God; it is created; it has been given to humans' stewardship.
- What was at the beginning? The good God, who is origin of each and all
- Human dignity: human beings are not created as servants of the gods as in pagan religions but in the image of God, as God's trustees and not as tyrants and exploiters; human beings are set above the rest of creation
- The order and unity of creation: creation is called cosmos meaning that it is a well-ordered, structured, harmonious whole. The one God creates 'heaven and earth', the whole universe
- Is anything else [star, animal, or human being] a god alongside God? No, there is no other god but God
- the world is of the good creator God, and so matter, human body, sexuality is fundamentally good. 'God saw all that he had made and it was very good' [Genesis 1:31]
- Creation account allows people to discover a meaning in life and provides them with standards for behavior and an ultimate security in this unimaginable great universe.

Books of the Bible are not seen as God dictating to the authors of the books but the truths revealed in the Bible is inspired by God. Bible is also human testimony, human language, images, parables taken from living human life situations, trying to answer questions concerning beginning and nature of the world. Stories were the medium with which a pre-scientific community tried to answer questions of existence.

Father Jose

