

Text: Genesis 1:1-2:3

Title: In the Beginning

Truth: God created everything. Implication: God rules everything.

Date/Location: Sunday August 21, 2022 at FBC

Introduction

The book of Genesis is critical to our understanding of the way things really are—and how they are supposed to be. If “All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten,” then it is all the more true that all you need to understand the world is in Genesis! The book teaches about God, creation, man, evil, Satan, faith, redemption, providence, immorality, and a bevy of other topics. It recounts early world history, the origin of people groups, languages, and the work week, and the “genesis” of the Jewish nation.

I. High Level Outline

The key term for outlining the book is “history” or “generations.” It occurs 13 times in the book and divides Genesis into 11 major sections. The outline below reflects these sections by using the word “History” in each outline point. The three “extra” references to the word “generations” are found in the middle of their respective sections at 10:32, 25:13, and 36:9. As you read the book, keep in mind these headings and you will keep yourself properly oriented.

1. Creation, 1:1-2:3
2. History of Creation through the Fall and Cain and Abel, 2:4-4:26
3. History of Adam’s family through the spread of evil, 5:1-6:8
4. History of Noah through the flood, 6:9-9:29
5. History of Noah’s Sons, Table of Nations, Tower of Babel, 10:1-11:9
6. History of Shem’s family to Terah, 11:10-11:26
7. History of Terah’s family through Abraham, 11:27-25:11
8. History of Ishmael’s family, 25:12-18
9. History of Isaac’s family, account of Jacob, 25:19-35:29
10. History of Esau’s family, the Edomites, 36:1-36:43
11. History of Jacob’s family, Joseph, travel to Egypt, 37:1-50:26

II. What We Learn about God in Creation

- A. We learn something about God by looking at His creation. So says Romans 1:18-20, where Paul explains that the eternal power and divine nature of God are evidence by the things that are made and have been so since the dawn of creation.
- B. We can see the marvelous wisdom of the divine nature in what He made. This causes me to pause because I think of how beautiful and complex the creation is, and then remember that what we see today came after the original creation was damaged by sin, scoured clean by the Flood, and variously devastated by millennia of human mismanagement and war, and beautified by human work and the restorative powers built into nature by nature's God.
- C. If what remains is glorious, how much more glorious the creation was in its original state. And how much more glorious it will be when the Lord returns to rule the world...and later re-creates the world in perfect righteousness (2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21:1).
- D. The glories of creation are often the focus of mankind's eyes, who divert their view away from the creator, instead making the creation into an idol, as in sun or moon worship, or the worship of various animal-like deities (Romans 1:23, 25). But the creation is supposed to point us to the creator (Psalm 19:1-6).

III. What We Believe About Genesis

- If you are new to Fellowship Bible Church, or to Christianity, or are wondering what Christians like us believe, we start in Genesis.
- A. The Word of God, the Bible, is inerrant, infallible, and authoritative from the very first words in Genesis. Like the rest of the Bible, we believe Genesis according to the plain, literal school of interpretation. That is, we believe in an originalist hermeneutic. The book of Genesis is a straightforward narrative. Its opening chapters are not poetry or myth or figurative or metaphorical.
 - B. God created all things. He did so through the agency of His Son, whom we know as the God-man Jesus Christ, and with the assistance of His Spirit. All three members of the Triune God were

involved in the creation and continued to be involved throughout all of the history recorded in Genesis, up to the present day.

- C. We do not believe in macro-evolution, that is, molecules-to-man evolution. Said another way, we believe that random mutations do *not* add information to the genome and therefore cannot create new species. We do not believe a monkey became a man. Micro-evolution is indeed built into the creation by God to allow the species to adapt to their surroundings.
- D. We do not believe that the earth and universe is millions of years old. The creation is fairly recent—only thousands of years, not millions or billions. Why that is will become evident as our study of the early chapters of Genesis unfolds.
- E. We believe that God personally created the earth and cosmos for His glory and for the good of His creation. He graciously granted mankind to steward His creation, but we failed in that task.
- F. We believe God created everything out of nothing in six days and ceased from creation on the seventh day. That is why our week is seven days long. The very pinnacle of creation was man and woman, Adam and Eve. God made Adam out of the dust of the ground and made Eve out of Adam. They were real people whom God directed to keep the Garden of Eden, manage the entire world, and fill it with humanity. He gave them one prohibition, namely, to not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

IV. The Creation of a Very Good World, 1:1-2:3

God executed several creative acts which are summarized in the following outline points.

- A. Day 1: An unformed and unfilled world with a vast sea and light source, 1:1-5. We do not believe that God did this in eons past followed by a long intermission before the events of verse 2 happened. This belief is called the gap theory. There is no gap. How do we know? See Exodus 31:17. If that is not explicit enough, then turn to the 10 commandments in Exodus 20:11: “For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.” This is why the Jewish people were instructed to work six days and rest the seventh.

More to the point, *everything* was made in six days, including heaven and the angels. Notice how the Word of God guides our beliefs. An appeal to *any other authority* is incorrect because those authorities were not present, did not design the creation, and are not omnipotent and omniscient.

The light was a temporary “work light” which well may have been light from God’s own glory. The Sun and Moon were not created until day 4. The day/night cycle began.

- B. Day 2: The heavens, 1:6-8. The exact meaning of *firmament* is difficult. I take it that God formed the heavens from verse 1 to now include earth’s atmosphere and stellar space, and perhaps also the third heaven as we call it, where God dwells. Picture the earth as the hole inside a spherical “donut.” The spherical donut is like the firmament—the stuff “above” and “outside” of earth. Then there is some kind of layer of water above and outside of the outer surface of the donut. How that works is not clear to me.
- C. Day 3: Dry land, seas, plant life, 1:9-13. Next was an uplift of land masses, or a depressing of land to form seabeds. In any case, water ran off the ground and gathered into huge bodies of water perfectly proportioned with the rest of the earth to keep the land temperate for plant and animal life. God then implemented the design of grass, herbs, and fruit trees which had the means of reproduction in themselves via seeds. It is amazing how it works. No machine can do that! It appears that God created a “forest” instead of just one of each kind of plant, so that the earth immediately “greened up” instead of being desolate for years until seeds reached every part of the globe.
- D. Day 4: Sun, Moon, and stars, 1:14-19. These lights had a purpose: to indicate signs and seasons, days, and years, and to give light for the inhabitants of earth. The temporary light source was apparently no longer necessary at this point. I personally do not know how to read the stars to differentiate the four seasons, but others have studied that matter thoroughly. What about the “signs” that stars indicate? Some waste their time trying to find astrology-type signs in the stars. These signs are simply navigational aids like that used by the wise men in Matthew 2, or

especially by mariners on the sea. There are star arrangements called constellations that are of interest to human observers. But there is no “gospel in the stars” whereby mankind may understand the ways of God.

E. Day 5: Sea creatures, birds, 1:20-23. Now begins the creation of animals. Again, bunches of each sort of animal seem to have sprung into existence instead of just one pair of each. God filled the waters and air with creatures that have instinctual knowledge and can reproduce without outside assistance. God blessed the animal life He had made. This blessing was *that*—a blessing—but it was also in effect a command. They would be blessed, and they had to do what was necessary to implement the blessing of filling the earth and being numerous.

Note: Seven times along the way in Genesis 1, the text says that God saw the things He had made, and they were *good*. At the end, it was all *very good* (v. 31). There was no shortcoming, no evil, no immorality, no death of any sort in the creation. It was perfect. It was good as it was being built out, and it was very good once done.

When someone asks you why God created evil, tell them what we learn in Genesis 1—He didn’t. God did not create evil. He did not create disasters, or moral filth. He created a good world for two innocent people with free moral agency to live in, with known consequences if they did not follow the right path. As we will see in Genesis 3, that first couple turned it upside down. So, do not blame God for the problems that *we* create!

Why God *permitted* evil is a related but different matter. I find the arguments for the greater glory of God, for the greater good of man, and for the free will of mankind to be helpful. But whatever the case, we trust God has very good reasons for doing so.

F. Day 6: Land animals, humans, 1:24-31. The final creations of God are His most important. On Friday, God made all kinds of beasts, cattle, and creeping things. All this was good.

And then God created mankind. This is a summary statement that will be elaborated in Genesis 2. Humans are the only creation made in the image of God, which means we have a spiritual, moral, and personal likeness to God. People are *persons* like God the Father and God the Son and God the Spirit are persons—not people, but persons with intellect, emotion, will, etc. We have built-in morality, and the ability to be self-aware and communicate with others in complex language.

God created such that male-female pairs are able to reproduce and thus experience the blessing and follow the command of reproduction.¹ In addition, God told humans to *rule* the earth. They had charge of *everything* that God had just made. What a stewardship entrusted to the new man and his wife! This is a second way that people are set apart from the creation—actually *over* it. See Psalm 8:6-8. The implications of this are myriad.

It is curious that God said in verse 26, “Let US make man in OUR image...” Why the plural, do you suppose?

There is one more matter that God addressed, and that was the nourishment of the newly created beings. God assigned them the plants and fruit trees for food. Animals had the same for their diet. From the creation account, it appears that people and animals were herbivores, not carnivores.

G. Day 7: Rest from creation on the seventh (Sabbath) day, 2:1-3. God did no more creative work on the seventh day. Everything was finished, so God ended the creation work and rested. Because of this, God blessed and sanctified Saturday (Sabbath = seventh day). In the Law given to Moses (at least 2500 years later) it was set aside as a special day for the Jewish people as a sign of their

¹ There is some debate as to whether “be fruitful...” is a blessing or a command. I take it to have features of both a pronouncement of blessing *and* command. If humanity as a whole does not follow the command of God, we rob ourselves of participating in the blessing. In other words, there are *means* to experience the blessing of God. This does not mean every single person can or will be involved in multiplication, for some are given to be single in their service of the Lord. Others are unable to have children. But the society *as a whole* should be oriented in the fruitful direction, and it will experience the favor of the creative blessing of God.

covenant with God (Exodus 31:13). It reminded them that they were also set apart for God.

Conclusion

I recommend you and your students learn about modern cosmology and evolution in order to be conversant with “people of the culture” today. Do not be afraid to hear it taught. But have a strong foundation in creationism. Do not be fooled by the “self-organizing chaos” theory promoted today. It is just a new “learned” form of pagan thought. Learn how to speak kindly to evolution-believers about your own beliefs and where they come from. Be able to show them by manner and content that you are reasonable and have a God-honoring answer for their view. And do not be afraid of science. Use it to glorify God like many scientists of old.

Recognize in all of this that God made the universe, and derivatively, he made YOU. You are responsible to Him.

MAP

References

Terry Mortenson, “The Firmament: What Did God Create on Day 2?” in *Answers Research Journal* 13 (2020) 113–133.