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● I INTRODUCTION

- A In many ways the first eleven chapters of the Bible are the most difficult to read and understand in the Bible
 - 1 They include some of the stories that are most familiar to all Christians
 - a) The 7-Day Creation Story
 - b) Adam/Eve
 - c) Cain/Abel
 - d) Noah and The Flood
 - e) The Tower of Babel
 - 2 These stories spotlight the great clash between the Bible and modern science
 - a) Jews and Christians are challenged to decide between creation in 7 days or 15 billion years
 - (1) Science seems to be telling us that the earth was formed 5 or 10 billion years ago
 - (2) The Bible seems to be telling us that it was created sometime in 4000 BCE (An Anglican Bishop decided the precise date about 6000 years ago as he reconciled the dates of Biblical events))
 - b) How could there have been a universal flood since there is no geological evidence of such a universal flood occurring within 6000 years of when the Bible says it should have happened (or even millions of years before that)?
 - (1) There is evidence of violent regional floods in the Middle East
 - (2) One of these must have been the source of the flood narratives that are common to most Mid Eastern Cultures
- B These stories are different from the rest of the Bible
 - 1 They tell what happened before God entered history as He did during the life of Abram/Abraham
 - 2 They tell of the pre-history of God's dealings with Israel
 - a) They are not based on a dictation or revelation by God of His creative schedule
 - b) Knowledge of the this schedule is not needed to experience salvation, to experience God
 - 3 We must remember
 - a) The Bible was not written in the order in which we have it today
 - b) Our Christian ordering of the books is not the only way they are ordered in Bibles
 - c) Our ordering is not the ordering that was used by Jesus and the other Jews at the time of Jesus
 - d) Many books now placed later in our Bible were written earlier than the opening books
 - 4 The first eleven chapters actually were composed very late in Biblical history
 - a) They were written after much of the rest of the other booklets had been completed
 - b) They form a preface, an introduction, to these finished writings
 - 5 Strangely, there are very few, almost no references to any of these stories in the rest of the Old Testament
 - a) If these stories were written early in the history of Israel, this silence would be very odd
 - b) It's almost as if most Israelites were unaware of these stories
 - (1) They probably didn't know them until after most of the prophets had died
 - (a) Adam/Eve are ignored by the prophets -- they are never mentioned
 - (b) The sin in the Garden was not seen as an explanation of evil
 - [1] It is not referred to in the OT, including by the prophets
 - [2] It is referred to in the NT by Paul
 - (c) Cain/ Abel are not referred to by the prophets
 - (d) Noah and Flood also were not cited by the prophets
 - (2) Different, non-biblical stories of creation, are hinted at in other parts of the Bible
- C These opening stories are more a comment on today than on yesterday
 - 1 They answer the basic questions of all life
 - 2 They give clues on how we should live each day of our lives

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- 3 They are more like parables of every day living than a story of yesterday
- D **The whole tone of the Bible changes with the stories about Abraham reported in Genesis 12**
 - 1 The opening stories have traits that change in a noticeable way after the stories about Abraham
 - a) **There are numerous contradictions in these early stories**
 - b) There are no references to specific historical events
 - c) **Kings and other specific details of history are not mentioned**
 - 2 All of this changes with God calling Abram/Abraham
- II **BACKGROUND -- THE FOUR TRADITIONS THAT UNDERLIE THE PENTATEUCH**
 - A Here is a rough sketch of God acting in our history as reported in the Bible:
 - 1 God began entering history and touching Abraham roughly around 1800 BCE
 - 2 He continued with **Moses about 1250 BCE**
 - 3 And influenced **David and Solomon around 1000 BCE**
 - B But none of the Biblical booklets were written until the reigns of David and Solomon
 - 1 Until the monarchy existed, there was no rich class of people
 - a) **Almost everyone needed to work full time to eke out a living**
 - b) **So there was no time for the luxury of writing**
 - c) Nor was anyone able to underwrite a class of scribes to do the writing
 - 2 With the establishment of the monarchy by Saul and David, privileged classes arose
 - a) People now had the luxury of free time
 - b) And a professional class of scribes appeared -- writing experts
 - 3 Before this time, Biblical traditions were passed on orally
 - a) They were transmitted from generation to generation to generation by memory
 - b) People who can't write often develop their memories to degrees that are amazing to us
 - c) Many Jewish people probably knew most of the sacred books by heart
 - C The final form of the historical books was not completed until after 500 BCE
 - 1 These books had a long, long period of oral history
 - 2 This oral history was followed by another long period of written history during which the stories were only partially composed
 - D Important historical events occurred during this period of oral and written transmission of the stories which affected how they were later compiled and arranged into coherent booklets
 - 1 1800 BCE -- 1000 BCE (David) -- Israel was just a confederation of the Twelve tribes
 - a) **Each tribe had its own founder**
 - b) it was natural for the separate tribes to recall stories in a light that was favorable to that tribe's founder
 - (1) A tribe would spotlight parts of stories that made their founder (and thus tribe) look good
 - (2) And all of the 12 tribes never felt a kinship with each other
 - (3) A rough division existed throughout the history of the tribes
 - (a) 10 northern tribes with loose bonds of coherence, not unity
 - (b) 2 southern tribes (Judah and Benjamin)
 - (c) (Just as in the thirteen American colonies there was a much closer affinity within the New England colonies and the Southern colonies than there was to the others)
 - c) **The tribes also had traditional feuds with other tribes**
 - (1) So as they retold the stories, the tales were shaped to make their foes look bad
 - (2) And they were shaped to make their own tribe and its ancestors look great
 - 2 **Example: The Joseph story**
 - a) Who intervened to keep the other brothers from killing Joseph -- with the hope of secretly saving him later?

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- b) One tradition said it was **Judah**
 - (1) Genesis 37:26
 - (a) Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?"
 - (b) 27 Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed.
- c) Another tradition said it was **Reuben**
 - (1) Genesis 37:21
 - (a) When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. "Let's not take his life," he said.
 - (b) 22 "Don't shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the desert, but don't lay a hand on him." Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.
- 3 900 BCE – 700 BCE (After David and Solomon)
 - a) The country founded by David was divided into two separate nations
 - (1) 1 Kings 12:1
 - (a) Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all the Israelites had gone there to make him king.....
 - (b) 3 So they sent for Jeroboam, and he and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him: 4 "Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labour and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you." 5 Rehoboam answered, "Go away for three days and then come back to me." So the people went away.
 - (c) 13 The king answered the people harshly. Rejecting the advice given him by the elders, 14 he followed the advice of the young men and said, "My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.".....
 - (d) 16 When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king: "What share do we have in David, what part in Jesse's son? To your tents, O Israel! Look after your own house, O David!" So the Israelites went home.
 - (2) It is the way America would have been if the South had won the Civil War, or at least had not lost it
 - (3) [Chart]
 - (4) North – Ten tribes of Israel
 - (5) South -- Two tribes
 - (a) Small Benjamin
 - (b) Massive Judah -- Jews: "Judites" became "Jews"
 - (6) The nations had separate capitals and temples
 - (a) Judah had Jerusalem
 - (b) The north shifted its capital several times
 - (7) The nations had separate royal families
 - (a) David's family always ruled in the south
 - (b) David's descendants never ruled in the north
 - b) The very different traditions preserved in the two nations gave very different slants to the same events.
 - (1) Regarding the monarchy
 - (a) One (from the South) makes David and the monarchy look good – they still had Davidic kings
 - (b) The other (from the North) makes David and the monarchy look bad
 - (2) Regarding the Temple
 - (a) One (from the South) upholds the Temple in Jerusalem (they worshipped in the Jerusalem Temple) and disparaged local shrines (that competed with the national temple)
 - (b) The other (from the North) remembered stories honoring local shrines
- E Four different Traditions eventually emerged
 - 1 "J" ("Yahwist") [the "J" is from the German form of the word]

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- a) The Adam and Eve story is from this tradition
- b) "J" is the oldest of the four traditions and dates to about 900 BCE
- c) This story is from the Southern Kingdom -- therefore, it is favorable to David and Jerusalem
- d) God is pictured "anthropomorphically"
 - (1) He is presented as very human
 - (2) Shortly before the Flood, He regrets creating the world
 - (a) Genesis 6:6
 - [1] The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.
 - [2] 7 So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth -- men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air -- for I am grieved that I have made them."
- e) The stories are very concrete, very real -- there is little theorizing
- f) Deep religious truths are taught using simple details
 - (1) Adam names all the animals
 - (a) The ability to name shows humanity's superiority to the rest of the animal world
 - (b) Man is not just part of nature
 - (c) Genesis 2:19
 - [1] Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.
 - [2] 20 So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found.
 - (2) Adam and Eve are comfortable in their nakedness
 - (a) They experience no shame
 - [1] Genesis 2:25
 - [a] The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.
 - (b) Both of them are able to accept and reveal themselves fully to each other
- 2 "P" ("Priestly") is from the Priestly Class that controlled the Temple
 - a) The 7 Day Creation belongs to this account
 - b) The Tradition is a very late account -- it took final shape after the exile -- 536 BCE
 - c) It is very abstract, legalistic, dull
 - d) God is pictured as very distant, transcendent
 - (1) God's description in "P" is the opposite of how He is presented in the "J" Tradition
 - (2) If God is close to us, we have no need for priestly intermediaries
 - (3) God has no human traits
 - (4) All the rules on Temple Sacrifice derive from this tradition
- 3 These and two other Traditions were blended together to form the opening of the Bible
 - a) The blending is often visible in the clash of details
 - b) How many animals was Noah told to take on the ark?
 - (1) J: 2 pair of each
 - (a) Genesis 6:19
 - [1] You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures male and female, to keep them alive with you.
 - [2] 20 Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive.
 - (2) P: 7 pair of "clean" animals; 1 pair of "unclean"
 - (a) Genesis 7:2

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- [1] Take with you seven of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and two of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate.
 - [2] 3 and also seven of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth.
- c) **How long did the flood last?**
 - (1) **40 days**
 - (a) Genesis 7:12
 - [1] And rain fell on the earth for forty days and forty nights.
 - (2) **150 days**
 - (a) Genesis 7:24
 - [1] The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.
- 4 **"Pentateuch" refers to the First 5 books of the Bible**
 - a) These booklets are special in the Bible -- and in the Jewish religion
 - (1) They are called "Torah"
 - (a) We translate the word as "law"
 - (b) Actually, it is a broader, wider term "Instruction," "Teaching," "Word"
 - [1] We think it applies to all the rules, positive and negative
 - [2] In reality, it applies to all the actions of God reported in these booklets
 - [a] He creates a people
 - [b] He saves this people
 - [c] He provides miraculous food for this people
 - [d] He guides this people
 - [e] And He wants to bond ("covenant") with this people in order that He can continue to bless them
 - [3] Against the background of God's actions (which form the basis of the Instruction) the rules are blessings, not limitations
 - [4] They are guides to show a people how to continue to be blessed and protected
 - (2) It was long felt that the Torah was authored directly by Moses -- this is one of the reasons it was held to be so sacred
 - (a) Today scholars do not believe Moses wrote these booklets
 - (b) They reflect language and customs from much later times
 - (c) Actually they reflect post exilic theology
 - (3) These booklets tell the story from Creation to Israel's preparation to enter the Promised Land
 - (4) The whole work is the story of God forming a People to be His own, His Light to the world
 - b) And this story is not the work of one man
 - (1) The People, as a People, actually began with the Exodus and the Covenant, the event that bound them to each other and to the God who had rescued them
 - (2) After they came together as a People rescued by Yahweh, they became interested in their history, especially as they, the People, related to God before the Exodus:
 - (a) They focused on the time of the tribal founders -- the Patriarchs
 - (b) They became interested in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob [a/k/a "Israel"], Joseph
 - (3) Eventually pondering stories about their formation caused the Hebrews to think further back to the time before the Patriarchs -- to their "prehistory"
 - (a) These introductory stories, therefore, are among the latest written parts of the Pentateuch
 - (b) The pagan stories of their neighbors and conquerors forced the Israelites to offer their own answers to life's main problems
 - (c) These pagan tales were adapted and applied to Yahweh and His creation -- i.e. The Flood Stories

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- A These stories were composed from strands borrowed from the varying traditions
 - 1 They were not written by one man but a single editor probably gave them their final form
 - 2 The transmission of early traditions through centuries or oral telling and the compilation of the final editions were guided by God
 - a) The final author and edition were inspired by God -- God guaranteed this editor was accurately
 - (1) Experiencing God
 - (2) Sharing this experience by using the myths, ideas, and cultural mores of his time
 - b) God guaranteed that the final edition was accurate in the truths it teaches; God did not guarantee the details (that may seem to be factual) used to present these truths
- B We must remember that these stories were among the last, not the first, parts of book of Genesis written
- C These stories are actually intended to answer some of the basic problems of everyday living
 - 1 Is there a God? One or many gods? Which god is the chief?
 - 2 Is nature good or evil? Friendly or unfriendly?
 - 3 Where do we fit in the universe?
 - 4 Why is there evil in our universe?
- D The introduction added to the book of Genesis was composed to answer these and other basic questions
 - 1 The purpose for adding these stories was not to give a history of the origin of the universe
 - 2 The Israelites were challenged by the differing answers of their neighbors to life's central questions
 - a) They were challenged during the 70 years of their exile in Babylon
 - (1) According to the thinking of that time, the Babylonian gods seemed more powerful than the God of Judah, Yahweh
 - (2) War was seen as a contest acted out on two stages
 - (a) In the heavens, the gods of the rivaling cities or countries battled each other as the cities battled
 - (b) The winner of the heavenly contest decided which city or country won on earth
 - (3) The Babylonians had been able to conquer Yahweh's people and destroy His house, His temple
 - (4) Therefore their gods seemed to be more powerful than the lone God of Judah
 - b) The Babylonian pantheon was inhabited by many gods – some good and some evil
 - (1) Matter was created by an evil god
 - (2) Matter, therefore, was inherently evil
 - 3 The Israelites in exile needed to answer these challenges in order to keep their own identity
- E Today, we have a fair idea of the experiences of God reflected in each of these separate stories and the truths resulting from these experiences
 - 1 The 7 Day Creation account: There is One God
 - a) Who made everything
 - b) Who made everything good
 - c) And who made humanity special
 - d) And who made man and woman equal
 - 2 Adam and Eve
 - a) God is not responsible for evil in our world
 - b) Rather, evil is the result of our misusing our freedom
 - c) This misuse affects all our relationships:
 - (1) With God
 - (2) With ourselves
 - (3) With others
 - 3 The stories from Cain and Abel through the remainder of the Bible reflect one continuing theme

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- a) Once evil is in the universe, it spreads
- b) Evil is stronger than we are
- c) So God must intervene to save us
- d) And God does this, intervene, by His calling Abram/Abraham

● IV THE "7 DAY" CREATION ACCOUNT

● A This story is from the "P" ("Priestly,") Tradition

- 1 This source explains the time frame of 7 days given to creation
- 2 The story shows signs of having been written very late in Jewish history -- written after the Exile
 - a) Before the exile, the Jewish religion focused on animal sacrifice in the Temple
 - b) When the Temple was destroyed and all the leaders deported across the desert to Babylon, sacrifice was not possible
 - c) How could they keep their purity as a people? How could they still be the people of Yahweh?
 - (1) They could no longer share a Temple sacrifice as the basis of their identity with each other as a people and of their loyalty to Yahweh
 - (2) Now, possibly for the first time in their history the laws, the religious rules, ("The Law,") became important
 - (a) Especially the Sabbath
 - (b) And circumcision
- 3 The Sabbath was being kept "holy" long before the 7 Day Account of Creation took shape
 - a) Creation was put into the mold of one week in order to enhance the dignity of the sabbath rest
 - b) The 7 Day story shows that even God rested on the 7th day -- therefore, how much more should you and I rest!

● B The fundamental teachings of this account include

● 1 There is only One God

- a) The Bible begins by simply assuming the unique position of Israel's God in the universe
 - (1) Genesis 1:1
 - (a) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.
- b) There was not a host of gods such as all their neighbors had -- the Egyptians, Phoenician, Babylonians, Persians
- c) Some of these "gods" of their neighbors, (like the sun and moon and stars,) weren't even made until the 4th Day! Genesis really demotes them in importance!
 - (1) Genesis 1:14
 - (a) 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, 15 and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so.
 - (b) 16 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.
 - (c) 17 God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, 18 to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.
 - (d) 19 And there was evening, and there was morning--the fourth day.

● 2 Who made everything -- including things like the sun and the moon which others called "gods"

- a) Genesis 1:16
 - (1) 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.
 - [2] 17 God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, 18 to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.

● 3 And made everything good!

- a) This theme is repeated again and again
 - (1) Genesis 1:4

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- (a) God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.
- (2) Genesis 1:12b
 - (a) And God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening, and there was morning -- the third day.
- (3) Genesis 1:18
 - (a) And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening, and there was morning -- the fourth day.
- (4) Genesis 1:31
 - (a) God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning -- the sixth day.
- b) The universe is not evil
 - (1) **Humans have always been threatened by the forces of nature**
 - (a) Many peoples felt that behind some of these forces must lurk a god of evil
 - (b) They believed that all matter is touched by this evil
 - (2) The 7 Day Creation Story rejects this heresy again and again and again
 - (3) **Somehow, God wishes we work with nature, not against it, for the goodness of all**
 - (4) God offered us the universe for us to bless it and develop it
 - (a) Genesis 1:28
 - [1] 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."
 - (b) **We are to share God's authority over the universe --**
 - [1] To subdue it
 - [2] To develop it as God does -- with love
- 4 Who made us special!
 - a) There is a halt in the poetic pattern of creating
 - b) This halt is marked by deliberation: "Let us make mankind"
 - (1) God wants us! --
 - (a) We are not accidents produced by an uncaring nature
 - (b) We are deliberate creations of a perfect God
 - (2) God wants you!!!!
 - (3) God wants the entire person that you are!
 - c) You and I are made in the image of God, the likeness of God
 - (1) Genesis 1:26
 - (a) Then God said, "Let us make humanity 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."
 - (b) 27 So God created humanity in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them
 - d) Each culture places preferences upon certain types of people
 - (1) Youth over age in America -- the Bible's values were the opposite
 - (2) Thin over full-bodied in America -- the Russians felt the opposite was true during the days of the Communists
 - (3) Male over female in America -- but the Iroquois learned the opposite
 - e) God never wants us to be ashamed of our bodies
 - (1) We are the image of God in all that we are
 - (2) God did not create us as angels
 - (a) He wants us to have the bodies that are ours
 - (b) He desires we have them regardless of illness, age, weakness

Topic● 5 Who made man and woman equal

- a) Genesis 1:27
 - [1] So God created humanity in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them
- b) "Male and female He created them"
- c) God desires absolute equality between the species in His creation -- not the precedence of males over females
- d) This teaching of sexual equality did not reflect the thought in the world at the time that the story was composed
- e) Both men and women equally reflect the image of God!

● C Here are a few points of interest

● 1 What is "Creation?"

- a) Creation in the Torah is not described as making "something from nothing"
 - (1) Void and water already exist
 - (a) Genesis 1:1
 - [1] In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.
 - (2) The kind of creation we conceive today, ("ex nihilo," "from nothing,") does appear very briefly in a few late OT books
 - (a) Jeremiah :10
 - [1] 12 But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding.
 - (b) These are the booklets which reflect the influence of Greek philosophy, not of God's revelation
 - (c) But these few references were never the dominant Biblical teaching about creation
- b) The Bible in the first story and in its usual view sees creation as God "bringing order out of chaos"
 - (1) Land is brought out from water ---
 - (a) Water having no form, was the ultimate picture of chaos
 - (b) Land, on the other hand, represented order, stability, security
 - (2) Light is separated from darkness -- darkness was threatening, chaotic, in a world without electricity
- c) God always acts to bring order out of disorder -- even today
 - (1) In our world
 - (2) In our lives
 - (3) In our hearts
- d) Man's actions often bring disorder into the order of God's creation

● 2 Is evolution incompatible with the OT's accounts of creation?

- a) In order for you and me to experience God's love it is absolutely unimportant whether
 - (1) God made the universe in 10 to 15 billion years
 - (2) Or He did it in 7 days
- b) Neither position is incompatible with our understanding of God creating
 - (1) Of course there must be a direct intervention by God when humanity is created -- and when each subsequent person is created
 - (2) We are not the product, the result, of evolution
- c) Rather we reflect God's sanctity in a unique way that nature can never produce

● 3 The Biblical understanding of "sex" is much more wholesome than that of the American culture

- a) At the end of the creation of the physical universe, God pronounced everything good
- b) This includes the whole material world

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- (1) Therefore, this includes our bodies
 - (a) All of our bodies
 - (b) **All our drives and feelings**
- (2) This also includes a world which requires sexual relations, a world in which God tells, (or as the Jews understood it, commands,) mankind to "be **fruitful and multiply**"
 - (a) Genesis 1:28
 - [1] *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."*
 - (b) **Sex, therefore, is not "dirty," "wrong," "shameful," "cheap"**
 - [1] **It is beautiful, natural, and good**
 - [2] **God desires that sexual intimacy be part of our universe**
 - [3] Our culture, not God, has cheapened and distorted our attitude to sex -- our ads, movies, TV
 - (c) The Jewish people have a far healthier attitude towards the innate goodness of our sexual nature than most Christians share
- **4 God wants humanity to rest from work**
 - a) Genesis 2:2
 - (1) By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing: so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.
 - (2) 3 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.
 - b) **Time, not place, is made holy by our God**
 - (1) The Sabbath rest is intended to be a foretaste of our heavenly rest
 - (2) Sadly this view seems to have been lost in later Judaism
 - (3) Most of the stress on the Sabbath seems to have been on laws regulating a host of forbidden activities
 - c) **It's possible that the original purpose of the sabbath was different**
 - (1) It was intended for our resting from work -- to enjoy the universe, to relax
 - (2) It was not intended for our worshipping God
 - (3) God did not worship God on the sabbath
 - (a) He rested
 - (b) He rested from work
 - (4) Therefore, God wants us to pause from our "workaholism" and enjoy His universe, **to play**,
- **5 Drinking, Gambling, Dancing**
 - a) All, if properly enjoyed, are forms of recreation, of helping people relax
 - b) We, Catholics, feel rest and recreation are good and God intended
 - c) **Each of these activities was done in the Bible as religious acts**
 - (1) **Therefore they are not wrong in themselves**
 - (2) **Drinking -- at the Last Supper and at the First Miracle of Jesus at the Wedding Feast at Cana**
 - (a) John 2:6
 - [1] Nearby stood six stone water jars, ... each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water".
 - [2] 8 Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, 9 and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine.
 - (3) **Dancing --**
 - (a) **David and the Ark**
 - [1] 2 Samuel 6:16

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- [a] As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart.
- (b) **Miriam, Moses sister, a prophetess**
 - [1] Exodus 15:20
 - [a] Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her, with tambourines and dancing.
- (c) In Psalms
 - [1] Psalms 30:11
 - [a] You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.
- (4) **Gambling -- for making decisions**
 - (a) **Gambling equipment was part of the priestly vestments**
 - [1] Exodus 28:30
 - [a] Also put the Urim and the Thummim in the breast-piece, so they may be over Aaron's heart whenever he enters the presence of the LORD. Thus Aaron will always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the LORD.
 - [2] Numbers 27:21
 - [a] He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by enquiring of the Urim before the LORD. At his command he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in."
 - (b) **Gambling was used in selecting the replacement for Judas**
 - [1] Acts 1:26
 - [a] Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.
- d) **People in the Church are instructed to drink in one NT letter**
 - (1) 1 Timothy 5:21
 - (a) 21I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism. 22Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.
 - (b) 23 Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.
- e) If any of these actions, good in themselves, was overdone or done in a way that caused a person unnecessarily to hurt herself, himself or a neighbor, God didn't will this,
 - (1) God does not want us needlessly to harm the beauty of any part of His created universe
 - (2) **But remember: the misuse by some does not make the ordinary or proper use of these by others evil**
 - (3) Here are an example and an explanation
 - (a) I can misuse the Bible: throw it at you in an angry pique
 - (b) My misuse of the Bible does not render every other usage of the Bible evil
 - (c) **My misuse just makes my individual abuse of the Bible wrong**
 - (4) The same standard should be used with drinking, gambling, and dancing
- f) **If these activities are done to help people relax, they are good**
 - (1) Thus, this is a standard to apply: "Is this action helpful or hurtful?"
 - (2) If the action is done moderately and helps a person relax, it is good
 - (3) If the same action is done to excess and hurts a person or others, this misuse is not willed by a loving God
- D Teachings
 - 1 There is a God
 - a) You are never alone, no matter what the circumstances
 - b) And you never will be
 - 2 Who made everything

Topic

- a) **The universe, our universe today, the world in which we live, is no accident**
- b) **It's a gift from God to enrich our lives**
- 3 **Our universe is good, wholesome, we must learn to use it**
 - a) **For our good, our growth as a whole person**
 - b) **And for the good of others**
- 4 **We are special**
 - a) **It's important that we experience how awesome we are -- even before we are "saved" by Jesus**
 - b) **We should treat ourselves as works of art, as masterpieces**
 - c) **We should treat ourselves as persons endowed with dignity**
- 5 **Men and women are equal -- a double challenge**
 - a) **Women must overcome all cultural messages to the contrary**
 - b) **Men must treat women as their equals -- for the health of both sexes**