

Genesis 1:1-2

"In The Beginning..."

How many of you would agree w/me that God has great timing ☺? I'm so stoked that we (as a body) are in a season whereby God is drawing us back to the beginning. It's been in my heart well before the Bill Nye & Ken Ham debate ever surfaced ☺. **This in no way a response to the movie "Noah", it's just God's sovereign timing to bring us back & familiarize, or perhaps refresh us w/the basic foundational/fundamental truths found in the book of Genesis.**

Now the word "Genesis" is actually a Greek word, the Hebrew word we're looking for is "Bereshith" which as you might imagine means "In the beginning". However when the Hebrew was translated into the Greek, giving us the Septuagint the word was translated "Genesis" which means, "Beginning" or "Origin".

Of course w/such a title one might expect to find the "beginning" or "origin" of all kinds of things, perhaps even *everything* in the book of Genesis. Well, we don't get the beginning of *everything* in the book of Genesis (which I'll develop a little more on that later) but we do have the beginning of the vast majority of things. For instance the book of Genesis brings to us the beginning of time, of the heavens & the earth, the creatures that fill the sea, the sky & the earth; we find the beginning of man, of woman, the 1st sin, the 1st murder, we find the 1st institution of marriage, of family, labor, of law & government, civilization, culture, sacrifice, ethnic groups, languages, cities, religion... it's all found 1st in the book of Genesis.

It's in Genesis that we 1st begin to learn of the Romance of Redemption. It's here that we discover God's love for mankind, His pursuit of mankind, His plan to bring forth a Savior who would redeem us from our sins, stand in our place & suffer in our stead.

The bible gives us what we call a "progressive revelation" of God's plan of redemption. It begins in broad (basically vague) manner & then God continues to dial in the scope making things clearer & clearer...

The promise of salvation comes as early as Genesis Ch 3, yet by Ch 6 the entire earth is corrupt & we'll discover that only Noah (being just & upright in the sight of God) finds grace in the eyes of the Lord. After the flood we'll continue to follow the genealogy of the nations that descended from Noah until we come to Abraham, & God (in His grace) will call Ab out of a pagan nation & make a covenant w/him promising him that in him all the families of the earth will be blessed. Meaning, Messiah would come forth from his lineage.

From Ab we'll meet Isaac & from Isaac Jacob, Jacob wrestles w/God & in the process is broken *by* God & receives a new name, "Israel". He has 12 sons who will become the 12 tribes of Israel & we learn that Messiah will come from the tribe of Judah (the Lion of the tribe of Judah). So we see the birth *of* & learn that Jesus will come forth *from* the nation of Israel & all these things happen right here in the book of Genesis. Never underestimate the critical/foundational importance of this "OT book" to your "NT life".

The doctrines of sin, redemption, justification by grace through faith, J.C., the personality & personhood of God, the kingdom of God, again; the promise of Messiah all have their foundation in the Book of Genesis. There are no less than 165 passages in the NT either quoted directly or referred to clearly from the book of Genesis; many of them quoted more than once making at least 200 quotations *from* or allusions *to* Genesis in your NT.

Jesus quoted from Genesis (Matt 19:4-6, 23:35). He believed it to be the infallible, inspired, inerrant word of God. Now if Jesus believed these words & you *don't* believe these words than how can you rightly say that you really believe in Jesus?

Here's my point; we do well to cement Genesis in it's fundamental, *foundational* place in our lives. The bible says, "*If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?*"¹ Listen to me, that's exactly what's happening in our nation (if not across this planet) today. The foundation of understanding that this universe, this planet, & the people on it are God's creation is being destroyed & therefore our society, our culture is crumbling.

You see if you believe, "In the beginning God created the heavens & the earth", then suddenly there is structure, there is purpose, there is a plan for life, there are absolute truths to guide & govern us given by God Himself, our Creator. Suddenly morals, standards of holiness, kindness & compassion make sense, the sanctity of life is realized. Why is a right relationship only recognized as being between a man & a woman as opposed to relationships of the same gender? All of these things come into focus & there's meaning to this thing that we call life if we will only realize/recognize, "In the beginning God created the heavens & the earth."

However if you subscribe to the theory of evolution, & you believe that out of nowhere there was a catastrophic cosmic explosion, that as Lawrence Krauss (Theoretical physicist & cosmologist, professor @ Arizona State University) proposes that we're all the result of exploding stars & that the atoms in your left hand may have come from a different star than the atoms in your right hand...

¹ The New King James Version. (1982). [Ps 11:3]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

...the man who is famous for saying, “Forget Jesus, the stars died so that you could be born”, now we’re suddenly the result of random, meaningless occurrences apart from the work of a loving Creator God.

& If we’re nothing more than a random chance of meaningless occurrences, now the dignity I bestow upon man is purely sentimental. Everything is relative, I’m no more significant in this universe than an amoeba & there’s really no greater law than the survival of the fittest. After all, if we simply made our climb out of the slime & went from the goo to the zoo to you, what purpose for existence could there possibly be outside of seeking to suck this life dry of all the personal pleasure I can?

If pregnancy is inconvenient, there’s no sanctity of life, simply have an abortion. If I’m drawn (sexually) toward an individual of my own gender, what difference does it make? If you got it & I want it, I’ll take it & if you get hurt or even killed in the process what’s that to me? What’s wrong w/pornography? There’s no absolute basis for law, for marriage, standards of decency or even the meaning of life...

Question, which mentality is more prevalent in our society? Why? It’s all a question of origins, it all comes down to going back to the beginning, how did we get here, why do we exist? We have to safeguard our foundations & all of these things find their answers in the book of Genesis...

Evolution denies the fall of man, the fact of sin, & the need for a Savior. It rejects God & the revelation of His word therefore we reject evolution w/every fiber of our being! Evolution can’t bridge the gap from something to nothing, from something to life & from life to humanity; that is, how did matter suddenly gain consciousness & a free will? Yet the Word of God resolves all of these issues & it does so in the book of Genesis.

Look at, underline & memorize Vs 1.

Vs 1

Well that’s rather matter of fact isn’t it? When you approach your bible you do so w/a presupposition & that is this; there is a God. God never defends Himself, He only declares Himself. “In the beginning... God.”

One day, students in one of Albert Einstein’s classes were saying they had decided there was no God. Einstein asked them how much of all the knowledge in the world they had among themselves collectively, as a class. The students discussed it for a while and decided they had 5% of all human knowledge among themselves. Einstein thought their estimate was a little generous, but he replied: “Is it possible God exists in the 95% you don’t know?”

The bible does not defend God's existence, it merely declares God's existence; it doesn't make elaborate arguments for His existence; but it does tell us how we can know that God exists. The psalmist proclaimed, *"The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world."*² Paul the apostle said, *"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they [mankind] are without excuse,"*³

Creation itself testifies to the existence of a Creator. We may comment more next time but to consider the variety, enormity & complexity of our universe, our planet, sea life, the animal kingdom, plant life, the complexity of the human anatomy & declare there is no God is willful ignorance & prideful arrogance. Something as simple as the building we sit in couldn't exist apart from design & deliberate/intentional action, yet man has the audacity to say that something as varied & complex as this universe happened through a series of random cosmic coincidences; foolish. *"The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."*⁴

"In the beginning, God." What a powerful statement; w/this single statement the bible refutes the atheist who says there is no God, the agnostic who says God can't be known, the polytheist who says there's many gods, the pantheist who says that "all nature is God", the materialist who believes that matter has been around forever & the fatalist who believes there's no real purpose, no divine plan behind creation & history...

Now when the scripture says, "In the beginning" we need to understand something & that is this; it's speaking about the beginning of time, the beginning of matter, not the beginning of God. The bible is very clear that God has no beginning, He has no end, He is eternal in nature. *People often ask, "Where did God come from?" That's the question of a mind that thinks on a linear level (which is really all we're capable of). We can't really grasp the nature of the eternal, we know beginning & end, God isn't bound by time, He dwells outside the confines of time & space.* The bible declares, *"Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God."*⁵

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ps 19:1-4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ro 1:20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ps 14:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ps 90:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Before anything ever existed God was there, I told you earlier that Genesis doesn't give us the beginning of everything. One thing it doesn't give us is the beginning of God, because God has no beginning. He's not One who's been created, He's the Creator. Remember these words? *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."*⁶ You see, if all things were made through Him, than He Himself can't be made.

You say, "Wait a minute, I thought that passage in John was a reference to Jesus?" It is, "I thought we just read that 'God' created the heavens & the earth?" We did. ☺ Here's another one about Jesus (Col 1:16), *"For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him."*⁷

Now if that's blowing your mind wait till we get to Vs 2 ☺. Many people are familiar w/the Holy Spirit from the Day of Pentecost, yet in reality He makes His 1st appearance right here being instrumental in creation. "In the beginning God created the heavens & the earth."

Having said that I guess there's no better time than the present to bring up this Hebrew word for "God". It's the word "Elohim". You say, "What's that mean?" Well, it means "God" ☺. But here's the interesting part, the word Elohim (grammatically) is a plural word used as if it were singular. **The verbs & pronouns used w/Elohim should be in the plural, but when Elohim refers to the Lord God the verbs & pronouns are in the singular... What's the implication? 1 God, 3 Persons; it's as though God is a plurality of singularity (riddle me this, right?).**

Before time began God was complete w/in Himself, in John 17 Jesus said, *"And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."*⁸ & Again *"... for You loved Me before the foundation of the world."*⁹

"In the beginning God created the heavens & the earth." Here's another interesting word for you, it's the word "created". In Hebrew its "Bara", & it's always associated w/the creative acts of God, or the initiation of God. "Bara" is never linked to what man creates. The word for that is "Asa" which is the assembling of things that already exist.

⁶ The New King James Version. (1982). [Jn 1:1-3]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁷ The New King James Version. (1982). [Col 1:16]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁸ The New King James Version. (1982). [Jn 17:5]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁹ The New King James Version. (1982). [Jn 17:24]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Yet w/God it's "Bara" the creating of something out of nothing. Now to be fair we realize that Bara isn't always used in the context of creating something out of nothing, yet it is always used in connection w/the acts of God, & not w/man.

"In the beginning God (out nothing) created the heavens & the earth." How did He do that? W/a word. Here is the power of your God, w/a word He can speak & all of creation is brought into existence... Psalm 33, *"By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth."*¹⁰ & Again, *"Let all the earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."*¹¹

God created the heavens & the earth, space/matter/time, all the materials which He would begin to organize during the succeeding days of creation; all w/a word. Dr. Henry Morris paraphrases "The transcendent, omnipotent Godhead called into existence the space/mass/time universe."

Question; what was happening *before* the beginning, *before* God spoke the universe into existence? God doesn't act arbitrarily, so by the very fact that He created something that suggests to us that He had a grand plan in mind. That being the case, what was happening before Genesis 1:1?

(BTW, how many of you really believe Gen 1:1? I mean you *really* believe it w/all your heart? Than the rest of the bible poses no problems for you, if you can get past the 1st Vs of the bible than you understand that w/God nothing will be impossible).

B4 the "beginning"; what was happening? The bible teaches that there has been an eternal purpose in the heart of God to gather in one all things in Christ (Eph 1:10). It's as though God wrote out an enormously complex problem the "blackboard" of the universe & the *sum of it all* was resolved in Jesus.

So the mission of Jesus was foreordained *before* the foundation of the world. Peter tells us of Jesus, *"He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you"*¹²

Titus 1:2 tells us that God, who cannot lie, promised eternal life "*before* time began". The mystery of the gospel (1 Cor 2:7) was ordained *before* the ages. The grace that God has bestowed upon you was given you *before* time began (2 Timothy 1:9).

¹⁰ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ps 33:6). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ps 33:8-9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (1 Pe 1:20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

God ordained your relationship w/Him before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4). & We know that at some point before the beginning God created the angels, Job tells us that they were singing & shouting for joy at the creation of God (Job 38:7).

So there was plenty going on *before* the beginning, however *in the beginning* God created the heavens & the earth.

Vs 2

Evidently the matter that God created in Vs 1 was in the form of basic elements existing in a watery or molten matrix of sorts here called “the deep”. The earth was an empty formless mass, soil & water but no light. God would begin to form & fill the earth as the week progressed.

Now some want to see the “darkness” on the face of the deep as an enigmatic emblem of evil. However there’s really no evidence for conceiving that perspective here... We simply haven’t made it to Vs 3 where God says, “Let there be light”.

Something else many people want to purport here is that rather than the earth “was” w/out form, that the earth “became” w/out form & void. & They propose that between Gen 1:1 & 1:2 there is a gap of time (it’s called the “gap theory”), they say, “God doesn’t make things w/out form & void” & they will allow for the period of time to account for the fall of Satan (that’s why [they say] the earth became w/out form & void) & that’s why the earth is millions/billions of years old or whatever.

Now as for this “became w/out form” business, you should know that this is not the plain grammatical sense of the Hebrew language here. Also, as for the “gap theory” being used to account for an old earth, or the fossil record or whatever. We should readily recognize that when God created the earth He created it w/age dating factors.

When He created the trees (fully formed) even though they were a day old, they had rings that would date them decades, maybe centuries old. When He created Adam, he had the age dating factors of a fully mature man, but he was only a day old. So, the appearance of an old earth, w/a young earth biblical position holds no discrepancies as far as I can see.

As for the fossil record, you can’t have fossils apart from death & the bible is clear that death came through Adam (Rom 5:12), so you can’t have fossils before sin which entered through Adam. I suspect it’s something else that created the fossil record (the bible refers to is as... the flood).

So the question that confronts us then is, “Why would God choose to begin His creative work w/a chaotic mass that was dark, formless & empty?” It’s one I can’t answer w/authority, but what I can say categorically is that God does this every day in the lives all those who will yield their life to Him.

He brings order out of chaos, fullness out of emptiness, the Holy Spirit broods over our dark & empty lives & He brings something beautiful out of the void of depravity. The bible says that He gives us beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, & the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness (Isaiah 61:3).

Listen family, God is in the business of bringing order out of chaos, we call it salvation, redemption, deliverance, we’ve been delivered from the chains of darkness & brought into the light of the love of the redeeming power of the blood of J.C. shed for you & for me.

God has no desire (at least at this point) to fill in every detail that would satisfy our every curiosity regarding His word. As a matter of fact that the bible tells us that it’s the glory of God to conceal a matter, it’s the glory of man to search a matter out. So we search & we seek but at the end of the day this is all a foreword that will ultimately point us to J.C.

That’s where God wants our attention, upon the Person of J.C. In the volume of the book it’s written of Him. So let’s not get lost in endless conjecture or speculation; let’s seek J.C. that we might be awed, inspired & taken to our knees in worship of Him by Whom all things were created, the One who spoke & it was done, who commanded & it stood fast

Allow your heart to be turned toward Him, overwhelmed by His power & may it steal your breath to learn that He would love you, shed His blood & die for you that you might live w/Him forever, it’s the romance of redemption that’s in view; not “Is there a gap between Genesis 1:1-2?” Who cares? Point me to J.C.! Lead me to give Him glory! In the beginning God created the heavens & the earth, & He has loved you w/an everlasting love, now give God praise!

Prayer Points:

God we take to our knees in our hearts before You, we’re in awe of You, Your infinite wisdom & power. We pray that as we seek to get a grip on this fundamental, essential book of Genesis that You would lead us to Jesus, that You would anchor us upon the solid foundation found in Your word. Edify Your body, glorify Yourself, & we’ll give You praise.

God is all about bringing order out of chaos, if you feel like your life is in darkness, in shambles, the light of life is available to you in J.C. who has loved you, & given Himself for you upon the cross. Turn from your sin, trust in Jesus & you’ll never be the same.