

GENESIS 1:1-5 IN THE BEGINNING GOD

This morning we're going to begin a study in the book of beginnings, the Book of Genesis. That's what the word Genesis means – "beginnings" or "origins."

The opening verse says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Right off the bat the Bible informs us that it was GOD who created the universe. There was no "big bang" where some form of self-contained energy appeared out of nowhere and then by chance at some point in time it exploded and produced the world as we know it. There was no evolution of the species over millions of years. Those scientific theories – they are just that, theories, have no real basis of fact, they've never formally been proved and quite frankly they are unsupported by modern science. The law of conservation of mass states that for any system closed to all transfers of matter and energy, the mass of the system must remain constant over time, as the system's mass cannot change, so quantity can neither be added nor be removed. So much for the Big Bang Theory! And as for the evolution of the species, over the last 40 years or so it's been completely dispelled by research in the area of genetics and DNA (each animal has a unique genetic code). These unsupported theories, not only are they wrong but they refute the biblical narrative that a Master Creator made it all.

So from the very first verse of the Bible we the readers are faced with a choice. Do we believe the Bible, do we accept by faith what IT tells us? Or do we believe scientific theories and accept by faith what THEY say? It's an important issue to settle because if we don't believe what the Bible tells us about the creation of the world then what makes us think the Bible is telling the truth when it comes to anything else. If we cannot rely on the Bible about this matter of the origins of the universe then how can we rely on the Bible when it comes to issues like the sovereign authority of God, the sinful nature of man, the deity of Jesus, salvation by grace thru faith,

and biblical prophecies? We can't! So, with all that being said, Genesis is foundational to our Christian faith.

Now by full disclosure so you know where I stand on this issue – I am a Bible teacher. I consider it an honor and a privilege to stand up here in front of you and teach God's word. I believe with all my being that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16), in other words the whole Bible is inspired in the sense that holy men of God "were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21) to write the very words of Scripture. I believe that this divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the Bible – the historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetic writings – as they appeared in the original manuscripts. I believe therefore that the whole Bible is without error. This includes Genesis and the creation account that we're about to read.

Just a real brief introduction to Genesis... as mentioned before it is a book of beginnings. Genesis tells the story of the origins of the universe ("the heavens"), the earth, man, animals, plants, sin, civilization, government, nations, languages, religion and of God's covenant people Israel. To understand who we are and where we came from and where we are heading, we must begin with God. The Bible is a book about God. God reveals Himself to us through the pages of scripture. I am going to ask you to do something during this study in Genesis. I want you to have a pen and paper and to write down everything you learn about God as we go verse by verse thru the first part of Genesis. Just write down anything that jumps out at you about God, His character, His purposes, His plans. Periodically I'm going to ask the class to share some of the things you've learned.

The Book of Genesis was written by Moses. This is based on widely held tradition passed down. Moses is recognized by almost every Bible scholar as the author of the first 5 books of the Bible (the Pentateuch). Genesis was written around 1450 B.C. So how does Moses know about the creation of the world which happened long before he was born? He was certainly not an eye-witness. God revealed it to him and then he wrote it down. Much we like saw with John on the island of Patmos. Perhaps Moses

had a vision. We don't know. Somehow God revealed to Moses all the details. There is no way we would know about the details of creation unless God told us and He did so thru His servant Moses. Apparently what Moses wrote down is true because it is later corroborated by the psalmist, by many of the prophets, by Jesus, by the apostle John, by the apostle Paul and by the writer of Hebrews. "By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible" (Hebrews 11:3).

When I taught this class, I began by reading through the entire creation account, Genesis 1:1 through 2:3. This gave us the full context for the first part of our Genesis study, which is the seven days that God took to create the world. This lesson focuses on Day One.

READ Genesis 1:1

God, the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, have existed since eternity past. They have always been. At some point in time God decides to make a physical world. The Hebrew word we translated as "created" is *bara*. It means literally to create something out of nothing. Every time it is used in scripture God is the subject because He's the only One who can make something out of nothing. And that is what we see in the Genesis acct. Here in verse 1 we see the creation of TIME (in the beginning), SPACE (the heavens) and MATTER (the earth). And the ENERGY and FORCE that forms it all is GOD Himself.

Starting in v 2 and going through Genesis 2:3 we see HOW God creates. Notice His methodology. He did not choose to create through the slow drawn-out process of evolution having the various species of plants and animals mutate to a higher form. No, instead God spoke it all into existence. Over and over again we read, "And God said... and it was so." Psalm 148:5 says, "He commanded and they were created." Psalm 33:6 says, "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made." God spoke the world into existence and Psalm 33:9 says, "He commanded, and it stood firm."

Notice that in the passage I just read creation didn't take millions of years. No. God did it ALL in six days. The entire universe was created in just six days. And just so there would be no doubt what is meant by a day here in the Genesis creation account the original Hebrew word used for day is the word *yom*, which literally means a 24-hour solar day. This is underscored in v 5 where it says, "there was evening and morning, the first day."

One final point to make about the creation of the world – the Bible always speaks of creation as a past event, as the completed work of God. Hebrews 4:3 says, "His works were finished from the foundation of the world." They've been completed!" They're not evolving slowly over time. "On the seventh day God rested from all His work that He had done" (Genesis 2:2) – past tense.

As far as creation is concerned there was (1) original creation (Genesis Chapters 1 and 2), (2) conservation of the created world (Hebrews 1:3 says that God upholds the universe by the word of His power), (3) restoration of creation (Revelation 20 which ushers in the millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ), and (4) re-creation (Revelation Chapters 21 and 22, the new heavens and the new earth).

How old is the earth? Scientists claim that it's millions, maybe even billions of years old. They need that amount of time to be able to fit their narrative of a constantly evolving geology and plant and animal species. Again, that's not what the Bible says. Let's do the math from the biblical account of creation and the ensuing genealogies contained in scripture. This is what you have – let me lay it out for you. You have the 6 days of creation which includes the creation of the first man, Adam. Then you have 1,656 years from Adam to the flood. Then approximately a year for the flood. Then 225 years from the flood to Abraham. From Abraham to Israel's return from Babylonian captivity is another 1500 years or so. Then another 500 or so years from the return from captivity to the birth of Jesus. Finally, 2,000-plus years from the birth of Jesus to today. Add it all

up and you have, give or take a few hundred years (depending on certain assumptions) -- **6,000 years!**

Some skeptics might ask how then is the earth dated so much older than this? Let me answer their question with a question of my own – how old was Adam when God created him? He obviously was not a newborn baby because right off the bat we will see that God communicates with Adam like he's a full grown man. And when the plants and animals are created they were already in mature forms. So everything God made, He made with age to it. So, why not the earth? Could not God have created the earth already with some age to it, perhaps millions of years? Yes. Of course He could. He's God!

Just a side note here. Do you remember when Jesus performed His first recorded miracle in Cana, turning water to wine? By its very nature the wine He made had some age to it even though Jesus just made it. So this is something that only God can do. And that first miracle proved that Jesus was God!

What I want to do over the next several weeks is to go through each of the six days of creation. Day One occurs in v 2 thru 5.

READ Genesis 1:2

Notice the condition of the newly created earth: (1) without form and void (it is empty and desolate, uninhabited with life); (2) darkness is over the face of the deep (that's because there is no light yet); (3) the Spirit of God hovers over the surface which is covered with water.

It is interesting that the Hebrew description here we translate "without form and void" is the same description Jeremiah uses to describe Jerusalem after its destruction by the Babylonians in Jeremiah Chapter 4. It is a devastated wasteland.

Like the unformed blob of clay on the potter's wheel ready for the potter's hand to form it. Like the raw ingredients piled up on the kitchen counter ready for the master chef to prepare it. Like the block of granite in

the studio ready for the master sculptor's to begin chiseling. All the materials God will need are in place. But before God does anything He turns the lights on...

READ Genesis 1:3-4

As with the rest of His creation God sees that the light is good. God is pleased. He separates the light from the darkness.

READ Genesis 1:5

God calls the newly created light DAY and He calls the darkness NIGHT. And He establishes a 24 hour rotation of light and darkness, evening and morning, called a day, which has continued ever since. An interesting note at this point: there is no sun, moon or stars. He wouldn't make those until Day Four. So where does this light come from? We don't know. Perhaps it is the very glory of God Himself that shines!

I want to leave you with a question. WHY did God create the physical universe as we know it? The easy answer is because He wanted to. A better theological answer would be that He wanted to display His glory and His majesty. In Revelation 4:11 there is a scene where a heavenly throng of saints and angels are around the throne of God worshiping and praising Him. They say, "Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they existed and were created." God wants to be praised and worshipped by His creation.

The 12th C Scottish philosopher and theologian, Richard of St. Victor in his classic *De Trinitate* captures a tremendous thought. He teaches that the infinite God the Father so loved God the equally infinite Son that He brought into being out of nothing a finite material world. This world was to be populated with creatures made in the likeness of His Son in order that as the Son's bride they could share in the beatitude of the divine life in a way appropriate to finite creatures in God's personal image. To provide a beautiful bride for His Son, the eternal Father created an entire universe, and in it a world which previously had not existed as the nursery and the

home in which the bride would be reared. Such a stupendous gift from the Father to the Son required an absolute creation out of nothing.

A deep thought and it is a unique perspective to leave you with on this our first look at the Genesis creation account. We'll stop there for today and pick up with Day Two next time.