

Intro. What are some of the biggest questions of life? What is man? Where did we come from? Why are we here? What is wrong with the world? Is there any hope beyond this life? All of these questions are answered in the opening chapters of the Bible, which are foundational to the rest of Scripture. Other issues we'll deal with in this series include marriage, the formation of the continents, the Ice Age, dinosaurs, different ethnic groups & more. As we begin our series on Genesis 1-11 on "Building a Foundation for Your Faith," we look at chapter 1 "A Panoramic View of Creation" today & next time.

Theme: Creation

Background: While many debate it today, I believe God revealed the material found in the 1st 5 books—the Pentateuch or Torah—to Moses during the 15th century BC. While the Bible is a book first & foremost about God & then His plan for His people, it is also accurate in terms of history, geography, science & more (which cannot be said of many other religious texts, including Joseph Smith's writings)

➤ I want you to consider several key truths flowing from Genesis 1

1. God exists & has always existed (1:1)

- "in the beginning"—the beginning of time
- Without giving proofs of God's existence, He is placed before & above time & space
- "God"—occurs 32x in chapter 1 & 14x in chapter 2=46x in 1st 2 chapters
- The very first verse of the Bible affirms God & monotheism & denies several basic errors:
 - a. Atheism—belief there is no god
 - b. Agnosticism—belief there is no way to know if God exists (cf. Romans 1:20)
 - c. Polytheism—belief there is more than one god
 - d. Materialism—belief that everything has always existed or that it came from previous matter
 - e. Pantheism—belief that equates God with forces & laws of the universe (everything is God)
 - f. Panentheism—belief that God is in everything
 - g. Fatalism—belief that things just happen (events determined by fate)

Illus: One of the hardest truths for children (& adults) to grasp is the eternity of God—all we know has a beginning & an end, but not God

2. All 3 Members of the Trinity were involved in creation (1:1-2; John 1:1)

- God (the Father) was involved (1:1), as was the Spirit of God (1:2) & Christ, the Word (John 1:1)
- "created"—to bring into being—only God is the subject of this verb in Scripture
- He created out of nothing (creatio ex nihilo) & He created by spoken word (creatio de fiat)
- The state of the original matter was "formless and void" (1:2)—the rest of the chapter tells how it took shape & was filled

Illus: Notice what Genesis 1 doesn't say: "In the beginning, God created the Word, who in turn created everything else"—that's what Jehovah's Witnesses teach, but that isn't true, because the Word is God & co-eternal & consubstantial with the Father

3. God created the heavens & the earth in 6 days (1:3-31)

a. How long was a "day"?

- 1) 24-hour period (1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; 2:2)—the regular, normative use of the word "day" throughout Scripture
- 2) 12-hour period (1:5)—"day" as the time period of "light" versus "darkness"
- 3) Day as a longer period of time (2:2-4)—used for creation week & sometimes for periods of time in eschatological texts for end-times events during the "day of the Lord"

b. How long did creation take?

1) Old earth view—4 billion years old

- a) Some view the creation account as a myth with no scientific value—if the Bible begins with a myth, how can any of it be trusted?
- b) Some view the creation account as God revealing to Moses what happened over 7 days—not the natural way to read the text & not what Moses is saying

- c) Some hold to an age-day theory—each day is really long, like 100s of millions of years—not the natural way to read the text & presents lot of challenges, like how do plants created on the 3rd day survive without the sun created on the 4th day if there were 100s of millions of years in between?
- d) Some hold to a gap-theory between 1:1 & 1:2—God created, judged & then recreated & fossil record is from previous creation—not the natural way to read the text, has lots of problems with God creating things “good” the 2nd time around (why not the first?) & reads a lot into a few words of 1:2
- e) Theistic evolution—God created the universe through the processes of evolution
 - I’ll say more about evolution next time, but one of the big challenges biblically is evolution & any of these “Old Earth Views” teach 100s of millions of years of death before mankind comes along & Romans 5:12, a didactic passage, teaches death entered the world through man’s sin (which isn’t true if evolution is true & man would have died naturally any way)

Illus: Some Christians say things like “I believe in the Big Bang theory: God spoke & “bang!” everything came into existence”—I’m not a big fan of that slogan because some can use it to say God created from the Big Bang & through evolution & that’s not biblically faithful nor does it interpret the evidence accurately

2) Young earth view—6,000-10,000 years old

- Reads the creation account literally (supported by Exodus 20:8-11) & considers the Flood narrative to help explain why some things appear older (I’ll say more about the “Canopy Theory” when we get to the Flood story)
- Another reason for a literal, 7-day week is the use of ordinal numbers—first, second, third, etc. instead of cardinal numbers—day 1, day 2, day 3, etc.
- Moreover, the reference to “evening & morning” (sunset to sunset), though backward to Western thinkers, is another way to talk about a 24-hour day rather than a period of time

Illus: A literal, 7-day week only makes sense in light of man’s calendar—we have 7-day weeks, based on the first week of creation. If creation wasn’t 7 literal days, there’s no reason to have a 7-day week, because it doesn’t fit into our months or year. Think about it: with a 365-day years, it would be better to have a 5-day week & 73 weeks throughout the year with each month having 6 weeks of 5 days=30 days, except the last month would have 7 weeks. But a 7-day week makes sense if it’s built off of creation week (some would say the 7 “days” reflect God’s number, but why not 10 or 12, which also reflect fullness & perfection, unless there was a 7-day week at the beginning)

4. Everything that God created was good (1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31)

- 7x the word “good” occurs in chapter 1, signifying that creation started as good, because God is good & what He does is good
- Now the first two chapters don’t mention it, but chapter 3 talks about the Fall of man through sin & all of mankind & the history of the world were drastically changed through sin’s introduction—after sin, we no longer hear the same descriptions of creation as “good,” because we are fallen & depraved in need of redemption

Illus: Several years ago I was asked to preach a Thanksgiving message for a joint service of Protestants & Catholics in Apopka. Because I wasn’t sure how many of them heard the gospel regularly or at all, I preached on how we should be grateful for the gospel & I talked a good deal on our fallen state & absolute dependence on the Lord for salvation & after I preached, a Roman Catholic priest stood up to close us out in prayer & he thanked God for making us good, as it says in Genesis 1 (that was before the Fall!)—he basically claimed we are not fully dependent on God for grace & salvation but only partially dependent!

Conc. When you have a family reunion or gather for the funeral of a loved one, who do you invite & see? Siblings, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, monkeys, apes, gorillas, chimpanzees? Of course not! Why? After all, if you follow Darwinian evolution, that’s who you should invite, but we know better & no one in the world invites such monkey-like creatures. Why not? Because deep within each one of us, we know that isn’t true, but many people suppress the truth of God & being created in His image, because if He exists, I have to answer to Him & if I’m created in His image, even though I’m fallen in sin, life is now valuable & sacred & must be lived according to His standards. That’s why God sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to live a sinless life & die for our sins. We must turn from our sins & trust in Him to be saved.