

Truth for Today

The Bible teaching radio programme

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The finger of God: God in creation

Finger-work

*Fingers tap and fingers touch;
Fingers clasp and fingers clutch.
Fingers point and fingers pick;
Fingers twist and fingers flick.
Oh, my fingers work with care
I'm so pleased that they are there.*

*Fingers stretch and fingers bend;
Fingers smooth and fingers mend
Fingers sew and fingers shape;
Fingers scratch and fingers scrape.
Oh, my fingers frame with flair;
I'm so pleased that they are there.*

*Fingers grip and fingers squeeze;
Fingers catch and fingers seize.
Fingers press and fingers poke;
Fingers play and fingers stroke.
Oh, my fingers burdens bear;
I'm so pleased that they are there.*

*Fingers paint and fingers draw;
Fingers click and fingers claw.
Fingers pluck and fingers prance
Fingers steer and fingers dance;
See my fingers knit in prayer;
Lord, I thank you they are there.*

(GE Stevens, May 2015).

Fingers do so much work, don't they? They are one of the many marvels of the human body. On the one hand they are known for their strength. On the other they are recognised for the fine skills they have to produce work of great intricacy. In this series of talks, we will be considering the finger of God in:

- Creation;
- Communication;
- Judgment; and
- Forgiveness.

We begin with the finger of God in creation. We do well to define the verb "to create" as used in the context of the Bible. It means "to bring into existence" or "to form from nothing". Hence, we find the latter part of Hebrews 11:3 stating: "...*Things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*"

The psalmist, David, refers metaphorically to the fingers of God in Psalm 8. In Psalm 8:3-4 we read: "*When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?*" In this verse we see that the heavens are the work of God's fingers. Here the word for heavens is dual and refers to two of them; but they are called one "firmament" or "expanse" in Genesis 1:8. So the dual heavens may well refer to the earth's atmosphere and outer space itself. The word certainly includes the latter because the psalmist speaks of the moon and the stars being set up in this expanse.

The thought that there are two heavens mentioned here and three elsewhere (2 Corinthians 12:2) indicates that just as the atmospheric heaven is limited, then so is the heaven that contains the planets, stars, galaxies etc. This idea of three heavens is also indicated by the structure of Israel's wilderness tabernacle. If we compare Hebrews 9:11-12 with Hebrews 4:14 we can see how Jesus would have passed through two heavens into the third, namely, the holiest. The structure shows each to be contained. This goes against the grain of current theories that suggest the observable part of universe is currently expanding and therefore infinite. However, this apparent expansion may well be owing to the movements of celestial bodies and their systems relative to one another.

In chapter 38 of the book of Job (who lived about two thousand years before Christ) God asks: *"Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?"* (Job 38:31-33).

This set of questions asked by God reveals that there are binding forces between heavenly bodies and that they are moving within a pattern under the control of God Himself. The last question shows that the rule or dominion of heaven is established in the earth. Hence, we may see that celestial bodies and systems each have their course of movement within outer space and each have an influence upon the others.

Pleiades refers to the group of stars that still bear this name. The same Hebrew word may translated as "seven stars" as in Amos 5:8. There are many stars in the group, but only seven are visible to the naked eye.

What is meant by "Mazzaroth" (Job 38:32) is unclear. It would seem to be a constellation which God brings forth at a certain season for a specific duration of time. During that period it could be seen by the human eye because Job knew of it.

The question, *"...Canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?"* (Job 38:32) is of double significance.

1. Arcturus refers to the constellation known as the Great Bear. "His sons" represent the stars in the tail of the bear;
2. The constellation has motion - movement that only the Lord can guide.

But the point of all this is found in Isaiah 40:25-26 where the LORD, the Holy One, says: *"To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth."*

In Psalm 19:1 David states: *"...The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."* This is confirmed by Romans 1:20 where the Apostle Paul writes: *"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they [unbelieving people] are without excuse..."* So, the power and divinity of God are revealed to us through the faithful witness of creation. People who do not acknowledge this Creator have no excuse for their unbelief.

If the scientific principle of "cause and effect" is to be upheld in regards to creation then it demands a first cause that must have an existence that is both eternal and self-sustaining as well. It needs also the ability to act in some way. Of course, upon examining details and patterns in the things made, we must also say that this first cause must also have intelligence. In the publication of the Victoria Institute No. 124, page 267, Lord Kelvin stated, "Overwhelming strong proofs of intelligent and benevolent design lie all around us." Hence, we see that a self-sustaining and eternal **living being** must have created.

The being we call "God", answers to all the requirements we would expect of the Perfect Being. The Scriptures show us that He is a spirit being who is eternal, all-powerful, self-sustaining, all-knowing, ever present and unchanging. This is supported by the preaching of the Apostle Paul recorded in Acts 17:23-31. Speaking to the idolatrous Athenians, he made the following observation: *"For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a*

day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

If we have seen a little of the power of God previously, we can here see the benevolence of God because He created with a purpose in mind, namely, the existence and blessing of mankind. Isaiah 45:11-12 emphasises this purpose for we read: *"Thus saith the LORD ... I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded."* The same prophet writes: *"For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else"* (Isaiah 45:18).

Returning to Acts 17:23-31, the passage of Paul's preaching, we can find hints to the vastness of God's being as well as to His moral attributes of love, holiness, righteousness, truth and faithfulness. These are emphasised in the various elements of design in creation that are set there for the maintenance of life on earth in particular. Yet, the divinity of an intelligent Creator is seen in many facets of creation. Firstly, in humanity, we can see the moral attributes of God shining through even though in a fallen state. Furthermore, in each human we can see the tri-unity of God for each individual is made up, according to 1 Thessalonians 5:23, of three things, namely, spirit, soul and body - three yet one. We also see the Creator in the creativity of people. There is a story often told of Sir Isaac Newton that reflects this. This reputable scientist built a working model of the solar system. One of his companions visited and was in awe of its accuracy. He asked who built it. Newton apparently replied, "Nobody!" His visitor, an atheist, was seriously challenged by the answer to his own question.

Atheists may also be challenged by questions such as: "Where did life come from?" "Where did male and female come from?" and "Why does death occur?" The Lord Jesus Christ is revealed in scripture to be the holy Son of God who had no sin in Him. While talking about the topic of marriage He stated: *"But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh"* (Mark 10:6-8). If He is indeed the Son of God, then He cannot lie. Men and women were made by God and marriage was between a man and a woman.

As to death, the Bible tells us it is a judgment upon man because of Adam's disobedience. The first man sinned against God and all since conceived through his seed have sinned as well. Human kind has a sinful nature. (This, of course, was one of the reasons why the Christ had to be born of the virgin). Man's sinful nature has a strong urge to rebel against even the idea of the existence of God. It is a nature that seeks self-exaltation, self-satisfaction and self-interest. Try to get through one day without a bad thought or action and you will find it impossible. The fact that we sin shows that there is something deeply wrong with us. The judgment God placed upon sinful man was death. This resulted in a physical death at the end of our life here and a second death to follow. The former is a separation of spirit, soul and body while the latter is an eternal separation of the unbelieving soul from God and His blessings for evermore. Note, that the second death applies only to those who die in their sins (see John 8:21-24).

The finger of God is seen in so many ways in the order of nature even in its fallen condition. In very simple terms we can find his power in the tempest; His grace in the water cycle; His kindness in times and seasons; His mercy in the rainbow; His glory in light; His wisdom in living things; His vastness in space; His attention to detail in the smallest things; His imagination in crystals of snow; and so we could go on and on.

Then we could take all these things and see how the pattern of number is a dominating feature of creation. Our measure of time comes through the motion of bodies both local and distant such as the earth orbiting the sun, the moon orbiting the earth, the earth spinning on its axis. In Genesis 1:14-18 we read: *"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good."*

Various patterns of numbers are found in nature on earth. If we examine the areas of true knowledge whether Physics, Chemistry, Astronomy, Zoology and so on we find patterns of number dominating. This indicates the finger of an intelligent Creator.

When we consider all these things, we with the psalmist, can say: *"For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker"*, (Psalm 98:3-6).

In the New Testament we read that the Son of God was the agent of God's creation. In Genesis 1 we find the words *"And God said ..."*. Hence, we read in Hebrews 11:3: *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by*

the word of God ..." We then find in John 1:1-3 that the Son of God is called the Word. It is stated: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made."* Christ was the active agent, in creation.

Paul affirms this in Colossians 1:16-17 when, speaking of the Son of the Father's love, he said: *"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."* So Christ is the Creator and the Sustainer of all things. He is also the one for whom creation was called into being. Because of creation and salvation, the Son of God now has righteous companions for eternity, while God the Father has worshippers, children and sons. Of course, God the Son will one day transform the current heavens and there will be a new heavens and a new earth (Hebrews 1:10-12 and 2 Peter 3:13).

The finger of God as seen in Creation demands a response from the man He made in His own image and likeness. We finish with the start of God's challenge to Job found in chapter 38 of the Biblical book: *"Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God [angels] shouted for joy?"* (Job 38:1-7). After a couple of chapters of God's challenging questions, we find Job's response. In Job 40:4 he says: *"Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth."*

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