



Genesis 2011 - Lesson 1A

Chapter 1:1-5

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- Overview of the Book
 - Two parts
 - Beginning of all things (Chap 1-11)
 - Beginning of the Jewish race and nation (12-50)
 - Genesis may be the most important book of the Bible
 - Some consider it a book of stories (Adam & Eve, Cain & Abel, Noah, etc.)
 - Most important written work in history
 - Foundation of all things
 - Matter, energy, life, marriage, family, society, morality, Law, even the 7-day week
 - Book of firsts
 - First human beings, marriage, birth, death, lie, trial, murder, first self-defense, ownership of property, natural death, rainfall, boat, nations formed, cities built, calendar established, first example of God's grace, first covenant, on and on
 - Most quoted by other Bible authors, except Psalms and Isaiah
 - Quoted as literal text by Jesus Himself
 - By itself, Genesis reveals virtually everything we need to know about the person of God and man's relationship to God
 - Reveals His character, nature and person
 - His purpose for the creation
 - Genesis also explains much about man
 - Reveals the source of our character
 - Reveals our purpose for existence and the reason for our condition
 - And it reveals God's intentions for our relationship with Him
 - Genesis makes sense of everything in life
- Author & Time
 - Moses wrote the Torah (around 1445-1405 while wandering in the desert)
 - Originally 1 work – not split into 5 books (Mark 12:26)

Mark 12:26 “But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB’?”

- Covers human history from about 4,000 BC – 1800 BC
 - Must go from Exodus to Revelation to cover an equal amount of time
- Name Genesis
 - Taken from the Hebrew word *toldot*, which means the generations

- The Greek translation of the OT (Septuagint) translated this word into *geneseos*, from which we get Genesis

Gen. 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Gen. 1:2 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.

- The heavens and earth refers to the physical earth and the atmosphere
 - Not the heaven where God dwells
 - We will examine why a little later
 - From the first verse, “In the beginning, God...” we learn four important things
 - First, our world and everything in it had a beginning
 - There was a point before this existed
 - Every man has contemplated the question of where did everything begin
 - Even atheists pursue the question of the beginning of all things
 - The theory of the Big Bang is the secular answer
 - But it still begs a question of where did the material for the Big Bang come from?
 - The reason the unbelieving world has no answer for what came before everything, is that they limit their sources of information
 - They will only accept answers taken from what can be observed
 - But since we can only observe what already exists, we can never hope to learn what came before things existed
 - We must seek our answers from a source that existed before the creation of all things
 - We must be willing to acknowledge that there was a source of all things, which implies an authority, a judge
 - It also implies that if everything had a beginning, then it likely has an end as well
 - There will also be a point when it has ceased to exist

2Pet. 3:3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts,

2Pet. 3:4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.”

2Pet. 3:5 For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water,

2Pet. 3:6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded

with water.

2Pet. 3:7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

- The unwillingness to acknowledge the Biblical account of creation begins with an unwillingness to acknowledge a higher authority Who holds us accountable
 - Revelation tells us that this world does indeed have an end

Rev. 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.

- The irony: we are eternal but this world has an end
 - This is the opposite of the world's viewpoint
 - The world teaches we are temporary but the world is billions of years old and will never cease
- Secondly, Gen 1:1 teaches that God existed before all else
 - "In the beginning, God"...He was already there
 - God was around before the physical creation
 - Therefore nothing in the creation is equal to, or as powerful as, God
 - Nothing in the creation can outlast God
 - Nothing in the creation can contend with God
- Third, time itself is measured according to the origin of the Creation, not by the origin of God's existence
 - Time is a part of creation itself, so the passage of time did not exist until the creation itself existed
 - More importantly, the very existence of time is a feature of Creation to help us understand the beginning from the end
 - Once the end comes, then time will take on a new meaning
 - Or perhaps it will disappear as well
- Finally, the opening line of Gen 1:1 single-handedly contradicts six popular philosophies in our world today
 - Atheism—God does exist.
 - Pantheism—God is distinct from His creation.
 - Polytheism—"Created" is singular in the text.
 - Radical materialism (matter is eternal)—Matter had a supernatural origin (emphasis on origin).
 - Naturalism (evolutionism)—Creation took place when someone outside nature intervened (emphasis on process).
 - Fatalism—A personal God freely chose to create.
- Among Christians, the opening two verses of Genesis give rise to a fair amount of

controversy

- First, the Traditional view
 - Verse 1 & 2 are a summary of the entire chapter
 - Verse two describes an early starting point for God's work
 - Verse 3 and later describe the successive steps of creation as the world increases in order and complexity
- Second, the Gap Theory (Recreation Theory)
 - Stems out of the language in verses 1 & 2
 - Gap theory says that verse 1 is the initial formation of the earth
 - Verse 2 is God's judgment on the earth (due to Satan's Fall)
 - Verse 3 begins God's reforming of the earth
 - Support for Gap Theory
 - Language
 - *Erets hayah tohu bohu (Earth was formless and void)*
 - Disjunctive Conjunction Subject Verb
 - In other places where a similar construct is used, the verb is translated "became"
 - The formless and void phrase can be read as a phrase used in Isaiah 34:11 and Jer 4:23 to describe a state of judgment
 - Satan's description in Ezek 28 suggests a Creation with Satan prior to His fall
 - Against Gap Theory
 - Similar structure to the beginning of Chapter 2
 - Hebrew grammar would expect a different verb construct if it were describing items in a sequential order
 - Earth and heavens are described as beginning in verses 6-10
 - All Biblical cross references say the earth was created in 6 days, leaving no time for the earlier creation
 - Strange interpretation of the text – not the natural reading
- Some try to use the Gap Theory to find room to place the dinosaurs in between
 - We will address this later (end of Chapter 1)
- Looking at the start of the creation process
 - God begins creation with an initial stage where everything is formless and void with the Spirit hovering (*rachaph* - fluttering)
 - God is already shown as present in two Persons here
 - John 1 adds the third Person

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:2 He was in the beginning with God.

John 1:3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

- The earth was formless and void, meaning it was chaos
 - The Hebrew words are *tohu* and *bohu*
 - *Tohu* means confusion or without meaning
 - *Bohu* means empty, a vacuum
 - And there was darkness over the deep
 - The deep here is literally *tehom*, which is abyss
 - It can also refer to deep water
 - But deep water came to be called *tehom* because it resembled a dark abyss
 - So shouldn't imagine water at this point
 - We should understand that Moses is describing the creation as completely without physical form, utterly dark and completely without order
- The only thing that matches that description is matter, absent any form or order
- Then, the Spirit is seen to be moving or hovering over the deep
 - The Spirit seems to be introducing energy into the matter
 - This understanding would seem to match our understanding of how matter and energy are intimately connected
 - $E=mc^2$
 - The only thing missing is light

Gen. 1:3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

Gen. 1:4 God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.

Gen. 1:5 God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

- The basic equation explaining all matter and energy in all the universe, is consistent with the Bible's description of creation
 - Before anything existed God created all matter, formless and dark
 - God created everything *ex nihilo* or from nothing
 - God then introduced all energy
- Then, God spoke light into existence
 - Here we see confirmation of the Third Person of the Trinity
 - The Word was Jesus acting to bring Light into existence
 - He saw light was "good"

- Saw – *raah* – reflected upon, concluded
- Good – *tob* – good as in best, beneficial
 - Good (vs. bad) implies a purpose
 - God can only do good
 - So why make the statement?
 - It implies this light is good or beneficial for something
 - What?
- And God separated light from darkness
 - God named the light and dark
 - Naming means one has authority (sovereignty) over something
 - What two things are most curious about this description of creation?
 - Light without an apparent source
 - Where does it come from? God
 - Darkness is “created”
 - Not merely the absence of light

Is. 45:6 That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun

That there is no one besides Me.

I am the LORD, and there is no other,

Is. 45:7 The One forming light and creating darkness,

Causing well-being and creating calamity;

I am the LORD who does all these.

- So God sets about to create the world with light and dark from the beginning
 - And these features are present in the universe before there are any celestial bodies
 - In fact, the Sun and Moon don't arrive until Day 4 in Creation
 - This fact leads us to discover an important pattern or code in the first 6 days of Creation
 - In the first three days we will see God creating spaces
 - In the second three days, He will create the objects to fill those spaces
 - And by this pattern, we'll come to understand His purpose in the creation itself
 - That answer awaits our arrival to study Day 6
 - For now, let's go back to examining the purpose of God creating light and darkness
 - This dichotomy is even more interesting when you discover that in the new Heavens and Earth, there won't be darkness
 - Rev 21:25 tells us that the NH&E have no darkness

- So if God has determined that He doesn't need darkness in the eternal order, why did He include it in the first Earth?
- Well, consider how God has consistently linked light & dark with good & evil

Job 30:26 “When I expected good, then evil came;
When I waited for light, then darkness came.

Psa. 104:19 He made the moon for the seasons;
The sun knows the place of its setting.
Psa. 104:20 You appoint darkness and it becomes night,
In which all the beasts of the forest prowl about.

Is. 9:2 The people who walk in darkness
Will see a great light;
Those who live in a dark land,
The light will shine on them.
Is. 9:3 You shall multiply the nation,
You shall increase their gladness;
They will be glad in Your presence
As with the gladness of harvest,
As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

- It would seem God has created the world with two sides, light and dark, so they could serve as powerful metaphors for good and evil
 - Which also suggests that God was already anticipating and planning for the entry of sin into His creation
 - Which would also explain why the future New Heavens and Earth will lack a night

Rev. 21:4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

- So as we continue studying through Genesis 1, we have two puzzles to solve
 - Why does God describe his work as “good?”
 - And why is God embedding creation in ways different than the way He eventually creates the eternal order?
 - In particular, with metaphors or symbols of evil