

# The Book of Genesis

## Genesis 1:3-5 (Prologue)

### Day 1 of Creation

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Message in The Book of Genesis

Sunday 21 July 2019

Glenvista Baptist Church

**Genesis 1:3-5 (ESV)** “<sup>3</sup> And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. <sup>4</sup> And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.”

### Introduction

- a) Without form, void and utterly dark – such was the original condition of the created earth. The earth was a mass of fluid, utterly incapable of sustaining human life. And as the very first acts of creation, the Spirit of God flutters over the face of the deep and vibrates with Divine Energy to life all of creation, bringing order and structure to what was at first chaos. This activity of God changed all that follows thereafter – “**And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.**” **Genesis presents the God of creation, not only as the author and source of matter, but also as the author and source of order and form.** The Holy Spirit is the direct author of the law, the order, the beauty and the form that exist in the universe. And what is stated here is the cosmic activity of the Holy Spirit; in other words, His activity in the realm of nature, the realm of the cosmos. We did however also see last Sunday that the Holy Spirit has a ministry of moral and spiritual activity as well by which He convicts men of sin, causes them to be born again and sanctifies them. And as much as creation takes place by Divine Command (*or divine imperative/divine fiat*), so also the new creation or the new birth takes place only by divine command. Therefore in the natural realm, as well as in the spiritual realm the Holy Spirit is the source of form, order and beauty.
- b) The way in which God transforms the universe from **chaos** to **cosmos** is now described commencing in **verse 3**. God transforms an unformed mass into a beautiful, well-ordered world, teeming with various forms of life and fit for human habitation. And by Divine Inspiration this work of God is done and described over a period of time. God created the earth over a period of a seven day week, of which six He worked and the seventh He rested from all His labour. The time it took God to form the earth into a habitable place for man and animals, is presented to us in the Scriptures as six days. Again, it is so crucial to note that if you get Genesis wrong, you get all else wrong.
- c) What is true in the physical realm also is true in the spiritual realm. Under the new covenant, while old rules which separate Jew and Gentile no longer apply in Christ, the principle behind those laws is still the same. God has separated His holy people from the

world to be distinct from the world, and therefore in **2 Corinthians 6:14-17**, we have a clear instruction, **“<sup>14</sup> Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup> What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup> What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>17</sup> Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you...”** God establishes what is right and everything must conform to His standard. God not only separates the light from the darkness; He also purifies for Himself a people that He separates unto Himself.

- d) And all of these marvellous things in creation, God established in a mere six days, and left for us a pattern to follow. A creation ordinance established by God for the glory of His Name and for the benefit of His people.

## **Point 1 – “Responding to Two False Assumptions” (Gen 1:1a)**

**Genesis 1:3-5 (ESV)** **“<sup>3</sup> And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. <sup>4</sup> And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.”**

- a) At the outset there are two matters one need be aware of in a study of the Book of Genesis; and they are the **GAP THEORY** and the **DAY-AGE THEORY**. Both these matters are false assumptions and both have an impact on how many people view Genesis and the beginning of all things. That means we need to understand some of it, so as to counter some of these false assumptions. Now I am not intending on being exhaustive on these matters. I desire simply just to give you a brief glimpse of each of these so that we can know what we are dealing with. Both these theories have a great impact on the **first 3 verses** of Genesis.
- b) The **GAP THEORY**, states that after the original creation as described in **verse 1**, the original earth was the habitation of angels. Then Satan and other angels fell into sin and God destroyed the earth in His righteous wrath. And the result of God's judgement upon that first earth was that the earth became waste and void, just one mass of uninhabitable water. This theory proposes that there was a lengthy gap period between the events described in **verse 1** and the subsequent events of the moving and shaking of the Holy Spirit in **verse 2**. So then a widely held opinion among fundamentalists is that the primeval creation of **Genesis 1** may have taken place billions of years ago, with all the geological ages inserted in a tremendous time gap between **Genesis 1:1** and **1:2**. Verse 2 then is believed by these proponents to describe a violent earth wide event that terminated the geological ages. This event left the earth in darkness and covered with water as a divine judgement on Satan's sin in rebelling against God. Following the earth wide disaster in **verse 1**, God then, millions of years later “re-created” the world in six literal days as described in **Genesis 1:3-31**. This theory is most popularly known as the **GAP THEORY** or as the **RUIN AND RECONSTRUCTION THEORY** or even as the **PRE-ADAMIC**

**CATAclysm THEORY**. This theory was revived by a Scottish Theologian, Thomas Chalmers, in an aim to reconcile the Biblical chronology with the accepted system of geological ages which was becoming more and more prominent in Chalmers' days. This theory has done us no favors though and has allowed evolutionary establishment to take over our schools and our media and many, if not most, institutions of our society. The Gap Theory is however not only impossible scientifically but it is also destructive theologically. One of the greatest difficulties with the gap theory is that it requires that creation suffer death and destruction before Adam's death, whilst the Word of God teaches that death only entered the world once Adam sinned (**Rom 5:12**). And if **Genesis 1:31** describes God's creation as "very good" then it is impossible as per the gap theory that evil already existed between **Genesis 1:1** and **1:2**.

- c) The **DAY AGE THEORY** has to do with whether the days of creation described in Genesis are to be seen as natural 24-hour periods or as symbolic terms for long ages. Many sincere and competent scholars sadly have accepted the geological age system that has led them to prematurely settle upon the **DAY AGE THEORY**, as the recommended interpretation of **Genesis 1**. By this they seek then more or less to equate the days of creation with the ages of the evolutionary theory. This theory however is clearly wrong as the Biblical revelation clearly reveals the days of creation as literal 24-hour period days, not as long indefinite ages. And this will become conclusively evident as we work our way through the six days of creation. So, the only way to look at the days of creation is to look at the text in a literal rendering and purely accept the wording of the text at face value. In six literal days God created the heavens and the earth, and this first verse of Scripture is confirmed by Moses in **Exodus 20:11**, "<sup>11</sup> **For in six days** the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

## **Point 2 – "God, as Divine Light Bearer, in the Beginning" (Gen 1:3)**

**Genesis 1:3-5 (ESV)** "<sup>3</sup> **And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.** <sup>4</sup> And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day."

- a) **V3** The principle of *Divine Fiat*, or *Divine Command* is adequately highlighted in **verse 3** – God said, and so it was. "**And God said, "Let there be light", and there was light.**" Even though the earth had been created in a formless, watery dispersion that was surrounded and enveloped in static darkness, God had a great plan and purpose for it. We saw in **verse 2** that the Spirit of God fluttered over the face of the waters, energizing that which was dead and brought life, structure and order to all of creation. **First though comes life, then comes light.** And it's exactly the same way with spiritual regeneration – first life then light.
- b) **V3 Verse 3** is the very first account of God speaking in the Bible. **This is the first historical recording of the vocal chords of Almighty God reverberating through a mass of formless, thick darkness to bring about structure, form and order.** And the first words of God was the command to bring about light – "**God said, "Let there be light", and there was light.**" The

Word of God, dear friends, brings light. We have learnt thus far in **verse 1**, that the Father is the **Source of all things**, that the Spirit of God is the **Energizer of all things** (v2), and we will see in **verse 3** that the Word is the **Revealer of all things**. And this is the consistent witness of the Scriptures. **2 Corinthians 4:6** - **“For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”** Our Lord Jesus Christ who is the living Word of God according to **John 1:1** and **John 1:14** is also **“the light of the world”** (**John 8:12**), and **“in him is no darkness at all”** (**1 John 1:5**). So Christ, Himself, is not only the light-bearer, but indeed Christ is **the** light.

- c) **V3** So, the work of God, on the first of the six days was to create light. In his systematic theology, Dr Louis Berkhof comments, **“In view of the fact that light is the condition of life, it was natural that it should be created first.”**<sup>1</sup> Now note at this point that God has not yet created the sun. All we see on Day One is the creation of light as distinct from darkness and the separation of light from darkness. Note that the light God creates at this point was not the sun – which means that for the first three days of creation either the earth reflected its own light in that it was in some or other way self-luminous, or that God Himself was its light, as we see will be the case once paradise is restored in **Revelation 22:5**. Whichever it was we cannot say with certainty, but God splits darkness from light by creating light, and after creating such light God says it is good.
- d) The Latin translation of **“Let there be light”**, **“fiat lux”**, has given rise to the phrase **“creation by fiat”**. This means creation was by God's commanding word and it was effective immediately – God spoke and so it was. Now note that the uninhabitable mass, which we spoke about last week, which was chaos, in the sense that it was not suitable for human or animal life, was also created by God even though the Word of God does not tell us how it happened. One thing we can know for certain though is that the earth which was **“without form and void, and dark...”** was in itself put in place by the creative sovereign decree of God. It is very probable, as per Calvin, that all this was put in place by God even without a word from God. So, we need to remember that **“without him nothing was made that has been made”** (**John 1:3**). It is certain that the world had begun by the same efficacy of the word by which it was completed. God spoke and it was so, and God continues to sustain all things by the word of his power (**Hebrews 1:3**). So not only has God created by His Word but He continues keeping all things in their place by His sustaining and everlasting word.
- e) **V3** In **verse 3** however, Moses, for the first time introduces God as the **speaking** God. And it was proper that the light by which the world was to be adorned with such excellent beauty, should be first on God's creation mandate. And the greatest testimony to the power and all-knowing nature of God is the fact that God only creates the sun on day four, so as to show forth His brilliant excellence bearing witness to the fact that in His hand He holds the light, which He is able to impart without the sun and the moon.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, Banner of Truth (1949) page 155

- f) **V3** And then to crown it all God declares of Himself that what He has made is “good”. Moses introduces God as if God is surveying His own work, so as for God to take pleasure in His own creation. But Moses captures this largely for us to see that God makes nothing that is not good and without a particular purpose and design. This means God approved of His own work, and by His own word places great value on that which He has made. We are presented here, dear friends, with the glorious truth that nothing escapes the watchful eye of our glorious Creator. He assigns both place and meaning to all that He has made; He appropriately marks the first step from chaos to order; and He does it all for His sovereign pleasure and glory.

### **Point 3 – “God, as Divine Organizer, in the Beginning” (Gen 1:4-5)**

**Genesis 1:3-5 (ESV)** <sup>3</sup> And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. <sup>4</sup> And God saw that the light was good. **And God separated the light from the darkness.** <sup>5</sup> God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. **And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.**

- a) **V4** Attention is now drawn to the fact that God not only brings and creates light, but that God also separates and names. In **verse 4** we are told, “**God separated (divided) the light from the darkness**”. Now beloved here is something crucial you need to see – God evaluates the light before He separates light from darkness – God first calls the light good before He brings a chasm between the light and the darkness. And this is the only day God does it this way – from day 3 onwards God first completes the act of creation before He calls it good, whilst on day 1 He first calls it good and then proceeds with the creation. The reason for this is that this passage teaches us God’s preference for light, but also that there is more to come in connection with dividing light from darkness. We are introduced here to the fact that God created in successive portions. Calvin says: “God distributed the creation of the world into successive portions, that He might fix our attention and compel us, as if He had laid His hand upon us, to pause and to reflect.” <sup>2</sup> Therefore it is significant to see that God purposefully takes six days to create so that man can marvel at the mighty work of an Almighty Creator.
- b) **V4-5** So the text tells us that as light appears, “**God separates the light from the darkness**” (v4). Now this does not mean that darkness was removed completely, but simply that darkness and light are now separated as two distinct entities. Further to that, “**God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.**” (v5). God clearly sets the perimeters and demarcates the boundaries, so as to avoid any form of future confusion. See therefore how much God indeed is in control – God determines what is called Day and God determines what is called Night. The very first time God used the word “day” (*yom* in Hebrew), He defined it as “light” so as to distinguish it from “darkness” called “night”. And this was the sum total of the first day of God’s Work – God divided light from darkness

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<sup>2</sup> Alister McGrath and JI Packer, *Genesis, Calvin, The Crossway Classic Commentary Series*, Crossway Publishers (2001) page 19-20

and created the first day and night. And at its conclusion, Moses writes, “**And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.**” This is the same phrase used at the conclusion of each of the six days of creation, - and this formula is to be noted very carefully. The introduction of time and structure as per God’s design is clearly portrayed here. **Firstly**, we see here that the duration of each of the six days is exactly the same – each day has an **evening** and each has a **morning**. Evening is mentioned first as at this time the commencement of a new day was marked by sunset. **Secondly**, we need to note, that in each of the days of creation God introduces a period in which He works and a period in which He does not work. The “**day**” is the time in which God works; and the “**night**” is the period in which God refrains from any work – meaning nothing took place between the “**evening**” and the “**morning**” of each day. So it should be understood like this – and there was evening and then morning – day one. And what is evidently clear is that God introduces at the outset of creation a cyclical period containing succession of days and nights – periods of light and periods of darkness.

- c) The main thing you need to see in all of this is that God is the Divine Organizer – God arranges and divides in such a way as to best reflect His own character and His holiness so that man can see the glory of God in all that God has made. On day one therefore God created visible light as opposed to darkness. As already mentioned the creation of the sun and the moon only takes place on day 4. This means that God on day 1 created light in such a way that it included every aspect of electromagnetic spectrum. To this hear what Henry Morris writes in his commentary, “In turn, setting the electromagnetic forces in operation in effect completed the energization of the physical cosmos. All the types of force and energy which interact in the universe involve only electromagnetic, gravitational, and nuclear forces; and all of these had now been activated. Though no doubt oversimplified, this tremendous creative act of the Godhead might be summarized by saying that the nuclear forces maintaining the integrity of matter were activated by the Father when He created the elements of the space-mass-time continuum, the gravitational forces were activated by the Spirit when He brought form and motion to the initially static and formless matter, and the electromagnetic forces were activated by the Word of God when He called light into existence out of darkness. Of course, God is the One, and all three persons of the Godhead actually participated in all parts of the creation and continue to function in the maintenance of the universe so created.”<sup>3</sup>
- d) And my dear friends, all of this, God accomplished on the first day of creation.

## **Conclusion:**

- a) And so there you have it, an earth that was no longer without form and no longer void. Yet an earth that was still void of any inhabitants. What follows hereon is that God continues making the earth as suitable as it needs to be for man to dwell upon it. This home was to be a place where man would cultivate the earth and look after all that

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<sup>3</sup> Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record, A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings*, Baker Books (1976) page 56-57

God has made. A place in which man could fulfil his creation mandate by glorifying God in filling the earth and living for the glory of God.

- b) The prophet Isaiah so helpfully states, <sup>12</sup> **Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? <sup>22</sup> It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in..." (Isaiah 40:12&22). He who sits above the circle of the earth is the God so worthy of praise. It is this creation account that causes us to wonder in utter amazement at a God as great as this.**
- c) This creation account is enough to condemn all men to hell, unless they repent. This creation account is a sufficient witness and evidence to the fact that there is a God; and that creation comes not by chance or by luck, not by mystery and particularly not by evolution or a big bang. No! This creation account speaks to the fact that a great and awesome God spoke and it was so. By the breath of His mouth all that is in existence came into being. Listen how wisely the apostle Paul speaks of the glory of God and man's accountability in light of what has been made plainly known: <sup>19</sup> **For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.** <sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. **So they are without excuse.**"
- d) Friend, the fact that God spoke and it was so, leaves you without excuse. The fact that Sovereignly by His Spirit He superintended every aspect of the created order by divine fiat and then made you – leaves you utterly inexcusable. That fact that God is sovereign does not negate human responsibility. On the contrary it highlights human responsibility to the place God has assigned to us. And what then, you may ask, is our responsibility? Our responsibility, in light of God clearly revealing His glory through creation, is to repent and call upon Him who put the stars in their place. Our responsibility is to call on Him who alone can save us. Ours is to take to heart the warning we find in **Acts 17:30-31** – <sup>30</sup> **The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,** <sup>31</sup> **because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."**
- e) For we have this glorious promise dear friends from the God who made the heavens and the earth - **Acts 2:21** - <sup>21</sup> **And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."** Beloved, God's created order testifies against us and shows us that we are in need of a Savior that saves. What will you do in light of the fact that no one has an excuse? Will you call upon Him?

Amen  
Soli Deo Gloria  
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