

GENESIS 1-3  
Message 2

INTRO: The little girl proudly told her mother she could recite Genesis 1:1 complete with chapter and verse. The encouraged mother, of course, wanted to hear this great accomplishment. "In the beginning..." the little girl said, "... God created the heavens and the earth" Genesis 9-1-1. What a great truth we have here in Genesis 1:1. In the first message we saw that was written by Moses, some 3500 years and some 2500 years after the fact. We do not know if the words of were revealed to him divinely or whether it was relayed to him by his forefathers, or whether both methods were used, but we did insist that the information was divinely inspired, and that we must use the literal, normal method of interpretation.

This morning we want to consider the words, "In the beginning God..." four words in English 2, in Hebrew; bireshet bara, "In the beginning God..." We're going to look at the chronology of creation, from Genesis 1:1-2:4. Here we have a consistent chronology of creation. Then we're going to look at the crown of creation, Genesis 2:5 and on. Man, the crown of creation. And then in Genesis chapter 3 we are going to look at the crucible of creation; the test of man, the fall of man.

I. THE CHRONOLOGY OF CREATION (1:1-2:4)

A. Day One (1:1-5)

1. Creation of the universe (1:1-2)

a. When it was created

And so we begin by looking at the chronology of creation. We're given this chronology in its seven day format, completing the week of creation. We're going to begin by looking at day one. And we begin day one in Genesis 1:1. We're going to be looking first at the creation of the universe, and in the creation of the universe, we are going to look first at when it was created. The amount of information given in Genesis 1-3 is staggering. At first it appears a simple and elementary account, but when one begins to search it out, its

complexity leaves one awestruck. In the Hebrew language, this first sentence has seven words.

Now these seven words could have been put together a number of different ways and thus stressing a number of different things. For example, it could have been written, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Now that's the way we have it, and this sentence puts time first, "In the beginning..." But it could have been written like this, "The heavens and the earth were created in the beginning by God." That puts the heavens and the earth first and weakens the verb to the passive voice. This sentence puts that which was created first. Or it could have been written like this: "God, in the beginning, created the heavens and the earth." I suppose, if I had written it, that's the order I would have put it in. I would have put God first. Well, it could have been written in another way: "God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning", putting time last and God first and the other things in between. Or it could have been written, "The heavens and the earth were created by God in the beginning." So there are a number of different combinations that could have been used. What we must note is that He gave us the time of creation first in these words, "In the beginning..."

What are we to learn from the fact that God put the time of creation first? God places great emphasis on the time of creation. Certainly that is self evident from the construction of the sentence. Now the timing of creation touches the question of the age of the earth. When we used to live in Three Hills, Alberta, we were close to Drumheller Museum. On a number of occasions we would take visitors to see this museum, and it is a beautiful work, and there are a lot of interesting things to see. And so as we toured this place we would see ages given like 60 billion years, 80 billion years; in one place there was one wee little plaque; it said,

"Some people believe the world was created. The timing of creation touches the question of the creation of the earth. This is one of the great differences between the view of creation and evolution. Creationists who are intimidated by evolutionists and there are still many in our day, still find room for billions of years of the existence of the universe. We will mention these later. Now I always tell people, and I sincerely believe this, you need not be intimidated by so called science; you need not be intimidated by so called people with x amount of doctors degrees behind their name. If they do not teach what lines up with the Word of God, one does not need to be afraid of them. One does not need to be intimidated. One does not need to feel under them or inferior, because when it all comes out in the wash, they are going to be wrong, unless they line up with the Word of God.

Well, there are several approaches that can be taken to determine the age of the earth. Scientists use various methods of radiometric dating. The conclusion I have reached with regard to these dating methods there is no reliable dating method so far that can reliably tell us the age of the earth. You see, science, there are two ways of proving things. There is the judicial way and the scientific method. The scientific method proves things by methods that can be shown over and over again because this is how it works. Let us say you go to a country where they never have frost and you tell them that when the temperature gets low enough that water will turn hard and you can walk on it. Well, they might laugh out of the place. So you transport a freezer over to that place and you show them a thermometer and show them how it works and put it into the freezer and it goes below zero celsius and it begins to freeze, and sure enough, after some time they can stand on the water. And they say, "Well, this is very strange." And so you do it over and over and every time, same temperature,

same thing happens. That's science. When you want to date the earth and you are talking millions and billions of years, how are you going to date it? Nobody has lived long enough, and nobody will live long enough. There must be some method by which you can clearly indicate age, and the radiometric system doesn't do this because nobody's been able to live long enough to prove it over and over.

Another way to determine the age of the earth is by history. Someone has said, "History is simply His story." Genesis five gives us ten generations and in these ten generations we span from Adam to Abraham. We span within a few years of Abraham. Time from Abraham to Christ is not that hard to determine. Now to determine time from Adam to Abraham is not that hard. Genesis 5. You can do it very simply. Take a pen and paper and you can do it quickly. You cover two thousand years in history in this chapter. From Abraham to Christ is not that difficult although it takes some work. Then, time from Christ to us is not that difficult. We have about 2000 years from Adam to Abraham; 2000 years from Abraham to Christ and 2000 years from Christ to us, and there we have 6000 years.

It does not take a great thinker that if the creation account is correct in the Bible, and there is not a single reason to doubt it; then the world is about 6000 years old at this time, and don't let anybody belittle you on that. So the words, "In the beginning..." refer to the beginning of the universe, some 6000 years ago. But we may become even more specific. Let me tell you on which day God created the heavens and the earth. Do you know which day it was? Well, it was the very first day, wasn't it? That's very simple. And what is the very first day of the week? That's simple too. It is Sunday. God began creation on Sunday. You say, "What, God worked on Sunday?" Yes, God worked on Sunday. Now don't you take permission to work on Sunday because

God did. You see, it is the Sabbath God set aside as the day of rest, and we'll come to that in Genesis chapter 2. The seventh day is the Sabbath. It is when Jesus was resurrected that we began to commemorate the first day of the week. Now the first day of the week is referred to as either the first day or the eighth day, and likely we could refer to it as the eighth day with regard to the resurrection. Nevertheless, creation began on Sunday. You can trace it down. Find the Sabbath in chapter 2 and go back 7 days and you'll be at Sunday, which is the day God began to create the universe.

But we may be even more specific. What time of day did God begin creation. Well, He began at night. It's interesting the Hebrew day and the creation day begins at night. Look at Genesis 1:1-2 (read). Of course there was darkness. It was night! The day begins at night. How long did it take God to create the heavens and the earth? (By the way, a comment could be made here. It tells us here that everything was without form and void. Maybe that is because God worked at night.) Well how long did it take God to create the heavens and the earth? Well, probably around 12 hours, because the next thing He created, which makes up the second part of the day, is the light (1:3). So we could say that it probably took around 12 hours, and then He began to create the light. Light is a very complex thing. And when God created light, the heavens and the earth were finished. God created them at night.

But we must ask another question. The Bible begins with the words, "In the beginning..." In the beginning of what? The beginning of time? Well, contrary to the teaching of many, I believe time has always been and will always be. We have many ways of measuring time today because of the speed of things, we measure time by very small increments, in our day. Computers for instance. Electricity travels at such tremendous speeds, but to make computers more powerful and to make the speed greater

they have even created smaller time increments to measure things. So we have now such things as nanoseconds and microseconds. In the past we used seconds and minutes. Then hours and days and weeks and months, then years and decades and centuries, and then millenniums. When we speak of time beyond our comprehension in the future, we speak of it as everlasting. When we speak of time in the past we speak of it as from all eternity. When we speak of time beyond our comprehension in the past and in the future, it is eternity. When we describe God, who is beyond our understanding in the past and beyond our understanding in the future, we say, He is eternal. It is a time concept. We have no non-time concept, because I think there is no such thing as no time. Never has been. Never will be.

Now you're going to say, "There is a verse in Revelation which speaks of there being time no more." Let me quote for you from a series of messages I did on the Pilgrims Progress: The Journey of the Church Age Believer." I spoke of the Christians progress through life and then into the ages to come. And I quote, "It is sometimes taught, and I have held the view myself, that when we move into eternity, that there is no more time. We sing, 'When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more.' Well I have to say, I have changed my view on that. I believe that when we move to the other side, there will still be time. The timeless view of heaven is based on one verse of Scripture. You might want to turn to that, Revelation 10:6 (read). That was the KJV of the Bible and it is an excellent version. And it speaks of there being time no more and it's a rather natural translation because the Greek word is chronos, the word from which we get chronology and speaks of time.

Now turn to Matthew 24:48 to a related word and see the translation here. "But if that evil servant says, 'My master is delaying his coming...'" This word delaying has chronos in

it as well. And the word speaks here of delay. When you back to Revelation 10:6 and we read that there should be time no more, there still is time after this. After this there is still part of the tribulation to go, which takes time. After the tribulation is the millennium, which is a thousand years of duration, which is a time concept. After the millennium is a short season, which is a time concept. Then comes the new heaven and new earth, and I believe it will be time throughout all of this. So the words, "In the beginning..." speak of something coming into existence at a certain point of time. We might say, "In the beginning this church had just a few members." We are speaking of the time of the coming into existence of Tompkins Evangelical Church, when it began. So in Genesis the words, "In the beginning..." refer to the beginning of the existence of the universe.

b. Who created it

Let's turn back to Genesis 1:1 because we want to look at who created everything. And that's no big secret to us, but we may learn some things there as well. Who created everything. "In the beginning God..." Now we have been told who created all things. We're going to learn more about that, by the way. It is God who created everything. In just four simple words, we learn when matter came into existence and by whom it came into existence. God is the One who created everything.

Now there are many names for God in the Bible. The name used here is Elohim. The name El refers to a god or God Himself. It is simply God, Elohim. All names in the Bible beginning with El- like Elijah, Elihu, Eliazer, and so on have this name of God prefixed their name with the El-. We have many names for God like this; El Shaddai. You may have heard the song, "El Shaddai" well, that is a name for God. El Olom, El Elyon, the strongest strong One; these are all descriptive words of God. Now in English when we want to pluralize something,

we add an s to the noun and we have a plural. So we say God and add an s and we have gods. We say table, add an s and we have tables, more than one. In Hebrew, when you pluralize a noun you add 'im to the end. So we may speak of a Cherub. that is one angel of a certain type of angel. To pluralize Cherub we add the 'im and we have cherubim. That plural. The Cherubim means more than one. In Genesis 1:1 we have the plural Elohim. You say, "Oh, does that mean the gods created the heavens and the earth?"

Well, there is in the Hebrew language the plural of majesty or the intensive plural. The word is spelled in the plural but it is singular in idea. It may be that, that is significant in Genesis 1. In the Low German we have a very good example of the plural of majesty or I would call it the plural of respect in German. When we say to someone of our own age in the Low German language we say, "Vus du en cofu?" Or, "Vus du cofu?" We say, "Do you want coffee?" If we address someone older or someone of rank or respect we say, "Vull ye cofu?" And when you say, "Vul ye..." its plural. Normally that would address more than one person. And it is the plural of respect. The idea is still singular, even though the plural is used. (By the way, this name God is used 58 times in these first three chapters of Genesis.)

Now there may also be included in this plural name the Trinity, and I think there is the plural idea in this word Elohim. The Trinity is a concept that goes beyond our understanding and yet it is clearly taught in the Bible. God is a singular God but a plurality of Persons. This is a very important matter in Scripture. I want you to notice something in Genesis 1:26 (read). I'll deal with that more later. But here we have God speaking, but who is He speaking to? Well, we'll learn more of that later. "Let us make man in our image." I think in this word Elohim

we have the plural idea present as well, even though it may have the majesty idea as well.

I want you to notice something else as well, of great significance. This verse, like all the rest of the Bible does not argue or try to impress us with the fact that there is a God. It simply takes it for granted. You understand that the atheist and evolutionist teach that there is no God. I've been told about a Christian and non-Christian arguing about the existence of God. And the non-Christian kept saying, "There is no God." Finally the Christian said, "Say the whole verse." "What do you mean, 'Say the whole verse?'" the non-Christian asked. "Well," said the Christian, "The whole verse says, 'The fool has said, 'There is no God.''" The Bible doesn't argue that there is a God. It simply takes it for granted, "In the beginning God ..." That is a statement of fact.

The theology books use four arguments that prove the existence of God. The Bible never seeks to prove God's existence. Now these theology books speak of the cosmological argument, the teleological argument, the ontological argument and the moral argument. Four arguments that prove the existence of God. Now if you are interested in pursuing those you might purchase a theology book and it will go through those arguments for you.

But let me simply demonstrate one of those arguments. The teleological argument. order and useful arrangement imply intelligence and an organizing cause. I am told of a Christian and a non-Christian, both of which were scientists. They were always debating the existence of God. And so one day the Christian scientist showed his friend a little contraption he had made. It was a model of the earth, the sun and the moon, and I'm not sure what else all. And he had a little handle. And when he turned it the earth would move around the sun and would spin on its axis as it went along, and the other planets did what they

were supposed to do. And it was just a miniature of our universe and of our planets.

And the non-Christian marvelled at this little contraption and he said, "Wow, who made this thing?" And the Christian said, "Well, what do you mean? Who made this? This thing is not made; it evolved." And after some hot debating, the non-Christian scientist realized he had been taken in. Here is the universe, billions of times bigger. Everything working in orderly arrangement, and he was arguing it had happened by chance.

You see, the Bible does not argue that there is a God, but there are arguments that indicate that. I was travelling with a Bible school student. And he said, "We take everything by faith. You simply cannot prove there is a God nor is there evidence." And I said, "Oh, there isn't?" We had been at the Bible school and he wanted to go to town to MacDonalds. We were on the way back and I took one of those MacDonalds cups and I said to him, "Do you know how this cup came into being?" We had just crossed the Fraser River, and I said, "There was a log rolled down the Fraser River and kept tumbling until finally it turned into paper and then it turned into a cup. You see, this cup has design. It is open on the top and closed at the bottom. But it happened by accident." Well, he could see immediately that something like that could simply not happen. The fact that it had design argued that somebody of greater intelligence had made it. That is a large proof that there is a God. This is the teleological argument. This argument says the orderly arrangement of the universe is proof that there is a God.

We have one of these telescopes and you can see the craters on the moon. And one of the things I marvel at is the movement of the earth and the moon. In just a short time you have to move the telescope to keep the moon in its scope. And every day, you can look up there and it moves at the same speed. Order

proves there is a God though God never seeks to prove it. There are evidences that there is a God. Who made everything? The Triune and majestic, Almighty and all-powerful, and all-knowing Elohim made everything.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, Genesis 9-1-1.