

Plan and Purpose Bible Study #III-1---Genesis 1

For a number of years, it has been our practice in our local Bible study to follow the story the Bible presents through the whole Bible. Having done this several times, we think, each time that when we complete the study, that we will have the whole story in mind so we won't need to do that study again. But, by the time that we complete the study, we realize that we have learned a great deal more as we went through that particular study and that it would pay us to do it again adding what we have learned in all previous studies to make the overall picture more complete. The Bible is a simple book with a simple story, yet it can be as complex as a story can get as we find more and more pieces of this wondrous story which we consider God's Plan and Purpose for all mankind. As we go through the story this time, we will do our best to make it simple enough for all to understand, but we will try to add the complexities as well. Since, we are making these notes available not only to our local study group but to several on our mailing lists and our web site, my invitation for questions from my fellow students not only applies to our local group, but to all having access to these notes as well. A reminder for those on our mailing list, or from our web site, "kingdomseekersministry.org," our phone number is 970-562-4874; our mailing address is P.O. Box 279, Pleasant View, CO 81331; our E-mail address is ksm@fone.net. Feel free to use any of these means of communication to put forth questions or comments.

Rather than copy every Scripture that we will be looking at, I will usually put in parenthesis "Read—and then give the particular Scripture reference." This will save time in preparation and will benefit the reader in that it will require him or her to exercise their ability to look up Scriptures, thus becoming more familiar with their Bible. I will be using the King James translation, but will, from time to time, quote other translations for possible greater clarity and understanding.

The book of Genesis gives us the very foundation of the rest of the Bible. It was written by the inspired hand of Moses some 2500 years after the creation of Adam. We're told this was the first book of five that he wrote. These five books as a whole, which include Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, in addition to Genesis, is referred to as the Pentateuch. If you have ever tried to write down all that you did last week, or what happened in the world last week, I think you can appreciate how much history and detail Moses was able to relate of the 2500 years in this book (some 80 pages in my Bible). We can also understand why many details we might would like to know are not in the book.

Without an understanding of Genesis, I submit that it would be impossible to understand either the Old or the New Testament. Because of this, the account given in Genesis has come under constant attack, especially in the last couple of centuries. The atheists, the agnostics, the skeptics are all aware that if they can destroy the credibility of this wonderful book, they can basically destroy the Bible as a whole. Unfortunately, even people with good intentions have created division among otherwise Bible believing people by insisting on certain doctrines, that when the truth be told, they cannot prove nor can others prove them wrong.

The problem, as I see it, is that, because doubt and division are created in many people's minds, facts that we really need to know and adhere to are lost in the turmoil. So as we begin a more comprehensive study of Genesis than we have heretofore presented, please understand that there may be statements made that you may not be in agreement with. I ask that you not let these become stumbling blocks, but that you study along with me and search out that which is true. You may find your opinion to be true, or you may find that you have to change your mind. I think most of us who have studied the Bible very much have had to change our minds at one time or another. There is a great deal of false doctrine being taught and we have all be

influenced by some of it at one time or another. The apostle Paul, in Romans 14:13, says, **“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brothers way.”** I certainly do not want to be guilty of this, so where possible, I will try to present both sides of arguments, but will try to give my reasons for the way I believe. I do not claim to be always totally right, though my wife and daughters may disagree with that statement. I believe that as we study, we need to take positions, but if someone, or even our own selves prove that position to be wrong, we need to be able to abandon that position and set out to prove a new one to ourselves. If we are always afraid to take a position for fear of being wrong, I doubt that we will ever learn anything. I pray that this study will cause each of us further study and create in us a greater desire to learn God’s Word.

So to begin our study, I would like for us to read all of chapter 1 of Genesis and then we will go back and take it a verse at a time. (Read) Going back to verse 1, perhaps the greatest thing we need to understand, possibly of the whole Bible, is that **“God created the heaven and the earth.”** This means that as creator, He automatically is the owner, thus the supreme or sovereign of all. As such He can do whatever He wants with what He has created. He leaves it to us to find out what He wants to do with His creation and how He goes about bringing it about through study of His Word. While each of us may think He should do things a certain way, we need to keep in mind that it is He who decides what He wants and how to bring it about. We also need to keep in mind that we are part of that creation, so He is sovereign over us. While we might think that what we think, say and do are a result of our own abilities, we need to remember His sovereignty.

We’re not told when the beginning was. We’re just told that **“In the beginning God.”** In other words, when ever that beginning was, God was already there. He pre-existed. It is very difficult for us as humans to comprehend a God with no beginning and no end. Time as we know it was part of His creation, thus there was a beginning of our earth and universe. On this, science and the Bible agree. But what constituted this beginning? The answer has to be, “that which was created.” But from what was it created. Again there is general agreement between the Bible and science. Romans 1:20 tells us, **“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.”** Science tells us that the ingredient (for lack of a better word) of everything is energy. With the splitting of the atom has come at least a partial understanding of how great this energy, or power, is from which Paul, in Romans, tells us everything is made. There is disagreement as to how this energy was harnessed into the things that were made. Most theories that have been advanced are only that, theories. Only God has the true answer.

Between verse 1 and verse 2, there is a bit of a mystery. The first part of verse 2 says, **“And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.”** The prophet Jeremiah, in Jer. 4:23 (Read), in lamenting the coming destruction of Judah by the Babylonians, uses the same words as Gen. 1:2 as a description to which he was comparing the destruction of Judah. He indicates in this chapter that the earth was created for habitation, then destroyed, and remade as described in Gen. 1. Isaiah confirms this in Isa. 45:18 (Read). The phrase **“in vain”** is from the same Hebrew word, *“tohu”* that the phrase **“without form”** in both Jer. 4:23 and Gen. 1:2 is translated. I am not prepared to speculate on what happened, but thought it interesting enough to make note of it in our study.

That water covered everything is evident from the rest of Gen. 1:2, **“And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”**

In verses 3-5, note that light existed before the sun and the moon were created. Again, if we understand that God created everything from energy, we can at least have an idea where this light came from. When we get to the end of the book of Revelation in our study, we will see that there will be no need of the sun or the moon as God will be our light. The concept of day as opposed to night is introduced during this creation period, even though we are told in verse 14 that when the sun and moon were created, their rotations determined the seasons, days and years.

There are differences of opinion as to what is meant by the word “day” as used in the rest of this chapter in speaking of the 6 days of creation.. Some hold the very strong opinion that it means a 24 hour day, as we know it in our time. Others hold just as strong an opinion that the “day” means ages, though there is wide variation of opinions as to the length of these ages. “Day” is from the Hebrew word “yom.” Though it is most often translated “day” in the King James translation, it is also translated “time, age, life, year, years, and season” among others. What little I know about geology leads me to think of “day” in this chapter as ages. I would not speculate on the length of the ages as I know of nothing that proves this one way or the other, however, it is my guess that we can rule out the use of the quantitative term, “billions.” Also, the 24 hour day as we know it was not created until the fourth “day.” Whichever way one believes, the important thing we need to accept is that it is God, or, as we are told in Col. 1:16 (Read), it is Jesus Christ who created all things. If it was critical that we know more of these details of creation, I’m convinced He would have given us more details to work with.

It is interesting to me that the order of creation that we have in the Bible is basically the so called order of evolution that “scientists” in fairly recent history have come up with. I do not believe that you can separate science from the Bible but we have to be very careful that it is true science. I am convinced that there are scientific principles in the Bible that should be guidelines for true science. If someone gets outside of these guidelines, they are playing with false science.

The greatest principle is that because God is the creator, He is sovereign. It is His creation, He has the right to do whatever He wishes with it. The good thing for us is that He, in His creating, created laws that govern how His creation works, from the sun, moon, and stars, in fact, the whole universe, to the smallest entity known to exist. True science deals with discovering what these laws are and how they work. These laws concern every realm of science from chemistry to math to physics to geology, etc. (Read Prov. 25:2) When man tries to be disobedient to these laws and to create ones of his own, this is false science and will fail. Like other laws of God that are violated and taught to others as fact, this only leads to confusion and suffering.

In verses 6-8, the firmament dividing the waters was created with water below the firmament and with water above the firmament, thus producing a very different environmental effect from what we know today. This explains the very fast, lush growth of vegetation that is evident in our coal seams today for example. This water above the firmament was the source of water for the flood in Noah’s time. Somehow, food apparently didn’t spoil, at least as it does today, as we will see evidenced by the fact that the wine Noah drank after the flood was

fermented, thus causing Noah to become drunk, something he appeared to be unaware that such a thing could happen.

In verses 9-13 we have our first indication of life in this new creation. Vegetation was introduced and grew on the dry land. The water above the firmament apparently caused a tropical climate, a greenhouse effect, in which vegetative growth was very rapid. Each kind of plant life yielded seed after its own kind.

In verses 14-19, even though there was already light and darkness, we now have the source of lights that we are familiar with today. The statement, **“he made the stars also,”** seems to indicate that the creation of the stars could have happened at an earlier period. But the rotation cycles that were put in motion put heavenly bodies in orbits that provide scientist today with a great heavenly clock that helps them look into both the past and the future. Obviously, the years, seasons, and days as we know them were not known until this fourth day, or time period. Calling the sun and the moon the greater and lesser lights helps define the diffusion of lights that would have been the case with the watery canopy above the earth.

Note that beginning with the third day, or period, we’re told that with each addition to the creation, God saw that it was good. This is important to remember as we progress through the creation process.

In verses 20-23 we find the first animal life to be created to be fowls of the air and aquatic creatures. It has been my belief that this was the time period in which the dinosaurs existed. Dinosaurs have always been a mystery to me. I don’t remember what I was taught as a child about creation, but one of the biggest shocks of my young life was when in my early teens, I made my first visit to a natural history museum and saw my first dinosaur skeleton. To say that my faith was shaken at the time would be to put it mildly. Now, after having the privilege of being in various coal and uranium mines and having a little knowledge of the oil and gas industry, I marvel at how God planned everything for us to meet the needs we have in our society today, the millenniums past, and the future. Studying the books of Daniel and Revelation has taught me that this earth will be inhabited for a very long time yet, but seeing how God has provided for our needs to present, I have no fears that the future will be provided for as well.

Verses 24 and 25 tell us this sixth day, or period, has required considerable preparation so that life of man and animals could be sustained. Though I believe we are still seeing creation happen, the animal life was created first, kind after kind. In spite of all the credibility given the evolution theories in our educational institutions today, I think it well to point out that there has never been any proof that one species evolved into another specie. Moses, in his record of creation here, simply tells us that God created the animals so that they produced kind after kind. This is a simple thing to believe. Species have come and gone throughout history (creation is still in progress as we have said), but never has there been any evidence of one specie changing into another specie, or one specie originating from another specie.

To us, the most important creature created was that of “man.” Thus we find in verse 26, **“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”** Then in verse 27 we see, **“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”** What is fully meant by **“in our image”** or **“in the image of God”** will probably not be understood by us until the first resurrection. As we will see as we study further, Adam and Eve were apparently clothed with something until they sinned and then they

found themselves naked. Though I cannot define it, I submit that this “clothing” was the glory of God. Having lost this, however it might be defined, Adam and Eve became what we are now. I believe that Scriptures that we are going to study in the future will tell us that whatever that difference was between what they were and what they became will be restored to man. Acts 3:21 indicates that there will be a time when all things will be restored. I believe this is telling that this restoration will be back to the status that Adam and Eve held before their sin.

Verse 28 is a very important verse for us to know, though we won't learn the full significance until later in our studies. But to pique our interest, God gave Adam two mandates here, one to be fruitful and replenish the earth; and the second to subdue the earth and have dominion over it. These mandates, as we will see, are passed down from Adam to his son, then to his son, etc. They eventually become known collectively as the birthright, something we will discuss at some length later. If we keep this in mind, it will help us to understand a great deal of Scripture that is not understood by most people simply because they are not familiar with this verse and its implications. Basically, Adam is the ruler of the world. We'll see this rulership passed down from father to son in various interesting ways and that it eventually ends up being passed to Jesus Christ.

To help us understand as we study, anything that God says is God's law. We will see that He spoke the Ten Commandments and we recognize this as God's law. But, we will see a number of other things that are God's law that God speaks to various individuals and nations. These two mandates are two of those laws. God is the superior law giver. But, the thing that sets God apart from all of the man made gods is that He also keeps His own law. He is not above it as are most man-made gods in man's mind. You can look at any of the world's religions from Judaism to Islam to Buddhism and you will find, even though many claim to supposedly worship the same God as we Christians, in their doctrines they set their god (who is really man himself) above the law.

We said before that true science is discovering God's laws and how they work in everything around us. As we study His Word, God's laws concerning how man is to act and function are written out for us, but it is just as important that we understand how God's law works so far as man is concerned. Understanding His law is understanding His Word.

Verses 29 and 30 seem to indicate that initially, man and beast were to only eat vegetation. The word “meat” does not refer to flesh as we use the term today, but simply means food. Meat (flesh) will be added as a food for man later in Scripture.

Verse 31 makes a point that is important for us to remember, **“God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good.”** Even though man is going to do some terrible things, as part of God's creation, man is very good. Keep Acts 3:21 in mind—the restitution of all things. When all things are restored back to the way God created them, it will be very good.

God completed the creation in six days, or periods, or ages and set aside the seventh as a day of rest.

Some people want to look at the creation of man in chapter one and the forming of man in chapter two as two separate creations. This first chapter, to me, is an overall outline of the creation process. It is kind of like an inventor having an idea. He sees the finished product in his mind, but it still has to be built. His job is to actually put it together piece by piece, but in his mind he has already seen the complete machine. What we see next in Genesis is the actual

building, or forming, the creation of man God has planned. I do not see Gen. 1 and Gen. 2 as two separate creations.

We will begin our next lesson with Genesis 2. JRL