

Genesis Chapter 1
Gen.1:1-2:3; Jn.1:1-5; Col.1:15-20
14062-B August 13, 2014

I. The Bible starts its account at the beginning. John 1:1-5; Colossians 1:15-20; Gen.1:1-2

A. Remember the purpose of Genesis: To reveal the creation, fall, and redemption themes.

1. Not to answer all questions of physics, history, chronology.
 - a) There are unanswered questions, loose ends, but they do not contribute to the story.
2. Not to satisfy skepticism.
 - a) Radical skepticism is self-defeating and a form of idolatry.

II. Genesis 1:1-2:3

A. God brought everything into existence from nothing. 1-2

1. Not from pre-existing matter.
2. Not as an emanation of himself. (Pantheism/Panentheism)
3. Note the Trinitarian echoes.
 - a) Father, Son, Spirit all involved here according to the whole Bible.

B. God made it all orderly and purposeful and very good. 3-31

1. Day 1. Light/Energy: 3-5
2. Day 2. Water above and below. 6-8
3. Day 3. Land/Sea/ Plant life with reproduction. 9-13
4. Day 4. Receptacles for the light: 14-19
 - a) Sun, moon, stars, the timepiece of the universe
5. Day 5. Creatures for water and sky. 20-23
 - a) Dinosaurs? V.21 "Giant sea creatures." tannin gedolim. Tannin = serpent/reptile. (Gerald Schroeder, *Science of God*, p.201)
6. Day 6. Creatures for the land and humanity. 24-31.
 - a) Let us make man in our image. Interesting plural. 26

C. God finished it. Rested on the 7th day. 2:1-3

1. Day 7. The Lord's Personal Day.
 - a) Sabbath. He tells us to rest one day, too. To be reminded that our work, while not done, rests in His work which is done. A deed of faith to rest.
2. Completion, not a cyclical history.
3. A new Rest began in Christ, pointing to the next age. Heb.4

III. Pastoral advice on navigating Genesis 1-2 in our era. Three things to think:

A. All Truth is God's Truth. It's our interpretations of it that divide us.

1. If God created the material world and says it reveals things (general revelation Ps.19; Rom.1:18-20) and if he also gave his Word to us (special revelation), then the knowledge we gain from each, *if interpreted correctly*, will mesh together.
2. In other words, there is no real war between science and the Bible. If you're creating one you don't have a biblical worldview.
3. Our problems are with the *interpretation* of what we see through science and what we read in the Bible. (Carson, *The God Who Is There* chapter 1)
 - a) Science has more disagreement about origins than some folks think.
 - (1) It describes mechanisms without explaining causes.
 - b) Theology has more disagreement about interpretation of Genesis than some folks think.
 - (1) Clear back to Augustine there was question about how to interpret Gen.1

- B. All Christians agree that God created. They just disagree on how. 2 basic ways to blend natural and special revelation:
1. A quick creation: Creation in six “normal” 24 hour days and a young earth.
 - a) This implies creation with the appearance of age, miraculously accelerating the process.
 - b) There is nothing intrinsically impossible about this if there is a God who creates out of nothing.
 2. A long creation: Creation through time commensurate with Big Bang cosmology and current scientific interpretation of the evidence. Two broad types of interpretation here.
 - a) The Biblical text leaves room for day-ages in which God created in stages. (Gap Theory, Day-Age Theory, Theistic Evolution)
 - b) The Biblical text is a literary device designed to address the fact of creation without addressing how long it took.
 - (1) The Framework Theory and others. Non-Chronological, poetic, etc.
- C. The gospel is the grid.
1. The best course for spiritual growth in Christ is to look at the minimum reality necessary to make sense of the rest of the Bible and the gospel.
 2. The length of time it took to create has no bearing on the gospel.

IV. **Four Crucial Realities you must know to grow in Christ.**

- A. God is there and he alone is eternal. The existence of God is the presupposition that makes sense of life. And it is a Presupposition. The only one that works. Heb.11:6
1. The one big cosmic question. Why is there anything at all, instead of nothing?
 - a) If anything at all exists, something must have always existed.
 - b) That Something is either personal or impersonal. Mind or Stuff.
 - c) It makes more sense that Mind created Stuff than that Stuff created Mind.
 2. 4 big human questions. Ravi Zacharias’
 - a) Origins: Personal and specific Creation
 - (1) You are more valuable than many sparrows. Matt.10:29-31
 - (2) Naturalism says we are complete accidents, including our ability to think, beauty, love, relationship, etc.
 - b) Meaning: Knowing, loving and glorifying God.
 - (1) Jesus summed up the entire Law with the Shema and Lev.19:18 (Mk.12:29-31).
 - (2) Naturalism says there is meaning, but it’s hard to see where it comes from if we are just accidents in a universe that will die.
 - c) Morality: God’s character revealed in His Word/Law.
 - (1) The fruit of the Spirit.
 - (a) Love, Joy, Peace (Gal.5:22ff)
 - (2) The expression of God’s Word/law.
 - (a) Moral, ethical, spiritual justice, goodness, righteousness in community.
 - (b) What makes the Law dangerous to us is not that it requires justice and goodness in community, but that we cannot maintain these things and thus fall under its curse.
 - (3) Naturalism says there is morality, but it has been hijacked from the gospel and/or the Bible. This is Intellectual Property Theft.
 - d) Destiny: The fulfillment of all of these forever. Ultimate Rest...
 - (1) A re-created universe without evil and with the fulfillment of all the above.
 - (2) Naturalism says that we will cease to exist and so will the universe, for no reason.

B. There is only one God and he is a Person. *He did all these thing ...*

1. Monotheism: The main issue for the original hearers

- a) Not how long it took God to create, but the fact that there is only one God and he did create everything.
- b) Polytheism/henotheism
 - (1) Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Stoicism, Epicureanism.
- c) Monism/Pantheism/Panentheism is not true.
 - (1) Monism. This is the primary view behind most New Age metaphysics.

2. Personal Ultimate. A main message for our world. Ultimate reality is a Person, not molecules.

a) *Knowledge of Reality is Relational.*

- (1) All matter is sourced in the Spirit, the Mind of God. Which means that physical matter, including the “laws of physics,” is the material extension of a personal and expressed will for life—God’s spoken, expressed desire that matter and life exist with Him as the creative and sustaining Source.

- (2) *Which is why a relationship with God is crucial to thinking Truth and understanding Reality. Pr.1:7*

b) *This is why evil is a broken relationship, not just a broken rule.*

C. The material world is very good and you should like it. *7 times he says it’s good*

1. Normal Life is Holy!! Don’t be a Gnostic.

- a) It is not “more godly or spiritual” to reject physical life.

2. He will re-create an even more excellent world. Rev.21-22

- a) He is a gardener, a builder, an artist, a lover.

3. God likes material life enough to become a part of it permanently! Jn.1:1-5

D. The Word of God is the Source of life and you should absorb it. *He spoke ...*

1. The expression of His mind is source and sustenance of life materially and spiritually. Deut.8:3; Matt.4:4

2. God communicates all the time to all of us. Rom.1:18-19. Ears to hear?

3. Refusal to listen to Him and factor in His power is the root of all sorts of metaphysical error. Mark.12:24

V. ***The Ultimate Word of God is a Person. Which is why we must come to the Word made Flesh in order to understand anything else in God’s mind. Jn.1:1-5; 14-18.***

- 1. Jn.14:6. I Am the Way, Truth, Life.