

Last week, we looked at the rich doctrine of the creative power of God, working by His Spirit to create and redeem. His almighty power, teamed with His covenant promises, brings all of creation into focus – even in the midst of hurricanes and violence between nations. This week’s notes focus on God’s power to work good in hidden ways, under the cover of darkness. May it be of great encouragement to us after Hurricanes Helene and Milton, and may these notes prepare our hearts to have a God-centered Thanksgiving.

**Mon/Tues: Read Genesis 1:1-19 & Colossians 1:15-18**

**Light Out of Darkness**

One great blessing of Bible study is the rediscovery of the purpose of our lives and the *God-centered purpose of all creation*. In other words, Scripture teaches us the ultimate reason we exist by reminding us that all our lives are to be lived before God and for His glory alone. This purpose in living for the glory of God is well-expressed by the first question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism: What is man’s chief end? Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

Here is where creation fits into this goal of God’s glory: In creation, God first of all created light out of nothing, thus revealing His glory even over the hidden works which He performs in the darkness.

At first the earth and all that was under heaven was an undifferentiated mass lacking order and form. It lay in darkness. Yet God was at work there; His Spirit was moving over the waters. Under the cover of darkness God was preparing what He was about to bring to light. Yes, God works even in darkness and in secret; the fruit of His work becomes visible later. In the same way God is working at this very moment in the hidden depths of many a human heart. Perhaps He is at work in your heart, teaching you to have faith.

S.G. De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance Vol I*

**Meditate and Pray:** Give thanks that God is always working to further His own glory for the good of His people. We may not see right now what He is doing, but soon He will bring His glorious purposes to light, bringing something full of light even out of the deepest darkness, just as He caused His light to shine over the darkness in the creation account.

We may at times feel that our lives are chaotic and lacking in blessed evidences of divine order and form. The recent hurricanes in the southeast U.S. cause many to cry, “Why, LORD?” But take heart. Jesus Christ, who was there with His Father at creation, is the One through whom “all things hold together” (Colossians 1:17). Christ is committed to bringing glory out of every situation and every part of His Father’s created world. Though the Fall has marred God’s good work, Christ is nevertheless still the Light of the World, who shines all the brighter against the dark backcloth of sin and evil.

Sing about God working all things out for His own glory in hymn # 128:

1 God moves in a mysterious way  
his wonders to perform;  
he plants his footsteps in the sea,  
and rides upon the storm.

2 Deep in unfathomable mines  
of never-failing skill  
he treasures up his bright designs,  
and works his sovereign will. (continued)

3 Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
the clouds ye so much dread  
are big with mercy, and shall break  
in blessings on your head.

4 Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
but trust him for his grace;  
behind a frowning providence  
he hides a smiling face.

### Weds/Thurs: Read Genesis 1:20-27 & Psalm 145:10-13

### Order out of Chaos

Another key component of God’s glory over all His creation is that *He rules over it all, at every moment of time*. God’s glory, then, is a glorious reign, and the creation account shows us first of all how God reigns over all He has made.

In our culture, we don’t think much of the concept of Rule and Dominion – *especially when it comes to someone ruling over us*. We emphasize every individual’s vote, and laud democracy as the greatest form of government. It is the idolatrous exaltation of the individual (and his false sense of autonomy from God) that drives much of our culture’s obsession with self and the endless pursuit of our own selfish dreams.

But from the beginning, God shows His sovereignty in creation by dividing, naming, and assigning rule by subduing some parts of creation and exalting others.

Professor S.G. De Graaf, in *Promise and Deliverance Vol I*, points out how God “divides” (NKJV) or “separates” (ESV) the creation according to His sovereign dictates in a few of the verses from Genesis 1 (**bold** added for emphasis):

<sup>4</sup> And God saw that the light was good. And God **separated** the light from the darkness.

<sup>6</sup> And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it **separate** the waters from the waters.”

<sup>14</sup> And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to **separate** the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, <sup>15</sup> and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.”

Other verses speak of God’s “gathering the waters together to reveal dry land” (Genesis 1:9-10) and commanding vegetation, animals, insects, etc, to be produced, “according to their kind,” (Genesis 1:11-13 & Genesis 1:20-25).

In all these ways, God creates and makes distinctions between all earthly and heavenly phenomena. All the heavens and the earth are created in such a way that God is both completely exalted above and separate from all that He has made – and yet intimately involved with even the smallest seed, fish or bird. He has the right to rule over all things at all times.

Sing about His sovereign rule over all things in hymn # 74:

1 God is working his purpose out  
as year succeeds to year:  
God is working his purpose out,  
and the time is drawing near;  
nearer and nearer draws the time,  
the time that shall surely be,  
when the earth shall be filled with the glory  
of God as the waters cover the sea.

3 March we forth in the strength of God,  
with the banner of Christ unfurled,  
that the light of the glorious gospel of truth  
may shine throughout the world:  
fight we the fight with sorrow and sin  
to set their captives free,  
that the earth may be filled with the glory of God as  
the waters cover the sea.

2 From utmost east to utmost west,  
where human feet have trod,  
by the mouth of many messengers  
goes forth the voice of God:  
"Give ear to me, you continents,  
ye isles, give ear to me,"  
that the earth may be filled with the glory of God as  
the waters cover the sea.

4 All we can do is nothing worth  
unless God blesses the deed;  
vainly we hope for the harvest-tide  
till God gives life to the seed;  
yet nearer and nearer draws the time,  
the time that shall surely be,  
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God  
as the waters cover the sea.

### Fri/Sat/Sun: Read Genesis 1:26-2:4

### The Crown of His Creation

When we come to the creation of man and woman, the first fact to grasp is that God made them only after “taking counsel within the Trinity about their creation.” (James Fisher, *Commentary on the Shorter Catechism*). Fisher notes that God instantly commanded into being all other parts of creation, but He solemnly paused before man’s creation to reveal His *Trinitarian deliberation before creating man*, shown in the words, “Let us.” This shows “The great regard God had to man’s happiness and welfare.”

This careful deliberation *over human life* is just what we do when we have an important project to undertake, on our homes or at work; or, when we have a life and death medical decision to make for one of our children. No parent would take one step towards such an important decision without consulting others.

In the same way, God takes our lives too seriously to ever haphazardly “make it up as He goes along.” He is always working “all things according to the counsel of His will” when it comes to our existence (Ephesians 1:11).

**Meditate and Pray:** Father, thank you that, while all creation speaks of your glory, in the creation of man you took special care for our happiness and blessing. You first furnished the great house of the creation by creating the whole world *before you make man*. You then created him on the sixth day as your last work of creation. You acknowledge man and woman as the crown of your creation by taking them by the hand to show off the beautiful world you made for them to enjoy.

But just right at this point we confess that we don’t sufficiently appreciate the value you place on our lives. We don’t often remember that every detail of our lives is the result of your expert, Trinitarian consultations. Please help us to have our eyes of faith opened wider to your craftsmanship in our lives. Thank you for never making mistakes in how you create, provide for, and redeem us. Thank you for investing your very best care in who You have made us to be. In Jesus Name, Amen.