

At the Start

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[0 : 00] Turn to Genesis chapter 1, just turn to the first page where the scripture is, easy to find. Over the next several Sunday mornings, we're going to be looking at a series from Genesis 1 through 11.

We live in a world that feels like it's the worst time ever for a lot of folks. We live in a world full of chaos. We live in a world full of conflict.

The devil is on attack. And he is trying his best to, at the most, destroy lives and, at the least, to disrupt lives.

And it is real. It is now. Even so, Lord Jesus, quickly come. I mean, but what I want you to know and understand through this series is, this is not new.

What is true today has always been. Genesis 1 through 11 is not only a history that is unparalleled.

[1 : 15] The pagan versions do not match up to it that try to explain what happened before people were here, for one, and when the first people were here.

But it's not only that, it's also a blueprint of sorts. It's like a drawing of the construction of the world. And if you've ever built a building, you know that the blueprints or the drawings are vitally important, that everybody has the same ones.

If there's an update, there needs to all be updated. Everybody needs the same so they know what the plan is. And when you build that building, it is best not to throw those away.

You need to hold on to them. Because there'll come a day when a building this old, people who made the decisions on that are gone. And you better have some kind of plan to know how this building is made up, what needs to take place.

[2 : 25] Well, in reality, Genesis 1 through 11 is kind of a blueprint. It is God's design and a layout for where we really are and how this world is aligned.

There is some of the most fascinating scriptures in all of the Bible in this section. And it's also some of the most difficult. And the simple facts are sometimes fairly easy.

But the deeper thematic messages are there are worth our effort as well. And this is a scripture that is handled a lot. Handled so much that it can tend to be confusing.

And the reality is, it needs to be stated from the beginning, that all of our curiosities won't be answered.

All of our curiosities cannot be answered. The reality is that our finite minds cannot fathom the ways of an almighty God. If we could, he wouldn't be God.

[3 : 36] Therefore, he reveals his work to us in ways that we can understand. And just like if you're having a conversation with a small child that asks questions.

You can't always answer all their questions to their satisfaction. And God cannot answer our questions to our satisfaction.

And is not concerned with answering our questions to our satisfaction, quite honestly. Therefore, he reveals his work to us in ways that we can understand. And he reveals what he wants us to know and what we ought to understand.

And so I want us to look at this from the start. Genesis chapter 1, beginning in verse 1, says this. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, let there be light, and there was light.

[4 : 44] And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And there was evening, and there was morning the first day.

And God said, let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters. And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse, and it was so.

And God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening, and there was morning the second day. And God said, let the waters under the heavens be gathered together in one place, and let the dry place appear, the dry land appear.

And it was so. And God called the dry land earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called seas. And God saw that it was good. And God said, let the earth sprout vegetation, plant yielding seeds and fruit trees, bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind on the earth.

And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to its own kind, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind.

[6 : 00] And God saw that it was good, and there was evening, and there was morning the third day. I believe every jot and tittle of creation, every minute detail, and I believe it is important to grasp as much as we can.

I want to point out this morning, I want to point to the most important messages that are being taught in this scripture. The first is this.

Creation is about God. There's not a debate here about the existence of God. There's not a defense here about the proof of God.

It is a statement that God not only exists, but that God is involved in the most intimate way with the events of the earth and those who dwell in it.

He has been from the beginning. And when is the beginning? Well, let me tell you something that absolutely fascinates me.

[7 : 09] In the Hebrew, there is no article in those first three words. It's actually one word. In that statement, the thee does not exist at all.

It just says in beginning is a literal translation. Bereshoot is the word in Hebrew, and it means from the start, or he started creating.

It speaks not of the beginning of God, but the beginning of the earth and the universe. And earth has an age that is hotly debated age, but God is ageless.

And God is timeless. And God is eternal. So this is a declaration that the earth began by the voice of God, and it only came from God.

We're not to use these passages to try to prove God. That's not the purpose. The purpose and the successful attempt of Genesis is to declare God. And once you declare God, put your faith in him, and the rest of it will work itself out.

[8 : 15] It declares God as one making order out of, verse 2 says, without form or void. In other words, a wasteland.

An empty. And the emphasis upon God is also noticed, at least in the Hebrew mind, as a defeat of all man-made gods. When the sun was created to the pagan, that means the God of sun was defeated.

Because God Almighty developed the sun. The moon god. The god of the trees, of different types of vegetation. All the different gods that all the pagans could come up with.

To societies that believed in such that there's some kind of god behind every bush and upon every star. The biblical creation points to only one god who created it simply with his voice.

In days 5 and 6, the animals are created. It points to the fact that they have no divinity in themselves. They were created by the divine one. Creation is not about us.

[9 : 26] It's all about God. I'll tell you what else. Creation is also about Jesus. Jesus is right there in the midst of the creation.

I want you to consider something this morning. Why do you think the light comes on day one?

Where do you think that light comes from on day one?

Well, I will tell you, literally, Jesus is the light. In John chapter 8, Jesus spoke of that. John chapter 7 gives us the context in which Jesus said those words.

In John chapter 7 and John chapter 8, the Feast of the Booths, or the Feast of Tabernacles, as they call it, was going on. It was a time of harvest.

It was a feast that ran for seven days as a great celebration. It ran seven days before a great celebration on the eighth day.

[10:39] And it was a reminder of how God had provided for them in the desert. Of how God had led the Hebrews through the desert. And so annually, as the harvest came in, which was a celebrative time, and if you grow maters, you know that when the harvest comes in, it's a good time.

Start having mater sandwiches. You don't know what a mater is? I'm sorry. That's all I can say. You do know that when the maters come in, the first fruits are to come, you know, to the Lord or somebody that works for them.

So it's a great time of celebration. They took that time to pitch a tent, to build what they called a booth or a tabernacle, which is a dwelling place, temporary dwelling place.

They just camped out, I guess. They just camped out, I guess, for seven days, reminding themselves of how God had provided for 40 years in the desert.

How God had led them wandering in the wilderness. And during that feast, there were massive torches that were lit in the courts of the temple.

[11:55] Historians tell us that these towers of light that were built for this occasion, when they were lit at night, they lit up a quarter of the city.

And it was a reminder of how God had led the Israelites with a fire by night in the wilderness or the desert. More than just God providing light, the ceremony celebrated the Shekinah glory that led Israel for 40 years in the wilderness.

And Shekinah is a Hebrew word that means dwelling. In other words, it celebrated the glory of the dwelling of God being with them. And they celebrated his presence through burning light.

In and around that setting, Jesus stood up, possibly between two of those lights, and said, I am the light of the world.

He was declaring his divinity when he said it. I am the light. Therefore, he is the one that light comes from. And if you don't believe that, I want you to notice something. It's in Genesis chapter 1, 3 through 5.

[13:06] And God said, let there be light. And there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. And God called the light day. And the darkness he called night. And there was evening.

And there was morning the first day. And then in verse 14, it says this. And God said, let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years.

And let them be light in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth. And it was so. And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night and the stars.

And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth to rule over the day and over the night to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening. And there was morning the fourth day.

So get this. So light was made. And then the stars were made. Including the sun. Some would say that is scientifically impossible to have light before you had what appears to be the source of light.

[14:14] That is, of course, unless there is another source of light. By the way, these days of creation, if the sun was created on the fourth day, And we determine a day by when the sun comes up and down, then how do you measure the days?

Did God create the earth in 24-hour days? If he wanted to, he did. But don't forget something, folks. He spoke.

Spoke. And it was. And it was good. But don't limit God's days to yours either.

Don't stretch out God's days to be as long as you either. God determined the days. And by the way, he still does. Let me give you some food for thought. 2 Peter 3, verse 8 says, But don't overlook this one fact, beloved, That with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

And then in Psalm 90, verse 4, For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night. Don't limit God's days to our days. Could he do it in 24 hours?

[15:37] I believe he could have done it instantaneously. As a matter of fact, I believe Scripture says he did. Because he spoke it. And it was. Of course he could. Was he relying on the sun to dictate what was done each day?

No. The sun was not developed in day one. Not until day four. And it was done in God's time by his days. The light of day is God himself.

The creator is the source of light. Is that odd to you? It shouldn't be. It is throughout Scripture. In Exodus chapter 13, God led them with a cloud by day.

And God led them with a pillar of fire at night. As we've mentioned. In Exodus chapter 33, the radiant glory of the Lord radiated like a light from Moses' face.

Isaiah chapter 60, verse 19 and 20 talks about the glory of heaven. And it says this, The sun shall be no more. Your light by day.

[16:40] Nor for brightness shall the moon give you light. But the Lord will be your everlasting light. And your God will be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down. Nor your moon withdraw itself.

For the Lord will be your everlasting light. And your days of mourning shall be ended. In Matthew chapter 17, verse 2, it talks about the transfiguration of Jesus.

And it says as he transfigured before the Lord, he shone, his body shone like a light. In 2 Corinthians 4, 6 applies to this passage when it says, For God said, let light shine out of the darkness.

Has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The light of the world is the one that lit the work of creation. Creation is about Jesus.

He is the one that gave it in the beginning. John chapter 1, verse 1 through 4 says this, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[17:43] He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

Not only is he the one that gave it then, he's the one that gives it now. John 18, verse 12, I just told you he said, I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. Not only does he give it now, he's the one that will give it in the end. Revelation 21, verse 23, And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives us light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

He lit it, he created it, and let me reiterate, John 1, verse 3, All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

He gets the credit. 1 Corinthians 8, verse 6, For there's one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and from whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we exist.

[19:06] There is no doubt. There is no doubt. Colossians chapter 1, verse 16, For by him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities.

All things were created through him. All things were created through him and for him. And again, he gets the credit. He'll get the credit in the end as well. Revelation 4, 11 says, Worthy are you, O Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things.

And by your will, they existed and were created. I want you to understand that we're not the focus. The earth is not the focus of creation.

Creation is about God. Creation is about Jesus. And creation is also about God's order.

The cosmos was simply without form and void. Literally, it was a, literally the word says, a wasteful void.

[20:26] There was no order. There was only chaos. And God brought order. It speaks in verse six of the expanse that separated the waters.

That he built the expanse to cut through the chaos and dividing the chaos of the waters of space, as it says, and the chaos of the waters of earth.

The sky, as we see, or the expanse, as it is called, was the way that God brought order to the chaos and separated earth from sky.

Now, if that does not make sense to you, I want you to understand the Hebrew mindset. The Old Testament is written in Hebrew. First audience was a Hebrew mindset.

And I want you to understand it from a Hebrew mindset. Without the capabilities of exploration, that we have today, the Hebrews feared the unknown of the deep sea.

[21:38] They feared it. They didn't know all the details. They didn't have sonar technology to see how deep waters were. They didn't know all that was under the water and all those things.

They didn't have meteorologists that had radars that could figure out what the weather was going to be before you got there and all those things. They just knew that people went out to sea and sometimes they never came back.

And if you're here this morning and there's never been a time in your life when you've asked the Lord Jesus to forgive you of your sins, to cleanse them and remove them and allow you to be renewed with the Father, I want to encourage you to do that today. I'll be happy to guide you in that. We're going to stand and sing in just a moment. And that is primarily for you to be able to respond to that. You come and we'll talk. Maybe you're here this morning and you have done that. You've done that privately, but you've never made that public. You need to make that public. You need to let others know that. Jesus told us by his example and by his commission that we do that through baptism.

[30 : 41] If you've never been baptized as a believer, I want you to know that's the first step of obedience when you give your heart and life to the Lord Jesus. And without that in your life, there'll be a hindrance, I promise you.

From being everything that God would have you to be, I encourage you to respond to him in obedience. Maybe God's leading you to be a part of this church. You want to begin the year with a church family that you feel like God's drawing you to.

I encourage you, if God's doing that in your life, to respond to him in obedience and trust him with the rest. We'll be happy to guide you in that process.

Or maybe you're here this morning and you're feeling chaotic. You're feeling a little without form. At least parts of your life are. Or at least loved ones in your life are.

And you need to lay something down before the Lord today. You need to start new today. Allowing God to cleanse you, to change you, to help you to walk in the way that you need to.

[31 : 45] Let's begin this year the right way together. By putting God first and foremost in all of our lives. Lord Jesus, I love you.

I thank you for your word. I thank you, dear God, for the clarity of it. I pray that you'll help us to follow it, to read it, to obediently do it.

And that, God, you'll lead us today to do only and everything that you'd have us to do, Father. We thank you for your word. Thank you for the opportunity of worship.

Help us to do it wholeheartedly by simply being obedient right now, oh God, I pray. In Jesus' precious name, amen. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.