**May 13, 2020 | A Study on Chapter 1 of the Book of Genesis**

**The Beginning**

While we were meeting in person studying Revelation, there seemed to be some level of interest in Genesis as our next focus.  The author of the Book of Genesis was Moses who wrote the first five books of the Bible, commonly referred to as the Pentateuch.   Certainly all books of the Bible are inspired by God but the events described are witnessed by man.  In the case of Genesis, Moses was not present so it may be that God Himself dictated to Moses what to write.  It could also be that history was handed down from Adam to subsequent generations.  Genesis covers approximately a period of approximately 2300 years (I have included a chart at the end of this lesson below).

The word genesis is defined as the origin or coming into being of something.  One synonym is beginning and the first sentence of the Bible is “In the *beginning* God created the heavens and the earth”.  This marks the beginning of things that God created, not God Himself since He has no beginning or end.  We think of eternity as a future with no end but eternity also had no beginning.  I find the latter more difficult to comprehend than the former.  Isaiah 40:28 says that the Lord is the everlasting God.  The scripture that most clearly defines this is Hebrews 7:3 where Paul describes Melchizedek who appeared to Abraham as a pre-incarnate Christ.  “He is without father or mother or genealogy; he has neither beginning of days nor end of life”.

A common question arising from reading verse one is **“How old is the earth?”**

Most scientists would estimate the age of the earth to be 4 to 5 billion years based on fossil records (old earth theory).  On the other hand, many Christians believe that the earth is about 6,000 years old based on the genealogical records in the Bible (new earth theory).  Lifeway conducted a survey of 1000 pastors in 2012 and found that they were evenly split between old earth and new earth theories.

The old earth view does not require one to also believe that man evolved from a lower species nor does it require a belief in the big bang theory.  It is incontrovertible that God created the heavens and the earth.  In Exploring Genesis, John Phillips discusses the following old earth theories regarding the age of the earth:

**Day-age Theory:**  The days of Genesis are viewed not as literal 24 hour days but as epochs or ages or vast periods of time.

**Gap Theory:** 1:1 records the account of the original creation.  Between the first & second verses there exists a gap in time of countless ages.

**Revelation Theory:**  The days of Genesis 1 are literal 24 hour days but they are days in the life of Moses.  Over six days God revealed to Moses the truths concerning creation and on each of those days Moses recorded the revelation that was given to him.

Consider the following from Vernon McGee, author of Through the Bible

“The record of creation is very brief. At best there is one chapter, and there are 1195 chapters in the Bible. Evidently God did not intend to give us very much information. I personally believe that only one verse deals with creation — Genesis 1:1 — and there are 31,173 verses in the Bible. Evidently God is not emphasizing creation. He has something else in mind altogether. And of course the reason there has been so much controversy over the creation account is that God has been so brief. Chapters 1-11 from Genesis cover probably 2000 years plus.  I believe the plus could be 2 million years or 2 billion years or 2 trillion years.  Somebody days “You don’t think it goes back that far!”  Why not?  We have a God of eternity. He has eternity behind him, eternity in front of him so He is not crowded by time.  You could put in there all the years you need.  From Genesis 12 through the remainder of the Old Testament only 2000 years are covered.  Where is God placing the emphasis?  Why the Bible is the story of Abraham and his descendants!  He devotes 10 chapters to the man Abraham; He devotes one verse to creation.  Look again at something. The four Gospels in the New Testament are contained in 89 chapters. Of these, only four chapters deal with the first 30 years of the life of our Lord; 85 chapters deal with the last three years; 27 chapters deal with the last eight days of His life on earth. Where is God putting the emphasis? He puts it upon the death and resurrection of Christ, of course.”

Very learned evangelicals disagree on the age of the earth.  Regardless of your opinions in this matter, please remember that what lies behind us is not nearly as important as what lies before us and our relationship with Jesus is what truly matters.

**Day One**...

And God said “Let there be light”.  It is appropriate that the first day of the creation of earth is dedicated to light.  1st John 1:5 says “God is light, in Him there is no darkness at all.”  Much of John’s writings focused on the contrast of light of Jesus vs. the darkness of Satan.  As we just studied in Revelation, God Himself will be the light in the new heavens and earth (Rev. 22:5)

**Day Two...**

“Let there be an expanse (firmament, KJV) between the waters”.  God separated the waters on the earth from the waters (vapors) in the sky.  It could be that the earth was previously ensconced in a giant water blanket.

**Day Three...**

“Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place and let dry ground appear.  God formed what we know as continents separated by oceans.  Although there are 5 recognized oceans, they all had their origin in one vast expanse of water. “Let the land produce vegetation, seed bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it according to their various kinds.”  The question “What came first, the chicken or the egg?” might just as well be “What came first the plant or the seed?  God placed fully formed plants and trees on the earth.

**Day Four**...

“Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night”.  God created the sun and the moon as well as all the stars in the universe.  Notice that seasons are mentioned.  The earth’s rotation was designed by God to create seasons as well as differing climates which support diversity of plants and wildlife.

**Day Five**...

“Let the waters teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky”.  Just as God created fully formed vegetation, he also created fully formed fish and birds.  Notice he also formed them according to their kinds which we know as the Greek word phylum meaning a direct line of descent within a group.  My brothers and I have on several occasions pursued the elusive sauger fish with little success.  This fish is related to its larger cousin the walleye and there is a combination of those two fish known as the saugeye, however God does not allow a dogeye.

**Day Six...**

Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds”.  Notice the progression from the first day.  God is creating an environment suitable for man.  Only after he has prepared the earth does he bring forth man in verse 26.  We have all heard the basic rules for writers: who, what, when, where and why.  *Who* is God, *what* is earth and heavens, *when* depends on your thoughts of old earth or new earth, *where* is earth so we are left with the question why.    Why did God create man?  Vernon McGee provides us with three reasons:

**1.      For God’s pleasure.  (Revelation 4:11**)

**2.      For God’s glory.  (Isaiah 43:7)**

**3.      For fellowship with God.  (1st Cor. 1:9**)

Verse 26 also says “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness.”  This is a clear reference to the Trinity; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is also an indication that among God’s creation of plant and animal life we are unique.  God gave us intellectual abilities which are much greater than any other animal as well as a moral and spiritual likeness that other animals do not possess.  For this reason he also gave man dominion over all animal and plant life.   Notice also another distinct difference, in verse 28 God blesses man and woman.  This is another unique honor we have and those blessings give us access to riches beyond our imagination.