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Genesis chapter one is fundamental to all of biblical revelation. What a foundation is to a building, Genesis chapter 1 is to the Bible. It introduces us to two of the greatest subjects that confront us: the Creator and the creation. These two subjects are the cause of endless debate.

Genesis chapter 1 is a preliminary view, a summary, an overview, of God's creative work in bringing the universe and, specifically, the earth into existence. The chapter does not give us all there is to know about the work of creation. What it does give is truth which is embraced by persons of faith, for *"By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command...."* (Heb. 11:3a)

There is not a more controversial chapter in the Bible than this chapter. Genesis chapter 1 is the supreme battleground in the Bible. Scientists, skeptics, cynics, evolutionists, atheists and humanists battle against the biblical record of creation.

Richard Dawkins is Professor of Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University and one of the world's leading atheists. His book, *The God Delusion*, caused quite a stir. He writes, *"If this book works as I intend, religious readers who open it will be atheists when they put it down."* In his opening chapter, he argues that *"most legitimate scientists--indeed all who really understand the issues at stake--are atheists of one sort or another."*

Anyone who believes what Dawkins has written is reading the wrong book! Evolution is called "theory." Creationism is not "theory." Creationism is based upon Divine Revelation. God was there when He created and He reveals how He created the universe. Faith is based upon the facts of Divine Revelation not human speculative theory.

Divine Revelation appeals to faith. Yet, it is not unreasonable, for if one believes that there exists the All-Mighty, All-Wise and eternal God, then it is completely reasonable that such a God could and would act as revealed in Genesis chapter 1.

It is to be noted that nowhere in all of biblical literature that follows this chapter is one single statement in this chapter contradicted, challenged or questioned! The Bible is not a scientific book but everywhere it touches upon a scientific subject, it is correct.

"In the beginning..." is how the Bible begins. So, let us begin at the beginning by starting with the God Who created the universe. Most of man's attempts to explain how the universe, and the earth in particular, came into existence begin with creation, not the Creator. Let us begin as God begins His account with the words, *"In the beginning GOD"*

THE ORIGINATOR OF CREATION

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

The Mind behind creation.

The birth of the earth was not the product of an evolutionary process but the handiwork of a Person. *"You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands."* (Heb. 1:10)

Genesis 1:1 says, *"God created."* God is a Person. Consider some of the traits of personhood related to the words *"God created"*:

- He has a will because He decided to create;
- He has intelligence because He designed the universe;
- He has power because He created;
- He has wisdom because the universe is orderly, the evidence of a wise Creator;
- He speaks. In chapter one we read the words *"God said"* eight times;
- He has awareness. 7 times in chapter 1 we read: *"God saw"*;
- He acted: v. 4 *"God divided"* (light from darkness)
v. 5 *"God called"* (light Day and darkness Night)
v. 7 *"God made"* (the firmament)
v.17 *"God set"* (sun, moon and stars in the heavens)
v.22 *"God blessed."*

In addition Hebrews 11:6 uses 4 personal pronouns in reference to God: *"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."*

What are we to conclude from this evidence? At least 5 truths:

- (1) God exists;
- (2) He is a Person;
- (3) He is wise.
- (4) He is powerful.
- (5) He is Creator.

The design, order, beauty, functionality, etc. of His handiwork as seen in the universe and the earth in particular, are evidences to the person of faith that behind the cosmos is a Person – a Person with a mind far superior than the human mind can comprehend.

Jeremiah said it as follows: *"He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, and has stretched out the heavens at His discretion."* (Jer. 10:12)

THE ORDAINING OF CREATION.

"By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command...." (Heb. 11:3a)

The Method of the creative act.

"He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." (Psalm 33:9)

When God spoke the universe appeared! One moment there was nothing and the next moment there was the universe! The universe did not produce itself, but it is the result of the creative mandate of God!

People of faith believe with the Psalm writer that: *“By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.”* (Psalm 33:6-8)

And Psalm 33:6 declares that: *“By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.”*

For creationists, it comes down to this premise: there is an all-powerful, personal God who spoke the universe into existence. Peter writes of those who scoff at the biblical account of creation, *“It escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed”* (II Peter 3:5 nasb)

THE ORIGINAL CREATION

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void....” (vs.1-2)

The embryonic sphere described in verse 2 is how the earth first appeared before God fashioned and formed it into the place of wonder, beauty and habitation that it became by the end of the chapter. But the question I want to ask at this point is this: “Out of what was the universe formed?” From where did the material for its formation come?

The Material of creation.

“... the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” (Heb. 11:3b)

Theologians speak of God creating “*ex nihilo*.” The Latin phrase “*ex nihilo*” means “out of nothing.” That is what the statement in Hebrews 11:3 is saying: *“what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”* (niv) That statement places God prior to the visible universe. It takes us back as far as it is possible to go. It takes us back to eternity past when there was only God.

Secular history does not go back to the pre-creation era and inform us of it. God asks Job a question that could be asked of all humans of all times, whether theists or atheists, creationists or evolutionists: *“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?”* (Job 38:4)

Our knowledge of the subject of creation rests on the divine testimony of the only One Who was present at creation. His testimony in Heb. 11:3 predates Gen. 1:1. Therefore, the genuineness of our faith, the quality of our faith, the strength of our faith is tested right here in Hebrews 11:3.

This statement informs us that the universe was not made of pre-existent matter. The truth in Hebrews 11:3 destroys the theory of the eternity of matter and thus destroys the basic premise of the evolutionary theory. Evolution begins with already existing matter and proceeds from there. It teaches that everything evolved from something already in existence, usually referred to as "cosmic dust."

Furthermore, Genesis 1:1 tells us the same thing that Hebrews 11:3 tells us and that is that God created the universe out of nothing. It is very interesting that the Hebrew word translated "created" in Gen. 1:1 is *bara'* and means "to create, to make out of nothing."

"This verb is of profound theological significance, since it has only God as its subject. Only God can "create" in the sense implied by *bara'*. The verb expresses creation out of nothing. God brought the object or concept into being from previously nonexistent material. *Bara'* is a rich theological vehicle for communicating the sovereign power of God, who originates and regulates all things to His glory." (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words) Of *bara'*, the Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, says the Hebrew word means "the production of that which had no existence before."

The universe was created out of nothing by the Word of God. If you do not receive as truth the first verse of the Scriptures, you cannot believe anything else God says. Evolutionists are famous for saying, "Out of nothing, nothing can be made." That is because they exclude God from their calculations. Genesis 1:1 and Hebrews 11:3 expose their ignorance!

There is a continuing battle between the truth of Intelligent Design of the universe and the theory of Darwinian Evolution. Evolutionists believe the theory that the universe evolved from some pre-existent cosmic matter. Creationists believe the truth of Hebrews 11:3 "*what is seen was not made out of what was visible.*" One view adheres to Divine Revelation and the other to Scientific Theory - a supernatural event verses natural evolution.

Albert Barnes adds this in his commentary: "The visible creation was not molded out of pre-existing materials, but was made out of nothing. The materials of the universe, as well as the arrangement, were formed by God, and all this was done by a simple command. We must exercise strong confidence in Him who had power to create the universe out of nothing. If this vast universe has been called into existence by the mere word of God, there is nothing which we may not believe He has ample power to perform."

All unbelievers and even many who call themselves Christians do not recognize the truth of Luke 1:37 that "*with God nothing will be impossible.*" Yes! Out of nothing, something can be made – the universe!

THE ORDER IN CREATION

"Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light." v.3

The Movements that brought order.

Here we have a chain of ordered movements sovereignly sequenced, demonstrating the progressive arrangement preparatory to man's habitation and welfare. God "*formed it to be inhabited.*" (Isaiah 45:18) To make it a fit habitat, in six consecutive 24 hour periods called "days," God orchestrated the movements that prepared the earth for habitation. Each of the

24 hour periods called "days" are accompanied by this phrase: *"there was evening and there was morning."*

Eight times in Genesis chapter one, we read the words, "God said" and a creative result immediately followed:

- v. 3 *"God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light."*
- v. 6 *"God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters."*
- v. 9 *"God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear."*
- v.11 *"God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth."*
- v.14 *"God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night."*
- v.20 *"God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures."*
- v.24 *"God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind."*
- v.26 *"Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image....."*

Note the logical and rational order, from the creature's perspective:

Day one - light and darkness separated – v.3-5;

Day two - sky and land separated - v.6-8;

Day three - seas and dry land separated and the growth of vegetation – v.9-11;

Day four - sun, moon and stars appear - v.14-19

Day five – fish and fowl created – 20-23

Day six – animals brought into existence and lastly, man was formed – 24-25

THE ORIGIN OF MAN

Isaiah 45:12 says, "I have made the earth, and created man upon it...."

Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was published in 1859. It is considered to be the foundation of evolutionary biology. Darwin's book introduced the theory that we evolved over the course of many generations. We have a choice: believe the theory of the creature who postulates how he came into existence, or believe the Creator Who brought him into existence.

The Manner of man's creation. v.26-27

"Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

The more detailed account of God creating man is in Genesis 2:7 - *"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."* Dr. Edwin Slosson was a chemist of international fame. He said, "The chemical accuracy of the Bible is a marvel. The Bible says that man was made out of the dust of the earth, and this is literally and scientifically true. In the dust of the earth there

are sixteen different chemical elements, and in the human body there are those same sixteen chemical elements!”

Man was created last but was not the least. Man is a special creation directly and literally from the hand of God. Man is God’s crown of creation. God did not speak man into existence but fashioned him out of the dust of the earth. Isaiah 64:8 testifies, *“But now, O LORD, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter; and all we are the work of Your hand.”* This is the original “Roots” story. It shows the mighty power of God in producing such a creature out of the dust of the earth. Our bodies consist of a material substance, “earth”, and an immaterial, “The breath of life.” It is very humbling when we consider that we are constituted out of earth, dust, and to dust we must return.

Hear the exclamation of one who was filled with wonder as he contemplated his intricate body: *“You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. and in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!”* (Psalm 139:13-17)

Conclusion

The conclusion to the creation story is summed up in the words: *“And God saw that it was good.”* The statement is used 7 times in this chapter, in verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31. All had been prepared for earth’s habitation by mankind. God’s handiwork was perfect and pleasing to Him. Evil was not yet present, God was on His throne and all was well.

Other scriptures contain God’s comments on His creation. Among them are:

Isaiah 42:5 - *“Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it....”*

Isaiah 45:12 – *“I have made the earth, and created man on it. I - My hands - stretched out the heavens, and all their host I have commanded.”*

Isaiah 45:18 - *“For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: “I am the LORD, and there is no other.”*

Lessons

1. *“In the beginning God”* It does not read, *“In the end God....”* Most persons in this world tack God on at the end of their lives. He is not to be treated like a caboose! He is to be at the front – the Engine, the Divine Dynamo who creates all the good in life.
2. Scientific speculation can never take the place of divine revelation!

3. If you can believe that "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*" you can believe all else in the Bible. You must begin at the beginning!
4. God does not go into any detailed arguments or explanations concerning the original creative act. He gives us a plain statement of fact to be believed. He seems to say, "There it is! Take it or leave it!"
5. The creation of the human body was the crowning work of God's creative week. The proper use of the human body is to use it in spiritual service for the glory of God and the good of mankind. Paul appeals for this use in Romans 12:1, "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*"

How Great Thou Art

"O LORD my God! When I in awesome wonder
Consider all the works Thy hand hath made;
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
Thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed:

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!"

- Stuart K. Hine

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