

Genesis

Introduction

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In ancient days it was a common custom to name a book after its first word. Genesis means *in the beginning*. Thus, the book of Genesis is the beginning of God's doctrine of creation. God is the subject of the first sentence which established the entire book of Genesis is about God, not man.

Genesis begins with the listing of generations. There are four generations assigned to universal history, the beginning of mankind, and four genealogies assigned to the beginning of Israel, known as the patriarchal history. The four universal history, consisting of the first eleven chapters, revolve around four events: creation, fall, flood, tower of Babel. The patriarchal history, beginning in chapters 12 and continues on, revolves around four genealogies: Abraham, Issac, Jacob and Joseph.

There is a pattern of sin, punishment and grace established in Genesis which continues throughout Scripture. In the first eleven universal events, sin is described which causes God to pronounce the consequence or penalty of that sin. While at the same time God also established the gift of grace (Romans 5:20). However, He does not leave sin unpunished. How can God deliver punishment and grace at the same time?

- When Adam and Eve sinned, they were excommunicated from the garden and direct fellowship with God was broken; however, in His grace God did not impose the death penalty on them.
- When Cain murdered his brother, Cain was banished from his family; however, God placed a mark of protection on him keeping him safe from others.
- When sin overwhelmed creation and God punished the entire earth with a flood, in His grace he preserved the human race through eight people, Noah and his family.
- When man continued to rebel against God and desired to create a structure that reached to the heavens, the tower of babel, only then did God seem to withhold grace as He confused their languages and forced them to separate.

God remained faithful even when His people did not (2 Timothy 2:13).

Authorship

Who is the author of the book of Genesis? Both the Old Testament and the New Testament reveal that Moses was the author of the Torah, the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible.

Exodus 17:14

“Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly wipe out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.”

Deuteronomy 31:24

“It came about, when Moses finished writing the words of this Law in a book until they were complete”

Joshua 8:31

“just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the sons of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses...”

2 Kings 14:6

“But he did not put the sons of the murderers to death, in obedience to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, as the LORD commanded, saying, “The fathers shall not be put to death for the sons, nor the sons be put to death for the fathers; but each shall be put to death for his own sin.”

Romans 10:5

“For Moses writes of the righteousness that is based on the Law, that the person who performs them will live by them.”

2 Corinthians 3:15

“But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their hearts;

The strongest confirmation of Moses’ authorship comes from Jesus himself in **John 5:45-47**

“Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have put your hope. ⁴⁶ For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”

Critics will immediately ask, “if Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible how did he write **Deuteronomy 34**, which tells about his death?”

“So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, in accordance with the word of the LORD. ⁶ And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows his burial place to this day. ⁷ Although Moses was 120 years old when he died, his eyesight was not dim, nor had his vigor left him. ⁸ So the sons of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab for thirty days; then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses came to an end.”

The answer is Joshua which is confirmed in **Joshua 1:1-3**

“Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ servant, saying, ² “Moses My servant is dead; so now arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. ³ Every place on which the sole of your footsteps, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses.”

Genesis
Chapter One

- The Beginning

The Beginning (Creation)

Verses 1-31

The first three days of creation describe the forming of the earth.
The second three days of creation describe the filling of the earth.

- God formed the light – He filled it with the sun, moon and stars.
- God formed the sky and waters – He filled it with birds and fish.
- God formed the land – He filled it with animals and man.

Verse 1

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

God is the subject of this first sentence of Scripture, which makes sense as God is the subject of the entire book of Genesis and the entire Bible. Three books of the Bible begin with the wording, “In the beginning”: Genesis, Mark and John. In Genesis 1:1-2 God *declares* creation; in Genesis 1:3-16 God gives us a detailed *explanation of what* He created.

The word “creation” is only used of God; He is always the subject. Only He can create. God created both space (“heaven”) and matter (“the earth”). Creation is used only to describe things of value, the universe, animal life and man. This is true throughout Scripture, meaning when Psalms or Isaiah or other Bible writers use the term “creation” it is only in reference to the Genesis account.

If you embrace this opening sentence, you’ll have little problem agreeing with the rest of the Bible.

- When the Bible gives us history it reveals events that actually happened as they are described.
- When the Bible gives us poetry it reveals true feelings and experiences which the writer explained.
- When the Bible gives us prophecy it reveals events that are to happen just as Scripture details how they will happen.
- When the Bible gives us instruction it reveals truth to live in a manner which pleases God.

One can either receive the Bible as truth or choose to place oneself above the authority and truth of the Scriptures. The Bible must be accepted before it can be properly interpreted.

“Wasn’t the Bible written by a bunch of men who wrote what they wanted to write?” That kind of criticism was not found up to or during the reformation period. That thought is not true because the Bible is outside the dimension of time, meaning it tells history before it happened. Knowing what will happen in such specific detail centuries before the event took place is outside the ability of man so no, the Bible was not written by the hand of men, but by the leading and guidance of God. Prophecy, knowing exactly what will happen well before it does, is a large portion of how God has spoken.

“The universe was created by the Word of God not made out of things that are visible” (Hebrews 11:3, Isaiah 40:26, Revelation 4:11). Scripture (both Old Testament and New Testament) declares the world did not create itself or come about by chance. It was created by God.

Psalm 19:1

“The heavens tell of the glory of God; And their expanse declares the work of His hands.”

Romans 1:20

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood by what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”

There really are only two views of creation. Either everything is the result of some sort of cosmic act or creation is the result of an intelligent creator. How one answers the question of creation is also how one answers such questions as:

- Who am I?
- Where did I come from?
- Why am I here?
- What happens after I die?

Verse 2

“² And the earth was a formless and desolate emptiness, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.”

The earth was without form and void. It was uninhabitable.

Isaiah 45:18

“For this is what the Lord says— he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited— he says: “I am the Lord, and there is no other.”

Verses 3-5 – The first day

“³ Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light “day,” and the darkness He called “night.” And there was evening and there was morning, one day.”

Light is the first act of creating order from chaos. God SPOKE light into being and it was instantaneous. Before God created the sun and the moon, there is light. Where did the light come from, the sun and the moon had not yet been created? The light comes directly from God.

John 1:4-5

“In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

Psalms 104:1-2

“Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty, ² covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent.”

Habakkuk 3:4

“His brightness was like the light; rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power.”

WHY does God separate light from darkness?

Light is associated with

- Christ
- God’s Word Psalm 119;105, 119:130
- God’s people Matthew 5:14-16, Ephesians 5:8
- Blessing Proverbs 4:18

Darkness is associated with

- satan Luke 23:53, Ephesians 6:12
- sin Matthew 6:22-23 John 3:19-21
- death Job 3:4-9
- ignorance John 1:5

- divine judgement Matthew 8:12

Ezekiel 44:23 *“They are to teach my people the difference between the holy and the common and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:23 *“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Verses 6-8 - The second day

“⁶ Then God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” ⁷ God made the expanse, and separated the waters that were below the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse; and it was so. ⁸ God called the expanse “heaven.” And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.”

A firmament is an expanse or space. It separates the waters of the land from the waters of the sky. Again, the theme of God separating is seen.

Verses 9-13 – The third day

“⁹ Then God said, “Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so. ¹⁰ And God called the dry land “earth,” and the gathering of the waters He called “seas”; and God saw that it was good. ¹¹ Then God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit according to their kind with seed in them”; and it was so. ¹² The earth produced vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, according to their kind; and God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.”

Please note that the Bible tells us that the plant life is older than the sun and the moon. This is important because no evolutionist would take that position. For a believer, they understand there is a time coming when we will no longer need the sun, moon or stars. A day is coming when there will no longer be night. For a student of the Bible accepting the fact that there can be vegetation and plants without the sun is an acceptable understanding.

The dry land is important because from the land man will come. The vegetation is important because it will feed man.

The filling of the newly formed earth is the beginning of life. Life starts with vegetation and seed-bearing fruit trees. The plants were created not as seeds but as full-grown mature trees and vegetation. Also, something an evolutionist would not be happy with is the phrase “according to its kind”. This is a phrase used repeatedly in the opening chapter of Genesis. What does it mean? It means something of one kind cannot develop into something of a different kind.

As God transitions from forming the earth to filling the earth, He confirms the results are “good”. Notice God does not say that creation was good until the earth becomes inhabitable. When the earth is in a condition for life to live, He *then* says it is good!

Footnote: I have heard some use this point in creation to justify recreational drug use such as marijuana. After all, marijuana is a plant and the Bible says God himself made all the plants and then God said it was all good. What is missing in that thinking is God also said that man was to have dominion over all the creation, meaning man is to be over the plant life. The plant life is NEVER to control man, his thoughts, his actions, or his emotions. The goal of recreational drug use is to take one’s mind out of reality which is not supported by Scripture.

Verses 14-19 – The fourth day

“¹⁴ Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and they shall serve as signs and for seasons, and for days and years; ¹⁵ and they shall serve as lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so. ¹⁶ God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also. ¹⁷ God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.”

Notice when God made the sun and the moon, he identified them by calling them lights. He does not call them by name, the sun and the moon. This is to separate Him from other gods. Civilizations such as the Egyptians worshipped the sun god and the moon god. The God of creation is not to be lumped in with other false gods.

What is the purpose of the sun and the moon? Other than separating day from night, they also help man mark time and seasons. The heavens speak for God.

Psalm 19:1-6

*“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.
3 They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them.
4 Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. 5 It is like a bridegroom coming
out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. 6 It rises at one
end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its
warmth.”*

The stars are spoken about in Scripture.

Psalm 147:4

“He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name.”

Isaiah 40:26

*“Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings
out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his
great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.”*

Job 38:31-32

*“Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades? Can you loosen Orion’s belt?
32 Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the Bear with
its cubs?”*

Anything that is good, the enemy, satan, tries to pervert and corrupt, including how the stars are seen and used. Isaiah warned of the Babylonian astrologers, which by the way, are the root of the modern-day horoscopes.

Isaiah 47:12-15

*“Keep on, then, with your magic spells and with your many sorceries, which you
have labored at since childhood. Perhaps you will succeed, perhaps you will cause
terror. 13 All the counsel you have received has only worn you out! **Let your
astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions month by
month**, let them save you from what is coming upon you. 14 Surely they are like
stubble; the fire will burn them up. They cannot even save themselves from the
power of the flame. These are not coals for warmth; this is not a fire to sit by.
15 That is all they are to you— these you have dealt with and labored with since
childhood. All of them go on in their error; there is not one that can save you.”*

Verses 20-23 The fifth day

“²⁰ Then God said, “Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.” ²¹ And God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind; and God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³ And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.”

“Then God said...”, The fish and birds all come into existence at the same moment. They did not take millions of years to evolve. As with the vegetation and plants, animals will multiply “according to its own kind.”

Verses 24-25 – The sixth day

“²⁴ Then God said, “Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kind: livestock and crawling things and animals of the earth according to their kind”; and it was so. ²⁵ God made the animals of the earth according to their kind, and the livestock according to their kind, and everything that crawls on the ground according to its kind; and God saw that it was good.”

The land animal kingdom is created and will reproduce “according to their kind.” This is the beginning of the creation of conscious life versus the unconscious life of plants.

Verses 26-31

“²⁶ Then God said, “Let Us make mankind in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the livestock and over all the earth, and over every crawling thing that crawls on the earth.” ²⁷ So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” ²⁹ Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; ³⁰ and to every animal of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to everything that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food”; and it was so. ³¹ And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”

Verse 26 concludes God's creative work however this final act of creation, mankind, is unique. First, verse 26 highlights the phrase "*Us*", representing the Holy Trinity. Second, of all of creation, man is the only creation that is made in the "*image of God*." This distinction makes mankind's capabilities intellectually and spiritually superior. The fact that man is made in God's image solidifies the truth that human life is valuable.

Humans have morality. We are able to make moral judgments and we have a conscience. Man has the ability to feel shame. Man has the ability to connect with God on a spiritual level. None of creation possess these abilities, except for man.

The first thing God did for man is He blessed him. Without God's blessing life would be impossible. He commissioned man to be fruitful and to multiply. God's design is for a man and a woman, a father and a mother to fulfill His command.