May the Lord always be your refuge.

​*Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.
Before the mountains were born
Or You gave birth to the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*

 Psalms 90:1-2

This is the beginning of a Psalm whose author was Moses. It is a prayer he offered up to God. In the first line, the words for “dwelling place” could also be “hiding place” or even “place of refuge”. And God has been all this for all generations; as long as people have been on the earth.

God has shown by the flood in Noah’s day that He could wipe us out at any time. But we must also realize that He is the One keeping us going. If not for His provision, it would be very easy for us to cease to exist. God made us to spend eternity with Him and He is able bring this about.

Moses proclaims that God is the creator; his wording encompasses all things. But the important thing is that God has always been God. He was not crated; there was never a time when He was not; there will never be a time when He will cease to be.

As Moses continues his prayer, we are reminded that we owe God everything; we owe Him our very life. And we certainly owe Him our eternal life that He offers us through Jesus.

In Christ’s love

John

 12-19-21

Genesis 1:24-31

God has created a universe and placed in it huge, wonderous objects. He has made light and darkness and assigned them their places. He has attached light to many of the celestial bodies He created. All demonstrates His glory and power.

He has created the earth in all its variations and its rugged beauty. He has set boundaries for the waters and given the water its occupation; it has its tasks in both sustaining life and executing judgement. The dry land has been prepared so that life may flourish.

God began life with the plants; plants of the forests and plants of the fields, even plants of the water. God told the earth to produce vegetation and this is how the first plants came to be. But God also said that the first plants were to have seed and that the seed of each plant would produce more of the same kind of plant; each after its own kind. These are the first of God’s creation to have life; but only life in the sense of growing and being able to reproduce.

On day five, God began to create animate life. He called forth the fish and other creatures that live in the waters and the birds that fly in the firmament. Although the earth was used, God Himself created these living creatures. These had life such that they could move about, have some communication with others of their kind and create young; each according to its own kind.

Day six continues with the creation of living creatures, with much taking place on this day. Day six marks the end of God’s creative action; on this day, He finishes His work of creating the earth and universe and all they contain. God could have spoken once and everything could have been done at once, but He did His work progressively. From this we learn how to work: from beginning to end, taking each step in turn until the work is complete. Our whole life comes one day at a time, each day we do the work God has for us until the day our work is complete and God calls us home to rest.

God begins the day by making the animals. In verse 24, God says to let the earth bring forth the animals. Then in verse 25 we are told that God made the animals. This is different from the third day where God had the earth sprout vegetation and the earth did so. God used the earth to make the animals but they didn’t simply spring up out of the earth the way the plants did. This is clarified in chapter 2 where we are told that God formed every beast and bird out of the ground. God specifically formed the animals Himself.

Again, this shows that the animal life was created differently than the plant life. This is one more instance of the Bible demonstrating that evolutionary theory is incorrect. Plants and animals are interconnected in the model of evolution; clearly, they are different creations.

God created three general groups of animals on the sixth day. These creatures have animate life; they have the “breath of life”. One group is cattle or livestock which would include anything that we might domesticate and use for food or clothing. Another group is the “creeping things”. We can think of these primarily as small mammals, reptiles, and many insects. The third group is the beasts of the earth. These would be the wild animals that dwell in nature.

Notice that mankind is not included in any of these categories. Human-beings were created by themselves, as their own kind. We did not descend from monkeys and in spite of the scientific classification, we are not mammals. People were made by God in His own image; this distinction is not given to any of His other creation.

But while we are still looking at the animal kingdom, it is also important to see that the Bible is consistent in referring to their own kinds. In verse 25, we are told that God made each according to its own kind. The same verse then goes on to list each of the three animal groups and states specifically for each one that they were made after their own kind.

With regard to evolution, the Bible allows for changes within a species; a form of evolving, or better yet, diversification, according to each kind. God certainly made a canine animal of some sort, but not every type of wolf, fox, and dog. He made a feline, but the different types of lions and house cats came along later. The complexity of the DNA that God created allows for these changes. What did not happen was one species evolving from another: fish didn’t turn into groundhogs, dogs didn’t become bears, the dinosaurs didn’t become birds. Evolution states that everything came from a single organism. The Bible is clear that this is not the case.

In this account of God creating the animals, we don’t read that He blessed them and commanded them to be fruitful. However, this is implied by God seeing that what He made was good. Additionally, in Genesis 8:17 when God has Noah and the animals come out of the ark, He states that He wants the animals to be fruitful and multiply abundantly on the earth. God created all life to increase.

There is one more dividing point in verse 25. When God had created the three groups of animals, He “*saw that it was good*”. This shows that He was done with the creation of the animal kingdom. He was moving on to something else; and that something else was mankind. This is another demonstration that people are not animals. We are a completely separate creation; God formed us as a whole different category from everything else He had made.

Thus, at the beginning of day number six of the existence of the earth, God had created all the animals that we are so used to seeing in this life. The many animals were created for different benefits for humanity. Companionship can be had from our pets and their loyalty is unsurpassed. Isn’t it amazing to see a giant dog patiently tolerate a toddler a quarter its size?

Animals provide us with food, although this wasn’t the original design. But when God made them, He knew they would eventually become a source of nourishment for us. We are clothed by what they produce or by their hides. The Lord God used the hides of animals to clothe the first people after they sinned to cover their nakedness. It is also enjoyable just to see them and to watch them; to observe their beauty and grace, the colors and how they are formed. In all these things we should be brought to the point of praising God for what He is able to create.

For the second time in the sixth day account we read, “*And God said*”. As we read what follows, we realize that something very different is taking place here. The way God goes about His next creation still shows His divine authority, yet He speaks about His plans rather than commanding that they be done. What God said was, “*Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth*.”

The first thing we notice is the use of “Us” and “Our”. God is talking to someone, Someone involved in the creation. There are a couple ways of looking at this. One is that the way kings referred to themselves sometimes was in the plural which was a way of showing their majesty. While God is certainly worthy of this designation, His majesty is clearly shown in His creation. He doesn’t need to use the plural form to remind us.

Another possibility could be that He is speaking to angels. While the angels may have been present, the Bible is clear that they are also created by God and nowhere near equal to Him. God had no need to discuss His plans with them nor did they assist Him in creation.

The most reasonable conclusion is that this is another reference to the Trinity. The one God who mysteriously exists as three Persons. God is speaking to Himself in divine council. Notice in this divine council that there is no discussion; there is no back and forth or sharing of different ideas. God is always in constant and perfect agreement with Himself. He is completely stable. The three Persons have the same thought because they are one God.

It is so very important to us to understand how stable God is. If He were not stable, we could not have faith in Him. The Bible is very clear that God does not change. He is the same God in the Old Testament that He is in the New. His laws are the same now as they were thousands of years ago.

Sometimes we read accounts in the Bible where God is said to “repent” of His actions or what He says He will do. We get the idea that He changed His mind after declaring He would bring judgement, usually after someone intercedes or changes their own behavior. This type of wording isn’t literal, but is spoken in a way that we can understand; in the way it appears to us as human-beings.

God knows full well if He will have to carry out His threats or if the threat will have the desired effect of bringing the people in line with His word. This is truly difficult, because we see an impossible interaction between divine sovereignty, God’s intervention in human affairs to bring about His ultimate plan, and the choices that human-beings make every day.

Our God is wonderous and amazing. How He works all this out is beyond us. But we know that He does, and that nothing can stand in the way of His plans. We know that His plans will not change and that if we are in Christ Jesus, we are safe for eternity in the hands of our unchanging Creator. Our faith can be a sure faith; God will never change the rules on us and that gives us the comfort and the courage to persevere.

So, in this divine council, God has chosen to create something special: He will create a being with the breath of life that is in His own image; according to His likeness. These two descriptions, image and likeness, let us know that we are not exactly like God but we have some of the same characteristics.

We don’t look like God. God is a spiritual being who doesn’t have a physical form. But we do have a soul, a spirit; a part of us that can’t be seen in the physical world. We will see later how God actually breathed life, or a spirit, into our physical body. Our likeness to God comes from some of our attributes; some of our characteristics. God has many attributes that we don’t have: for instance, He is all-powerful, He exists everywhere at once, He knows all things, He is unchanging. None of these things describe us.

Human-beings have dignity. This comes from us being image-bearers of God. One of my favorite passages is Job 38:3. Job is about to receive a tongue lashing by God, yet God tells him, “*Now gird up your loins like a man*.” Even though Job is about to get chewed out, God expects him to be able to stand before the Almighty and take it.

People have compassion and we know that God is a compassionate God. We are capable of love and love is one of the attributes of God. Mankind has a sense of justice and we know that we serve an absolutely just God. God has given us the abilities of kindness and mercy, generosity, knowledge, and wisdom. All of these things that define God have been built into us by Him.

We haven’t gotten to the account of sin entering the world but we know it’s coming. Because of sin, our image of God is tarnished. Those attributes we have are now imperfect and we don’t always display them.

How beautiful that God has allowed us to be joined to His Son, Jesus Christ. How wonderful that we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Because of these gifts of God, we are able to regain some of God’s image even while here on earth. And these things will be perfected once again when we see Jesus.

Prayer

Lord God, thank You for creating the animals. They are beautiful and it is our joy to interact with them. They are a testimony to Your creative ability and to Your glory. May they always remind us that You are God of all things so that we may praise You.

Thank You Lord for creating us in Your image; for the precious characteristics that You have endowed us with. It pains us that Your image is tarnished by our sins. We beg Your forgiveness and for the righteousness of Christ to cover us so that Your good attributes can be seen by others so that they may be drawn to You.

Help us, Holy Spirit, to give praise and honor to God as the rest of His creation does; both inanimate and animate. As part of His creation, we wish to glorify Him. Help us to reflect the light of Christ in this spiritually darkened world; that Jesus’ Kingdom would be increased.

We pray these things in the name of Jesus our Lord

Amen