

# GENESIS CHAPTERS 1-3: THE ACCOUNT OF GOD'S CREATION, THE FALL, AND PROMISED REDEMPTION

## 1. We come to the Bible (including Genesis) knowing there is a God.

- a. There are many good and strong philosophical and logical reasons to believe in God. Yet the Bible does not make elaborate arguments for the existence of God. However, it does tell us how we can know God exists.
- b. The Bible tells us we can know God exists because of what we see in the created world:

Psalm 19:1-4 explains this: *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.*

Romans 1:20 also explains: *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 are without excuse.*

- c. This is an example of the *teleological* argument for the existence of God. It is the understanding that there must be a purposeful intelligence that created this world because the world shows both purpose and intelligence. In the view of many, this argument from purpose and design remains unanswered by the atheist or the agnostic.

## 2. The unique importance of the Book of Genesis.

- a. The Bible would be incomplete and perhaps incomprehensible without the Book of Genesis. It sets the stage for the entire drama of redemption, which unfolds in the rest of the book.
- b. Almost all of the important doctrines and teachings of the Bible have their foundation in of Genesis. Genesis gives the foundation for the doctrines of:
  - Sin, the fall, redemption, justification.
  - The promise of the Messiah and Jesus Christ.
  - The personality and personhood of God.
  - The kingdom of God.

Genesis shows us the origin of:

- The universe.
- Order and complexity.
- The solar system.
- The atmosphere and hydrosphere.
- Life, man, marriage.
- Good and evil.
- Language, government, culture, nations, religion.

It is precisely because people have abandoned the truth of Genesis that society is in such disarray.

- c. Genesis is important to the New Testament. There are at least 165 passages in Genesis either directly quoted or clearly referred to in the New Testament; many of these are quoted more than once, so there are at least 200 quotations or allusions to Genesis in the New Testament. Jesus quoted Genesis as if it were a purely historical record (Matthew 19:4-6 and 23:35).

In John 5:46-47, Jesus spoke of the importance of believing what Moses wrote: *For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?* We can't truthfully and consistently say we believe in Jesus if we don't believe in the Book of Genesis.

### **3. According to the New Testament, Moses wrote the Book of Genesis (Luke 24:27 and 24:44). We can surmise that he did this with help from actual written records from the past God had preserved.**

a. There are indicators of where these records begin and end. Note the phrasing of Genesis 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10, 11:27, 25:12, 25:19, 36:1, 36:9, and 37:2.

b. In these passages phrases such as “this is the history” and “this is the book” and “this is the genealogy” may indicate the start or end of the records Moses collected.

“Thus it is probable that the Book of Genesis was written originally by actual eyewitnesses of the events reported therein. Probably the original narratives were recorded on tables of stone or clay, in common practice of early times, and then handed down from father to son, finally coming into the possession of Moses. Moses perhaps selected the appropriate sections for compilation, inserted his own editorial additions and comments, and provided smooth transitions from one document to the next, with the final result being the Book of Genesis as we have received it.” (Morris)

### **4. Genesis (and the Bible) starts with this simple factual statement regarding God’s work as Creator: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”**

There are competing viewpoints (beliefs) on how the world began. The three major views are:

- 1) **Aethistic Evolution:** world was created through laws of nature without any divine involvement (there is no God who played a role in creating the world).
- 2) **Theistic evolution:** (also known as theistic evolutionism or God-guided evolution) is a theological view that God creates through laws of nature.
- 3) **Creationism:** the belief that nature, and aspects such as the universe, Earth, life, and humans, originated with supernatural acts of divine creation.

A literal reading of Genesis supports #3.

a. **God created:** The Bible simply and straightforwardly declares the world did not create itself or come about by chance. It was created by God who, by definition, is eternal and has always been. “It is no accident that *God* is the subject of the first sentence of the Bible, for this word dominates the whole chapter and catches the eye at every point of the page: it is used some thirty-five times in as many verses of the story.” (Kidner) If you believe Genesis 1:1, you really have no problem believing the rest of the Bible. The God big enough to have **created the heavens and the earth** is big enough to do all the rest the Bible says that He did and does.

b. **God:** This is the ancient Hebrew word *Elohim*. Grammatically it is a plural word used as if it were singular. The verbs and pronouns used with *Elohim* should be in the plural, but when *Elohim* refers to the LORD God the verbs and pronouns are in the singular. Luther on *Elohim*: “But we have clear testimony that Moses aimed to indicate the Trinity or the three persons in the one divine nature” (cited in Leupold).

c. **God created the heavens:** The simple fact of God’s creation is even more amazing when we consider the greatness of God’s universe. A typical galaxy contains billions of individual stars; our galaxy alone (the Milky Way) contains 200 billion stars. Our galaxy is shaped like a giant spiral, rotating in space, with arms reaching out like a pinwheel, and our sun is one star on one arm of the pinwheel. It would take 250 million years for the pinwheel to make one full rotation. But this is only our galaxy; there are many other galaxies with many other shapes, including spirals, spherical clusters, and flat pancakes. The average distance between one galaxy and another is about 20 million trillion miles. Our closest galaxy is the Andromeda Galaxy, about 12 million trillion

miles away. For every patch of sky the size of the moon, if you could look very deep, you would see about a million galaxies.

But God did all this Himself: *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). But 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).

d. **God created the heavens and the earth:** If **God** created the heavens and the earth, then we must forever put away the idea that anything *happens* by chance. “Chance” merely describes the statistical probability of something happening. *Chance* itself can neither do or perform anything.

Assigning power to *chance* doesn’t make sense. Chance has no power. For example, when a coin is flipped, the chance it will land heads is 50%; however, *chance* does not make it land heads. Whether or not it lands heads or tails is due to the strength with which the coin is flipped, the strength of air currents and air pressure as it flies through the air, where it is caught, and if it is flipped over once it is caught. *Chance* doesn’t *do* anything but describe a probability.

e. **God created:** Inherent in the idea of God is that He is an *intelligent designer*. Only an intelligent designer could create a just-right universe, not chance. Our universe is a just-right universe. According to Hugh Ross in his book *The Fingerprint of God*:

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. We could conclude that there is *no chance* that such a universe could create itself, apart from an intelligent designer.

f. **In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth:** This tells us that God used no pre-existing material to create the earth. The ancient Hebrew word *bara* (**created**) is specific. It means *to create out of nothing*, showing that God created the world out of nothing, not out of Himself. God is separate from His creation. Unlike Eastern and pantheistic perceptions of god, the Bible teaches the universe could perish yet He would remain.

Men cannot *create* in the sense the term is used in Genesis 1:1. We can only *fashion* or *form* things out of existing material. The closest we come to creating is in reproducing ourselves sexually. This is perhaps one reason why Satan wants to pervert and destroy God's plan and standard for sexuality; it is deeply connected to our being made in the image of God.

g. **In the beginning, God:** God Himself was before the beginning: *Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting* (Psalm 93:2). Some are troubled by the questions, "Where did God come from?" and "Who created God?" The answer is found in the definition of God – that God is the uncreated Being, eternal – without beginning or end. This is demonstrated in several passages of Scripture. *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* (Psalm 90:1-2).

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.*

h. **In the beginning, God:** God was in three Persons before the beginning, and the Persons shared a relationship of love and fellowship: "*O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was...for You loved Me before the foundation of the world*" (John 17:5, 17:24).

i. **In the beginning, God:** Before the beginning, there was an *eternal purpose* in the heart of God (Ephesians 3:11) to *gather together in one all things in Christ* (Ephesians 1:10). God's purpose was to "resolve" or "sum up" all things in Jesus as if Jesus Himself were the answer to a great and complex problem God wrote out on the "blackboard" of the universe.

j. **In the beginning, God:** Before the beginning, God had a specific plan to fulfill this eternal purpose, with many different aspects revealed to us:

1. The mission of Jesus was foreordained before the foundation of the world: *He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you* (1 Peter 1:20).

2. Eternal life was promised before time began: *in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began* (Titus 1:2).

3. The mystery of the gospel (the cross) was foreordained before the ages: *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory* (1 Corinthians 2:7).

4. The grace given unto us was given before the world began: *who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began* (2 Timothy 1:9).

k. **In the beginning, God:** At some time before the beginning, God created the angels, because they witnessed the creation of the heavens and the earth (Job 38:7).

## **FIRST THREE CHAPTERS OF GENESIS:**

**Chapter One: The Beginning** (Big Picture of Creation)

**Chapter Two: Adam and Eve**

**Chapter Three: The Fall of Man**

(Note: most of this content came from David Guzik)