

Beginnings 1 - Foundations

1. Science!

As we begin to study the Book of Genesis we have to be careful to make sure that we have a general idea of what we are looking for.

The entire scope of the Bible ranges from the corruption of God's creation to the redemption of God's creation. This forms the framework for studying God's word. As we look specifically at the creation in the first two chapters it would be a mistake to get caught up in *extensive* scientific analysis of the creation account in a preaching setting. We shouldn't ignore this completely, but we want to be sure to keep the main thing the main thing. There are those who want to dig into evolution and creation, which is good to do in a class setting, but you would end up missing the main thrust of Genesis. Always keep in mind Paul's warning to Timothy about wasting time with *false* science:

1Tim 6:20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

2Tim 2:14,16 Of these things put *them* in remembrance, charging *them* before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, *but* to the subverting of the hearers.

16But shun profane *and* vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

This does not mean to say that such things are not worthy of consideration. Ken Ham of Answers in Genesis has insightfully pointed out that the massive attack on the first two chapters of Genesis is an attempt to knock out the foundation of all that follows. A shift in thinking that occurred in the late 1800s added an idolatrous factor to science turning science into religion for many. Christian leaders made a mistake by trying to make the Bible adapt and conform to scientific speculations of millions of years of evolution. This added to the weakening of the foundations of God's message.

When starting with Genesis, we are more concerned with the beginning of God's unfolding drama of redemption. Let's begin looking at where Genesis fits in.

2. Beginnings.

Gen 1:1 In the beginning...

Genesis, very simply, means *beginning*. The word is Latin for origin or beginning and is a translation of the first words of the book, "In the beginning." This phrase does not merely

describe the initiation of the creation week. "In the beginning" describes the *whole course* of the book as it relates to the whole set of books that Moses wrote about the establishment of Israel. You could read it this way, "In the beginning was the foundation for Israel. Next Israel was separated from Egypt. And then next, God established His Law. After that, Israel rebelled and had to wander in the wilderness. Finally, God re-established the Law so they could finally enter the Promised Land." It's a lot shorter, though to say, "Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy."

So, when we read Genesis, we are reading about all those things that formed the foundation of God's plan of redemption. Genesis has been described as the book of firsts. You could say, "In the beginning was the first darkness, the first light, the first work, the first rest, the first marriage, the first sin, the first sacrifice, the first promise of the Messiah, the first man to die, the first man not to die, the first human religion, the first government, the first envy, the first murder, the first civilization, the first covenant with God, and the first people of God." Every kind of problem and human situation is given to us from the beginning.

Genesis is the foundation to all human learning. Genesis is at once the introduction to and the explanation of all things. It clearly gives the origin and purpose of the universe, the world, life, and man himself. One cannot even remotely understand anthropology, geology, literature, philosophy, history, theology, or prophecy [and the complexity of race and language] apart from this book.¹

Genesis sets the stage of history that will find its completion in the Revelation. The problem of sin is introduced in the beginning and its *resolution* is completed in the Revelation. Starting in Genesis 1 God takes us through the stages that finally brings closure in Revelation 22.

3. In the beginning.

There is an assumption made in Genesis 1:0. Of course there *is no* verse 0. By this I mean that God is assumed before the book even starts. He was there before the beginning began. We are creatures of time, but God *created* time. Let's take the time to read through Gen 1:1-26 –

Gen 1:1-26 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
2And the earth was without form,
and void; and darkness *was* upon

¹https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1015&context=will_articles

the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

6And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

7And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament: and it was so.

8And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

9And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so.

10And God called the dry *land* Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that *it was* good.

11And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed *is* in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

12And the earth brought forth grass, *and* herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed *was* in itself, after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good.

13And the evening and the morning were the third day.

14And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

15And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

16And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: *he made* the stars also.

17And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

18And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that *it was* good.

19And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

20And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl *that* may fly above the

earth in the open firmament of heaven.

21And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good.

22And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

23And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

24And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

25And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good.

26And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

I am going to wait to cover the creation of man for the next sermon, but what can be said about the creation can be summed up in the last verse:

Gen 1:31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

At each stage of creation, God declared it good and then God declared it good in its entirety. We don't have to accommodate the scientific skeptics by explaining away the creation with Gap Theory, Day Age Theory, Theistic Evolution, Apparent-Age Theory, Punctuated 24-Hour Theory, Punctuated Equilibrium, Recapitulation, Just-so stories of Lamarck, Natural Selection Theory, Mutation Theory, Synthetic Theory, or any other pseudo-science. What God did was good. It was complete. It didn't need any improvement.

There are many scientific issues that are fascinating about creation that boggle the mind as to why someone would find any satisfaction in the world's misuse of science. It is no wonder that the world takes advantage of the complexities of biology to insert its fantasies. For evolutionary thinkers, giga-years, space dust biology, boiling volcanic ocean vents interspersed with plenty of maybes and perhapses produce life, but that is only so in the mind with a fertile imagination.

We don't have to go into extensive scientific analysis, but when actual science is used we discover a roadblock that God put in place. The supposed processes that were supposed to work in a totally uncontrolled and random setting are highly difficult to create with the most rigorous laboratory methodology. Even then, they don't create any actual building blocks of life even though they are working under such controlled conditions in the laboratory. Of course they will say that they have done that knowing that more than just the average person will accept their assertions. The goodness of God's creation anticipates and precludes any other possible sense of creation. The creation of life is so impossible that any other consideration is so much science fiction.

Based on Rom 1, we know that people sense this so that they feel compelled to react to it. When they do, they create a god of their own imaginations.

Rom 1:18-25 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them.

20For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: **[They know that there *must* be a God from the complexity of creation so that they are without excuse. But, what do they do in their rebellion?]**

21Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

23And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

24Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

25Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

There is no culture on earth that has not created some concept of God based on what they have seen in nature. Do not begin to think that we are so much more

sophisticated and beyond such pagan notions. What man does with the revelation of God through nature is corrupted. People are sucked into new age mysticism, paganism, and self-worshiping atheism. We behold the goodness and order of God, but sinful man degrades the idea of God and brings chaos. The life, work, and death of Jerry Garcia is a great illustration of the descent into disorder.

The Vietnam era produced an upheaval that looked like it was opening the way for a new culture in an Aquarian Age. People thought they were on a new path of significance but we realize it was largely in their imagination. Jerry Garcia, known for his part in the Grateful Dead, was discharged from the army after two courts martial and being awol eight times. He was treated as a guru in his day and declared to be an American icon by President Clinton after his death. From 1965 to 1995, the Grateful Dead toured almost constantly, developing a fan base known as deadheads. They were renowned for their intensity and devotion. Some fans dedicated their lives to the band, following the Grateful Dead from concert to concert, making a living by selling handmade goods, arts, crafts and other items in the parking lots of venues before the shows. It was no secret that drugs were condoned in this scene. Garcia's tendency to use hard, addictive drugs was evident to those who knew him by the mid 1970s. He ultimately died in a drug rehab.

—based on entry in Wikipedia

Garcia was accurate when he said, "It's pretty clear now that what looked like it might have been some kind of counterculture is, in reality, just the plain old chaos of undifferentiated weirdness." People thought they were being significant, but the truth is, they were just being weird. And it was an undifferentiated weirdness. They were all weird in about the same way. Comedians tried to mimic that weirdness and in turn the unwashed masses yearning to be cool tried to imitate them. Garcia hoped this as an effort to create a new culture, but all he found was the chaos of everyone trying to do that which was right in their own sight.

Consistent with this is the sale in 2005 of the paintings by Congo the chimpanzee which sold at auction for more than \$25,620. The collection of paintings - assumed to be abstracts - were auctioned alongside works by impressionist master Renoir and pop art provocateur Andy Warhol. But while Warhol and Renoir's work didn't sell,

bidders lavished attention on Congo's paintings. An American bidder purchased the lot of paintings for \$26,352 including a buyer's premium. It might not be so amazing that they valued the chimp's painting above Warhol. However, people's acceptance of chaos is reflected in that they valued his work more than Renoir.

Man celebrates chaos and calls it normal. An honest person recognizes this as the insanity of our times.

In contrast, So much is said about the God of order and goodness as we look at the creation. From chapter one we could launch into sermons about the personality of God, His self-existence, immutability, plurality and unity; His truth, love, holiness, goodness, mercy, and righteousness; His eternity and infinity, omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence. What we are going to do, though, is limit ourselves to consider that as the God of power and intelligence in the complexity of the universe and life, He is the God of order.

When God created the world, He did not just make it good, it was *very* good. It had perfect rhythm, design, balance, and order. I want you to see in this passage the sense of order that God brought about.

- God could have just spoken the world into existence with everything in place. Certainly He did that on each day. The stars were spoken into place, the seas and the air brought forth abundantly in a flash...but God spread out the creation over six days taking a number of balanced and orderly steps.
- The sense of rhythm is created by the day and night, day and night, day and night order.
- The stars, moon, and sun were created to help give a sense of order...be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.
- Each plant and animal was created to reproduce after their own kind. It is interesting that when breeding between distinct species, the hybrids that are produced are sterile.
- When God created man, he was not just another creature, but had a sense of order in that he was created in God's image. God was the pattern for the nature of man.

There was a sense of completeness to God's creation. That rhythm and balance is present throughout the rest of the Bible. Law and grace, judgment and deliverance, good and evil, flesh and spirit, the old covenant and the new covenant.

1Cor 14:33,40 For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

40Let all things be done decently and in order.

We are presented with an ordered perfection in the absolute beginning. This is the starting point. That is what we are looking to see restored.

In some preachers meetings you can tell that they are approving of something in a message because they often don't merely say "Amen," they will sometimes say, "That's good!"

When God looked at His work of creation, He said, "That's good!"

When He looked at what they did to Jesus on the cross, He said "That's bad."

When He looked at Jesus in the resurrection, He said "That's good!"

When He looked at us in our sin He said, "That's bad."

When He looked at us in Jesus, He said "That's good!"

We see perfection as something impossible, and so it is, for us. One motivational speaker once said, "The pursuit of excellence is gratifying and healthy. The pursuit of perfection is frustrating, neurotic, and a terrible waste of time."² That is true when you are talking about man trying to make himself perfect before God. However, *God's* perfect work in *us* is *not* a waste of *His* time. When we quit trying to work according to the god of our own imagination and turn to the salvation that God has brought through Jesus Christ, God puts everything back in order.

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

God is working a work of art in you.

Phil 1:3-6 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

4Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

5For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;

6Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:

If you are saved then God has made you beautiful. You are a child of God and you possess a beauty in your soul and in your spirit that shines brighter than the noonday sun, that is more brilliant than all the stars of the heaven because Jesus bought you and created your new spirit. Man has come along and tried to cheapen God's work and defile it, but you will continue on

²Edwin Bliss quoted in *Eating Problems for Breakfast* by Tim Hansel

through eternity in God's beauty if you have been born again into God's everlasting Kingdom. In the end, for those who are saved, God's perfect order will be as it was in the beginning.

2Cor 5:17-21 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

18And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

1. Science! 1Tim 6:20, 2Tim 2:14,16
2. Beginnings. Gen 1:1
3. In the beginning. Gen 1:1-26, Gen 1:31, Rom 1:18-25, 1Cor 14:33,40, Gal 2:20, Phil 1:3-6, 2Cor 5:17-21