

GOD THE CREATOR

Genesis 1:1-25

Key Verse 1:1

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

The word “Genesis” comes from the first word in the Hebrew Bible, “In the beginning...” Genesis is a book of beginnings. It teaches us how the universe was first created. We find here the beginnings of the world, of all things in it, of life, man, sin, salvation and faith. We also find the beginnings of culture, language and nations; the beginnings of death, curse, and judgment; and the beginnings of the gospel, blessing and redemptive history.

The book of Genesis also teaches us about God, about humanity, and about the world. In chapter 1, we can learn how the universe came into existence and who God is. May the Lord help us to open our hearts and accept the truth of God!

I. IN THE BEGINNING GOD... (1)

Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” This one verse is the foundation of the whole Bible. This verse is the foundation of all Christian faith. This verse tells us that our God is Almighty Creator God. It also tells us that God is the Maker of our precious lives.

“In the beginning” is different from “at the beginning.” “In the beginning” has to do with God’s time. In the beginning there was no time -- there was only eternity. So St. Augustine defines “in the beginning” as eternity. Before the universe began to exist, there was eternity. This eternal God is the Creator and everything and everyone came from him. So this God is the only true God.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” This verse solves the problem of the “First Cause.” What was there in the beginning? Where are we, the mankind, coming from and where are we going to? This has been an inscrutable question to thoughtful men and women in history. In 1977 Alex Haley’s *Roots* premiered on a network television and about 130 million American watched the series. Why would people be interested in a black man’s effort to trace his family tree? An answer to this is that every person wants to know his roots and have a sense of history or find his place in history.

From ancient philosophers to modern-day scientists, many people have tried to solve the problem of the First Cause. The early philosophers speculated that everything started from one of air, fire, water, or earth. Evolutionists present a theory that man evolved from a primitive form of life such as amoebae. There are several problems that arise from this materialistic viewpoint.

In the first place, there is the problem of origin. If we say that the world originated with fire or water or “something” or with an amoebae, we cannot find any answer to the basic question of the first cause. If men came from an amoebae, then where did the amoebae come from? Or where did the fire come from? They are totally unable to answer the question of the first cause, the origin. So those who take the atheistic position avoid the question of the first cause, and talk only about hypothetical process. They only succeed in confusing people.

In the second place, there is the problem of the meaning of human existence. As Pascal said, “Man is a thinking reed.” Even though man is very weak, he is the being who probes the meaning of his own existence. Man’s existence has meaning. A person’s character is formed as he finds the meaning of his life. The meaning of a person’s existence must be absolute. Absoluteness comes only from God

But if the origin of all things is water or fire or air, where does life come from? How does life come from inanimate things? And how can the mankind, with intellect and feeling and will, come from an amoebae? And how can water, fire and air come together of themselves to form the great burning sun? And who planned the amazing mystery of the seasons? Or the way the sun marks time? There are these and many other unanswerable questions. But the greatest problem of all is the problem of the meaning of man’s existence. Let’s say that man evolved from something somehow. What, then, is man? Did we accidentally come from our father’s loins to struggle to live until we go to join the kingdom of the worms? (Isa 14:11) So men become fatalistic. They think that they are born and live in order to die after working hard to survive in this hard world. Fatalistic thinking leads to Nihilism. “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (Isa 22:13). The result of such fatalism is indeed great. It takes away the meaning of life. It makes man immoral to the point of committing incest (Ge 19:36). The source of all evil seems to be the atheistic view of life. The thing that makes people most unhappy seems to be the thought, “My life just came into being by chance.”

But Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Here we find the answer to the question of what was in the beginning. God was in the beginning. And God created the heavens and the earth. When we say that God created the world, we are also saying that God has a relationship to his world--the relationship of the Creator to his creation. It is in the context of this relationship that man can know that his existence is not an accident, that his life has meaning.

God created man according to his absolute purpose. For example, look at a watch. The watch was made by someone for a purpose. As long as the watch is used for the purpose for which it was made, it has meaning. Likewise, God made mankind with a clear purpose of life. God made mankind with a clear meaning of life. The words, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” tell us that because God created the world, all the people and things in the world have a necessary existence. Nothing is here by accident or chance. Every person’s life has meaning in God. Without creation faith a

person falls into deep chaos.

I may not comprehend in detail how God created this universe and all the life in it. But I accept by faith in my heart that he created me and all others for his absolute purpose. I thank God for the gift of life God has given me. I thank God that I can have a personal relationship with him.

II. AND GOD SAID ... (2-25)

Look at verse 2. “Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” When the heavens and the earth were first created, they were in a chaotic state. The earth and the heavens were still not distinguishable; they were unformed. There was nothing but a heaving deep, an abyss of waters, and this deep was wrapped in darkness. The world before God spoke was empty and dark. When the world was still in chaotic state, the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. In the beginning God was there as the Spirit, because he is the Spirit (Jn.4:24). As his Spirit hovered over the waters, his plan of creation moved fast, his desire to see the beautiful world and man who would glorify him was intense and firm. And when he spoke, everything came into being.

In chapter 1, the phrase “And God said...” is repeated 9 times. We learn here that God created the world by his word. We can learn several things from this.

First, our God is the Almighty Creator God. It was by his almighty power that God created the heavens and the earth. Look at verse 3. God said, “Let there be light.” And light blazed out to fill the darkness. He said, “Sun, come into being” (14). And the great, burning sun rose in the heavens. This is amazing, especially when we think of our own limitations. If the sun is a little too warm, we sweat and get sunburn; if the weather gets a little cold, we shiver. But when God simply spoke, “Let there be light,” bright and dazzling light blazed into the darkness. This teaches that God is not limited. He is great and his power is almighty. The hymn writer, Carl Boberg, wrote in the language of poetry, “O Lord my God ... How great thou art! How great thou art!”

Once God rebuked Abraham for his complacency saying, “I am God Almighty” (Ge 17:1). God introduced himself to Moses as the “I Am Who I Am” (Ex 3:14). God made the heavens and the earth by his almighty power and matchless wisdom. When we look at the beauty and harmony of the universe, and see how everything works according to unseen natural laws, we cannot deny God’s divine nature and eternal power. So Paul wrote, “for since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made...” (Ro 1:20). The Hebrews believed in this Almighty God. This God is the God who created all things. This is the God who made water come out of the rock to quench the thirst of the thirsty people of Israel as they grumbled in the desert (Ex 17:6). God is almighty. He gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they

were (Ro 4:17). The almighty God who created the heavens and the earth is God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead. He holds the whole world in his hand. This Almighty God created the heavens and the earth.

Second, our God is a personal God. By what instrument did God create the universe? It was by his word. When he said, "Let there be light," the light came into being. Our God is a God who speaks. Our God feels and thinks. He plans and makes decisions. He is a personal God. He speaks to us through the nature; he speaks to us by his word (the Bible); and he speaks through his servants. Although he is a great God, he speaks to each of us personally. I can come to him and have fellowship with him. Some people worship some impersonal objects as their gods. Egyptians worshiped the sun. Zoroastrians worshiped fire. I heard there are about 6,000 gods in Japan. They bow down to a couple of gods in kitchen, more in bathroom, and more in garage. But these gods do not speak or think. But our God is the God who created the universe by his word and spoke to Moses, Abraham, David, Mary, and many others throughout history, and who talks to us personally today.

Third, our God is a God of order. God brought order and life from chaos by creating things of the world by his spoken word. And there was a clear internal order in his creation. He made an environment that could sustain life. On the first day he made light; then, on the fourth day, the sun, moon and stars to rule the day and the night. On the second day he made the expanse which he called sky. He separated the waters above the expanse from the water below it. Then, on the 5th day he put the birds and fish in their respective environment. The environment he prepared on the 3rd day was for animals and man, created on the 6th day. God prepared the environment carefully so that he could create the main actors to live in that environment. Suppose the order of the first and fourth day was reversed. Then the sun, the moon and stars would have been nothing but space monsters. If he'd created fish before the sea, no fish would have survived.

The fact that our God is a God of order is also significant for our relationship to him. The Creator God is the center of the universe and we are his children. In Genesis chapter 1 the word "God" is repeated 30 times. God created the universe according to his own will, for his own purpose and by his own power. Man is a created being. He did not create himself, as some people think. The universe belongs to God. He remains the central figure in the universe. We are his creatures. We cannot make ourselves the center of the universe. But when we read the Bible, we find that God is our heavenly Father and we are his precious children (Ps.8:4,5).

When we believe that God is our Creator, then we realize that we are his creatures. When we believe that God is the Owner of our lives, we can become godly people. We must also become humble, for we accept the sovereignty of God. Because God made us, our existence is not accidental. It was planned by God according to his good purpose. When we realize that God is our Creator and the Sovereign Lord of

creation, we can know the truth about where we came from and where we are going. We came from God and we are going back to God. When we believe that God is the Creator, we become possessors of eternal life in this Eternal God. When we believe that God is our Creator, we can have absolute values, and absolute meaning. Otherwise, our meaning and purpose, our morals and values are relativistic. If we do not have creation faith, it doesn't matter whether we are men or monkeys.

III. AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD

On each day God created all kinds of different things and filled the world with many beautiful and wonderful living things. God created the sun, the moon and numerous stars to show us the best special effects we can see. He created plants, trees, birds, fish and animals according to their various kinds. He certainly did not make this universe a boring place. For example, think about what he created on the third day. He made various kinds of vegetables including cabbage, turnip, lettuce, spinach, cucumber, pumpkin, carrot, cauliflower, corn, pea, pepper, celery, leek, parsley, zucchini, and many more. We can also enjoy fruits including plum, apricot, peach, apple, pear, grape, persimmon, chestnut, pomegranate, orange, jujube, nutmeg, raspberry, and walnut. In tropical climate, banana, pineapple, papaya, mango, and other tropical fruits make our mouths watery. There are more than 50 varieties of mango. And how about flowers that beautifully decorate our world in four seasons? To name only a few, we have azalea, cuckoopint, iris, foxglove, geranium, honeysuckle, lily, narcissus, peony, poppy, rose, seneca snakeroot, shepherd's purse, shooting star, Solomon's seal, sweet William, witch hazel, and zinnia. There are about 4,000 varieties of cactus alone. Then there are so many wild flowers in the fields and mountains whose names we don't even know. Altogether, there are more than 230,000 different kinds of plants that so far we discovered. God created each of these plants with his artistic touch. We realize that God is the best artist when we look at closely even one wild flower in the field. Like the Psalmist, we can only praise God's wisdom and greatness, saying, "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (Ps 8:1)

In this passage, the phrase "and God saw that it was good" is repeated many times (4,9,12,18,21,25). This means that God was pleased with the work of creation. The world was suddenly full of life and the mysterious power of life produced many awesome wonders. The world was beautiful. In what respect is the creation good? Creation is good because it is full of God's power and wisdom. His divine nature and his glory are revealed in each act of creation. Jesus described this beautiful world when he said that wild lilies in the field are much prettier than the splendid dress of Solomon. Indeed, God's created world reveals his invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature (Ro 1:20). Even in this fallen world, we still see the grandeur and beauty of God's world--the grandiose Grand Canyon, the mighty Pacific Ocean, the clear blue sky, the endlessly stretching fields.... Everything God made is good, for his glory is revealed in everything. God created everything for his glory. May we appreciate the beauty of God's world and acknowledge his eternal power! May we come to this God the Creator and worship him!