

GENESIS 1-3
Message 1

INTRO: I welcome you to this series on the book of Genesis the first three chapters. We originally recorded these messages as they were given in our church. I am now re-recording these messages in my office due to technical difficulties with our recording equipment and the loss of both sides of this first cassette tape. I trust that though they are recorded in my office, they will be a blessing and that you will be encouraged through these messages. So I welcome you to Genesis chapters one through three. These are such very crucial chapters in the Bible.

Let us say you had never known of the Bible, and you had a great interest to find out where matter came from. The sun, the moon, the stars, and man, and all that are made of matter. Now lets lay aside the Bible and the view of creation for a moment. Let us say you went to all the teaching centres of the world and in those centres you read every bit of material you could get your hands on as to where matter came from. How much information would you find in all the universities and educational centres of the world? How many views would you find? Interestingly, not one view? You see, not even evolution or the big bang theory would express a view on how matter came into existence. It is a question that seems to be beyond theory.

Encyclopedia Britannica says, " Mans' present knowledge of the origin and evolution of the universe as a whole is pitifully small." This article goes on to say that, "Henry " " words are as appropriate today as in 1913." Here's what he said, " It is impossible to contemplate the spectacle of the starry universe without wondering how it was formed." I invite you to turn to Psalm 19 in response to Henry () quote here. He says it is impossible to contemplate the spectacle of the starry universe without wondering how it was formed. Psalm 19:1-6 reads like this, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork, day unto day utters speech and night unto night reveals knowledge, there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard, their line has gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its' rising is from one end of

heaven and its' circuit to the other end, and there is nothing hidden from its heat."

Creation declares that there is a God, and when one looks at the material universe, one cannot get away from the thought of "where did it all come from?" So as you continue your research, one glorious day you discover the Bible. Here you have a very ancient sixty-six volume book and hardly a likely source of great truth. There will be a lot of reading to do to see if it expresses a view on the existence of matter. There is no use to begin anywhere else than at the very beginning. Genesis is the name of the beginning of your search and actually, Genesis means, beginning. Then wonder of wonders, there in the very first sentence you read these words, " In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Here you have an explanation for the existence of matter. Searching thousand upon thousands of books you find one that opens with a view on how matter came into being. It was made by God out of nothing. (ex nehel) Do you think this searching student would be excited? Not only is he told how everything came into existence, in the next three chapters he is given a most astonishing, detailed account of Creation (six days), and when and how everything came into being. Here in these chapters he is given the special account of the Creation of man and matter and why man is the way he is .

For the next while we will be considering three of the most important chapters of all the Bible, Genesis chapters one through three. The book of Genesis is foundational to the whole Bible. In a manner we might say that Genesis one through three is foundational to all of Scripture. We might even go farther and say that Genesis 1:1 is vital to the whole of Scripture. How great are the truths found in this one verse alone. Think for a moment how much would be changed in our world if this first opening statement of the Bible were believed.

1. The Name of the Book

Let's begin this series by looking at the name of the book. The name Genesis surprisingly comes from a Greek word, not a Hebrew word. The Hebrew language is the original language of the Old Testament. I understand that the Hebrew word for Genesis comes from the opening phrase, "In the beginning." Now Genesis means *beginning*

or *origin*. It is a word used for birth, which is a beginning or origin. So the book of Genesis is a book of beginnings. Therein lies one of the beautiful facts of the Holy Scriptures. What Genesis begins, the book of Revelation (the last book of the Bible), concludes. Henry Morris gives a list of 21 things begun in Genesis 1 -3, concluded in the book of Revelation. And you may want to make a study of those things on your own.

2. The Writer of the Book

Lets look for a moment at the writer of the book of Genesis. Who wrote this book? Genesis is one of those books that is not difficult to determine the writer. For instance the book of Hebrews is a little different, its hard to determine who is the writer. But it is not so with Genesis. Moses, the learned Jew of Egypt wrote this and the following four books. Only modern liberals have questioned Moses' authorship. These first five books of Moses, called the Torah by the Jews, are the most sacred section of all the Bible to the Jewish people. It is hard for those of us in the Gentile world to understand the reverence or awe the Jew feels for the Torah. Some very interesting things have been discovered in the Torah since the age of computers. Certain Jews have designed a computer program that will take a certain letter of the Bible or a certain word, count any number of word forwards or backwards and then take that letter and count the same number and pick out that letter. The Hebrew letter which begins the word Torah is the Hebrew letter (). Counting forward forty-nine letters (a significant number in the Bible), we have the letter "O." Another forty-nine letters and we have the letter "R", and so on. So Genesis spells out "Torah" at forty-nine letter intervals.

If you go to Exodus the same thing happens, and when you go to Leviticus, this phenomenon is not present. However, in Leviticus, the word "Jehovah", the most sacred name for God appears like this as well. It seems that the words Torah in Genesis and Exodus point forward to Jehovah in Leviticus. Then in the fourth book of Moses, the word Torah appears backwards, pointing to the name of Jehovah in Leviticus. The fifth book of Moses has the same phenomenon as the fourth. So Torah appears in Genesis and Exodus, pointing forward to Jehovah in Leviticus, and Numbers and Deuteronomy have the word

Torah pointing backward to Jehovah in Leviticus. Now that is interesting, although great care must be taken in this type of thing, because God's message is not revealed, I believe, in this manner. His message is revealed to man in simple language.

3. The Time of Writing

Well lets look for a moment at the time of the writing of the book of Genesis as we introduce this topic of Genesis 1 - 3. When was this book written? It may come as a surprise that it was written approximately fourteen hundred and fifty B.C., or two thousand, five hundred years after Creation. It is possible that the book of Job is older than the book of Genesis, as far as its writing date is concerned. If not, then these of course are the earliest written books that we have in the Bible which tells us that there was no written Scripture in our form up until 2500 hundred years after Creation. So it is a book approximately 3500 years old. Now if you are computing the age of the earth from these years, you realize that I believe that the earth is approximately 6000 years old. If that bothers you in light of the billions of years evolution speaks of, I want to encourage you that when so called science, or maybe the theory of evolution, which is not really science, becomes a real scientific field of study, then the figures of their study will match that of the Bible.

Evidence is growing that supports a young earth view. You will have seen the Apollo spacecraft with which several men from the United States landed on the moon for the very first time. If you remember the pictures, they had huge flat landing pads on the Apollo landing ship. It was believed that since the universe was millions of years old, the moon would have a thick layer of dust, and the spacecraft would sink deep into the dust. And so they made these large pads so that the module wouldn't sink into the surface of the moon. To their surprise when they landed there, there was hardly any dust there at all. I might ask our teachers here how they would like to use a text book in Science and Social Studies lets say from the mid 1800's in their school today. They would only be about 150 years old. I suppose I wouldn't have any takers if I asked you teachers who would use a textbook in Science or Social Studies that's 150 years old. I would like to recommend to you this

morning that there is no better education in all the world than one that takes Genesis, a book that is 3500 years old, and uses it for Science and Social Studies wherever it touches on these matters. This education has a foundation that will never ever move. I always tell people if science doesn't want to line up with the Bible, chuck science - it's not really science because when it really is science it will catch up with the facts of what the Bible already has revealed.

Now the Bible never seeks to be a scientific textbook or one on Social Studies, but where it touches on these matters, it is accurate, always has been, and always will be. Genesis will never be out of date. Nor will it ever be out of touch. This very morning if you walk without peace and without certainty as to your eternal destiny, if you accept the truths of this book and the redemption pointed to in it, you will leave a joyful, fulfilled person, with peace reigning in your heart.

4. The source of the material

Lets look at the source of the material given to us in the book of Genesis. Let me ask you a question this morning. If Moses wrote 2500 years after Creation, where did he get his information? The source of Scripture as a whole is a weighty topic all on its own. The topic has to do with inspiration. Scripture is made up of many different kinds of writings and from various sources from various kinds of writers on many different topics. The Psalms are collections of Hebrew songs, the Proverbs are collections of wise sayings, the writings of Moses are largely collections of history, the Epistles are letters written to others, the Gospels are accounts of the life of Christ. Now Moses may have gotten his material from various sources, but there is in Scripture a good amount of material that can only be known by divine revelation. That is, God gave this information to man divinely.

One of the studies that I have done in Scripture has to do with the psychological, the spiritual, and the physical make-up of man. Now when you come to the physical make-up of man, our doctors in this world are much better at explaining that than I am, and can give you much more detail than the Scripture does. But when you come to the spiritual make-up of man, the things

revealed in Scripture with regard to the soul and spirit of man can only be made known to man by divine revelation. Mans' spirit and soul cannot be dissected as the physical body, and checked out, and the information gleaned and written into books. While it is possible that God gave Adam the information of Genesis 1 and 2 and that Adam wrote it down or passed it down orally to his family, or it is possible that God divinely communicated to Moses the information of Genesis one through two, and he wrote it down. From Genesis three and onward man was present and could have recorded his own history. Nevertheless God still inspired the information that is written down. We cannot state with certainty how Moses got all his information. What we can state with certainty is that the words that were eventually written down were inspired by God. By inspired, I mean "God-breathed", or "God-spirited" words. The person of the Trinity most actively involved in the recording and preservation of God's Word is the Holy Spirit.

In Genesis 1:1, the very first verse of Scripture, we have the content speaking of God the Father. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..." In the last verse of Scripture the Bible speaks of God the Son. And every word between the first word and the last word was God breathed, superintended by God Himself through the Holy Spirit. I want to show you some important verses in Scripture on inspiration. Turn in your Bibles to 2 Sam. 23. David is speaking here on the matter of inspiration. The word in Scripture we have for inspiration is *theopneustos*, meaning God breathed. Now when you say words it takes breath to say them, verbally. And these words are all God breathed. God gave these words (2 Sam. 23:1-2 read). David here, recognizing inspiration, recognizing that the words that he wrote were inspired by God. Then 2 Timothy 3:16. This is a very crucial verse with regard to inspiration (read). Then one more verse (2 Pet. 1:19-21). You see, God inspired Moses to write these words. Genesis 1-3 are God breathed chapters. We do not know exactly how Moses got his material. We do know that his writings are inspired and thus without error.

Now there was a Person who was there at creation and appeared on earth 4000 years later and verified the writings of Moses, saying, "Yes, the writings of Moses

are accurate." His name of course, is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, as we will learn here in Genesis, is the agent by whom God created everything that He created. Jesus Christ was there in the beginning. Jesus was there. What did He say about Moses' writing and creation? Well, look at Matthew 5:17-18 (read). Jesus is giving verification here to Moses' writings and to creation. Mark 7. Jesus, who was there in eternity past, then at the creation of the world, and His view of Moses writings (Mark 7:9-13 read). Look at Luke 24.

Jesus, after His ascension, meets these two travellers on the Emmaus road who were sad because the One they had thought was the Messiah had been killed, and as they walk along Jesus pulls alongside of them. And it says in verse 38, He said to them, "Why are you troubled, why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones and so on." Then He says in verse 44, "These are the words that I spoke to you while I was still with you that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses..." there we have the Torah, including Genesis. "...and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." Jesus was there when the world was created. He was the agent, surely He knows whether it is an accurate account or not. Then for one more Scripture (Matt. 19:1-6 read). Don't you read Moses' writings? Moses told you. Jesus again verifying Moses' words. Never did Jesus give any indication that Moses' writings were not accurate and how could they be inaccurate if God breathed these words. Well, we do not know exactly how Moses got his information. But we do know that the information he got was accurate, and it was verified by Jesus who was there, who made everything.

5. System of interpretation to be used

Let's look at the system of interpretation to be used when interpreting Genesis. Interpretation is a very crucial topic. In interpreting Genesis, I insist on the very same rules I insist on in every book of the Bible. And I think we are very wise to do this. Interpretation is a very big topic and I'd like to keep it simple. But the system to be used in Bible interpretation is the literal, normal approach. It is the same approach you use when you read the newspaper. When you read the

newspaper and you read that there was a hurricane in Florida, you know there was a hurricane in Florida. You don't say, "Well, hurricane means this and Florida means this and its talking about something entirely different." You use the normal approach to interpretation.

When a figure of speech is used in the newspaper and they say that John Cretian decided thus and such and he is out to lunch, you don't understand it to mean he is eating lunch somewhere. It is a figure of speech and so you use the normal approach again. And so the normal approach is the one to be used in interpreting the Bible. Figures of speech must be understood as figures of speech. Literal, historical truth must be understood as literal historical truth. Let me give you an example. We read in Genesis 1:5 for the first time, "...so the evening and the morning were the first day." Question: Is that a literal day? Or is it a time period of possibly millions of years, as many will tell us? Well this clause occurs 6 times, and I think the message comes through loud and clear that it is a literal day. The evening and morning. Here is an interpretational rule: When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense.

Now we go to Genesis 2:4. Here we have the day referred to again. It is the same Hebrew word, yom. But here it refers to the creation week. The context makes it very clear. You see, we can speak of Abraham's day, or Noah's day and we are referring to, not a 24 hour time period, but a time of much longer duration. We do this in the literal normal approach of interpretation in daily life as well. If I told you how they hunted moose in my Grandpa's day, which day am I referring to? A 24 hour day or a time period? Well, a time period. And that is what we have in Genesis 2:4. So in Bible interpretation, the rule is the same for every book. It is the literal normal approach that is to be used.

CONCL: Well, having looked at those introductory matters, let's conclude this message. I was a young Christian and I was doing visitation on my own and I came to this little house and I knocked on the door. An East Indian man came to the door and I told him my mission and he invited me in. We discussed our differing views on eternity and I said I got my information from the Word of God the Bible. And he said

he got his from the Koran which was his sacred book as a Moslem. And I said I'd be interested in reading his book, and in exchange I would give him a Bible to read. Well, I visited him several times and each time I asked him for the Koran, and he had agreed to this, but somehow he seemed to be hesitant. And he made excuses each time and finally I insisted on our agreement. And reluctantly went to another room. And there I saw him gingerly pick up this brown paper bag that contained his holy book, and caustiously and with hesitation he timidly gave the book to me. I had no idea in what a fashion he viewed this book and how holy it was to him and what care must be taken with it. I took the book and opened the pages and looked through it for a moment and I was sitting on a couch low to the floor. And he seemed to be nervous in my handling of the book. And I was unaware of what I was doing. And I was sitting on this couch which was low to the floor and I was going to lay the book on the floor. And he came before me and put his hands under the Koran and said, "No. No, no, no." Then he said, "You must not treat this book like that."

Sometimes I wonder if we have the right awe, for the Scriptures, the Word of God. Now I do not recommend that kind of awe. But do we have an awe for the wonder of the Word of God; the inspired Word telling us where matter came from and how it all began. Sometimes I could wish there were a greater awe instilled in us for the Word of God. In this book of the Bible we will find all we need to find for life and all we need to prepare for the next life.

Immortality is one of those things that has weighed heavily on the hearts of many. The great philosophers of the past wrestled with this.

Listen to a discussion of Socrates with some of his students regarding immortality as written by another. "In the course of the conversation, Simmeas made the following statement, 'I think a man's duty is one of two things. Either to be taught or to find out where truth is or if he cannot, at least to take the best possible human doctrine and the hardest to disprove and to ride on this like a raft over the waters of life and take the risk. Unless he could have a more seaworthy vessel to carry him more safely and with less danger, some divine doctrine.'" Or as Jowett translates it, "Some word of God to bring him through." My friends, I have found this truth. Have you? Here in the Word of God is the most sea worthy vessel you will find. How sweet it is to ride the rough waters of life, knowing my personal destination.

Permit me in closing this introduction, to read for you, one of the greatest statements ever penned anywhere in introduction to the divinely revealed truth of the Word of God, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."