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The God of Creation

Genesis 1: 1-23

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There's a wonderful children's story called *Yellow and Pink* which wrestles with one of the most profound questions that people have had for thousands of years, and that is the question of our origin. "Where did we come from? Are we here by chance or are we here as a part of God's grand design?" Yellow and Pink are marionettes; they are puppets. The story opens with them lying on a newspaper. One has been painted yellow and one has been painted pink. They are out on a newspaper in the backyard and they are drying. Pretty soon, one of them sits up and asks the question, "Where did we come from? How did we get here?" They enter into a discussion trying to figure it out. Pink looks at himself and the complexities of his design and how he is made. He concludes that we had to have had a maker, because we are just simply too complex to not have had a designer. But Yellow disagrees with that. Yellow thinks they are probably there by chance. As a matter of fact, Yellow launches into his explanation for how they came to be.

Listen to what he says. "A branch might have broken off a tree and fallen on a sharp rock splitting one end of the branch into two legs. Then the wind might have sent it tumbling down a hill until it was chipped and shaped. Perhaps a flash of lightning struck in such a way as to splinter the wood into arms and fingers. Eyes might have been formed by woodpeckers boring into the wood. With enough time, a thousand... a million... maybe two and a half million years, lots of unusual things could happen. Why not us?"

Yellow and Pink continue to have this conversation as to whether they are there by chance or whether someone made them. But suddenly the discussion is cut off when a man exits from the back of the house, walks over to the marionettes, sees that they are dry, tucks them under his arm, and begins walking back toward the house.

At that moment, Yellow moves over towards Pink and whispers in his ear, "Who is this guy?" In Yellow's worldview, he had left no room for a creator. He had created a belief that they were there by chance. Therefore, when the creator came and picked them up, he didn't know what to do with that. It is really a wonderful way to tell this story about creation, because there are millions of people who have convinced themselves that they are here as products of chance and one day they will stand before God and they, too, will whisper, "Who is this guy?"

There is no more significant foundational belief that anyone holds than your belief related to the first five words of the Bible, "In the beginning, God created." Either we believe that or we do not believe that, but it basically affects all of the other beliefs that we hold. It is like a domino effect; believing what we believe about our origin then affects all of our other beliefs. There are those who would tell you that this is really a debate between faith and fact. But that is certainly not the case. There are also those who would say this is a debate between religion and science. But that is also certainly not true. It is a collision of worldviews. There are two worldviews. One is espoused in the first chapter of Genesis, and that is that God is the center of everything; God is the divine Creator and we will give an account to God. God is the center in this view. The other worldview is the belief that mankind, or what most would say matter, is at the center of the universe. In that view, we are the center. We can rewrite the rules. We can basically do as we please, and we answer to no one.

Charles Darwin clearly understood what he was saying when he espoused his theory. Listen to what he says in his own words in his autobiography: “A man who has no assured or ever-present belief in the existence of a personal God, or of a future existence with retribution and reward, can have for his rule of life, as far as I can see, only to follow those impulses and instincts which are the strongest, or which seem to him the best ones.” Darwin clearly understood that his theory allowed people to do whatever they felt like doing and they would answer to no one. And that is the collision of worldviews that is debated today.

It is interesting to think about how profoundly your own view of your origin affects your beliefs concerning every major topic of discussion in our culture. Think with me about several of the most discussed topics in our culture today. Think about how profoundly they are affected, depending upon whether we believe that **we** are the center of the universe or whether we believe that **God** is the center of the universe.

Take, for example, the discussion concerning purpose and meaning in life. This is a big discussion these days because a lot of people feel that there is no meaning – there is no purpose. It is reflected in music. It is reflected in books, magazines, and movies. As a matter of fact, the one common thread with all of the school shootings, and shootings that go on in malls and places of business, is that all of these people who commit these crimes are people whose lives are characterized by despair. They are characterized by hopelessness. They are not just going in to kill someone. In the end they will kill themselves, because there is nothing to live for. And if the theory of evolution is true, they are correct. There is no meaning and purpose in life. The only meaning in life would be something that is contrived. It would be something that we just made up, because the reality would be that we are freaks of nature. We are here by chance. But if it is true that we are created by God, then we are created on purpose, for a purpose. There is a meaning to life. There is purpose to life, and God defines what that is.

Take another topic that is hotly debated right now, which is the whole issue related to marriage. There are a lot of people discussing in the media, “Does marriage mean one man with one woman or can it mean two men or two women?” Typically, when it is debated, it is debated on the basis of tradition. It is on the basis of our founding fathers and those types of arguments. And that is probably adequate if we are here by chance. We are just making up the rules as we go. But if there is a Creator God, then we would say, “This God has created marriage. This God has defined marriage. It is not up to us to redefine that.” Discussions related to homosexuality would also come back to this. Discussions related to racism are another example. If the theory of evolution is true, then the natural conclusion is that there are people at the highest end of the gene pool and people at the lowest end of the gene pool. And if you read Darwin’s writings carefully, it is the responsibility of those at the highest end to eliminate those at the lowest end to produce a higher race.

Adolph Hitler carefully studied the writings of Darwin, and that was a major motivational belief that led him to do what he did. That is a natural conclusion of the evolution theory. But if we believe that there is a Creator God who has created all people in God’s image, all of us equal, we have a foundational philosophical belief whereby we can do away with racism. You could talk about crime; about abortion; about euthanasia; about capital punishment; about welfare reform. All of these are discussed at the topical level. But when you cut through the topic, you get down to the foundational beliefs. It does come down to whether or not we believe the first five words of the Bible are true or not true.

This is not a discussion of fact versus faith. If you carefully study the facts, the facts support Genesis 1 and they discredit the theory of evolution. It is not a discussion of religion versus science, because if you study science thoroughly, you find that science supports Genesis 1 and it discredits the theory of evolution. It is a collision of worldviews.

Francis Bacon once made a very interesting statement. He said, “A little science estranges man from God; a lot of science brings him back.” That is very true. Some of you may be somewhat skeptical and say, “That is a radical statement. I wonder if you can back that up.” Well, I am not a scientist but I have arranged for two PhD scientists to be here on the 13th of February. They will back up the statements I am making. They will demonstrate that science does support Genesis 1 and science does discredit the theory of evolution. I will allow them to work in their area of expertise and I am going to stay in what I am more familiar with, and that is the world of theology.

Genesis 1 really isn't a chapter about science. It is a chapter about theology. It is the foundational chapter of the Bible. As a matter of fact, most all scholars agree that the book of Genesis is the foundational book in the Bible. They also agree that chapters one through eleven are the foundational chapters of the book of Genesis, and that Genesis 1:1 is the foundational verse of the first eleven chapters. The case can then be made that Genesis 1:1 is the foundational verse in the Bible. It is from that verse that all of scripture builds upon. It is highly significant. Let's look at Genesis 1:1-23, with most of our discussion about chapter one, verse one. Because if Gen. 1:1 is true, the rest simply falls into place very naturally.

One of the things in the text we need to understand is that when Moses wrote chapter one of Genesis, it is not written as an argument. It is not written as an apologetic. Nobody is trying to prove the existence of God in the Bible. As a matter of fact, there is just an assumption that God is and that God created. It is fact; it is stated as fact, and the rest of the teaching rolls right out of that because God does not prove Himself to anyone. God simply **is**, and that is the flavor of Genesis 1. When you look through the chapter, notice that every single verse in this chapter begins with the word *and* or the word *then*. It is helpful to know that both of those words are translations of the same Hebrew word. In other words, every verse in this chapter, except for v. 1, starts with the same Hebrew word. That is a word which we translate either *and* or *then*. Either word works fine because it is simply saying, “If v. 1 is true, then everything rolls out of that verse....and this....and this....and that....then this....then that.” That is the way the whole chapter is written. It's a technique to point us right back to v. 1 to say, “This is really the verse and the rest of this is a natural outflow of the truth of that statement.” Listen for that technique in Gen. 1:1-23:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day. Then God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters. And God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. And God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day. Then God said, “Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so. And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters he called seas; and God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, with seed in them, on the earth”; and it was so. And the earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a third day. Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to

separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth”, and it was so. And God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also. And God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day. Then God said, “Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens. “And God created the great sea monsters, and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

It is obvious from this chapter, that if Genesis 1:1 is true, then everything naturally flows out of that. One of the questions skeptics would ask is, “How could Moses know this? He wasn’t there when the world was created, so how could he know?” That isn’t a problem for us because we don’t claim a human book; we claim a divinely inspired book. Now I realize that drives the skeptics crazy, but we don’t believe this is a man book; we believe this is God’s book. And God inspired, in other words, God told Moses what to write about the origin of the universe. Now is that really true? That is another question that we could ask. How do we know that is really true? That raises the question: How did Moses know everything that he knew in chapter 1? In other words, let’s imagine that Moses was just winging this – just giving it his best shot. How could he know what he knew and recorded in chapter 1?

Moses was schooled in the finest schools in the ancient world. Moses was groomed to be the next Pharaoh in Egypt, and on that journey, he received the finest education the world had to offer. But when Moses wrote about the origin of the universe, he wrote something contrary to everything that he had been taught. So, if Moses wrote contrary to everything he had been taught, how did he know this? Here we are thousands of years later, and the more sophisticated our equipment and technology gets, the more people are amazed. Because thousands of years ago the ancients were wrong, and Moses nailed it. His description of the universe and how it came to pass is completely consistent with science. Even though there have been theories all through the years that disagreed, it has turned out they were wrong and Moses was 100% accurate. The question is: “How could that be possible?” Take for example v. 16 when Moses talks about the sun and the moon. From viewing just with the naked eye, when he says that the sun was greater than the moon, he was talking about size. That is what the word means. With the naked eye, it is very obvious that the moon is larger than the sun. And in the ancient world everyone believed that. How did Moses know that the sun was actually bigger and greater than the moon? But he didn’t call it the “greatest” because we have now discovered the sun isn’t the greatest. There are many planets that are greater in size than the sun, so he didn’t say that. How could Moses use such precise language and we find out thousands of years later that he was exactly right?

I am really glad that you are struggling with that question. Because Peter Stoner, who is a scientist and a mathematician, also struggled with this question. His expertise was in the law of probability. And so he took Genesis 1 and he listed out all of the things that Moses recorded and what he called them, and how he recorded the details. He put his science to Genesis 1 and asked the question: What is the probability – the likelihood – that Moses could have been guessing? What is the probability that Moses could have been winging it and hit everyone of those correctly in Genesis 1? This is what he says, “Those things (and he is making reference to all the things listed in Genesis 1) are not only correctly named and listed in their proper order, but also Moses’ chances of writing Genesis 1 in that way by accident

would amount to one chance in 31 sextillion.” If you wanted to write 31 sextillion, it would be a 31 with 21 zeroes after it. He is talking about the chance of one in that. To come to grips with how big this is, he goes on. He postulates a raffle with that number of tickets, in other words, 31 sextillion tickets in this raffle. To print them would call for 8 million printing presses, each capable of producing two thousand tickets a minute running day and night without stopping for five million years. One of the tickets is marked. Our chance of drawing that one ticket on the first try would be the same as Moses’ chance of writing Genesis 1 by accident. The laws of probability make it very obvious, even if we look at it from a scientific point of view, that this had to have been a divinely inspired chapter. There is no other explanation.

There are many other things about Genesis 1 that I find interesting. One of them is the way that Moses describes creation. If we were going to set out to describe the wonder of creation, we would write volumes. In fact, people have written volumes out of Genesis 1 to try and describe the majesty of all that God has made. Moses does it in just a handful of sentences. If you look again at v. 16, when we think about creation and the universe, one of the first things that we think about are the stars and the galaxies and how vast all of that is. You talk about understatement! Look at v. 16 when Moses records the creation of the stars. It is something that we are so impressed with, and yet Moses records it so nonchalantly. As a matter of fact, it is recorded almost in passing. It says at the end of v. 16, “Oh, by the way,” (that isn’t in there but it is my interpretation). “Oh by the way, he made the stars also.” That is it; that is his total description of God creating the stars. And if you really go back to the original text, the words *he made* aren’t even in the Hebrew. The only thing he said is “the stars also.” Talk about understatement and being nonchalant! “By the way (*in passing*), He did make the stars.”

Compare that to the way the *National Geographic* describes our universe. We used to think that the universe was simply our Milky Way galaxy. Today we know that galaxies are as common as blades of grass in the meadow. They number perhaps a hundred billion. How does one comprehend the incredible size of this galaxy-filled universe? For such an awesome distance, scientists and astronomers think in terms of time, and they use the telescope as a time machine. They measure space by a unit called the light year, the distance light travels in one year at the rate of 186,282 miles per second, about six trillion miles. The only way to measure the vastness of the universe is with a measuring device called the light year, which is the distance that something travels at the speed of light in one year’s time. Now to understand how big that is, if I were to take a 22 pistol and shoot it from here all the way around the earth to come back and go right through me, it would do that seven times in one second at the speed of light. Now imagine how far that bullet would travel at the speed of light in an entire year. And that is the only device they can figure out that is big enough to measure the expanse of the universe, and even then, they can’t begin to comprehend how big this universe is.

Moses describes it this way, “The stars also.” Why does he do that? It is because the focal point of Genesis 1 is not creation. The focal point of Genesis 1 is **God**. Moses does not want us to worship creation. He wants us to worship the God of creation. In 31 verses God is mentioned 32 times. The star of the show is not the stars. As big, as vast, as impressive, and as majestic as all of that is, it is merely the very breath of God. That is the point. So how much bigger is God? That is what Genesis 1 is all about. It is about the awesomeness of God. It is laying a foundation that will be built on throughout the rest of the Scriptures. God is this big! God is this awesome and everything builds on that. If Genesis 1:1 is true, then nothing else recorded in the Bible is a problem. No miracle is a problem; no promise is a

problem; nothing said about life after death is a problem. None of those things are a problem if God can breathe and the universe comes to be. Everything comes back to a belief related to Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning, God created.”

Let’s look at just a few of the many passages which illustrate how much the Bible builds on what is stated in Genesis 1. One of my favorite passages is in Job, chapters 38, 39, and 40. Job was a man who suffered incredible losses. He went through a very severe time of suffering. And in the midst of that, as we all do, he questioned God, “Why does it have to be this way?” Of course, when we do that, we question the wisdom, the character, and the integrity of God. And so, God spoke to Job and in chapter 38 God sits Job down and says, “Job, let’s have a little talk here. You have questioned my ways and I would like to chat about that.” (That is kind of the *Living* version). God says to Job, “Tell me Job, where were you when I hung the stars in space? Where were you when I put the sun where it belongs? Where were you when I formed the boundaries of the oceans and I measured the earth and I put out the universe?” And God goes through this discussion in chapters 38, 39, and part of chapter 40 saying, “Job, tell me, where were you when I did all of these things?” In chapter 40 in the first couple of verses, the text says that Job put his hand over his mouth and he said, “I will be quiet now.” Job got the message. God was going back to Genesis 1 and saying, “Job, you are not Me. I am God and you’re not.” And Job said, “I think I’ll be quiet now.”

In Psalm 8, you have what I consider to be the greatest text for understanding our self-esteem and who we are to be in our own eyes and in the eyes of God. It is really a text about David marveling at the wonder of creation. “When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy hands, the moon and the stars, which Thou has ordained.” Then he asked the question, “What is man, that Thou dost take thought of him? And the son of man, that Thou dost care for him? Yet Thou hast made us a little lower than God and has crowned us with glory and with majesty.” David is wrestling with Genesis 1. He looks at the vastness of creation and says “A God this big, a God this awesome, a God that seems so transcendent, so far beyond us—how could that God care for us? How could that God want anything to do with us? And yet, He has made us in His image and longs to be intimate with us.” But the wonder of that is built upon the truth of Genesis 1. In Psalm 19, a Psalm some people consider to be the most beautiful piece of literature ever written, there is a discussion about the God of creation and how creation communicates the wonder and the majesty of God. And once that has been established, which is Genesis 1, then it goes into a discussion about God’s communication through this book. But before we marvel at God’s communication through this book, we marvel at the God of all creation and how He speaks through what he has made. So, the writer of that Psalm established the wonder of this book by going back to Genesis 1 and establishing the God of creation.

I notice an interesting thing throughout the Psalms. It is very common in those Psalms when people are questioning, “Is God big enough to deliver me? Is God big enough to protect me? Is God big enough to do what needs to be done?” that the writers often go back to Genesis 1 and say, “This is the God who made heaven and earth. This is the God who breathed and the universe was put into place.” They go back to Genesis 1 to say, “Yes, this God is big. This God is big enough.” Whatever you are going through, whatever your struggle, whatever your trial, whatever your burden, whatever seems to be hopeless, the Psalmists say, “Yes, this is the God who breathed and the universe came to be. I think He can handle anything.”

That is the same argument that Paul makes in Colossians 1. Paul is dealing with the sufficiency of Christ; that Jesus Christ is sufficient for our every need. And when Paul wants to convince us that that is true, what does he do? He says “This is the God who created the universe, and not only did He create it, but He sustains it. He keeps it in place; He keeps it going every day. And, if our God, Jesus Christ, is that big then He is sufficient to meet our every need.”

In Romans chapter one Paul says that every person who has ever lived on the face of this planet is without excuse in terms of knowing that there is a God, because it is so evident in creation. God has made Himself known in the wonder of creation. Paul goes back to Genesis 1 and says that God is evident in creation. We could spend a month talking about passages that build on the truth of Genesis chapter one. Genesis 1:1 lays the foundation on which everything else in the Bible is built. This is the Creator God. “In the beginning God created,” and everything flows out of that.

The one passage that continues to amaze me the most is in the Gospel of John, chapter one. At the beginning of that chapter, John goes back to Genesis 1 and he identifies that Jesus Christ is that Creator God. Everything that has been created was created, and apart from Him, nothing was made. But then, he goes down to verse 14 and says, “God became flesh and dwelt among us.” When I study Genesis 1, I can almost **not** believe John 1. Because when I study Genesis 1, that God is so big.....that God is so transcendent beyond us.....that God is so awe inspiring.....that that God feels far away. That God feels so big that I could never have a relationship with Him. He couldn't even know that I exist on this planet. He is so big, which makes it so hard to imagine that the truth of John 1 could be true. That God became flesh and dwelt among us, allowed Himself to be nailed to a cross for the forgiveness of sin that we might be intimate with Him. That almost seems impossible to believe.

But the God who is so big in Genesis 1 is also the God who longs to be intimate with you. To make that happen, He came to this earth, lived as a man, died on a cross that each of us might experience forgiveness of sin, that we might know Him intimately and personally. That is the wonder of this God. “In the beginning, God created.”