

January 9, 2011 by Steve Brandon



## Faith In The Creator

### Hebrews 11:3

In Petersburg, Kentucky, there is a museum, called the "Creation Museum." It is a state-of-the-art 70,000 square foot museum that is committed to presenting a world-view consistent with the Bible, particularly what it says about the creation account in the book of Genesis. It puts forth the 6 days of creation, and what God created on each of these days. It has some wax sculptures of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, along with many of the animals in perfect peace. It shows Eve being tempted by Satan and eating the forbidden fruit along with her husband, Adam. It shows the consequences of the fall of man and the hard labor that ensued. It shows Cain and Abel and Methuselah. Furthermore, it has some 80 life-size dinosaurs, some of which are animatronic which means that they are motion-sensitive and move to make them seem like real dinosaurs. It shows Noah building his ark and puts forth a scientific model for the flood and how that can explain many of the geological features that we see in the world today.

The creation museum also does a good job at showing our need for Christ and the sufficiency of His sacrifice. Overall, it's a great place. It's a great place to visit. In fact, how many of you have visited the Creation Museum? If you are interested in going, come and talk to me. My wife and I are charter members of the museum and have some passes which will help you save money in your trip, if you want to go.

Anyway, at the museum, after you visit the main hall, you can walk through the museum. Near the beginning of the walk, you immediately encounter a re-creation of a dinosaur fossil dig site. You see wax figures of two paleontologists digging away at the earth, uncovering dinosaur bones. One of these men believes in evolution. The other believes in the Biblical account of creation.

Above the dig site, there's a video, in which each of these men explain what they see. The first explains that he sees an animal that died millions of years ago, decomposed and was covered by sedimentary layers of rock. The second explains that he sees an animal that died thousands of years ago in a flood that quickly covered him with sediment. It's pointed out that they have the same evidence, but they interpret it differently. So, my question to you is this: why do they interpret these things differently? Why don't they agree?

The answer comes in our text this morning, which is a single verse of Scripture. If you haven't done so already, I invite you to open your Bibles to Hebrews, chapter 11, and verse 3.

Hebrews 11:3

By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

So, why do the paleontologists disagree as to how the dinosaur bones were buried in the earth? Faith is the answer. You can see it there in the first two words: "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God." God has told us in that He created the world by His word. By faith, we believe it. God has told us in that He created the world by His word. Without faith, many don't believe it. Such is the difference in worldview of the paleontologists.

If you have ever been in a discussion (or debate) with a non-believer over creation and evolution, you surely have experienced some difficulty in getting your point across. You say that God created the world; your friend says that it all evolved naturally. You tell your friend that many scientists in the past were creationists; your friend says, "Yes. But many scientists now are evolutionists." You tell your friend that if life came about by chance, there would be no meaning to life; your friend says that meaning in life doesn't have to be defined by the origin of life. You tell him that design implies a designer; your friend says, "No, natural selection can also bring design as well." You say, "But most mutations are harmful"; your friend says, "But, harmful mutations don't survive long. So, of the surviving mutations, most are beneficial." You tell your friend that evolution isn't a theory and cannot be proved; your friend says that you can't prove creationism either.

You can go around and around and around and around, and you may well never change the mind of your friend. The reason is because, fundamentally, it's not an intellectual issue. Rather, the issue is one of faith. See, it is "by faith" that we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God. And without faith, people won't consider God to be the answer for how the world came into being. Theirs is a worldview without God. Rather, they will look to their own thoughts and try to create a natural reason for the existence of the world, apart from a supernatural Creator.

But, remember, everyone in this world knows that there is a God. Those who say that there is no God are denying what they know to be true, deep down in their souls.

Andy began our service this morning by quoting Psalm 19, which begins like this: "The heaven are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge" (Ps. 19:1-2). The heavens are telling everyone in this created order of the power and glory of God. Without words, God has made Himself known. The language is universal. It's the language of the stars - the vastness of the stars, the number of the stars, the power of the stars. They all tell us the same thing. God made all of this and He is glorious!

In fact, it isn't only the language of the stars that tells us of God's glory. It's the language of the creation itself. Job said, ...

Job 12:7-10

Ask the beasts, and let them teach you;  
And the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you.  
Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you;  
And let the fish of the sea declare to you.  
Who among all these does not know  
That the hand of the LORD has done this,  
In whose hand is the life of every living thing,  
And the breath of all mankind?

In our service, we sang the hymn written by Isaac Watts, "I Sing the Mighty Power of God." That hymn is all about singing the glories of the creation.

I sing the mighty power of God, that made the mountains rise,  
That spread the flowing seas abroad, and built the lofty skies.  
I sing the wisdom that ordained the sun to rule the day;  
The moon shines full at God's command, and all the stars obey.

There's not a plant or flower below, but makes Thy glories known,  
And clouds arise, and tempests blow, by order from Thy throne; ...  
Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed, where'er I turn my eye,  
If I survey the ground I tread, or gaze upon the sky.

The reality of this world is that it screams of God and His glory. But, there are those who deny it. Listen to the familiar words of Romans 1:18-23, ...

Romans 1:18-23

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

Here it all comes together. God has made Himself known to all mankind. He has made his power known (Rom. 1:20). He has made his divine nature known (Rom. 1:20). He has done this through the created world. Nobody, who has ever walked the planet, can claim that they didn't know that God existed. Nobody can claim that they didn't know that God created the world.

To be sure, there are those who deny such a statement. Romans 1 addresses this issue as well. Paul says that such people suppress the truth in unrighteousness. They do so because there is a conflict in their souls. They know that such a God created the world. But, they don't want to submit their lives to such a God. So, they will deny God's existence, so that they can pursue their own passions and pleasures. That's how it works. Rather than giving thanks to God, they have thought of ways around God.

Listen to the testimony of one atheist, Thomas Nagel. As I read, I want for you to listen to his confessions.

I want atheism to be true. ...  
It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief.  
It's that I hope there is no God!  
I don't want there to be a God:  
I don't want the universe to be like that. ...  
I am curious whether there is anyone who is genuinely indifferent as to whether there is a God--anyone who, whatever his actual belief about the matter, doesn't particularly want either one of the answers to be correct." [\[1\]](#)

Do you catch what he's saying? He has a vested interest in not wanting God to be true. Now, he doesn't get to the root of actually telling us why he doesn't want the universe to have a creator God--to whom he is accountable. But, he doesn't want God to be true. So, he will do whatever he can to convince himself of what he wants to believe.

For many professing atheists, Verse 22 fits exactly - "professing to be wise, they became fools." That's exactly what takes place. They think themselves to be so wise. But, when eternity comes and opens every dark room, they will be shown for exactly who they are: they are fools. Psalm 14:1, "the fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'"

Over the years, as I have mixed with people and spoken with them about God, I have run into a fair number of atheists. Now, it's not the case every time. But, in general, I have found them to have a degree of intellectualism, professing themselves to be wise. They argue well their position: "I don't see God; I can't believe what I don't see." Perhaps your experiences are the same.

Now, for sure, many of those who say that there is no God are smart people. When the Bible calls them fools, it doesn't call them dumb. But, for all of their wisdom, they are blind to the spiritual realities of this world. This blindness is what makes them to be fools. The fool sees only part of life. He doesn't see the poverty that will come from his laziness. He doesn't see the destruction that will come from his marital unfaithfulness. He doesn't see the trouble that will come when he despises his father's discipline. So, likewise, regarding the creation of the world, He doesn't see the fruit of eternity when he rejects God as the creator. Thereby, he only sees a part of life. He doesn't see the other part where he will spend eternity.

I love the way that Tim Keller puts it, ...

Prominent disbelievers in Christianity today--Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens--insist that sufficient reasons do not exist for the existence of God. Dawkins, for example, says that the claim of God's existence is a scientific hypothesis that should be open to rational demonstration. He and his co-skeptics want a logical or empirical argument for God that is airtight and therefore convinces almost everyone. They won't believe in God until they get it.

Is there anything wrong with that? I think so. These authors are evaluating Christian arguments by what some have called "strong rationalism." Its proponents laid down what was called the "verification principle," namely, that no one should believe a proposition unless it can be proved rationally by logic or empirically by sense experience. What is meant by the word "proved"? Proof, in this view, is an argument so strong that no person whose logical faculties are operating properly would have any reason for disbelieve it. Atheists and agnostics ask for this kind of "proof" for God, but are not alone in holding to strong rationalism. Many Christians claim that their arguments for faith are so strong that all who reject them are simply closing their minds to the truth out of fear or stubbornness.

Despite all the books calling Christians to provide proofs for their beliefs, you won't see philosophers doing so, not even the most atheistic. The great majority think that strong rationalism is nearly impossible to defend. To begin with, it can't live up to its own standards. How could you empirically prove that that no one should believe something without empirical proof? You can't, and that reveals it to be, ultimately, a belief. Strong rationalism also assumes that it is possible to achieve "the view from nowhere," a position of almost complete objectivity, but virtually all philosophers today agree that is impossible. We come to every individual evaluation with all sorts of experiences and background beliefs that strongly influence our thinking and the way our reason works. It is not fair, then, to demand an argument that all rational people would have to bow to. [\[2\]](#)

Now, when it comes to understanding the creation, it's all about our faith, believing what God has said. It is, "By faith [that] we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible." And if you understand what Tim Keller was saying, you can also see that: "it is by faith that people deny that the worlds were prepared by the word of God."

In other words, when you look at the origins of the world, anyway you stack it up, there is an element of faith in your beliefs. In fact, I would even go further than this. I would contend that faith plays a predominant role in how you see the origins of this universe.

This is greatly illustrated in "The Magician's Nephew," one of the Chronicles of Narnia. We are reading it as a family. This week, we came to the portion of the book where Aslan is creating Narnia. And I love the way that C. S. Lewis described it. I want to share it with you, because it so illustrates our point. The portion of the book that I want to read is long, but it is so very enjoyable, and puts forth my point so well, that I'm sure you will put up with me reading it. All you need to know to understand what's going on is that Digory is the magician's nephew.

The Lion was pacing to and fro about that empty land and singing his new song. It was softer and more lilting than the song by which he had called up the stars and the sun; a gentle, rippling music. And as he walked and sang, the valley grew green with grass. It spread out like a wave. In a few minutes it was creeping up the lower slopes of the distant mountains, making that young world every moment softer. The light wind could now be heard ruffling the grass. Soon there were other things besides grass. The higher slopes grew dark with heather. Patches of rougher and more bristling green appeared in the valley. Digory did not know what they were until one began coming up quite close to him. It was a little, spiky thing that threw out dozens of arms and covered these arms with green and grew larger at the rate of about an inch every two seconds. There were dozens of these things all round him now. When they were nearly as tall as himself he saw what they were. "Trees!" he exclaimed. ...

In a few minutes Digory came to the edge of the wood and there he stopped. The Lion was singing still. But now the song had once more changed. It was more like what we should call a tune, but it was also far wilder. It made you want to run and jump and climb. It made you want to shout. It made you want to rush at other people and either hug them or fight them. It made Digory hot and red in the face. ....

Can you imagine a stretch of grassy land bubbling like water in a pot? For that is really the best description of what was happening. In all directions it was swelling into humps. They were of very different sizes, some no bigger than mole-hills, some as big as wheel-barrow, two the size of cottages. And the humps moved and swelled till they burst, and the crumbled earth poured out of them, and from each hump there came out an animal. The moles came out just as you might see a mole come out in England. the dogs came out, barking the moment their heads were free, and struggling as you've seen them do when they are going through a narrow hole in a hedge. The stags were the queerest to watch, for of course the antlers came up a long time before the rest of them, so at first Digory thought they were trees. The frogs, who all came up near the river, went straight into it with a plop-plop and a loud croaking. The panthers, leopards and things of that sort, sat down at once to wash the loose earth off their hind quarters and then stood up against the trees to sharpen their front claws. Showers of birds came out of the trees. Butterflies fluttered. Bees got to work of the flowers as if they hadn't a

second to lose. But the greatest moment of all was when the biggest hump broke like a small earthquake and out came the sloping back, the large wise head, and the four baggy trousered legs of an Elephant. And now you could hardly hear the song of the Lion; there was so much cawing, cooing, crowing, braying, neighing, baying, barking, lowing, bleating, and trumpeting.

But though Digory could no longer hear the Lion, he could see it. It was so big and so bright that he could not take his eyes off it. The other animals did not appear to be afraid of it. ...

And now, for the first time, the Lion was quite silent. He was going to and fro among the animals. And every now and then he would go up to two of them (always two at a time) and touch their noses with his. He would touch two beavers among all the beavers, to leopards among all the leopards, one stage and one deer among all the deer, and leave the rest. Some sorts of animal he passed over altogether. But the pairs which he had touched instantly left their own kinds and followed him. At last he stood still and all the creatures who he had touched came and stood in a wide circle around him. The others whom he had not touched began to wander away. Their noises faded gradually into the distance. The chosen beasts who remained were not utterly silent, all with their eyes fixed intently upon the Lion. The cat-like ones gave an occasional twitch of the tail but otherwise all were still. For the first time that day there was complete silence, except for the noise of running water. Digory's heart beat wildly; he knew something very solemn was going to be done. ...

The Lion, whose eyes never blinked, stared at the animals as hard as if he was going to burn them up with his mere stare. And gradually a change came over them. The smaller ones--the rabbits, moles and such-like--grew a good deal larger. The very big ones--you noticed it most with the elephants--grew a little smaller. Many animals sat up on their hind legs. Most put their heads on one side as if they were trying very hard to understand. The Lion opened his mouth, but no sound came from it; he was breathing out, a long, warm breath; it seemed to sway all the beasts as the wind sways a line of trees. Far overhead from beyond the veil of blue sky which hid them the stars sang again: a pure, cold, difficult music. Then there came a swift flash like fire (but it burnt nobody) either from the sky or from the Lion itself, and every drop of blood tingled in the children's bodies, and the deepest, wildest voice they had ever heard was saying: "Narnia, Narnia, Narnia, awake. Love. Think. Speak. Be walking trees. Be talking beasts. Be divine waters."

It was of course the Lion's voice. The children had long felt sure that he could speak: yet it was a lovely and terrible shock when he did. ...

And all the beasts and birds in their different voices low or high or thick or clear, replied: "Hail, Aslan. We hear and obey. We are awake. We love. We think. We speak. We know."....

"Creatures, I give you yourselves," said the strong, happy voice of Aslan. "I give to you forever this land of Narnia. I give you the stars and I give you myself. [\[3\]](#)

Such is the account that C. S. Lewis gave of the creation. It's beautiful. Aslan, the Lion, singing the world into existence. Everything growing rapidly. It is so fresh, so joyful, so happy. The creation is in harmony with the Creator. But, that's only half the story. C. S. Lewis then continued on to tell of the creation from the uncle's perspective. His name is Andrew. He was not delighted with what he saw.

We must now go back a bit and explain what the whole scene had looked like from Uncle Andrew's point of view. It had not made at all the same impression on him as on ... the children. For what you see and hear depends a good deal on where you are standing: it also depends on what sort of person you are.

Ever since the animals had first appeared, Uncle Andrew had been shrinking further and further back into the thicket. He watched them very hard of course; but he wasn't really interested in seeing what they were doing, only in seeing whether they were going to make a rush at him. Like the Witch, he was dreadfully practical. He simply didn't notice that Aslan was choosing one pair out of every kind of beasts. All he saw, or thought he saw, was a lot of dangerous wild animals walking vaguely about. And he kept on wondering why the other animals didn't run away from the big Lion.

When the great moment came and the Beasts spoke, he missed the whole point; for a rather interesting reason. When the Lion had first begun singing, long ago when it was still quite dark, he had realized that the noise was a song. And he had disliked the song very much. It made him think and feel things he did not want to think and feel. Then, when the sun rose and he saw that the singer was a lion ("only a lion," as he said to himself) he tried his hardest to make believe that it wasn't singing and never had been singing -- only roaring as any lion might in a zoo in our own world. "Of course it can't really have been singing," he thought, "I must have imagined it. I've been letting my nerves get out of order. Who ever heard of a lion singing?" And the longer and more beautifully the Lion sang, the harder Uncle Andrew tried to make himself believe that he could hear nothing but roaring. Now the trouble about trying to make yourself stupider than you really are is that you very often succeed. Uncle Andrew did. He soon did hear nothing but roaring in Aslan's song. Soon he couldn't have heard anything else even if he had wanted to. And when at last the Lion spoke and said, "Narnia, awake," he didn't hear any words: he heard only a snarl. And when the Beasts spoke in answer, he heard only barkings, growlings, baying, and howlings. And when they laughed -- well, you can imagine. That was worse for Uncle Andrew than anything that had happened yet. Such a horrid, bloodthirsty din of hungry and angry brutes he had never heard in his life. Then, to his utter rage and horror, he saw the other three humans actually walking out into the open to meet the animals. [\[4\]](#)

There's the creation account from another perspective. Digory was believing and submitting to Aslan, so he heard the song of creation. To him, all was beautiful and marvelous. He approached the Lion without fear. But, Uncle Andrew was not believing. Rather than hearing the song and rejoicing, all he heard was noise. Rather than approaching the Lion, he fled.

Your perspective on the matter comes down to how you look at things. Remember the way that C. S. Lewis put it: "What you see and hear depends a good deal on where you are standing; it also depends on what sort of person you are." And regarding the creation of the world, "What you think and know about the creation of the world depends on whether or not you have Faith in the Creator."

That's what our text tells us this morning.

Hebrews 11:3

By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

It's those who are believing, who truly understand. Now, it is not as if we are blindly believing. It's not as if we take a blind "leap of faith" to believe what is unreasonable. No, there are very good reasons to believe that God created the world. That's the whole premise behind the Creation Museum. It exists so that you can understand that a belief in God as creator doesn't mean disengaging your mind. On the contrary, there are good reasons to believe that God created the world.

Our text addresses this fact. Look again at verse 3, "By faith we understand." This word, "understand" is a cognitive word. It's a word of rationality. It means that we have taken in the facts, we have thought about them, and we have found them to be reasonable. We have embraced the reality. "We understand."

For us who believe that God created the world, such is the case. We have read the word of God and have understood what it says. It says that God created the world. By faith, we believe it. First, and primary, we believe it because of our faith in God. You weren't there; I wasn't there. And neither was anyone else in the world. But, God was. He tells us how it all went down. And by faith, we accept it.

Here's the account of creation that God has given to us. Genesis 1. Hear it like you have never heard it before, ...

Genesis 1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God 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, one day.

Then God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them"; and it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good. There was evening and there was morning, a third day.

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate 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 expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also. God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

Then God said, "Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens." God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." There was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind"; and it was so. God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 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 God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food"; and it was so. God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Did you notice how much God was speaking? Eleven times in these 31 verses, we have a direct quotation from God, Himself. And when God spoke, He did so with authority. When God said, it was so.

You see the centrality of the word of God in the act of creation in our text.

Hebrews 11:3

By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God,

And in other places in the Bible we see the creation tied to the word of God. Psalm 33:6 says, "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host. And in verse 9, "For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded at it stood fast." Psalm 148:5 urges, "Let [creation] praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created."

Each of these passages speak of Genesis 1, when God speaks, and the creation comes into existence. Such is the authority of the word of God over creation. And if God has such authority over the creation, how much authority does the word of God in Genesis hold in your life? When God puts forth the creation of the world in, "six days," do you believe it? We have every reason to believe that God created in 6 literal, 24-hour days.

This morning, right now (some 40 minutes into my message) is not the time to delve deep into a scientific discussion of the merits of a young earth, created by God in accordance with what He has written in Genesis, chapter 1. But, now is the time to say this: If you believe that God created the world just as Genesis 1 says, there are scientific reasons to support your ideas. Many have found them to be reasonable and rationally defensible. If this is a question for you, I can give you books, CDs, and DVDs that help to show you how these things can be understood.

Now, ultimately, can we prove, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that God created the world? No, we can't. Such is the place of faith, because, such a premise cannot be disproven as well. And when we get to verse 6, we will talk more about this. Ultimately, "Without faith, it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that he is and the he is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

Well, let's look at the last half of Hebrews 11:3 this morning.

Hebrews 11:3

By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

Thus describes, in the broadest of terms, the creation of God. God created, "out of nothing." Perhaps you have heard the Latin phrase, *ex nihilo*. It literally means, "out of nothing." It describes God's creative work in this world.

This is best illustrated by the story of the scientists who got together and decided that man had come a long way and no longer needed God. So they picked one scientist to go and tell God that they were done with Him. This scientist walked up to God and said, "God, we've decided that we no longer need you. We're to the point that we can clone people and do many miraculous things, so why don't you just go on and get lost." God listened very patiently and kindly to the man and after the scientist was done talking, God said, "Very well, how about this, let's say we have a man-making contest." To which the scientist replied, "OK, great!" But God added, "Now, we're going to do this just like I did back in the old days with Adam." The scientist said, "Sure, no problem" and bent down and grabbed himself a handful of dirt. God just looked at him and said, "Whoa! Wait a minute. You go get your own dirt!"

See, before God created the universe, there was nothing. And from nothing came everything. Such is the power of the creation of God. Everything that we, as humans, create, starts with something. We take the pieces of creation and put them together in a different way to create our cars, radios, shovels, houses, ladders. But, God's creation is vastly different. He begins with nothing, and creates everything!

It's right here that we begin to see the connection with the context of Hebrews 11. One of the big questions here in Hebrews 11 has to do with how verse 3 fits into the flow of the argument of the chapter. Verse 2 speaks about the men of old gaining approval. Last week, I told you that this is main thought of the chapter. We will see example after example after example of those who walked by faith, and thereby gained the approval of God. But, such an example doesn't begin in verse 3. Rather, it begins in verse 4 with Abel, and continues in verse 5 with Enoch.

So, how does verse 3 fit into the text? It's not talking about the "men of old" and their faith, as verse 2 prepares us. Rather, it's talking about us. It's talking about our faith. Which, by the way, shows that such a faith ought to be true of all of us. We all must believe that God created the world out of nothing with his word.

On one hand, I believe that the writer begins right here with creation, because he is thinking of how faith has been demonstrated down through time. Think about it: Abel is in Genesis 4. Enoch comes in Genesis 5. We see Noah in Genesis 6, Abraham in Genesis 12, Isaac in Genesis 22, and Jacob in Genesis 48. Joseph comes in Genesis 49 and Moses at the beginning of Exodus. By the end of the chapter, the author of Hebrews has been so heavy in the beginnings of the Pentateuch, that he hasn't any time to talk about the judges or the kings or the prophets in detail. He can only mention them and their deeds in passing (verses 32-38). And so, it makes sense to begin with Genesis 1 and the creation of the world.

But, I believe, there is another key. Verse 3 is talking about faith at its most fundamental expression. Verse 1 has already described faith as "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." And here in verse 3, we see that our belief in the creator God, is something that we cannot see. None of us were there. But, we trust God that His account is true.

Throughout the Scriptures, you see this emphasis upon the “invisibleness” of God. 1 Timothy 1:17 says, “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only god, be honor and glory forever and ever.” Colossians 1:15 explains, “[Jesus Christ] is the image of the invisible God.” Jesus told us to pray to our Father, who is “unseen” (Matthew 6:6). Look down at verse 27, “By faith [Moses] left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.” What helped Moses? Seeing the unseen by faith.

And seeing the unseen is key to your life. In 2 Corinthians 4:18, Paul tells us what will carry us through our “afflictions.” “We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” Fundamental, and basic to our faith, is that there is something beyond this life. Oh, we can’t see it. We can’t grasp it now. But, by faith, we can live in light of its reality.

Are you living a life of faith? It begins by believing in the Creator.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on January 9, 2011 by Steve Brandon.  
For more information see [www.rvbc.cc](http://www.rvbc.cc).

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[1] Thomas Nagal, as quoted by Tim Keller in his book, “The Reason for God,” p. 123

[2] The Reason for God, pp. 122-123

[3] Chronicles of Narnia, The Magician’s Nephew, pp. 104, 105, 113-118

[4] Chronicles of Narnia, The Magician’s Nephew, pp. 125-126