

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Des Moines, Wash.
June 19, 2011**

Genesis 1:1 – 2:3

Mysterious Revelations on this Trinity Sunday!

- 1. The design of the Creator*
- 2. The design of his creation*
- 3. The design of his salvation*

Hymns: 195 – 191 – Distribution: 261, 234 – 501

All Scripture quotations from the NIV

Genesis 1:1 – 2:3 –

¹ *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* ² *Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*

³ *And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.* ⁴ *God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.* ⁵ *God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.*

⁶ *And God said, “Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water.”* ⁷ *So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so.* ⁸ *God called the expanse “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.*

⁹ *And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so.* ¹⁰ *God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.* ¹¹ *Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so.* ¹² *The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was*

good. ¹³ *And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.*

¹⁴ *And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years,”* ¹⁵ *and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so.* ¹⁶ *God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.* ¹⁷ *God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth,* ¹⁸ *to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.* ¹⁹ *And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.*

²⁰ *And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.”* ²¹ *So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.* ²² *God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.”* ²³ *And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.*

²⁴ *And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so.* ²⁵ *God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.* ²⁶ *Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”* ²⁷ *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.* ²⁸ *God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”* ²⁹ *Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for*

*food.*³⁰ **And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.**³¹ **God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.**

2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.² **By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.**³ **And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.**

Do you like mysteries? Perhaps a good Agatha Christie novel? Or a Sherlock Holmes book? Perhaps you enjoy an Ellery Queen episode? Or a Columbo movie? Even today, shows like CSI, Monk, or other detective stories remain popular. Children still enjoy the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew. Clues are given, a puzzle is revealed, and at the end the solution is satisfying!

This morning we will be looking at mysteries. We do this because we are worshiping on Trinity Sunday and we are examining the OT lesson from the book of Genesis. **We will examine “Mysterious Revelations this Trinity Sunday!” These are deep mysteries that mankind has wondered about since the beginning of time, and we’ll delve into some of the deepest questions people still ask. From God’s Word we will examine:**

1. **The design of the Creator**
2. **The design of his creation**
3. **The design of his salvation**

1 – “*In the beginning God...*” This is how the Creator introduces himself to mankind. It is the first verse in the entire Scriptures. He does not try to explain where he came from. He does not try to justify his existence. With these four words, God invites the reader to simply believe the fact that God is. **Before Moses said anything else, he drew attention to one of God’s divine characteristics: He is eternal. He was present before the world began.**

Moses also received a taste about the existence and eternal nature of God when he was called by God at the burning bush. Remember how Moses gave God many reasons why he should not go represent the Lord to Pharaoh? One of them was, “I don’t know your name!” How did God answer this? In Exodus 3 we hear, “*God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the*

Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” This mysterious name reveals that God has “always been.” He is eternal.

Moses expanded on this thought in the only psalm that is attributed to him, Psalm 90: “*Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*” (vv. 1,2)

This is also why God, in the book of Revelation, is praised in heaven by this song: “*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.*” (Rev. 4:8) **The Creator is eternal.**

We see another aspect of the Creator in Genesis 1:2-3: “*Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.*” We hear of the Spirit of God hovering over the waters.

We also hear of the Word of God being used to create the world. We hear more about that “Word” later in in Scripture. John 1 says, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*” One of the names for Jesus Christ is the “Word.”

Listen to more about Christ and creation in Colossians 1: “*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*”

We see from the Bible’s verses on creation that God has multiple “persons” involved in his existence. We hear another interesting reference to God when he says, “*Let us make man in our image...*” “Let us?” What does this mean? God speaks of himself in the plural. In fact, the Hebrew word for “God” is a plural form (ELOHIM).

Other Scriptures speak of this concept:

- “*Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*” (Matthew 28:20)
- The baptism of Christ revealed Jesus in the water, the voice from heaven that spoke about his “beloved Son,” and the

Holy Spirit who descended in the form of a dove.

- We see it in Jesus' predictions about sending the Holy Spirit at Pentecost: *"I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth... All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."*

Yet we hear Scripture speak of the one-ness and the indivisibility of God. Every OT Israelite knew the mantra of their faith: *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one."* (Deuteronomy 6:4) Jesus said in John 10, *"I and the Father are one."* Scripture teaches us that this is not just God being "united" in what he does, but that he is one in essence – indivisible. The persons are not three parts to the whole. **God is three-in-one, or as the early Christian Church coined, a "Trinity," a contrived English word to try to describe what God has revealed to us.**

If you think about this long enough, it will blow your mind. This does not make sense either logically or mathematically. Yet what is our attitude toward what God has revealed about himself? Psalm 33 tells us, *"The word of the Lord is right and true."* 1 Timothy 6 also says, *"(God) alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see."* God is above us and beyond us. Therefore, we simply believe what he has said about himself.

2 – We see a second mystery in our text today, more mind blowing information! We hear about the design of God's creation. This information has sparked endless commentary and debate down to the present day. What can we say about the creation account as we read it?

Let's review the facts. We quickly see that God is not the creation he has made. He is not "in the rocks" or "in the hills," as some assert. He is separate and far above his creation.

What did he make on each of the days?

1. On Day 1, God said, *"Let there be light."* Right away, this is a mystery to us because God did not make the logical sources of light (sun, moon, stars) until Day 4. Where did the light come from? Yet God says that it was so.

2. On Day 2 God separated water from water, putting water below and water above, what we would recognize as the sea and the atmosphere above in our sky.
3. On Day 3 God separated even more. He gathered the seas to one place and the dry land to another. On this dry land he caused plants to grow.
4. On Day 4 God made the heavenly lights – the sun, moon, and stars. They governed the day and night, along with the times of the year.
5. On Day 5 God filled the seas and the sky with fish and birds.
6. On Day 6 God made all the land animals and then proceeded to make humans.
7. On Day 7 God ceased his creating activity. He "sabbath-ed," the Hebrew says. Sabbath means "to stop" in activity.

Have you struggled to remember what God made on each of the days? Here's an easy way to remember. In God's orderliness, he created light – water – land to begin with. Then on Days 4-6, he filled or enhanced them with light sources – water creatures – land creatures.

What does God's creation display? *"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."* (Psalm 19:1) The heavens and earth show us:

- Order – Both in the creation of it and in the balance of it.
- Majesty – In our part or any part of this world.
- Wisdom – As man tries to "figure out" God's creation, even in our own bodies.
- Kindness - Compare our unique planet to any other planet or place in the universe that we can see. What a unique, blessed home we have!

What about the theories of evolution? What about the ocean of speculation you can read about and study on college campuses of higher learning?

Many have pushed God out of the picture altogether. Others, even Christians, have tried to harmonize evolution and creation into one account. What can we say?

We don't have time to exhaust the subject today, but I'd like to scratch the surface. We don't know every detail about how exactly God brought this universe about, but I'd like to submit four principles that Bible-believing Christians know for sure:

1. We know that the "days" listed in Genesis are normal, 24-hour days. Some Christian scientists have tried to harmonize creation and evolution by saying that God used evolution because the days in Genesis were millions of years.

What can be said about this?

- The terms "*evening and morning*" in Genesis are certainly a clue.
- Also, it would be enough for us if the term "days" was only used in Genesis; however we see it in other places of Scripture. Exodus 20 says, "*In six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day.*"
- Also, it is true that the word "day" can mean "era" in a secondary sense in Hebrew. However, when it's used with ordinal numbers ("first, second," etc.), this is never a meaning for the word "day."
- Finally, the most damning fact of all is the concept of sin. How did sin come into the world? By the sin of the first humans. According to the evolutionary chart, man came on the scene very late in the process. What happened to the living creatures in the millions and billions of years before man had even evolved? They certainly must have died. And

this would bring death onto the scene before sin!

- Add to this the fact that the items created on the days of creation don't jibe with the order on the evolutionary chart, and this idea is untenable.

2. A second fact that we know for sure is that animals and plants did not come from one source. This is clear in verses such as Genesis 1:24-25: "*God said, 'Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.' And it was so.*"²⁵ *God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds.*" We hear the same about the plants with seeds "according to their kinds."

3. A third fact that we know for certain is that man did not come from the animals. We have separate creation details for man and woman. Also, we hear that man and woman receive the "image of God" from him, which is not said of the animals. We also see the gift of marriage in the orderly way that God designed humans to live.

It makes a big difference to note these things! If you are a product of a chance process, even an accident, this makes a difference in your outlook on life. If you are an animal in your basics instincts, this makes a difference on your outlook as well. Is it any surprise that our world has a generation of young people who are depressed and tend to violence, whose love is "growing cold?" We've told them that they are animals who are here by accident!

4. A fourth fact that we know for sure is what man's role in this world is. Man is the ruler and caretaker of creation. Psalm 8 says, "*When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set*

*in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet:
all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.”*

Many scientists today would tell you that man is an invader in creation and nature. They would call him an “unwelcome visitor” and a destroyer of the way things are supposed to be. Some have even gone as far as calling mankind a “cancer” on the biosphere! We certainly would agree that man is not supposed to abuse or misuse creation. Yet God has put man here as ruler and caretaker of it.

3 – We have one more mystery to note today. We see it in God’s assessment at the end of his creative activity. After Day 6, we read, “*God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.*” It was in a perfect state. But then it got graffiti-ed.

Have you seen any graffiti lately? Unfortunately, in our area here we see it regularly. Traffic signs are spray painted with symbols. Fences are scrawled on. Walls are marked up. Graffiti makes me mad! A perfectly fine fence or landmark is made ugly by someone’s senseless act!

How do you think God felt when his creation was graffiti-ed? If we had read further, we would have heard about this sad account in Genesis 3, where the devil tempted and led Adam and Eve into eating of the forbidden fruit and ruining their perfect condition. Because of their senseless act:

- Every inclination of man’s heart would not be evil from childhood
- Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin
- As Romans 8 tells us, even creation has been ruined and is “groaning”

This has had a profound impact on you. You are on a doomed voyage. Perhaps you’ve studied or seen images of the story of doomed vessels such as the *Titanic* or the *Edmund Fitzgerald*. It can be pretty somber reading personal backgrounds of folks on those

doomed voyages or looking at their pictures. But did you know you are on a doomed voyage? Your ship is going down because you are a doomed creature, born in sin, living in sin, and by nature on a road to hell, all because your first parents sinned; all because you have willingly lived in it also.

Yet God had not finished his work. His creative work was done, but his saving work had just begun. In Genesis 3 he promised, “*I will put enmity (hatred) between you and the woman. He will crush your head and you will strike his heel.*” God would send a Champion to crush the devil’s power and win the salvation of the world. God would send his own Son to be the Savior of mankind and die in your place on the cross. **God’s plan of salvation in Jesus would be vital for your future, to change your doomed voyage to a safe passage to heaven!**

It’s interesting how God uses many creation references to allude to your salvation, such as:

- “*God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*” (2 Corinthians 4)
- Living water
- The Sun of righteousness
- The Light of the world
- I am the Vine – You are the branches
- The bright Morning Star
- The sower and the seed
- Raising us up on eagles’ wings

God has saved your soul. And he will deliver you and his creation one day forever through a massive renovation on Judgment Day. 2 Peter 3 says, “*The present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men... But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare... But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*” A “total makeover!”

So ends the deep mysteries in our text today. I don’t think we could take much more! Yet this

account about God's mysteries on this particular Sunday have deep meaning for our congregation. Why? Because we are Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. Our congregation has been named for this God and for this Sunday! Today we can marvel at this triune God and what he has done.

A good assignment as you continue to marvel at these thoughts is to read Job 38-41 this week. It will cause you to marvel all the more. May God cause us to rejoice today about who he is, how he has made us, and how he has rescued us from sin! Amen.