

# AT THE BEGINNING

## Genesis 1:2

### INTRODUCTION

YouTube, social media and the internet have transformed a dynamic that has been a fundamental part of humanity since God created us - the whole concept of being a witness

- we live in a day and age when everyone is a witness to everything else
- we witness things many times that we ought not witness
- in the Bible, God tells us the principle of a witness is important
- God gives us instructions as to the number of witnesses and how witnesses are to be treated

In **Acts 1**, we are told by God that we will be the witnesses of Christ in Judea, in Jerusalem and in to the most remote part of the earth.

John Mark – the **Gospel according to Mark** was based on eyewitness account of Peter (John Mark was a disciple of Peter)

Well, in the same way, **Genesis 1-11** → are based on God's eyewitness account

**Illustration** – The creation miracles of Jesus are described by men who witnessed these events. Jesus created wine. On another day he created food for thousands. We know these things happened because we have the testimony of men who were there to see it happen. There is no need to invent theories to try to “help us understand what really happened.” They happened just the way the Bible says they happened.

**Application**– In the same way → we have no more right to question what **Genesis 1-11** says, literally, than to question what happened with the miracles of Jesus.

**Illustration** – I was in an important meeting last week – CEO, CTO, COO, Executive VP's, etc. I had a discussion during our break time with Division VP (dear friend of mine) about what we were doing in our respective churches. I was telling him that I was preaching through Genesis and his response was “Genesis is complex.” → I explained it really isn't which led to further discussion and next thing we knew, one of the others at the meeting was saying, “Guys, can we start our meeting?” The VP replied : “Oh sorry. Clay and I are discussing the book of Genesis.”

The point is we can understand Genesis. Yes, they are deep truths but when we take it at face value, we don't need to craft things to understand God's Word.

### READ Gen 1:1-2

**Summary of 1:1** – Presupposition - God in the Bible presupposes the existence of God.

- Every human being starts with some kind of presupposition - either that
  - God is, that God exists and He has spoken his Truth to us in the pages of Scripture

- or we can presuppose something else that we have conjured up in our own mind which is really coming from the little god that is staring back at us from the mirror
- while our faith is based strongly on evidence, and supported by evidence and by fact and by reason, it is not arrived at by fact or evidence or reason
- the Biblical saving faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints is the only true rational and reasonable explanation for anything in the universe, on this earth - the purpose of life or anything else
- at the same time, we realize that every man, woman and child understands that God exists - that is why at the very beginning the Bible does not start with a proof of His existence. It begins with God.

Gen 1:1 also gave us an Introduction to God and His Creation

→ Today: **1:2**

There are 1533 verses in **Genesis** – if we studied one verse a week, without interruption we would be done in 30 years → the year 2043

There are 299 verses in **Gen 1-11** → just under 6 years → we would be done in 2019.

I will tell you that we will probably pick up the pace at some point!

**Proposition:** 3 Pictures of Creation in this Opening Summary:

1. The **Centerpiece** of His Creation
2. The **Construction Materials** of His Creation
3. The **Controlling Calm** over and through His Creation

**So That:** Purpose      Stage/Theater To display

**1<sup>st</sup> Picture** ...

The **Centerpiece** of Creation

Point – The Bible begins with an audacious truth claim.

Gen 1:1 – The Who. The What.

Gen 1:2 – For what purpose does this all exist.

The Universe, the Earth, was created, primarily, as a theater for His glory. Creation is a stage. A stage on which a story happens.

What is the most important Creation of the Universe?

Geocentric – Centerpiece of Stage

**Earth** is the focus of God’s attention.

Proof – **Gen 1:2a** – “**And the earth**”

“**earth**” – Last word in 1:1. First word in 1:2.

- in English language, the normal order of the components of a sentence is subject, verb and object
- in Hebrew language, the normal order is verb, subject and object
- when Moses wrote this, he broke that grammatical rule of Hebrew language and he took the noun 'earth' and put it first - to bring our attention into focus

Earth is emphatically first ...Geocentric

**Illustration** – In my discussion with Division VP – after his statement that “Genesis is complex” was the statement “But there are two creation stories.”

**1:1-2:3** – Panoramic Creation Account

**2:4-25** – Day 6 Creation Account

**1:1-2** → Summary Statement

1:1 – Universe

1:2 – Earth

**Gap Theory** – ...“became” not “was”

- originated in the 19th century
- says that, in verse 1, God created the heavens and the earth
- then in the 'white space' between verse 1 and verse 2, there was millions, maybe even billions of years, when there was all this activity, the fall of Satan, destruction and death .....which then takes us to verse 2.
- because of all this activity they have to change the "was" in v. 2 to "became"

Gap theory didn't come from liberal Christians, it came from otherwise conservative Christians. It offers an explanation that allows for an earth that is billions of years old.

No one would ever read the first 2 verses of Genesis and imagine there is a huge gap between 1 and 2.

The only reason, the only reason, is capitulation, compromise, cowering to the defunct, nonsensical, moronic idea of Evolution – that is absolutely ludicrous in the face of objective, true science.

No matter how you slice it, the Gap Theory is → **Recreation** not **Creation**

**Illustration**– “Elder” – founding member in East Coast church – admitted **Gen 1:2** and forward is a “recreation” not creation.

**Illustration**– **Gen 1:1-2** online Sermon – “God, Our Maker and Recreator”

There are other theories:

**Framework** – comes from a literary standpoint - that this is all metaphor - literary units, indefinite, very long periods or blocks - Days 1-3, Days 4-6

**Analogical** – the "days" of Genesis 1 are God's workdays, analogous to human workdays. They set a pattern for our rhythm of work and rest. The six days represent periods of God's historical supernatural activity in preparing and populating the earth.

**Day-Age** – periods of indefinite length and not of 24 hours duration. The six days are taken as sequential but as overlapping and perhaps merging into one another.

→ **Theistic Evolution** or **Progressive Creationism**

The one thing clear in all these views is their rejection of the biblical view that prevailed throughout the history of the church until the rise of the theory of evolution.

There are many godly men and women that might hold on to one of those views. This does not mean that anyone who hold to any of these theories is outside fellowship or that we should rupture fellowship with them.

At the same time, we're not talking about a few thousand here a few thousand there, who cares. We're not talking about a few billion here a few billion there, who cares. Massive difference.

**Application**– Very important question for every person who professed Christ – “If you don't accept the literal account of Gen 1-11, when do you start accepting the literal account?”

**Application** → Gen 1:1-2 → The Meaning of Creation.

God is drawing our attention here from the entire **Universe** to the **Earth** as the centerpiece ... then later ... **Earth** → **Man**

**Illustration** – Earth is an average sized planet, dwarfed by the size of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, which are all gas giants.

The ancient Hebrew had no idea what the world looked like. God tells the ancient Hebrew right at the beginning that the earth is special. We can walk up to a globe and view the earth as though we were in outer space.

When you look at volume:

- Neptune is 58 times bigger than the Earth
- Uranus is 63 times bigger than the Earth
- Saturn is 764 times bigger than the Earth
- Jupiter is 1321 times bigger than Earth

But Earth is the focus of God's attention.

In Genesis, God compares the stars of the heavens to the sand of the seashores and the dust of the earth in His promise to Abraham.

Consider our sun which is a part the Milky Way galaxy. The latest estimate of the number of stars in just the Milky Way galaxy is 300 billion.

- Based on data from the Hubble Telescope, NASA's current estimate of galaxies in the universe is hundreds of billions.
- Let's say 100 billion galaxies X 100 billion stars each = there are 10 sextillion stars in the universe (a 1 with 22 zeros after it)
- **Isaiah 40:26**  
**"Lift up your eyes on high**  
**And see who has created these stars,**  
**The One who leads forth their host by number,**  
**He calls them all by name;**  
**Because of the greatness of His might and the [a]strength of His power,**  
**Not one of them is missing."**
- The universe is vast and God names it all - if you were to name each of those 10 sextillion stars, one per second, it would take you 317 trillion years to name them all!

**Illustration**– The late Carl Sagan was interviewed on Dateline shortly before his death in 1996. Sagan was asked if he had any words of wisdom he would like to share. This is what he said:  
*"We live on a hunk of rock and metal that circles a humdrum star that is one of 400 billion other stars that make up the Milky Way galaxy which is one of billions of other galaxies which make up the universe which may be one of a very large number, perhaps an infinite number of other universes. That is a perspective on human life and our culture that is well worth pondering."*

He was saying, in essence:

- We came from nowhere.
- We are going nowhere.
- There is no purpose in anything we see around us.
- Life is meaningless.
- Humans are not special in any sense.

**Application**– Wrong!! Gen 1:2 → The Meaning of Creation.

The Earth is The **Centerpiece** of Creation.....

**2<sup>nd</sup> Picture ...**

2. The **Construction Materials** of His Creation - the building blocks

Point– The Earth is incomplete, unfinished, unorganized, uninhabitable at this point  
 → but Good!! The bare materials are present .

Proof– **Gen 1:2b** – “**was formless and void and darkness was over the surface of the deep;**”

“**formless and void**” – *tohu wabohu*

– words rhyme in Hebrew – mnemonic device - so His children could memorize and understand His Truths

“**formless**” – without boundaries, without separation, without distinction

“**void**” – empty, without population

Primordial Soup - the evolutionists talk about this - in absolute defiance of the Second Law of Thermodynamics - God does describe a formless, watery mass of unorganized material without boundaries BUT there is nothing evil, bad, chaotic, etc. in this phrase.

- The Earth was good.
- There was nothing lacking.
- All the materials, the building blocks are there.
- That is what God is communicating to us in **v. 2**

“**and darkness was over the surface of the deep**” –

→ God created the heavens and the earth in darkness.

- He does not need light.
- He creates light on Day 1.

“**darkness**” - in and of itself, is not inherently evil.

Scripture says God cloaks Himself in “**darkness**”

**Turn to: Psa 18:9-11**

**Psa 97:2 – “Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.”**

**Psa 104:20 – “You appoint darkness and it becomes night, in which all the beasts of the forest prowl about.”**

The Hebrew day begins with “**darkness**”

In the same way ... Creation begins with “**darkness**”

There is nothing in Genesis 1 to indicate a chaotic evil “**darkness.**”

There is nothing to imply a gap between vv. 1 and 2.

Chaos is at the heart of every pagan mythology. In the same way, even if someone is not following after the Gap Theory, they will talk about how God created things out of chaos.

“Chaos” – defined as 'disorder and confusion', 'mayhem', 'bedlam', 'pandemonium', 'a state in which behavior and events are not controlled by anything', a 'disorderly mass'.

That is the exact opposite of the picture that God gives us in Scripture. What God gives us is this formless, without boundaries, without separation, beginning construction materials from which He would display His sovereignty. The way the world exists in **v.2**, no birds, animals, or human beings could live on the planet Earth while it remains in this state. So God begins to work on this formless, watery mass of unorganized material without boundaries. God’s first stage in creating the earth is to make a scene of primordial disorder in which and over which He is going to display His sovereignty.

**Illustration** – If you went to a pet store, and you got an aquarium, and it came in a big box. You set all the contents on the table. Then you went back and purchased a fish and brought it home and set it on the table, you couldn't toss it on the table and tell it to thrive. It wouldn't survive. There is nothing lacking but you must put the materials together first. That is the same with God. Everything is there - in v. 2 - for God to put it all together in His perfect timing.

**Illustration** - Consider an annoying website that says “under construction” for months. You keep going back to check on it and it continues to be "under construction". Not so here, God has all the building blocks, bare materials → all good. He will construct in His perfect timing.

### **Application**

“**formless**” – God completes on Days 1-3

“**void**” – God completes on Days 4-6

	<u>Formless</u> <i>tohu</i>	and	<u>Void</u> <i>bohu</i>
	↓ separates (completes)		↓ fills (completes)
Day 1	light and darkness	Day 4	luminaries/light-bearers
Day 2	expanse/firmament	Day 5	sea creatures, sky creatures
Day 3	dry land,vegetation	Day 6	land animals and man

**1. Separates** (shows sovereignty)

**2. Bounds** - sets **Boundaries** demonstrates sovereign control

**Isa 45:18** – “**For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, But formed it to be inhabited)**”

- God's divine commentary on Genesis 1:1-2

The **Centerpiece** of Creation, The **Construction Materials** of Creation.....

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Picture ...**

3. The **Controlling Calm** over and through His Creation

Point – Protection and Preservation Peace/Control/Nurturing

- direct opposite of other theories

Proof – **Gen 1:2c** – “**and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.**”

“**the Spirit of God**” – Plurality/Trinity – not fully revealed in all detail by the Old Testament. The term allows for all that God will reveal in the progression of His revelation.

“**was moving over the surface of the waters**”

- this root word translated as English word moving may mean “vibrate” – connection with foundational laws of physics
- same word is used three times in Old Testament including **Deut 32:11**

**Deut 32:11 – “Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, That hovers over its young, He spread His wings and caught them, He carried them on His pinions.”**

- same Hebrew word translated as hover

A protective hovering → The Holy Spirit is preserving and nurturing like a great eagle hovering above its nest, controlling and protecting.

- the picture here is of calmness, gentleness, peace, and control
- the language here goes against any kind of chaos

This is in contrast with Ancient Near East myths of out of control gods trying to regain control. In the ancient creation account, "Enimu Elish", the gods created out of rebellion, out of control, in war.

**Illustration** – From Greek mythology - Ouranos ("Sky") mated nightly with Gaia ("Earth"). When their children were born, Ouranos hid them inside Gaia. Painfully swollen with offspring, she wrought a huge sickle and asked her children, six brothers and six sisters (the Titans), to punish Ouranos. Only her youngest son, Kronos, agreed. She gave him the sickle and Kronos emasculated Ouranos and Kronos then rose into power. Kronos married his sister Rhea, who bore him three daughters and three sons: Hades, Poseidon, and Zeus (the Olympian gods). But Gaia and Ouranos had foretold that Kronos would be over-thrown by a son, so he swallowed his children as each was born. About to bear her sixth child, Zeus, Rhea asked her parents how to save him. They sent her to Crete, where she hid him in a cave on Mount Aegaeon. She presented Kronos instead with a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes, which he swallowed. Zeus later tricked Kronos into eating a mixture of wine and mustard which caused him to vomit out the Gods. Once reborn, the gods waged war on the Titans, whom they overthrew, and Zeus replaced Kronos as ruler.

In our twenty-first century minds, we think this is ridiculous. How could this be? That is a perfect picture that goes anywhere outside the calming control over His creation.

**Application** – The Gap Theory, Progressive Creationism, Theistic Evolution all have more in common with pagan myths.

The Bible says God created everything good without death of any kind. Man sinned. Then came death.

All these other theories place death, disease, suffering, bloodshed, violence, and extinction before sin. That is a fundamental problem.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the Bible, God treats **Genesis** as pure history:

**Exod 20:9-11** - Moses, when he is recording God's command to the nation of Israel about the Sabbath, they reference the literal historical six day creation of God

**2 Pet 3:5** - "by the Word of God, the heavens and the earth was formed out of water and by

**water"** - Peter describes creation as pure literal history

**Luke 11:51 – “from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah,”**

- first (Genesis) to last chapters (2 Chronicles) of Hebrew Bible
- Jesus is pointing to the historical veracity and trustworthiness of the Bible that they had at that point and time - which we have as the Old Testament

10/6/13