

Notes for Next Sunday

Trinity Sunday

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Genesis 1:1-2:4a). The basic narrative of this text is the story of creation. However, on this Trinity Sunday we find that the triune God was fully involved the creation of the world. While the word “trinity” is not found anywhere in Scripture, we find the three persons in various verses in the Bible. That is true for this text. In verse 1 we see that God created heaven and earth. This points to the God the Father whom we confess in the first of the Apostles Creed and the maker of heaven and earth. But, creation also includes the Holy Spirit in verse 2 and Jesus as the Word (said) in verse 3. Luther understands this to be a reference to the Jesus Christ. John 1:1-3 tell us that “*the Word (Jesus) was from the beginning and that all things were made by Him.*”

Epistle (Acts 2:14a, 22-36). Here Peter preaches a powerful sermon especially to those who were sceptics at the Pentecost event. First Peter points out that Jesus was truly accredited by God through the many miracles and other signs while on earth. Peter goes on to bluntly accuse them of putting Christ to death, but that God had raised him again. David was an important character to the Jewish people and Peter quotes David to prove Jesus’ validity as the Son of God and the world’s savior. Peter ends reminding them that Jesus had done the will of God and that God’s approval was shown by the Father’s not abandoning even after death.

Gospel (Matthew 28:16-20). This text is about Jesus giving the apostles what we now call “The Great Commission.” Jesus connects with his disciples in Galilee as he had told them he would. The disciples had been through trauma brought on by their own traitorous behavior. When they see Jesus they worship as they ought because he proved to be the risen savior. The doubt that some have is not about Jesus identity, but what the future will hold for their ministry considering their recent behavior. Jesus assures them by stating that they have his full authority as savior of the world backing them. To make disciples they are to baptize in the name of the triune God and teach. The teaching was to be through and ongoing to the point that it molded the entire life of the disciple. And he ends with yet another assurance of being with them unto eternity.

For more in-depth commentary on each reading, read the notes found after each text below.

OLD TESTAMENT – Genesis 1:1-2:4a

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.¹⁶¹⁶ 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 vault 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 vault of the sky.”²¹ So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, 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: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the 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 mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; 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 in the sea and the birds in the sky 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 in the sky and all the creatures that move along 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.

1:1-2:3 God’s creation of the world is presented in three stages; declaration of the creation of matter out of nothingness (1:1-2); the ordering of creation (days 1 and 2, 1:3-8); and the filling of creation (days 3 through 6, 1:9-31). (TLSB)

1:1 In the beginning God. The Bible always assumes, and never argues, God’s existence. Although everything else had a beginning, God has always been. (CSB)

1:1 God created. Hebrew “bara” is never used with a subject other than God in the OT. God alone has the power to create (bring into existence from nothing). Humans make (or “create) things only by rearranging what God has created. That God alone is the Creator of all that exists affirms that He is the only true God. (TLSB)

1:1 first day.† The first day was reckoned from evening to morning, according to the prevailing custom of the Jews. The six days of creation make up a period of time equal to Israel’s work week (Ex 20:9–11). (CSB)

1:11 Both the horizontal and vertical relationships between the days demonstrate the literary beauty of the chapter and stress the orderliness and symmetry of God’s creative activity. (CSB)

1:26 image ... likeness. Hebrew tselem means something more than mere physical resemblance. An image, in ancient Near Eastern though, was that which manifested the presence of the gods within the

material realm. Created in God's image, Adam not only reflected God's character but also was His representative in the world, His steward over all that He had made. (TLSB)

1:31 very good. Creation is summarized by stating that it conformed to God's intentions in the best possible way. (TLSB)

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.

2:2 finished ... rested. God rested on the seventh day, not because he was weary, but because nothing formless or empty remained. His creative work was completed—and it was totally effective, absolutely perfect, “very good” (1:31). It did not have to be repeated, repaired or revised, and the Creator rested to commemorate it. (CSB)

⁴This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

2:4 account. The word occurs ten times in Genesis—at the beginning of each main section. (CSB)

EPISTLE – Acts 2:14a, 22-36

¹⁴Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd.

²²“Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. ²⁵David said about him: ”I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. ²⁶Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, ²⁷because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. ²⁸You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.’ ²⁹“Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ,^d that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. ³²God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. ³³Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. ³⁴For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, ”The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand ³⁵until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.””³⁶“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

2:23 wicked men. Jesus was handed over to the Romans, who were not under the yoke of Moses' Law. (TLSB)

2:25-28 Quoting Ps 16:8–11, David (“I”) speaks in two dimensions. First, the king rejoices that God will not allow death to cut off David's or God's covenant people. Second, through David, Christ speaks prophetically of His own soul's deliverance and His body's escape from corruption. (TLSB)

2:33 to the right hand of God. Jesus has equality with God the Father. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Matthew 28:16-20

¹⁶Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^a the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

20:16 the mountain. That a mountain setting was selected doubtless marked outwardly the fact that a noteworthy event was to transpire; for it was on a mountain that Jesus had preached His great sermon (chapters 5-7), on a mountain after spending a night in prayer He had chosen the twelve apostles from among His many disciples, on a mountain He had discoursed with the multitudes and then fed the five thousand and four thousand respectively. Now on a mountain He would issue the Great Commission. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

28:18 JESUS CAME TO THEM – God’s amazing, saving grace; He could have stood atop the mountain; challenged them to climb the rest of the way; condemned those who doubted. No so! He treated those doubters as He treated Thomas in John 20:24-28. (Koehneke)

28:18 To possess authority means to have both the right and the power to rule and enforce obedience according to one’s wishes. Jesus asserted that his was the absolute, the total control over all created things in heaven – the entire angelic host and the spirits of the saints already in glory and over all forces of nature, devils, and all the rest of his animate and inanimate creation. Whole creature world had to submit to His will and respond to His command; no hostile power could withstand Him. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

28:19 go. As you are going through life...each moment of your life. – The disciple-makers must go out where these people are. Not as in the OT period by attracting them to Jerusalem, the Temple, and its worship, but by traveling out to all the unbelieving and presenting them with Word and Sacrament where they live. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

28:19 make disciples. There is a whole host of things that, in the push and shove of daily Christian living and mission, go into the process of getting people to the point where they are baptized, as well as enabling them to be taught comprehensively to guard everything that Jesus commanded all of his people to guard. All one has to do is read the rest of the NT (or just the Gospel of Matthew) to learn the importance of loving one’s neighbor (even the enemy [5:43-48]), doing good deeds that direct glory to the Father who is in heaven (5:16), working together to restore and preserve one’s fellow disciples (18:15-20). This means that the commission to “make disciples” is given here in only the barest of skeletal forms. (CC)

28:20 obey. To go back and reread this Gospel! No one can exhaust this book the first time through. Now that we have made it to the end, we can go back and see new things in the opening chapters that did not dawn on us the first time. (PBC)