

DO YOU BELIEVE AS MOSES BELIEVED?

Do you know what a creed is? It is a statement of what one believes; it is a statement of one's faith. How many creeds do you know? There is "The Apostles' Creed," "the Nicene Creed", and "The Athanasian Creed." Did you know that Scripture has creeds in it? 1 Corinthians 12:3 contains a creed: "**Jesus is LORD!**" The 23rd Psalm is a confession of what King David believes about God – his creedal statement about God. Did you know that Genesis One is a creed? It is! It is a confession of what Moses believes about God and creation.

Remember that Moses was raised in the courts of Pharaoh in Egypt. He was educated in the finest schools of his day. He was exposed to the teachings of the ancient Middle East regarding creation. There were many common threads about how the world came to be throughout the ancient Middle East. It was taught that there were many gods, both male and female. Their gods were more like super humans in both form and power. Creation happened in a time of chaos and war. The sun, moon, and heavenly bodies were gods to be worshipped and served. Ancient gods were easily manipulated to make it rain and water their crops. Man was created as an afterthought for the purpose of doing the gods' dirty work.

Yet Moses, in Genesis One, rejected all of these teaching. He believed that there was one God who orderly and logically created the world. First the universe, then planet earth, then the waters were divided and land appeared. Plant life blossomed with rain, then came lower forms of life, then the higher species, and finally man was created. The sun, the moon, and the stars were not to be worshipped, but were created to help mankind: the North Star, the Southern Star, the Zodiac, the planets, the sun, and the moon all give directions, acted as a calendar, and told the time. Man was the climax of creation and was made in the moral image of God. Look at verse 12. This suggests that plant life did not slowly evolve. The Hebrew word translated "produced" literally means to "burst forth instantly."

The whole chapter is a statement of Moses' faith. He believes creation and life came about entirely different from that of his contemporaries. Look closely at chapter one and you can begin to understand why it is a creedal statement, one that not just Moses confessed, but all of God's children. Moses wrote it in sections that follow a very logical order. Look at the words and phrases like "**and God said...it was good...and there was evening and morning, the first day...the second day.**" These key words and phrases helped the mind organize and remember one's

thoughts. Together these make up Moses' creed on creation, his confession of faith regarding God and creation. Do you believe as Moses believed?

What is interesting, entirely appropriate, and proper, and most logical is the fact that this reading is assigned as the Old Testament reading for Holy Trinity Sunday. Look again at verses 1-3. How many times does Moses refer to the Trinity in the opening three verses of Genesis One? The correct answer is **TWO!** Twice the author makes reference to the Trinity. The first reference is very clear. In verse one we have the words, **"In the beginning God (the Father) created the heavens and the earth out of nothing."** That's what the Hebrew word for create means: **"to make out of nothing."** Moses tells us the God the Father is our source for life! That's what both the Hebrew and Aramaic word for "father" means: "source." In verse two we find **"the Spirit of God hovering over the waters."** Here is the Holy Spirit! And now look at verse three: **"And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."** What did God do? He spoke. He spoke what? Words! Here we have the Second Person of the Trinity. We read in John 1:1, **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word. He was with God in the beginning."** Go to verse 14: **"And the Word became flesh and pitched his tent temporarily among us."** Here you have in the opening verses of the entire Bible a reference to the Trinity: Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

But where is the second reference to the Trinity? Look again at the words of verse one, **"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."** Look at the Hebrew words for **"God created."** One is a noun, "Elohim." The second is the verb, "bara." In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word "Elohim" means God. The Hebrew suffix "-im" functions like the English "s" when added to a noun. If I have one apple and add a "s" to it, I now have *two or more* apples. In other words, "Elohim" is plural, not singular. Yet the verb "bara" is singular, not plural. Now the verb controls the sentence. It not only tells us what action is taking place, but, in most languages, it also tells us if the one doing the action is singular or plural, male, female, or neuter. Such is the case in Hebrew.

Now pay attention: here is the kicker! When Elohim is use in reference to Yahweh, in every case in the Old Testament, Elohim is plural but the verb is always singular. It is telling us that there is but one God but there is something plural about His nature. Yahweh is one God, but there is a plurality about His nature. He is one God, yet He is three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The question for the day is this: do you agree with Moses? I know that some struggle trying to figure how God created the universe and how long it took for the earth to cool, for life to appear, and for man to exist. How old is the earth?

Scientists themselves do not agree on the answer. Some say millions of years, some say billions, and some say trillions of years. St. Augustine said it happened not in six days but in a flash of time. The issue at hand is not how long did it take, nor is it how was it done? The main point of the first chapter of Genesis is that God, the entire Trinity, was our creator. Do you believe as Moses believed? Do you accept and confess the Creation Creed of Moses?

There are a number of reasons why people might resist or refuse to believe that God is our creator. Some simply choose to believe the theories of scientists, Ron Hubbard, or others. Some have not heard of God and do not know of His awesome power and love. Some choose to think that they know more than God. Some are blinded by sin and satan and deny God's hand in creation, even today. Others fear having a Creator because if it were true, then they, as the creatures, would be forced to submit, obey, and serve their creator. Some point to scientific evidence that suggests in their minds evolution and billions of years in the earth's making. Others point to scientific evidence that refutes evolution and suggests a shorter time period since the earth came to be. But perhaps the greatest scientific evidence that man did not evolve is the medical evidence of DNA. Do you know that all the DNA you will ever have comes from your very first cell? And for human DNA to evolve in even the longest suggested time of the earth's age is not possible. We are the product of God's creation.

Creation tells us God's Word has power and that power brings results. God the Father spoke and things happened; things came into being. That is power! Jesus, the Son of God, the Word in the flesh, spoke and sick people were healed and the dead were raised. That is power! And the Spirit, through the spoken Word, brings salvation as He uses the Word of God to create faith and preserve that faith! That is power! St. Paul calls it, "**the power unto salvation!**"

Because you and I know the awesome power of our God and Creator, we can trust in His Word. We can believe God's promises because we know that God, as our Creator, has the power to make it happen, to fulfill all that He promises. If God promises us something, it is as good as done. It is never a question of, "Can God do it?" but rather "When will God make it happen?" When God promises that Jesus' blood sacrifice paid for the sins of world including all of ours, we can be confident that we are forgiven. When God promises "**all who call up His name will be saved**" then we can be sure that as we confess our sins and call out to God, God will save us. When we need help in the trying times of life, when we face the loss of a job or relocation to another city, when the disappointments of life get us down, when failures destroy our will to go on, when the pain from a broken relationship seems too hard to bare, we can believe God's promises to be "**present**

help in the time of trouble...to give us rest when heavy burdened...to give us our daily bread”...and to empower us to reconcile with others. We can have hope and comfort when a loved one dies and peace in the face of our own death because we can believe the promises of God that Jesus is “**the resurrection and the life**” and even temporal death cannot separate us from God’s love in Jesus Christ.

If God’s Word has the power to create our wonderful and vast universe, then God’s Word has the power to create life in the womb of the Virgin Mary, resurrect Jesus from the dead, forgive our sins, resurrect us and all believers on Judgment Day, control history to serve His purposes, and answer our prayers. Believe His Word!

As I mentioned earlier, “Father” in Aramaic and Hebrew means “source!” God is the source of our physical life: He gives us life, provides, sustains, and protects our life. And God is the source of our spiritual life: He sacrificed His Son to free us from our sins and the power of satan; and God creates the very faith that He requires of all who are saved.

Today is Father’s Day. It is a day we remember our fathers and give thanks to God for them. It is also a day in which fathers look to their Heavenly Father as their role model to be a good dad. Just God is our source of all we need for life and in His love made the greatest sacrifice so we could be saved and have eternal life, so let us as fathers take seriously our responsibility to be the source of our children’s food, clothing, nurturing, and love, as well as the source for teaching them about the Word, the love, and grace of our God, Savior and Creator.

When it comes to God and creation, **DO YOU BELIEVE AS MOSES BELIEVED? IJN, amen.**