

**Sermon: 2020/06/07 (1st Sunday after Pentecost - TRINITY, Year A)
- Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Psalm 8; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; &, Matthew
28:16-20_BTR**

[A heart wrapped up in gaudy wrapping-paper, on the inside of which is written:
"Obsolete Worldview."]

Trying to *satisfactorily* explain the trinitarian nature of God is an unending challenge for the Church.

We've been "wrestling" with it since the earliest centuries.

Far superior minds to mine have, over the years, conjured up impressive theological jargon - drawing on the best of classical Greek philosophy - to "capture," supposedly, what it really means for God to be both a *genuinely, single* entity, yet harbouring *three* persons.

This doctrine is about sooo(!) much more than that God appears in three "forms."
(As water can be ice, fluid and gas.)

No, the evidence of the Bible goes *much* further than this:
our *one* God has internal conversations.

He is a *community*.

He prays to Himself - in Gethsemane, when Jesus wept blood.

And the Son intercedes with the Father, on our behalf.

That is to say, in some mysterious way, there is *debate* within God.

About our salvation and judgment.

Indeed, in (the Book of) *Job*, the protagonist, describes God as a 'council': [15:8].

And this idea of Him comes through especially strong in our Old Testament reading; in *Genesis*.

Just look again at verse twenty-six (on the inner page of your Scripture insert, about half-way down) - I quote: 'Then God said, "Let *us* make humankind in *our* image, according to *our* likeness...'

To be clear, there is no one else present - *external* to the creator - for Him to be speaking to.

These are the (separate) *persons* of God collaborating together.

You know, I wonder if those *quasi*-Christian traditions - like the "J.W.s" or the Latter Day Saints - who "gloss over" this unambiguous *yet confounding* - "data" in the Bible - and deny the existence of the three divine *people* - and demote, in particular, Christ to human only - have just "thrown in the towel."

Because, after all, it just doesn't make sense, does it, for three to be one and one to be three.

In the *physical* universe, such a thing is impossible.

Nonsense.

Something else that seems like "nonsense," of course, is the depiction of God creating 'the heavens and the earth' in a mere seven days.

Seven days!

That's ludicrous.

The evidence from *multiple* scientific fields - from geology, palaeontology, astronomy, and a whole bunch I can't even pronounce - says that the world (around us) is millions and *millions* of years old, that there were great, *unimaginably* long "sweeps" of time between the major historical natural events, such as between the solidification of the planet (from a nebulous ball of swirling, chemical elements), and then the emergence of life - simple, single-celled; floating in mostly empty oceans, under a poisonous sky. But *Genesis* (chapter) One has God producing the universe like a machine-gun: *bam, bam, bam.*

Trees, fish, birds, mankind...these things come "flying" out of His mouth, as He declares them real.

It's really quite beautiful.

He merely imagines their possibility "from scratch," *and then* just pronounces their existence: *voila!*

There they were.

And though some of the sequence (of creation in *Genesis*), despite its unscientific rapidity, bears *some* resemblance to what we think is true about how things emerged and developed; that is to say, specifically, life in the sea before on land, for instance.

Other aspects of it have been *thoroughly* falsified; disproven.

The birds, for example, on day five.

Followed by the other animals in the morning on day six.

But it is common knowledge, isn't it, that birds *evolved* from dinosaurs?

That their wings are, essentially, extremely long fingers, adapted to flight by *countless* generations of "natural selection" - of environmental factors interacting with random genetic mutation.

Yet, there is *nothing* random about how God is in *Genesis*.

He is deliberate and direct.

"A man with a plan."

Bringing order out of chaos.

So, what do we do?

Well, is the "cup half empty or half full"?

What *I* choose to see is that the inspired author of the book - maybe Moses himself - lays down for us some *fundamental* facts - life-giving, life-transforming facts.

That there *is* a God, for instance.

A God who is *intimately* involved with His creation.

Who *cares* for His creation.
Who has a *design* for this creation.
These aren't all self-evident truths!
Indeed, the (multiplying) atheists would tell you; the so-called, "nones" would tell you - that what we see and experience is just...atoms.
Atoms endlessly re-arranging themselves according to blind physical laws.
Thus, *sometimes* those atoms happen to be arranged into pretty, lovely things: a butterfly or a rainbow.
A new-born baby or an American Robin.
And *sometimes* those atoms just happen to be a highly infectious disease or a dead-body.
Like that of young black man, his neck crushed by a certain policeman's knee.
And there's no point crying: "*Foul!*" Or, "*Injustice.*"
Because it's just...atoms, baby.
Doing their thing.
Re-arranging themselves.
A mindless, callous "Circle of Life," which grinds forever on, chewing up and spitting out.
Which doesn't care if there's global warming or not.

Genesis One, however, points in a different direction.
And I'm so glad it does.
It provides the framework for meaning, for purpose, for morality.
It provides the foundation for saying that some things are wrong and other things *better*.
It provides the background against which we can say:
"This society isn't what it could be."
And: "This nation can improve."
It offers us truths that make sense of reality; of human experience -
Give it *value*.

[Unwrap heart.]

It is only that those *revealed* "truths" come to us *wrapped up* in an antiquated, obsolete worldview. [Display text to congregation.]
A simple, childish "worldview."
A "worldview" which was *appropriate* and to be expected from the time and the place in which *Genesis* was written:
Bronze. Age. Israel.
When people really *did* believe that the earth was flat and the sky above a hard, solid "firmament."
But so what! [Screw paper up into a ball. Throw it away.]
Don't be distracted by matters of No. Real. consequence. [Point to the ball.]

That distraction stems from an unfair expectation that God should have taught those *ancient* people; those Bronze Age people; those *Israelites* - ("back then") *modern* knowledge - about fossils and physics, etc., etc.

About DNA and cells and, and...

confused them with it.

No, what they *needed* to know was that they existed *for a reason*.

To be loved and to love.

Irrespective of skin-color.

Let us pray: ...