

Let Freedom Ring!

2. Brave New World: Pilgrims in Paradise



Scripture: Hebrews 11:3, 6

Introduction:

By some estimates, half of America's families have stories of Pilgrim ancestors among those aboard Mayflower on its historic 1620 voyage to America. Some here this evening may have had an ancestor who made that historic voyage, and not even know it.

The Mayflower Pilgrims were the first European immigrants to North America who formed a permanent colony. They didn't just come for a visit, or to trade goods, and then leave again. They came far, faced incredible challenges, adapted to a new environment, and stayed permanently. Within a few years after the arrival of the Mayflower and the establishment of the Plymouth Colony, scores of thousands, and

eventually millions from nations all over the globe followed. The Mayflower settlers were the first “Pilgrims in Paradise”—the original immigrants to the Brave New World that became America.

The tale of the Mayflower Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony is a story of freedom itself. Those who would become the Mayflower Pilgrims were prisoners of conscience. In Old World Europe, they all belonged to the same local Christian congregation in England. Because of their separatist beliefs, they were considered outlaws and troublemakers—a thorn in the side of the same King James who authorized the famous version of the Bible they would bring with them on their voyage.

The law forbade the separatists’ assemblies. So they worshipped secretly in barns and other out of the way places. The law said religious duty before God consisted in obeying the will of England’s king as expressed through the bishops and clergy of his appointing. They declared religious duty consisted in obeying the will of God, as expressed in the Ten Commandments and discovered through earnest searching of the Bible’s teaching. The law said only priests appointed by the king’s bishops could officiate at religious meetings. They declared that every congregation had the right to elect its own pastor. This smacked of sedition against the government in England, where the king was also the head of the church. If these strong-minded religious dissenters picked their pastors, soon they would wish to pick their kings, as well!

Because of their convictions, those of their congregation suffered persecution. Their taxes were raised. The bishop’s spies searched out their illegal meeting places. They were refused admission to the universities. Some were arrested, imprisoned, and even killed. But instead of suppressing and destroying them, persecution only steeled their resolve. They declared that while they would be loyal to the king in all matters civil, their devotion to God could not be bound.

Eventually, groups of dissenter’s to England’s state church began to abandon homes and property to go into voluntary exile in other European countries. The particular group of English separatists who eventually became the Mayflower Pilgrims spent a dozen years as exiles in Holland seeking freedom of worship. The people of Holland permitted their worship, but the leaders of the exiles became

increasingly concerned as the years passed. Their children were forgetting their English heritage. They were taking up the customs and language of the Dutch. While few Dutch joined their ranks, many of their own young were becoming assimilated into Dutch society. Their numbers were dwindling. Their men were denied entry into the long-established Dutch trade guilds, and were forced to work at the lowest-paying jobs. There was little chance of gaining lands or truly prospering in this crowded country.

What should they do? News from England assured them that persecution was as severe as ever. Yet moving to another country in Europe would only erode their English heritage and their numbers further.

Then someone suggested going to the New World—to America. There they could raise their children as English-speaking subjects of the crown, yet avoid spiritual domination by the state-controlled clergy. It was a bold and exceedingly dangerous move. Many difficulties must be overcome. For this beleaguered Christian congregation, the thought of forming a colony in far away America would be similar to a group in modern times pondering the colonization of Mars. It was technically within the realm of possibility, but it involved enormous risk.

The congregation set aside a day for fasting and prayer, that they might seek God's will in the matter. Then the whole group was put to the vote. A majority moved to take up the great adventure of moving permanently to America. A Brave New World! A brand new start! A fresh beginning where anything was possible—where liberty and freedom of conscience were assured!

I. The Bible's Brave New World

The Bible also speaks of a Brave New World. It tells of an even more primeval beginning that lies behind the origins of all nations on earth and humanity itself. The story of this original Brave New World unites us all. It surpasses barriers of nationality, culture, race, class, politics, and even chosen religion or worldview. This is the Great Story Behind

All Stories--the place where every person's lineage returns to and came from.

This story of beginnings arrived in America in the new King James Bibles the Mayflower Pilgrims brought with them on their 1620 voyage to America. It was among their most precious belongings they carried with them when they disembarked on Plymouth Rock.

Tonight we will look at this story again, to make sure we remember clearly what they knew well. It was the strength of this story that was a foundational part of what allowed the Mayflower "Pilgrims in Paradise" to maintain the audacious courage they did. It allowed them to face of incredible hardships that resulted in the deaths of half their number during the first difficult winter. It provided the openness of spirit to establish friendly relations with other humans of an entirely alien culture. It was a firm faith in this account of beginnings that provided the under girding of the Pilgrims' social order, work ethic, and intellectual life. It gave them hope in the face of death and the resilience not only to suffer and survive, but to carve their own Brave New World and launch a thriving nation. Tonight we go to the *Theater of the Universe* as we see again the story that lies behind the story of the Mayflower Pilgrims—the view of the universe they believed. Without this belief, the first Thanksgiving Day would not have been possible.

So sit back, close your eyes, and imagine you are sitting in a vast theater. The curtains are closed and the play is about to begin. Suddenly, from the right of the stage a man steps out and walks to the center. He is dressed in a long robe with sandals. He grips a stout walking stick nearly as tall as himself in one hand. Under his other arm, he carries a fresh-penned, sheep-skin scroll written in the Hebrew language. He looks out on us who have gathered--his dark, desert-parched eyes fixing us intently. He clears his voice to speak.

"I am Moses," he informs us. "I once held the place of the next Pharaoh of mighty Egypt, the greatest nation on earth. But I forsook all that to come here to the wilderness to herd sheep and to seek what unites all people and forbids the oppression of one man by another.

"Tonight you who have come to the *Theater of the Universe* will see and hear a story written on my scroll. Listen carefully, because this tale is

not of my own devising. This story is true. It was told me by One who knows, that I might tell you. This story gives answers to the first great riddle of existence:

- How did everything begin?
- Where did I, and everything around me, come from?
- Am I here by chance, or is there a purpose for my existence?

“Once you have listened and seen, you must decide whether you will believe it or not. Whatever your choice, once you have made it, that choice will unavoidably begin making you.”

The figure on the stage lays down his rod at his feet, unrolls the scroll, and begins to read—translating into our own language that we may understand his meaning. He says--

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

Then Moses rolls the scroll up again, bends to retrieve his staff, and exits the stage the way he came. We sit in the dark, pondering the meaning of the story of beginnings we are about to see when the curtains before us open and the great drama begins.

- When did what we see occur? “IN THE BEGINNING...”

There was a beginning for humanity and for the world in which we live. Everything hasn't simply always been here. Existence, as we know it, had a starting point. Reality doesn't go around and around in circles, chasing its tail, repeating itself mindlessly--signifying nothing and going nowhere. In this story, there is a beginning. Things proceeded from that beginning to our own day, and stretch beyond us into the future. If there was a true beginning, then a true end is possible, as well. But a story needs more than a beginning. It needs a main character.

- Who is the main character? “In the beginning GOD...”

God is the starting point for all that exists. Not blind chance. Not “Well, we can really never figure that question out for certain—since the information is not available to us”. Not many gods and forces involved, each with its own bit to contribute and control. There is a Center for all

that exists, a Main Character in the drama here at the Theater of the Universe this evening. That protagonist is God. But any story must have a telling. Something must happen.

What action occurred? “In the beginning God CREATED...”

What did this God who was in the beginning do? He created. He brought into being that which had not been, and would not be without his will and action. What he brought into being was not a part of himself, but was separate from his own existence. He created as a songwriter composes a song, as an artist paints a painting, as a sculptor sculpts a statue, as a poet pens a poem, as a singer sings a song, or a builder builds a house. The Creator created, yet stands apart from the creation. All that the Creator made reveals his unique qualities, yet is not the Creator himself. The one who makes always exceeds that which is made. We have our Main Character and the basic plot. Now we need a background location for the story to unfold. How broad is the stage here in the theater of the universe?

Where did this creation take place and what is its extent? “In the beginning God created THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.”

The Creator God the Bible presents is not a little god—a maker of merely the sky, or the sun or moon, or of natural forces like fire or storm. He is more than the god of the river Nile, or of childbirth, or of particular nations’ rulers. He is more than the God of fertility, planting and reaping, or of certain stars or seasons. The God of the Mayflower Pilgrim’s story of beginnings is the Creator of all that exists in heaven above and on the earth beneath. He is Master Designer, the Original Source, the First Cause, the God of all.

Suddenly, the lights go dim. The opening credits are over. The great curtains sweep from center stage to each side. Act one of the Genesis—the story of beginnings, has begun. It is titled, the *Creation Countdown*.

III. The Creation Countdown—Days 1-3

We peer into darkness with its tiny pinpoints of stars barely visible in the distance. Dimly before us we see planet Earth hanging in the inky blackness of deep space. Does it rotate on its axis? We can’t see clearly

enough to know. Earth is simply there—a dark, indistinct, drifting smudge of an orb. It is a water planet. Its temperature is somewhere lower than boiling, and higher than freezing. It is neither a caldron steaming its fluid into outer space, nor a celestial snowball with its great deep frozen solid. Rather Earth is formless, empty, and entirely devoid of any spark of life. Darkness covers the face of the deep.

Over that darkness a vast Presence broods. Suddenly, a Voice speaks:

“And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light ‘day,’ and the darkness he called ‘night.’ And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.”

The stage light has come on, but only to the right of the stage. We can see half of Earth clearly now. There is still no sun, moon, or accompanying world as stars--only the separation between darkness and light. The Maker gives these things names. He calls them “day” and “night”. In giving them names, their Maker fills them with meaning. The night and day combine to create one full cycle—the first day. Time has been set in motion for this Brave New World. The clock existence has begun to tick. The Earth spins slowly on its axis as dawn and dusk circle the globe. The stage goes dark. The first day is over. The second is about to begin.

“And God said, ‘Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water,’ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. God called the expanse ‘sky’. And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.”

We look closely. A new division occurs. Sky separates the waters in liquid form that cover the face of the planet below from the waters in gaseous form that envelope the planet and shield it from deep space. Clouds and mist appear, and perhaps even a layer of water in the form of a great shielding bubble along with the ozone layer. Between the floating clouds we can see the great deep of brilliant blue below. It is the endless ocean.

Present conditions on planet earth provide only a partial clue to what was a part of the original Creation God spoke into existence. Much has changed on the most profound levels from the time of that first beginning to our own day. But the basics are clear enough: Waters above. Waters below. Air in between. And God called the air, “sky”.

The stage goes dark again. Day three is about to begin...

“And God said, ‘Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.’ And it was so. God called the dry ground ‘land,’ and the gathered waters he called ‘seas’. And God saw that it was good.”

Here is the third great division. Day One brought the separation of light from darkness, and non-time from time. Day Two brought the separation of the lower waters from higher waters—placing our sky between. Day Three now separates the lower waters that cover the earth from the earth itself. As we watch there is great commotion over the planet’s entire surface. Land surges up from the blue depths while foaming streams, rivers, and waterfalls thunder down into the deep places between.

What a roar and rumble! What a rushing of raging rapids and thundering of torrents! The flowing waters streaming from the newly lifted land cuts gullies between the high hills and deeper canyons between the lofty mountains. Earth has no vast oceans. The entire globe is a land of rivers, lakes, small seas, and endless shorelines. It is plain the Creator loves beach-front property. It is everywhere!

But day three isn’t finished yet. The bare earth, the vast plains, the swelling hills and mighty mountains with their streams, rivers, and lakes small and great will never do. This world is naked. It is still lifeless. The Creator’s new earth needs a gown of green.

“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. 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. And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.”

God speaks and Earth goes green. Dark, sacred, moss-bearded rainforest giants raise their dripping heads above fern grottos. Mighty redwoods soar like pillars holding up the sky. Palms, pomegranates and pines spring up in an instant. Vast forests of maple, cedar, oak, palms, dogwoods, and birch emerge. From the endlessly-creative, ever-orderly mind of Creator God the Word goes forth. Each tree bears in its fruit or along its limbs the seed of future groves and forests. The Creator has made life, that which will continue making itself.

Grasslands bow before the gentle winds like waves. Golden wheat fields spring into existence in an instant--heavy heads of holding the kernels of all future wheat fields within. On the hillsides and mountain slopes and meadows wild flowers waft their perfume. In the lowlands around the borders of the water there are cattails, rice patties, and water lilies. Within the waters themselves, where the sun can reach, the green extends in beds of kelp and the floating blossoms of water lilies and other aquatic plants.

There is fruit everywhere: pineapples, peaches, pears, and persimmons. There are banana plants with great leaves and heavy hanging heads of ripened fruit. There is rustling tasseled corn, golden pumpkins swelling, and clustered, clinging vines of grapes which the Mayflower Pilgrims will one day use as part of the menu in that earliest and most American of holidays—Thanksgiving. There are even bogs of cranberries we who came later would add these to the original Thanksgiving fare. All the good treasures of the earth abounded--provided in perpetual abundance.

The Creator words have splashed this Brave New World with a great brush dipped in chlorophyll. Planet Earth is cloaked in the gorgeous gown her Maker has provided. The stage in our *Theater of the Universe* goes dark again as day three ends.

IV. A Pause for a Question

Let's pause at this point for an intermission. We'll take a moment to consider a question many thinking people have ponder in recent times: How long were these days of creation? Were they regular 24-hour days? Or were they, in fact, long epochs of time—perhaps spanning a thousand or more years each?

Here in the *Theater of the Universe* are we being shown the beginning of all things in actual time? Or is some sort of “time lapse photography” compressing into a few moments what actually evolved by very different processes slowly over the course of vast ages? Can God speak, and things spring into existence? On that first day of light and darkness, did the time span of morning and evening actually begin ticking, too? Were the evenings and mornings of Creation like all the evenings and mornings since? Or is the *Creation Countdown* time markedly different than what we experience now? Does it really matter either way? What does the Bible say? If we can learn its true meaning, will we accept that testimony? Or will we choose another option offered by an alternate world view instead?

William Bradford--who would serve nearly 30 consecutive terms as governor of the Plymouth colony when the Mayflower Pilgrims settled in the America--was an avid Bible reader. They said the Pilgrim's first long-term governor was as apt to discuss the true meaning and application of a passage of Scripture as he was to consider the business of roofing the common house, or of harvesting the crops. As Bradford grew older, his taste for Bible reading deepened to the point where he studied the story before us in the original Hebrew language. Sometimes we think the Bible is a very old book. But it was already an ancient volume when the Mayflower Pilgrims first brought it to America. Bradford once said “he wished to see with his own eyes the ancient oracles of God in their native beauty.” That's why he learned to read it in Hebrew.

What would Governor Bradford conclude after reading the passage before us as Moses first penned it? How long did Moses say God took to create our world? Were his words unclear? Can they be correctly interpreted as simply seven time periods of any duration? Could he

have actually meant seven long ages where life slowly evolved to its present form? Or did the Creator actually speak all things into existence in a series of ordinary 24-hour days?

Biblically speaking, the answer is clear beyond all question. Hebrew scholars who read these words as Moses first penned them have been in unanimous, world wide, generation-to-generation agreement on the meaning Moses intended to convey. Moses uses exactly the same terminology in this passage that he employs elsewhere in his writings for all other ordinary 24-hour day. He plainly intended us to understand the Creation Countdown as occurring over the same length of days we have still.

Once the clock of time began ticking that first day of Creation, it set the pace for all the other days that has followed. Moses was not writing as a poet, a myth-weaver, or a symbol manipulator. He uses the straightforward, literal, chronologically accurate language of the historian. This picture we've been watching in the great *Theater of the Universe* is in real time.

This is significant. The *Creation Countdown* of the Bible reveals a powerful, Almighty, miracle-working Creator bringing our world into existence over the course of a series of ordinary 24-hour days. Will we believe, and take a step toward this God? Or will we disbelieve and take a step back--then another, then another—until our Maker shrinks down to a size we are willing to accept?

One thing is undeniable: The longer the time span we allot to the process of Creation beyond the six days the Bible clearly specifies, the weaker, the more befuddled, the more cruel and the more dishonest a deity we declare ourselves willing to worship. In fact, if we back up far enough, the Creator God of the Bible can shrink down to the size where he disappears entirely—and we are left quite alone in the universe.

What about this God of the Bible? Is he telling us the truth in the very first page of the Bible? Or is he lying from the start? Can't he get his own story straight? Is he, in fact, too powerless to simply speak and have things happen? If he cannot do this, but must resort to endless cycles of pain, struggle and the deaths of endless generations of screaming prey writhing in the jaws of fierce predators or perishing

miserably in titanic upheavals, is he a God worthy of our worship? He cannot be both a loving, all powerful Creator who speaks the truth to us about our beginning and the beginnings of the world around us, and also this other chopped down, lying through his teeth, vicious in his methods of making things, stunted alternate deity at the same time.

Or has the Bible been telling the truth about our origins all along? If the Creation story is true, the most incredible miracles are indeed possible--even in our own lives. At its center, the universe was molded and is upheld by a Creator God who can do anything he chooses, and make it happen simply by speaking. With a God like that, nothing is impossible. That—fellow pilgrim—is truly a Brave New World!

What kind of God are you willing to serve? The measure of any man or woman is the measure of the deity he or she will settle for. How big is your God? Is he no larger than your reflection in the mirror in the morning? Is he only as big as the deity possible chopped down to fit into the suggestions of origins offered by another alternate, mutually exclusive worldview? Is he too small a god, too powerless a god, too dishonest a god to bother with, or to truly worship? Do you want to trade in that little god tonight for the great Creator God of the Bible? Each of us will leave the *Theater of the Universe* with some god this evening. That is inevitable. Which God will it be for you? The choice is your own. Once you have made that choice, it will begin making you.

For those who insist these days of creation were actually long time periods—perhaps a thousand years, or more—there is a decided problem at this point. God has made the plants, but there is no sun yet to make them grow. There are no animals to breath out the carbon dioxide for the necessary gas exchange that keeps our well-balanced, mutually interdependent environmental system functioning.

If a day of creation were a thousand years minimum according to some human speculation, what would happen to all those chlorophyll powered life forms during the next 500 years of darkness? Have you ever leave a board lying on your lawn for a couple weeks? When you lift it up, what has happened to the grass that has been robbed of sunlight that short space of time? What if you left a board over an entire half of the planet for 500 plus years? Hmm...

V. The Creation Countdown Continued—Days 4-6

Intermission is over. The lights dim and the *Theater of the Universe's* window into the past is opened before our gaze again. Day four of the *Creation Countdown* continues...

“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, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.’ And it was so. 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. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.”

Planet earth now is set within its own solar system, with its moon, stars and accompanying planets and their moons. The sun casts its rays onto the earth. Fields of sunflowers turn their faces to the bright rays. The plants can thrive. The moon gives light to the night, and the night blooming species unfold their petals beneath its cool gleam. The stars march in their appointed courses in the great dance of the heavens.

Consider for a moment the wonders of the starry heavens and the useful knowledge imparted through the regular motions of the intricate celestial machinery.

- **The night sky is a compass, if you know where to find the North Star.**
- **It is an odometer, if you know how far above the horizon a particular star must be in order to determine the distance you have sailed from one island chain to another in the midst of an otherwise chartless sea.**

- The sky is a clock if you can read the marks the shadow of a sundial leaves.
- It is a calendar if you determine the phases of the moon and the longest and shortest days of the year in the solar cycle.
- The sky is a global positioning device if you can calculate your position by a star to determine latitude and longitude.
- It is a historical timeline marker, if you know the regular cycle of eclipses and meteor showers and find accounts of these in ancient historical records.
- The sky—like the rest of the Creation--is an evidence of its Maker's existence—the demonstration of a vast mind of incredible order, wisdom, intelligence, and complexity.

But the scene on the stage before us is changing again. We hear the voice of the Creator speaking again. Day Five has begun.

“And God said, ‘Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the sky.’ So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 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.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.”

God speaks and the sea swarmed with living things. Bright jeweled jellyfish waft their phosphorescence in the midnight depths. Flying fish dart from the tops of the surface to fling themselves into the air above. Barnacle-bearded whales launch themselves at the moon before exploding into the boiling waters again to sing hour-long sonar songs to others of their kind. From lobsters to leviathans, from trilobites to tuna, from anemones to big-eyed anchovies, from perch to porpoise, from the brittle star beneath its stone to the giant squid staring with great moon eyes in the inky depths, from conch shells and the great wound nautilus

to clinging oysters clutching their pearls—the Creator spoke all into being and bestowed on each the power to reproduce after its kind.

And in the air over land and sea are birds of every kind: Peacocks and parrots, ostriches and owls, eagles and egrets, the Archaeopteryx, sparrows and storks, flamingos and finches, geese and gulls, pelicans and pigeons. Each sings its own song, builds its own nest, seeks its own food and habitat, obeys its own migratory instinct and mating ritual. What an explosion of feathered beauty of all colors and patterns! The *Theater of the Universe* is ablaze with swirling forms and shapes in the waters below and in the sky above.

The stage before us darkens as the fifth day ends. Day six is about to begin. Sky and sea have their living beings. But there is still the green-gowned earth itself.

“And God said, ‘Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.’ And it was so. 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.”

There were goats, geckos and grizzlies. There were kittens, crocodiles and kangaroos. There were beaver, bison and broad-horned bulls. There were scampering mice, broad-antlered moose, and chattering monkeys swinging through treetop highways. There were long-necked giraffes with two foot long purple tongues licking leaves from the high branches. There were lordly lions shaking their great manes in the brilliant blaze, great gray elephants with gleaming tusks spraying water over their backs in the river pools, and thundering herds of reindeer pounding across the grasslands.

There were otters sliding joyfully down slippery banks, mountain goats scrambling for the highest peaks, and locusts leaping in the green-blade fields. There were humpy-backed camels, broad-antlered moose, and bellowing bull alligators. There were platypus, prairie dogs, and pandas. There were geckoes and gorillas, turtles and tarantulas, aardvarks and armadillos, mastodons and mice.

Male and female the Creator made them all, with the power to bear their own young and continue their kinds. The God of the Bible spoke, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood firm. No creature feared another. There was no harm, no pain, and no sorrow anywhere. This was the Maker's Brave New World in its golden age, before death was known. The Creator looked on the three-ringed circus his world had become under the canopy of those waters that were above the earth. He saw that it was good. This new planet was well woven with its interdependent, interlocking, endlessly varied habitats of plants, fish, birds, insects and animals. Every system was in place and in perfect order one jigsaw piece joined to the next.

Our drama has been building day by day to its climax. The plot has quickened. The intensity mounted. Each day has been more wonderful and astonishing than the one before. Now there is a pause before the final scene. What will God do next?

The Creator has spoken all things into existence over the six days of Creation, save one. God's crowning act is the most personal and poignant of all. What he makes, and how, is qualitatively different than all that has come before. Watch closely as the final scene unfolds. Here the Voice we have heard becomes a Form we can see. The Painter steps into His painting, the Composer into his song, the Creator enters His creation.

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

“God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

The Creator God made all things. But only man was made in his own image and after his own likeness. The Creator God spoke all things into

existence. But to man he spoke directly. The Creator God saw that everything was good, but man alone he blessed. The Maker and his man: The One to make them all, and the other to rule them all. Creation's king and queen are given their charge of leadership over all their Maker has made. They alone are answerable to him, not only for themselves, but for all under their charge.

What will sustain this Brave New World? Will it be a continuing of the endless cycles of predator and prey, the survival of the fittest while the weaker are destroyed and die? Will it be an "eat or be eaten" world?

"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. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—every thing that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.' And it was so."

This Brave New World is a world without death, spoken into existence in six twenty-four hour days, and sustained by the eating of those things that grow from the ground directly. Man's diet includes seed bearing plants like grains and nuts—and also fruit with seed in it. For the lower animals are reserved the green plants as well—grass to graze, vegetables to munch, and leaves to nibble. Nobody eats anybody. Not even the animals. It is not necessary. Nobody kills anybody. It is not necessary. Not even for food to sustain life. Animal life eats what plant life produces. Is it possible? What kind of a kind, loving, generous, wise, powerful, personal and awesome Creator God would envision such a realm and speak it into existence?

"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day."

The *Creation Countdown* is nearly over. Only one cycle remains. As the scene brightens on the Brave New World before us for the seventh time, we see the same tall, white bearded, robed figure with the shepherd's staff and the scroll walking from the side of the stage. Moses arrives mid-stage. He rests his staff on his shoulder, unrolls the same scroll as before, and looks up to read. Beyond him we see the new born world spinning on its axis in its slow arc around the blazing sun. We see its

tiny satellite moon, and the other planets with their moons and asteroid belts. Moses reads clearly and slowly.

“Thus the heavens were completed in all their vast array.

“By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. 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.”

Then Moses rolls up the scroll, lays down his staff, bows on his knees, and lifts both hands in praise and worship. The Creator has rested from his great work of creation. The seventh cycle has come. It is time to celebrate!

The Great Artist steps out of His painting. He looks on all he has made. It is very good! There is but one thing left to do: In setting aside the seventh day in the cycle, the Creator signs his creation as an artist would sign his completed painting. His signature is the blessing and making holy that final, seventh evening and morning upon which he rested. It shows his creation complete. The signature of the seventh day proved the Maker was separate from what He had made.

All other cycles of time would be connected with the movements of the sun, moon, and stars. But the seventh day was different. It matched no rhythm of the created order—but pointed to he who was beyond all that is made. It served as a week-by-week perpetual reminder that the Creator God exists and is separate from his creation. This seventh day was the recurring pause in the endless cycles of seven-day weeks that would follow—set apart, blessed, and made holy by the Maker himself.

The *Creation Countdown* cycle continues to our own day. To remember the Creator’s seventh day is to remember him who blessed it and made it holy and rested on it. It is to remember the Creator of the Brave New World as he intended it to be. It is to look upon the painting, and praise the Artist.

The original Brave New World is finished. We have seen it as the Creator himself says it actually happened when Moses first listened and penned the scroll of Genesis. If we wish to know what happened, we

should ask the main actor, someone who was actually there—not someone who came long afterward and simply guessed. The God of the Bible says he was there, and this is the true account of the creation of our heavens, the good earth, and our first human ancestors.

Conclusion and Appeal

The Bible says God made us and the world we live in, and that what He had made was very good. Plainly, something happened since, because that Brave New World is no longer as it was at its creation. We are surrounded by many great and grave evils: disease, destruction caused by war, babies born deformed, suffering and death. Where did all these evils come from? Why do we ourselves struggle to do good and often find ourselves doing just the opposite? The Bible answers this question too. Be sure to be here _____ night as “Let Freedom Ring!” continues. Our topic will be “Gettysburg’s Ghosts and the War Behind All Wars”.

Let’s bow our heads in thankfulness to the Maker as we close this evening.

Great Creator God,

We thank you for making us and the world in which we live. We know every good and perfect gift comes from You.

Amen.
