Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

Have you heard of the chicken and egg problem? It is, which comes first: The chicken or the egg? Because to get an egg, you need a chicken, and to get a chicken, you need an egg. Well, the answer of the Bible is the chicken. And we will see that when we get to the Sixth Day. But if you have been reading the Genesis family commentary, you may have read about the Yucca ‘problem.’ You see, in Mexico, there is a plant known as the Yucca plant. And for the Yucca plant to reproduce, pollen from one plant needs to be carried to another plant. But the plant can’t do this by itself. What can do it is the Yucca moth. It is the only insect that can travel from one Yucca plant to another. And the Yucca moth survives by eating from the Yucca plant. So, the Yucca plant needs the Yucca moth to survive, and the Yucca moth needs the Yucca plant to survive. So, we could ask: Which came first? The Yucca plant or the Yucca moth? Well, we are going to see today that the Yucca plant came first.

And the reason I began with this horticultural and entomological wonder is that it highlights a major problem with a creation theory called the day-age theory. It is the belief that the days of creation are not ordinary days but long ages of perhaps millions of years. But you can see the problem – You cannot have thousands or millions of years between the Yucca plant and the Yucca moth. Two days between, which is what the Bible says, is fine! And this is just one example of the interdependency of many aspects of creation that require six-day creation. And it is a reminder of what goes wrong when we start with the ideas of evolution rather than what the Bible says.

Well, let’s look at the Third Day of creation week in the same way that we looked at the Second Day. And that means that we will start with a **Creation Explanation**, then consider some **Creation Implications**, and finish with a few **Gospel Implications**. And again, we are seeking more reasons to praise the majesty of God as we consider His beautiful creation!

1. So, let’s begin with the **Creation Explanation**.
   1. And the same seven elements that describe each day of creation week are present here on the third day, although we see *two* announcements, *two* commands, *two* results, and *two* approvals. And that is because, as we have explained in earlier sermons, the third day completes the work of separating the waters that began on the Second Day. The focus of the Second Day was the creation or stretching out of the universe. And that ended with water above or at the very edge of the universe and water on the surface of planet earth. But the focus of the Third Day is what God does with the waters on earth. So, let’s quickly walk through the elements of the Third Day:
      1. **Verse 9** begins with:
         1. The **Announcement** element: “*And God said*.”
         2. Next, we have what God said in the **Command**: “*Let the waters under the heavens (which means the waters on the face of earth) be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear*.”
         3. And then we see the **Result**: “*And it was so*.”
            1. Now, it says that the dry land “***appeared***.” So, perhaps it was there under the formless waters that are described in verse 1. But **2 Peter 3:5** says that “*the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God*.” So, it could also be that God took elements of water and very quickly formed them into the chemical elements that make up land. And this would be perfectly in keeping with some of the other creation activity of this week, which normally would take much longer to do than it did in creation week. And this further emphasizes the majesty and power of Almighty God!
            2. But notice also that the water was “*gathered together in one place*” and then the dry land appeared. And the simplest way to understand these words is that in its original form the dry land was **one continent** with water all around it. And your typical geography textbook recognizes the existence of supercontinents in earth’s past, although this is always accompanied by references to billions and millions of years. But God did it all during the Second Day!
      2. And that brings us to **verse 10**:
         1. And verse 10 begins with the **Declaration**: “*God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together He called Seas*.”
         2. And so, now the work of separating the waters that had begun on the Second Day was concluded. Now, the basic environment on earth was ready for life to flourish. The air was right, there was gravity, and there was land and sea, which meant water to drink. And so, now we get the words of **Approval** that relate to the work of separation and gathering: “*And God saw that it was good*.”
      3. But the creation work of the Third Day was not yet concluded; there was more work needed for the planet to be ready to support mankind. And so, in **Verse 11**:
         1. We have a second **Announcement** element: “*And* *God* *said*.”
         2. And what God said is the **Command**: “*Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth*.”
         3. And then we see the **Result**: “*And* *it* *was* *so*.”
      4. And in **verse 12**:
         1. What was so is seen in the **Activity** described here: “*the earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind*.”
            1. Now, notice that whereas the activity elements of Day One and the Second Day described *God* doing things, here it is **the earth** that brings forth... But this is still the powerful and creative activity of God.

Boys and girls, **have you planted seeds before**? Did the plant grow to its full height the same day? No. It can take days or weeks or many years if it is a tree. But here we see plants growing to full height and producing seeds that are ready to fall and germinate, and trees growing to their full height, producing fruit, all within this Third Day.

* + - * 1. Now, the original diet of animals and humans was **vegetarian**. It was only after the Flood that God permitted humans to eat animals. So, with the creation of the plants and trees, the food source for animals and humans was ready.
        2. But you will know also that plants play a vital role in ***filtering our air***. They take in the carbon dioxide that we breathe out and they turn it into oxygen. So, with this function of plant-life, another part of the process of readying the planet for humanity was completed.
      1. And so, we get more words of **Approval**: “*And God saw that it was good*.”
    1. And that bring us to **verse 13** and the final element of the third day, the **numbering formula**: “*And there was evening and there was morning, the third day*.” So, for only the third time in its existence, the globe had completed a full rotation in relation to the light that God had created. And this brought the Third Day to a close.

1. So, there we have the **creation** **explanation** of the elements of the Third day. Let’s turn our attention in this second section to some **Creation** **Implications**.
   1. I mentioned earlier that the simplest way to understand the gathering of the waters on the Third Day is that the land was originally a super-continent, if you like. And again, this is not the time for a science lesson, but a few chapters into Genesis we are going to read about the global flood. And we will read that at the peak of the flood, “*The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep*.” And fifteen cubits is approximately **seven meters**! And so, when people read that today, and try and imagine water to about 7 meters above Mt. Everest, they find it unbelievable and another reason not to believe what the Bible says. But we need to pay attention to what the Bible *actually* says. Here in Genesis 1, we have a super-continent. And things like earthquakes and volcanos and floods, which drastically alter the contours and levels of the ground, only began *after* the Fall. So, the earth’s surface would have been flat or relatively flat when it was created. It is only after the Fall, with the arrival of earthquakes and volcanos and floods, that higher hills and mountains and lower valleys would have begun to appear. And then came **the global flood**.
      1. And this is what we read earlier in **Psalm 104:6-9**. Here we have a description of the flood and its after-effects. We read, “*You covered it (meaning the surface of the earth) with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains (So that is that seven-meter reference I mentioned a moment ago). At your rebuke [the flood waters] fled; at the sound of your thunder they took to flight*.” And then we read: “*The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that you appointed for them*.”
      2. And so, it is the receding flood waters that created the Mt. Everests and Grand Canyons of the world. And if you look up the 1986 eruption of Mt. St. Helens in the USA, you will see that it led to brand new canyons and rivers that did not exist prior to the eruption.
      3. What this means then is that the land described in Genesis 1 would have been much more even and smooth than the land we see now. And so, with my tongue firmly in my cheek, perhaps being called a ‘flat earther’ isn’t such a bad thing :-) But this further reinforces the reliability and accuracy of the Bible.
   2. But a second creation implication from the Third Day has to do with **science**.
      1. Verse10 refers to the gathered waters as “***Seas***.” And in the Genesis commentary that many of you have, Dr. Ham refers to **Matthew Maury**. Maury was a US naval officer who lived in the 19th century. And at one time, when he was quite sick, he asked one of his daughters to get the Bible and read to him. She chose **Psalm 8**, the eighth verse of which speaks of “*whatever passes along the paths of the sea*.” And when she was finished, he repeated to himself, “the paths of the sea, the paths of the sea, if God says the paths of the sea, they are there, and if I ever get out of this bed, I will find them.” So, when he was recovered, he began investigating this. And sure enough, he discovered under water currents and ridges and canyons. And he began to map them out. And he became known as the “Pathfinder of the Seas.” And his work gave rise to the modern sciences of hydrography and oceanography.
      2. And in a similar vein, in verse 11 that we have the first of ten mentions of “***according to its kind***” in this chapter. And this is a very important phrase.
         1. You see, naturalistic evolution teaches that changes occur in plants and animals such that, over time, new species or kinds occur. And this is why children are taught at school that they are descended from apes, which were originally amphibians, which were originally slime. But there is *zero* evidence for this. We have slime and amphibians and apes and humans, but no links between each kind. Yes, there are many varieties and colours and shapes *within a kind*, and there can be adaptation to a wide variety of environments, but a cucumber simply cannot become a squirrel.
         2. And this truth of Scripture led a man named **Carolus Linnaeus** to study and organize the different kinds of plants and animals. And this study is called **taxonomy**, which literally means the laws of order. And Linnaeuas is known as the father of modern taxonomy.
      3. And maybe the Lord will use these sermons to pique the interest of some of you young ones in science? We are meant to discover and explore this incredible creation that God made!
   3. But as our last creation implication of the Third Day, here are a few more verses from **Psalm 104**, in relation to vegetation and plants: The Psalmist praises God, saying, “*You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart*.”
      1. And so, whether it is the flowers and plants in the Winter Gardens at the Domain, or the magnificent Kauri in the Waitakeres, there is great beauty and variety in flowers and trees. And we ought to praise God for that beauty!
      2. And some of us really love salads, while others of us eat them because our wives make us ;-) But we should thank God for the way that plants enrich our lives in so many ways.
      3. But we also have a responsibility to be **good stewards** of plants and trees. In **Habakkuk** **2:17**, God promised Judgment on the Babylonians because of the violence they had done to Lebanon. And what He meant there especially was the cedars of Lebanon. The military campaigns of the Babylonians had caused extensive damage to flora and fauna. And God held them responsible for this unnecessary destruction. So, while we are not meant to worship the environment, as many do today, to the point that the environment takes precedence over the needs of humanity, we don’t want to be like the Babylonians also.
2. Well, that brings us, thirdly and lastly, to some **Gospel** **Implications** that arise out of the Third Day. And there are three that I would like us to consider.
   1. We have seen that God caused plants and trees to grow to full height, rapidly. Well, in **Matthew 21**, there is an account of the Lord Jesus causing a mature fig-tree to wither away to nothing, rapidly. And do you remember how He did this? He spoke to it! So, by the Word of His power, He un-created that fig tree. But on another occasion, He caused the withered hand of a man to instantly grow to full size and use! And this ability to do what normally would take a long time or even not be possible to do at all, humanly speaking, is further evidence that Jesus is Almighty God!
   2. And the second gospel implication from the Third Day has to do with **one tree** in particular. And that is the tree that provided the wood for the cross upon which Christ died. For that tree had an ancestor here on the Third Day.
      1. And that tree played an important part in the plan of salvation. **Galatians 3:13-14** says, “*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree".*” In Old Testament times, when one of the people of Israel had committed a crime worthy of death, they would be stoned to death, and then their body was hung on a tree as a sign that they were a covenant breaker who was under the curse of God. And so, it was necessary for Jesus to die as He did. His being hung on a tree was a sign that He was enduring the punishment that we deserved to suffer. And in order for us to have our sins forgiven, we must believe that He died for us.
         1. Do you believe this? If you do, then that tree is a sign that God loves you in Christ. When you are troubled by guilt or doubt, remember the cross. For it was from that cross that Jesus said, “*It is finished*.” Your sins are paid for. You have eternal life!
      2. And we have noted before that **Colossians 1:16** tells us that all things were created by Jesus Christ. And so, as He created the trees, He did so, knowing that one day He would be nailed to a descendant of one of those trees. And that is further evidence of His love for all whom the Father has given Him!
   3. But as our third and last gospel implication from the Third Day, we have read also of **fruit trees bearing fruit**. Does that call to mind some words of the Lord Jesus? In **John 15**, He said, “*I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit*.” And we see something similar in **Psalm 1**, where believers are described as “*like a tree planted by streams of living water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither*.”
      1. Do you abide in Jesus? Are you a branch that is connected to Him? If so, then you will be producing fruit. For it is not possible to be connected to Jesus and to not produce fruit!
      2. But **that does not mean that we are entirely passive in this**. For it is by His word and Spirit that He produces fruit. It is as we make use of ordinary things like attending church and Bible study and prayer and fellowship that the Holy Spirit turns us away from what is evil and towards what is good. And that is what is in view in **Galatians 5** with phrases like ‘sowing to the Spirit’ and ‘walking with the Spirit’ and ‘being led by the Spirit.’ It is as we apply ourselves to the spiritual disciplines that God has made available to us, that the Spirit produces fruit within us.

Well, there you have a few gospel implications from the Third Day. And so, as you go out of here, look around at the plants and trees, and the rivers and seas, and praise God for His majesty, for the beauty of creation, and for His saving love in Christ. Amen!