

The Bible in Context Ep 5: Gen 1:11-19

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Hey everybody, welcome back to The Bible in Context. And this time I'm able to be here with Nate again and we're going to be jumping into the second half of the third day of creation. Glad to be back and I've really enjoyed listening to the last two podcasts. I feel like we need some intro music though. I know, I thought about that too.

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So maybe we can find somebody to make us an intro for this. But anyhow, no, I'm super excited to be here again today in your garage. It has thankfully stopped raining. And so getting a little cooler out though. So we might have to bundle up here if we keep doing this in the garage. But excited about today's episode. Why don't we start with just a quick recap where we've been and where we're gonna be heading now. Yeah, so the first couple of days, we looked at the

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We look at the way in which Yahweh took the ruined elements of creation or pre-creation and restrained them, restrained these places that were bad, that were going to be homes for hostile forces, they were hospitable for forces that are hostile to Yahweh or people that are hostile to Yahweh. He's been restraining the darkness with light and restraining the waters with the seas and with the land and with the heavens.

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and now before jumping into the second half of day three let's take a few seconds to look at the symbols just a little more because i don't uh... i don't want to communicate that when you go outside at night you should be afraid of the dark or afraid of water now that we've seen these as these pre cosmic uh... ruined elements that are homes of yalways enemies so we need to remember that

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the biblical author is using the culture of his day to communicate to other people in his culture to communicate yahweh to them we need to remember that these are culturally packed symbols we don't need to believe that the earth is flat we live in a big snow globe the author is not trying to teach those things he is assuming those things and building his communication on those assumptions so

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we don't need to believe in the toward that the earth is flat we don't need to believe that darkness is evil or that waters are evil i mean you think today in our movies uh... we see darkness as a as a bad foreboding sign or the color red is often used as something that is uh...

for voting sign or it's associated with evil people but we don't necessarily look those things as evil themselves there just symbols

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Yeah, I mean, so some of the things that come to my mind that this kind of mentality still carries over even till today. I mean, how many movies are there, like Jaws or Into the Deep, right? There's a lot of movies out there where the ocean is the context of the nightmare that whatever the movie is talking about. And same thing with the darkness. I mean, there's lots of different movies and shows out there that really present.

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that idea that darkness and ocean because there's so much unknown about them, they still hold that same symbol even today I think. Yeah, yeah, and probably a lot of that is because of the Bible. And I actually like that you brought up Jaws, so it just made me think, you know, if you start hearing that da-dun, da-dun, you know exactly what to expect. That's exactly how the biblical author uses some of these symbols throughout the text. If you start seeing these watery symbols or these darkness.

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symbols woven throughout a certain passage, you're kind of getting the feel, this is what he, you know, the author doesn't have music to put to his piece, he has words and literary structures and motifs and themes to use. So does that make sense, you have any extra thoughts on this imagery? Yeah, no, I think that makes a whole lot of sense, it's helpful to see, and sometimes I think we can...

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Like we want to take the Bible seriously and sometimes we can almost take it too literally. If we're not careful, we've got to understand what the original author's intent was. And sometimes his intent is to use symbolism to explain the unexplainable. And so I think it's helpful to understand darkness and see as symbols.

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and once we understand that it starts to make the Bible make more sense. Yeah. Yeah, that's a good point about taking the Bible literally, and we want to believe the truths that the Bible is putting forth, but we need to not confuse the truth it is putting forth for the assumptions. For instance, if you tell someone with blue eyes, their eyes are like an ocean. Well, usually what that means in our context is that you're saying, their eyes are beautiful.

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take the symbolism another way, a biblical way, and say, oh, your eyes look like the evil chaos waters. Right, depending on how you're viewing the water. Right. But I don't think anybody would say that this is literal. They actually believe that there is an entire ocean of water behind your cornea. Yeah, well, and that's a good point, too. Language and words change meaning over time. And just, for example,

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Gosh, there's a lot of things that my kids will say that I will take wrong because just of the generational gap. I can remember, this is several years ago, where a pastor, I was a youth leader at the time.

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and the head pastor who was a little bit older than us came in and was talking about his thongs. He was talking about his flip-flops, but all the kids thought he was talking about a swimsuit, which was quite embarrassing when he found that out. But the same is true. We need to try to understand what did the biblical authors understand these

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today. Right, so hopefully that's helped us to think about these symbols a little more clearly and not confuse literalism with the actual meaning of the author. We understand that we all speak in metaphors and poetically even when we don't think about ourselves speaking poetically. We use metaphors all the time without even realizing it.

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So having talked about that, you ready to go ahead and dive into the second half of day three? Yeah, let's do it. Alright, so how about you go ahead and start reading in verse 11. And God said, 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.

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And it was so, 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. And God saw that it was good, and there was evening, and there was morning the third day." Awesome.

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Okay, so where we left off was in the first half of day three, Yahweh had brought the land up out of the water, taken it out of its ruined state and made it dry, somewhere that creatures can live. And now on the second half of day three, He is finishing making that land someplace habitable. He is putting trees with fruit. Notice only fruit trees are mentioned. So here we have sustenance being created for these creatures.

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that God has provided a way and given provision that's going to continue on and on and on for all of the land creatures that He's about to create in day six, including the humans.

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Is that what you're saying? Yeah, yeah. And these trees, they're given their own fruit and seed, so they're meant to multiply and expand, which, again, that sounds like the blessing that's going to be given to Adam and Eve, be fruitful and multiply. This garden, this good land, this

sustenance is supposed to expand over the dry wilderness land that Yahweh has pulled out of the waters. Yeah, and I would say we still see a remnants of that.

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to be fruitful and multiply and grow and expand. I think about just the woods in front of our house and how it has continued to develop over the years and expand and grow. If you just let it go, it continues to do what it was designed to do. It's pretty amazing just to watch that. In fact, just this week I was talking to Alex. He was just marvelous.

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at his garden in his backyard that at this point of the year is pretty much all weeded over but even in the midst of that there's wild flowers that are growing and just the beauty of them in the midst of all the weeds and so there's remnants of even before the fall that this ideal creation that is described here in Genesis 1 we still see hints of it even today.

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Yeah, for sure. And I also want to talk about the fact that these trees are created according to their kinds. They're to reproduce according to their kinds. And I think an important thing to draw out of this phrase is that I've been talking about taking these things that are in a state of ruin and making them good, taking the bad and making it good. Another way to talk about this is taking chaos and making it into order. And I think that's a very helpful

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human society in God building a kingdom, an ordered society. And so it's definitely helpful to think about God taking this chaotic state of the world and making ordered.

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families among will see this with animals but for now we're looking at the trees ordered types and families yeah i think one of the things i noticed as i was walking through and studying this to prepare for sermons is just the number of time number of times that that that phrase uh... according to its kind occurs to receive again later on the five and again in the six and over and over there's this uh...

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organizing into the various kinds almost uh... like this picture of organizing legos and uh... different types of legos who comes to my mind for some reason but you obviously guys working with more than legos here but uh... there's definitely something to that where it does bringing order to the chaos by having all these different kinds of things that are uh... reproducing according to their kind or no

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Yeah, and God saw that this was good, and then there was evening and there was morning on the third day, and then we move into day four. God starts to fill the spaces that He has created on days one through three. So do you want to read day four? Yeah, and so before I even read

day four, so day four correlates with day one. So what was formed in day one is being filled in day four.

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the separation of the dark and the light, right? So we had, uh, the sort of guy's going to fill those with something. What's he going to fill them with? So we pick up in verse 14 and God said, let there be light 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 for years and let them be lights in the

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expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth and it was so and God made the two great lights the greater lights to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night and the stars and God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light to the earth to rule over the day and over the night and to separate the light from the darkness and God saw that it was good and there was evening and there was morning the fourth day

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Yeah, and here we see again that same theme of God separating out and and decreeing destinies. Here we see the lights being placed in the expanse to separate the day from the night. What's really cool here is so God has already created light and separated it from the darkness. Here he is now delegating the upkeep of that system to the the stars to the lights in the sky. Now something

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it was pretty much assumed in the ancient near east that the stars were not fire gas balls far away but they were actually you know pretty much stuck onto the rakiya that we talked about the top of the dome and they were living beings they were actually thought of as spiritual beings and you will see that some places in the bible as well i think uh... my mind goes to to jude where he talks about the hum the false teachers being wandering stars because they would

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So in Genesis 1, the stars are given their orders. They are to move along fixed paths to set times for seasons and festivals, and when they go off course, they are rebelling. And so that's why Jude uses that imagery. So is, like Psalm 19, where it says, the heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

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that David when he's writing that is thinking about the stars in some way, shape or form, living beings declaring the glory of God.

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Yeah, absolutely. And you see the same thing in a verse that I read, I think a week or two ago, in Job 38, where God is talking to Job about when he laid the foundations of the world. He says, on what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together

and all the sons of God shouted for joy. So it talks about these the morning stars and equates them with the sons of God, these spiritual beings who were

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there in the beginning as he is creating the world. So we also see this in Judges 5 where Deborah is singing about the stars fighting for Israel whenever she's leading Israel's army. So again, just another place in the Bible where they think about the stars as living, active beings. Yeah, I don't have any questions. I was trying to think of something. All right. Well, the nations also saw the stars as living beings, but they didn't see them as

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living servants of Yahweh, they saw them as basically their gods in some cases, or servants of their own gods. They saw the stars as their pantheon, not as a bunch of angels, in a sense, as we might say it. So, did the Israelites actually believe the same way, too? Well, sometimes, yeah. Actually there are lots of places in the Bible where you'll see star.

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and things going on. This is what the prophets are railing about because one of the things the prophets are railing about, they're talking about how these Israelites have gone from worshiping Yahweh to worshiping Yahweh and these other gods and other stars. And they did see them as these enemy gods at times. You'll see in Isaiah 14 where he talks about, he's giving a prophetic denouncement of the morning star because

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in in that imagery he sees this morning stars last one is trying to hang on as the sun comes up where he's poetically portraying yawai as the sun and this morning star is one is trying to rival his his glory his brightness because he's still trying to hang on while the sun's coming up so there's a little bit of sharing of this world view and the biblical authors will use it to the co-opted for their own purposes but these the stars anyway and

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these stars the nation saw as their gods. The biblical author here is just intentionally saying, no, these were actually just beings that Yahweh has delegated authority to to help him keep order in the cosmos. They are completely his servants. So Yahweh doesn't describe them as

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God's necessarily, but is his servants? Is that what you're saying? Yeah, yeah. Still definitely spiritual beings and, I mean, that's what, you know, God or a God is as a spiritual being, but it's more so that the nations elevated those spiritual beings to the place of worship and of being their most high God when he— Okay. So, Yalloway makes it very clear you're not supposed to worship the stars or any other lower—

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spiritual being. Right. Gotcha. They're just there to, in this case, basically keep the schedule, keep rule of the day and the night and of festivals and months and years. They're mostly there for the upkeep of Israel's festival calendar. Go ahead.

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Yeah, I was gonna say, this is probably a fairly new concept for most people to think of like the stars and even the moon as spiritual beings. And obviously we've sent people to the moon and have walked on it and know that it's a big rock. And so how are we to, like when I look up at the moon tonight, should I...

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think about it as something that God has given some kind of spirit to? So I don't think so. I think that there are definitely spirits in the world. There are spiritual beings that Yahweh has commissioned to keep order in His world. You see all throughout the Bible there are angels, messengers He sends, and there are also angels doing things that we may not know about.

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active in creation, helping him maintain order in the ways that he has, or similar to the ways that he shows here in Genesis 1. But that doesn't mean that the moon is a spiritual being necessarily. Like, it's a physical thing. There may be some spiritual entity Yahweh has commissioned to oversee it in some way. I mean, we just don't know. But I think there is room to say the biblical authors are using this.

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They're co-opting their neighbors' worldviews and using it to portray meaning, but it doesn't mean we need to view the cosmos like they did, where the sun is a god, the moon is a god, all the stars are the gods. It's basically what you're saying is they were using the language of their day to describe the best way they could the cosmos and how God set everything up.

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in comparison to how they might look at a plant where god gives the growth there they look at that plant they don't say there's a spirit in that plant because they know what they see it they can well we've been to the moon now we know it's not just a big uh... glowy spiritual light person it's a uh... a big rock like you're saying so now our our concept of like we can touch this we know it's a thing that extends to the moon and not just

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a spiritual being in and of itself. Right. Well, and if you think about it, we still use old language to describe our cosmos. For example, we still say that the sun rises and the sun sets when literally it doesn't. Earth rotates and that's why we experience the sun the way that we do. And so this is very similar to that. Would you say that they're using their...

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the words that they know to describe the world that God has given them. Absolutely, yeah. They're just using common metaphors and common symbolism. Whether they think of it as symbolism or not, they're using what they know to portray meaning, not to try to teach us science. Gotcha. But yeah, so here we have these spiritual beings who are given commission over the day and the night, keeping the festival calendar.

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all the festivals that remind Israel of the ways in which Yahweh has delivered them or provides for them or of their future hope, they are in charge of relaying that schedule, that calendar to Israel and to the humans here. Now there is one more thing that I want to say about these stars because they're not called stars in this passage, they're called lights. And a lot of commentators will look at this and say, since they're called lights, the

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saying these aren't living beings, they're demoting them down to inanimate objects. I don't think you have to read it that way, you can. I definitely think Genesis 1 is demoting these things the nations see as gods down to something less, to servants of Yahweh. I don't think he's necessarily saying they're inanimate because it's throughout scripture in the ancient Near East that they are living beings. Again, if you read it that way, that's fine, but I don't

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Again, just so it's not confusing, we see them as inanimate fiery gas balls, but they probably saw them, the stars, the lights in the sky, as living beings that were set up, delegated authority by Yahweh, and they serve Him in keeping time and relaying festival schedules to God's people.

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So what you're saying is that these other nations, they looked at the stars as gods that they needed to follow. And the biblical narrative is saying, look, yeah, it's fine whether they're animate objects or they're animated objects. They're still my, they're still Yahweh's servants and you don't bow down to them. You only bow down to Yahweh. Right. Exactly. Gotcha. Yeah. We'll see some other ancient Near Eastern.

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We'll see at least one other Ancient or Eastern deity in Genesis 1 that is demoted and we'll talk about him actually Next time around but I think that's a good place to stop. So next time we'll pick up with day five Sounds good