

# I AM THANKFUL...

That God rules, *Psalms 8:1-9*

The role science played in our recent presidential election reveals the prominent place it generally holds in our society. People who advocate for it portray it as a dispassionate, just-the-facts discipline that dispels the myths and wrong ideas that inhibit us. It allows us, they claim, to understand the physical laws that govern our universe so that we can do more and better things.

Our society's upon science creates a problem for many Christians because they find it difficult to reconcile science with Genesis' account of the creation. That tensions attracts attention and can result in people sometimes missing the points made in Genesis chapter one. We will consider some of the points Genesis makes because they offer another reason for the thankfulness that defines us:

***We are thankful because God rules.***

## The creation and God's rule

We begin our consideration of God's rule with a reminder – ***while the Bible is for us, God did not write it to us.*** God addressed the Bible to people living in a particular place and time and used ideas and images from their world. The Bible's encultured character does not, however, make it impossible for us to understand; God composed the Bible in a way that speaks to the culture within which it was written while still remaining accessible to all people in all other times and cultures.

Even though we can understand the Bible's message without needing to know much about the world within which it was composed, some awareness of its world enriches our understanding of its message. We will therefore briefly consider a few insights from ancient near eastern world of the Old Testament to deepen our appreciation of the creation account in Genesis chapter one and its message about God's sovereign rule.

- Genesis' story of the creation offered a surprising version of a common story in the ancient near east.
  - Consider some features of creation accounts from the Old Testament world:
    - Ancient near eastern creation stories offered explanations for the origins of the gods, who were either created or self-creating.
    - Ancient creation accounts begin with darkness and water, a preexisting chaos that had to be overcome in order to bring the world into existence. Those stories present chaos as a monster or a primordial being the gods defeat through violence.



- Ancient near eastern stories of the creation also describe the gods creating humans as a slave population to manage the world so that they could enjoy the idleness they desired.
  - Genesis offers a very different account of life's origins; it describes God as a pre-existing deity who peacefully spoke the world into existence and who ordered it around humans whom He made to partner with Him in ruling over all He made.
- Genesis' surprising version of the origins of life asserts God's unique sovereignty and highlights a few features of His rule – **order**, **purpose**, and **goodness** characterize God's rule.
  - God rule established **order** on an earth "without form and void"<sup>1</sup> (*Genesis 1:1*).
  - The order God established serves a **purpose** – He created a space designed to support human life (*Genesis 1:14-15; 1:11-12, 29*) and to host His relationship with them (*Genesis 1:26-28*).
  - God's order and its purpose possess an inherent **goodness** that focuses on the humans He made in His image (*Genesis 1:4, 9, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31*).

## Applications

- God's rule gives life order, meaning, and goodness.
- Life is not, therefore, random nor meaningless.
- God focuses His ordered, meaningful, and good creation on us.
- God's decision to focus His creation on humanity reveals our importance to Him – God's rule reveals His love for us.
- Our lives take on order, meaning, and goodness when we live faithful to our identity as God's representatives in the world.
- Our sin – our selfish choice to represent ourselves rather than God – introduces "disorder" into God's ordered, meaningful, and good world (*James 3:16*).

Genesis account of the creation reminds us of God's rule. That reminder ought to cultivate a deep sense of thankfulness in us, a thankfulness that expresses itself through our effort to faithfully submit to God' sovereignty.

---

<sup>1</sup> All quotes from the Bible come from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV Permanent Text Edition, Crossway, 2016) unless otherwise noted.

