



FOUNDATIONS: “In the beginning, God” PART ONE

Focus Verses:

“1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

2 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.”

(Genesis 1:1-2 ESV)

Introduction

Genesis sets the foundations of our faith covering topics like:

- God
- Creation
- Worship
- Sin
- Sacrifice
- Salvation

According to Merriam Webster, Genesis is defined as: “The origin of something coming into being.”

In Scripture, Genesis comes from the Hebrew “*bereshith*” meaning beginning or origin. Genesis is a book of beginnings. It gives the only true and reliable account of the origin of all the basic entities of the universe:

1. The Universe (Gen. 1:1)
2. Order and complexity (Gen. 1)
3. The solar system (Gen. 1:14-19)
4. Atmosphere and hydrosphere (Gen. 1:6-8)
5. Life (Gen. 1:11-12,20-25)
6. Man (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7)
7. Marriage (Gen. 2:18-24)
8. Evil (Gen. 3)

9. Language (Gen. 11:7-9)
10. Government (develops throughout the book)
11. Culture (Gen. 4:20-22)
12. Nations (Gen. 10)
13. Religion (Gen 4:3-4)
14. The chosen people (Gen. 12:1-3)

Genesis does not appear first in the Bible by chance. Everything else in the Bible flows out of the book of Genesis. God always has order to everything He does. God does not, nor has He ever, worked-by chance. He is always intentional. As we study Genesis, we quickly become aware of the order with which God works. If he orders all of this, He is certainly capable of ordering our lives!



Genesis sets the stage for the rest of the Bible.

It's the introduction to Israel's beginnings as a nation. It presents the promises that God made to man. Promises that God carries out through the rest of the Bible. God's ultimate desire is the salvation of people. 2 Peter 3:9 tells us, God is *"not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* If the book of Genesis were summed up in one verse, it would be these words that God said to Abraham:

(Genesis 17:7 ESV)

"And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you."

It is the desire of God to save us.

It is the desire of God to have a relationship with us.

Genesis is a book of history, but it doesn't stop there –it points us forward toward eternity.

Adam and Eve were created and put into the Garden of Eden - "paradise" on earth. After God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, they disobeyed God. Sin entered the world because of their disobedience. When this happened, they lost paradise. Sin will always separate us from God. People need to be brought back into relationship with God. From Genesis to Revelation God works His plan to save humanity. God refuses to leave us in a lost state.

What was lost in the Eden is regained in the New Jerusalem. In the book of Revelation, paradise for humanity is restored by God.

Genesis	Revelation
People in a prepared garden (2:8-9)	People in a prepared city (21:2)
River out of Eden (2:10)	River from the throne (22:1)
Gold in the land (2:12)	Gold in the city (21:21)
Tree of life (2:9)	Tree of life (22:2)
Bdellium and onyx stone (2:12)	All manner of stones (21:19)
God's presence (3:8)	God's presence (21:3)

God's forever plan is to seek and to save that which was lost.

Luke 19:10

Genesis covers a huge period of history.

- Chapters 1 –11 cover about 2000 years of history
- Chapters 12 –50 cover about 400 years.

The Bible is the story of God and Genesis is where the story begins for us. The book contains major prophecies concerning the coming of Jesus.

- The seed of woman and crucifixion (Gen. 3:15)
- Abraham's seed would bless all nations (Gen. 12:3)
- Scepter (kingship) would not depart from Judah (Gen. 49:10)

“In the beginning, God...”

Never has there been an opening line that contained so much substance as the first line of the Bible. Carefully read the words of our text: *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”* (1:1).

There are two purposes in this opening statement:

1. To identify God as the Creator and
2. To explain the origin of the world

Both of purposes are vital to our faith as Christians.

J. Sidlow Baxter has suggested that this one verse provides a contradiction of five principal false philosophies popular throughout history.

Let's look at the myths that it puts to rest:

1. **“In the beginning, God...” denies Atheism with its doctrine of no God.**

In just four words, we have a revelation that we should never forget – the existence of an all-powerful Creator who continues to work in our life. The Scripture tells us, *“Without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him”* (Hebrews 11:6 ESV).

2. **“In the beginning, God...” denies Polytheism with its doctrine of many gods.**

The Word for God used here is Elohim. "Elohim" is found 2602 times in the Hebrew Bible (it is not used in the Greek New Testament).

- The word is used for: the true God, false gods, supernatural spirits (angels), and human leaders (kings, judges, the Messiah).



- The "im" ending denotes a plural masculine noun most of the time. However, when the noun is used for the true God it has singular masculine verbs. This is contrary to rules of Hebrew grammar. When used of the true God, "Elohim" denotes what is called by linguists as a plural of majesty, honor, or fullness. That is to say, He is GOD in the fullest sense of the word!
- He is "GOD of gods" or literally, "ELOHIM of Elohim" (Deuteronomy 10:17; Psalm 136:2).
- In the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (the Septuagint), where Elohim refers to the true God, the singular "Theos" is used. Genesis 1:1 in Hebrew reads, "In the beginning, *Elohim* created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:1 in Greek reads, "In the beginning, *Theos* made the heavens and the earth." "In the beginning God created" is a proclamation that our God is one! "*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one*" (Deuteronomy 6:4). "*There is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me*" (Isaiah 45:21). When we pray, we direct our prayer to the One God, the only God! There is only one true God and He created it all!

3. "In the beginning God created" denies Fatalism with its doctrine of chance.

The foundation of our faith rests in this scripture, "In the beginning, God created..." We do not believe that the world was formed from a cosmic explosion. We believe in intelligent design. We believe that God planned it and created it all by design.

Only an intelligent designer could create a just-right universe, not a "chance universe."

- **The universe has a just-right gravitational force.** If it were larger, the stars would be too hot and would burn up too quickly and too unevenly to support life. If it were smaller, the stars would remain so cool, nuclear fusion would never ignite, and there would be no heat and light
- **The universe has a just-right speed of light.** If it were larger, stars would send out too much light. If it were smaller, stars would not send out enough light
- **The universe has a just-right average distance between the stars.** If it were larger, the heavy element density would be too thin for rocky planets to form, and there would only be gaseous planets. If it were smaller, planetary orbits would become destabilized because of the gravitational pull from other stars.
- **The universe has a just-right polarity of the water molecule.** If it were greater, the heat of fusion and vaporization would be too great for life to exist. If it were smaller, the heat of fusion and vaporization would be too small for life's existence. Liquid water would become too inferior a solvent for life chemistry to proceed, ice would not float, leading to a runaway freeze-up.

The preciseness with which our world is designed is astounding. We can conclude that there is no chance that such a universe could create itself, apart from an intelligent designer!

"Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand has stretched out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand up together." (Isaiah 48:13)

As vast as our universe is our God is bigger and greater than all His creation:



“Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure?” (Isaiah 40:12)

God created the heavens and the earth!

Because God created the heavens and the earth, we must put away the idea that anything happens by chance. "Chance" merely describes the statistical probability of something happening. Chance itself can "do" nothing.

- 4. "In the beginning God created..." denies Evolution with its doctrine of infinite becoming.**

The Hebrew word for created is "bara" and it means to create from nothing.

Man needs something to create something.

God needs nothing to create something!

This was a habit that began for God in the book of Genesis. God is still making something out of nothing! So, whatever is going on in your life right now you can trust the Creator.

The first verse gives us the theology of creation. The rest of the chapter provides us with the chronology of creation.

We are told at the very beginning that God created all things from electrons to electricity; gold to galaxies; dandelions to dinosaurs; apples to Adam. *"All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made"* (John 1:3)

- 5. "In the beginning, God created heaven and earth" denies Pantheism which makes God and the universe identical.**

God made the universe so they could never be equal. God is above all in all and through all.

The Bible teaches the universe could perish yet He would remain.

Psalm 102:26-27

"Even they will perish, but You endure; And all of them will wear out like a garment; Like clothing You will change them and they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not come to an end."

Daniel 7:14

"And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed."

One day the universe will come to an end, but our God will stand forever!



Life Response

Genesis addresses the origins of the universe; order and complexity; the solar system; the atmosphere and hydrosphere; the origin of life; humanity; marriage; evil; language; government; culture; nations; and religion. It is precisely because people have abandoned the truth of Genesis that society is in disarray.

Some 100 years ago, there was a German philosopher named Arthur Schopenhauer. By habit, he usually dressed like a vagrant, and one day he sat on a park bench in Berlin, deep in thought. His appearance made a policeman suspicious, so the policeman asked the philosopher, "Who are you?" Schopenhauer answered, "I would to God I knew."

The only way we can find out who we are is from God. The best place to find out who you are is to begin with the only God who has always existed.

Psalm 93:2

"Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting."

Psalm 90:1-2

"LORD, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God."



J. Edwin Orr used a memorable definition of God, which was thoroughly Biblical:

"God is the only infinite, eternal and unchangeable spirit, the perfect being in whom all things begin, and continue, and end."

On Christmas Day 1968, the three astronauts of Apollo 8 circled the dark side of the moon and headed for home. Suddenly, over the horizon of the moon rose the blue and white earth, garlanded by the glistening light of the sun against the black void of space. Those sophisticated men, trained in science and technology, did not utter Einstein's name. They did not recall the poets, the lyricists, or the dramatists. Only one thing could capture the awe-inspiring thrill of this magnificent observation.

Billions heard the voice from outer space as the astronaut read, *"In the beginning God"*—the only concept worthy enough to describe that unspeakable awe, unutterable in any other way. When you look around at the earth that we enjoy—sun, moon, stars, trees, oceans, there is no other conclusion that can be reached except to say, *"In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the earth."*