

The First Week
(EGT) Genesis - Beginnings
By Dr. John Whitcomb

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Bible Text: Genesis 1:1-2:3
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Wayne Shepherd. Thousands, not millions or billions of years ago, was the beginning, so states our Bible teacher on "Encounter God's Truth," theologian Dr. John Whitcomb. I'm your host, Wayne Shepherd, and today we begin a major new teaching series on the book of Genesis called "Genesis – History of Beginnings." During the first quarter of 2012, we will explore chapters 1 through 9 of Genesis, that's volume 1 of this study which will cover the creation, the curse, the catastrophe, and the commission. Today, Dr. Whitcomb shows the incredible significance of the order of creation in a message called "The First Week." Listen and learn the fascinating lessons that God is teaching us about this world he made. Here now to begin this new series is Dr. Whitcomb.

Dr. John Whitcomb. Friends, I invite you to join me as we look at the first chapter of the Old Testament, Genesis 1. The beginning of creation. This was not millions and billions of years ago, friends. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 19:4 that in the beginning he made them male and female, so Adam and Eve were here at the beginning of the world, not millions and millions of years ago, obviously. No one would ever believe that. So we understand that this is relatively recent in time, thousands, not millions or billions of years ago, was the beginning and what happened at the beginning? God created the heavens and the earth. That's a Hebrew expression for universe, heavens and earth. Everything not in heaven is on earth, everything not on earth is in heaven.

Most important of all for us right here in this first verse is to know who God is. It's the Triune God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. An amazing thing to me is I'll never recover from this discovery from the Bible, that the one who created the universe in Genesis 1:1 is my Savior Jesus Christ the Lord, because John 1:3 says, "All things were made through Him," the word, Jesus, "and without Him was not anything made that was made." Colossians tells us in chapter 1 that all things were made through Jesus Christ, things in heaven above, things on earth, things visible, things invisible. You say, "What things in heaven that are invisible did Jesus Christ create?" And four things are listed: thrones, dominions, principalities, powers. Those are angels, so angels were there by the creative word of Jesus Christ at the beginning of the universe. They're not mentioned in Genesis 1 but Job 38:7 says that when the earth was created, the angels, the sons of God, bene Elohim, sang together and shouted for joy when they saw this planet appear where

they knew they would have their function, their significant interaction with human beings. Amazing to think about that, isn't it, friends?

Alright, in the beginning God the Father through Jesus his Son as recorded through the Holy Spirit as we'll see, of course, in verse 2, the world appeared. It wasn't chaotic. It wasn't some formless thing. No, what it means when it says the earth was formless and void is not that it was chaotic, it means it was uninhabitable. It was perfect but, what? Incomplete at this point, and through the six days of creation, a perfect world that was incomplete became a perfect world that was complete and appropriate as a home for man. And that's, of course, the point at the end of chapter 1, God saw everything he made and now it was very good. Angels, even Satan, still perfect, sinless, people sinless, the only perfect universe there ever has been or ever will be, as we shall see later. It only lasted so sadly, it only lasted a few days.

Now when God created the world, remember it was not chaos, it was just a perfect earth, perfect water, perfect air, perfect magnetism, gravitation. Everything in it was perfect except it was uninhabitable. Humans couldn't live on a shoreless ocean in total darkness. We understand it was not inhabitable yet. Step by step that problem throughout Genesis 1 is going to be resolved.

Alright, now, verse 2, "And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep," now watch this one, it wasn't chaos because the Spirit of God was there, "and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters." He was present. You see, we have different distinct functions in the Godhead, don't we, friends? God the Father planned it, can we say it that way? God the Son actually did it, the creative work of the Son of God. And then the Holy Spirit records it and overrules, controls, blesses, guides the things that Jesus created. Thank you, Lord, for this little hint here of the trinity and the distinct functions of the three persons of the Godhead.

Verse 3, "Then God said, 'Let there be light,' yehi 'or in Hebrew, "'Let there be light'; and there was light." Now this is not the sun, as we shall see later, it was a temporary astronomic localized light in reference to which the earth went through three night/day cycles until that temporary light was replaced by the sun, and we'll see in a minute why that was so, alright?

"Let there be light. And God saw that the light was good," I mean, everything God creates, dear friends, I remind you, is good, "and God separated the light from the darkness." Separation because God throughout the Old Testament is going to tell us the importance of separation. Light from darkness, yes. Satan from Adam and Eve, yes, as we'll see in chapter 3. Israel from the nations, yes. And we shall see the purpose that God has in mind, a good purpose for separation, alright?

Now, verse 5, "And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day." Now watch this formula, friends, throughout Genesis 1, over and over again it says and there was day one, second day, third day, fourth, a numerical adjective. Now, you see, that tells you what, that the word

"day" is a literal 24 hour period. Nowhere in the Old Testament is that Hebrew word "day, yom" mean a long indefinite period as many people think. It was a 24 hour period because it had a, what? A numerical adjective and it had an evening/morning formula. Evening and morning, day one. Evening and morning, second day. Evening and morning, third, fourth, fifth. So those formulas, evening and morning and the numerical adjectives confirm the literal 24 hour days of creation. Just like Exodus 20:11, in six days the Lord your God created the heavens, the earth, the sea and all that is in them and rested the seventh day. Then we say, amazing that God would have created the whole universe in six days? Well, friends, normally as we see Jesus the Creator functioning in Israel, his miracles were instantaneous. The real problem is not how short a time it was but how long. Why did God have to take six whole days to create the universe, and certainly he didn't need a day to rest, did he? It was to provide a frame of reference for Israel in their cycle of work and rest. God is saying, gracious to Israel, "Let's walk through life together. I'll stretch out My work over six whole days to serve as a model for your cycle of work and rest, and then you could rest the seventh day like I did." Amazing condescension, graciousness of God toward his people Israel.

Now verse 6, "Then God said, 'Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.'" So what is God going to do here on this day? Now this is going to be the second day in which the waters of the earth, 300 million cubic miles of liquid water on this planet, were separated in the form of a vapor canopy, presumably. Before the flood, a transparent invisible vapor, not clouds, not water droplets, vapor that would be transparent. Adam and Eve could see the sun and the stars through that vapor, yes, and it provided a global terrarium with warm air, it never rained, it never snowed, of course, and it was a different kind of world than we know of today, wasn't it? Amazingly different kind of world, and we shall see the significance of that later on in the animal kingdom too.

So "God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day." So you see, there are three heavens in the Bible, aren't there? Paul said he was caught up to the third heaven, 2 Corinthians 12, remember. That means the heaven where the angels, especially the seraphim surround the throne of God and praise his name, "Holy, holy, holy," and that's where God resides in his glory. The second heaven is outer space where satellites fly and where the moon is and the stars. Yes, second heaven, outer space we call it. Then the first heaven is the atmosphere. Yes, that's where planes do fly and where birds fly, and we understand that's a very excellent way to analyze the universe, first heaven, second heaven, third heaven. Thank you, Lord, for that analysis.

Now friends, look what happened on the third day, verse 9, "God said, 'Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear.'" So a continent arose from that shoreless ocean, perhaps just one great continent before the flood because, as we shall see, the animals could easily walk from all over that world into the ark. They didn't have to cross oceans to get there like they would today. One great continent, alright? Pangaea some people call it. Pangaea, alright?

And what happened on that continent? Look at verse 10, "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 on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them,'" on the earth, "and it was so. " And of course, the earth immediately responded to his command, this is Jesus Christ the Savior now speaking, the Creator of the world uttering his command. And what happened? Fruit trees appeared with seed in them, full-grown trees with an appearance of history they didn't have. They were fully grown, fully functional because God knew that three days later Adam and Eve would be there and couldn't wait 50 years for trees to grow up to have fruit. The creation of full-grown entities, and I say, "Lord, help me to ponder the significance of that as well."

Now as we go through this chapter, you're going to see an amazing order of events, friends. We know the timing, six literal 24 hour days, but look at the order in which things happen too. The earth first and the sun and the stars later on the fourth day. How can that be? Well, friends, that's one of God's ways of telling ancient Israel through Moses, "Don't you ever do what Egyptians do, don't you dare worship the sun." Do you remember what Job said? He said, "If I beheld the sun when it shines and the moon walking in darkness and my heart is secretly enticed and my mouth kisses my hand in a worship gesture, this would be an iniquity to be punished by the Judge for I should deny the God who is above." Never worship things you see, friends. Sun, moon, stars are glorious but they're not divine.

So God intentionally, deliberately postponed the creation of the sun to the fourth day to show us that it was not ultimate, infinite, divine, eternal and essential. It is an afterthought, can I put it that bluntly? An afterthought. Some day there won't be anymore sun or moon according to the book of Revelation 21 and 22. It'll be replaced by the light of Jesus. He is essential, the sun isn't. He's ultimate, he's eternal, he's divine, the sun, s-u-n, is not.

So we say, "Now wait a minute, I'm amazed at these things. The order of events, earth first and sun, moon and stars later?" Yes. Look at this, fruit trees first and marine creatures not until the fifth day when Evolutionism, which I used to believe as a student at Princeton University when I was taught there. Yes, look at this, whales first, land animals later. Birds first, reptiles later. Everything is backward in the order in which things happened from what you would expect from Evolutionary thinking today, something profound that God wants us to mastermind about the infinite difference between his creation time block message and what Evolutionists and Uniformitarians have believed.

Genesis 1, dear friends, in verse 14, "God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for,'" what? "Signs," of his glory obviously, we see his glory when we look at the universe around us, and number 2, "for seasons and for days and years," a clock calendar, we need a clock calendar, don't we, to guide our steps through life, "and let them be for," number 3, "lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so." We need luminaries by day and

night. Notice there's no fourth reason so there would be places out there for extraterrestrial beings to live. No, there aren't any. Isaiah 45:18 says the earth, the earth exclusively, was created to be inhabitable and inhabited. Thank you, God, for that perspective.

Now friends, that brings us to this amazing fifth day when God, of course, created all the marine creatures. We'll talk more about especially these great sea monsters in verse 21 at a later time. But look at the amazing spectrum of things he put in those oceans. "Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens. God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.'" That's the amazing fifth day of creation.

Now the greatest day, of course, as far as we're concerned, of course, was day number six when we appeared on this planet. Listen carefully verse 24, "Then God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind'; and it was so. God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good." Later we'll see what that includes, everything that creeps on the earth.

But notice this now, verse 26, "Then God said, 'Let Us,'" that implies a plurality of persons in the Godhead, does it not? Father, Son and Holy Spirit by implication. "Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea," etc. Now friends, image and likeness, what does that mean, tselem and demuth in Hebrew? There's something about man that's like God. We have a conscience, we have a will, we have a mind, we have emotions. It might even hint that our physical form, our human body was designed in a way to be like the body that God knew his Son would have in his Incarnation, in other words, there's something unique about man not only morally, intellectually, spiritually, but physically. That has always fascinated me yet, "In Our image and Our likeness."

And they will do, what? "God blessed them; and said, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it.'" And so God said now watch their special diet in an unfallen, uncursed, perfect world. They were vegetarians. Listen, verse 29, "Then God said, 'Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you.'" Yes, and notice, friends, we were exclusively vegetarians but the animal kingdom also was exclusively herbivorous, plant-eaters.

Verse 30, "'to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food'; and it was so." It's because there was to be no bloodshed, no violence at all in that perfect world. That is amazing. Of course, it's too late now, too late now as Paul points out in 1 Timothy 4, to become a vegetarian and therefore to become sinless. No. It's too late.

Vegetarianism now is not an acceptable God-requirement. No, it is not. We have changed. We have a sin nature.

Now finally, verse 31, what a magnificent statement this is, "And God saw everything, all that He had made, and behold, it was very good." Satan was still perfect, Ezekiel 28 tells us. All the angels, hundreds of millions were still perfect. All the planets, all the plants, the animals, the people were perfect and I say, "Lord, I'm amazed. What an amazing account You've given us."

Yes, chapter 2, verse 1, "the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts." Angels, stars, everything. And, "By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work," that is, he ceased from it, he ended it, and I say, "Thank You, Lord." Nothing more has been added to the universe from then, that's the first law of thermodynamics, by the way, nothing has been added or subtracted by creation or annihilation from the beginning of the world. "Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

Now just think of what God expects us to believe here and requires that we believe, that everything was created within six literal days, things were created in an order the opposite of Evolution, earth first, remember, sun later, sun, moon and stars. Amazing. Amazing. And thirdly, not just the timing and the order but the manner in which things were made. Full-grown fruit trees, full-grown people, as we shall see later. Adam and Eve created full-grown immediately. Adam from the ground, Eve from his body, and I say, "Lord, I can't even imagine a world like that and how the world began." And I say, "Lord, I don't need to argue with people about how these things happened because unless we know who Jesus is – now this is important, friends – we can't understand or fathom Genesis 1."

Jesus went around instantaneously healing people, raising Lazarus from the dead instantly, and when we understand who he is and how he functions, we begin to see the mystery and marvel of the creation events of Genesis 1. And so we need to introduce people prayerfully, patiently, graciously, to who Jesus is just like my soul-winner at Princeton University in 1943 told me who Jesus is, what he did for me, and rose from the dead, and I believed and was saved and then I became teachable, then Genesis 1 made sense to me, and I've been learning ever since and I trust you will too, dear friend, of how great our Creator God, Jesus Christ the Lord, really really is. May God bless you.

Wayne Shepherd. You are listening to "Encounter God's Truth" and today Dr. John Whitcomb is just opening volume 1 of a brand new series entitled "Genesis – History of Beginnings." If you want to hear this opening message again or share it with a friend, you'll find it on our webpage at sermonaudio.com/whitcomb.

Well, each week on the broadcast, I get to ask Dr. Whitcomb a Bible question and this time we have one that came in via whitcombministries.org that is most fitting for our study today. A listener references the 1978 Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy

which Dr. Whitcomb signed. That document states in part, "We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud or deceit. We deny that biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious or redemptive themes exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood." Now here's the question, "Many are coming forward to say that theistic Evolution is consistent with a belief in inerrancy. Dr. Whitcomb, would you be willing to comment on the intended meaning of this article, and how would you judge recent attempts by some to say that it's possible to reject a belief in a historical Adam and still believe in inerrancy?"

Dr. John Whitcomb. Wayne, my answer to that question is simply this: it is essential to believe the Bible is infallible and inerrant in every area on which it speaks, but it is infinitely insufficient. In other words, somebody can say, "I believe the Bible is true but here's what it means, here's what the correct interpretation of the Bible is, namely, that it allows for Evolution or billions of years of time." No. You see, friends, that's why it's insufficient. The Jews also believed in the inerrancy of Isaiah 53 but they denied the meaning of it, namely, that it refers to Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah who died on the cross for our sins and rose again from the dead. They reinterpreted God's inerrant, infallible word and that's what's going on today with Genesis. People say, "We believe it's true, we believe that this is absolutely inerrant, but we believe that it teaches that Evolution occurred." Well, friends, that's an issue of what we call hermeneutics, how do you properly interpret what God said, and that is where the modern theistic Evolution movement has collapsed in the mind of God because it has denied the obvious teaching of Scripture that the world was created within six literal 24 hour days, that trillions of fossils were formed not long before Adam and Eve but during the magnitude of the hydrodynamics of the Genesis flood. That is the biblical interpretation, you see, of Genesis 1 and I say, "Well, Lord, thank You for helping me understand the importance, the significance, the essential nature of biblical hermeneutics, interpreting the Bible correctly."

Now to put it in more blunt terms. Hundreds of thousands if not millions of Jews for 3 ½ years saw Jesus of Nazareth walking around, healing people, preaching repentance for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. They could see him, they could hear him, they could even touch him, but how few there were that really believed in him, that understood, properly interpreted what he meant by what he said. Very few. And so today, friends, it's one thing to say, "Well, I believe the Bible because I go to church, or my Christian parents believe the Bible," but you see, that's not enough. We need to know, "Well, what does it mean? What did it really mean when it told me that I'm a sinner that needs a Savior? What does it mean when it says Jesus Christ really died for our sins?" Everybody knew he died, they could see him on the cross, but did they interpret his death correctly, that's the point. They say, "He literally died?" Yes, who would have denied that? But did he literally die for our sins when he said, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" And that is the infinite difference between taking the Bible as infallible and inerrant and believing it means what it says and interpreting it correctly.

So friends, let's be very careful about these movements, these organizations, these individuals, these theologians who say, "Well, I believe the Bible but I don't believe it means what you think it means." And we need to sit down patiently, prayerfully, and carefully and say, "Let's talk. Let's open the Bible and compare Scripture with Scripture," because the Bible, friends, is its own best interpreter. Things that God said about the beginning of the world in Genesis are confirmed over and over again in later portions of the Bible like Exodus 20:11, "In six days God created the heavens, earth, the sea and all that is in them." In the later books of the Old Testament like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and so forth, and especially in the New Testament statements of the Lord Jesus Christ, who absolutely confirmed the miraculous nature, for example, of the creation of Adam and Eve, he said, "He who made them in the beginning made them male and female." He did, what? He created them physically male and female, you see, distinct physical forms. When? In the beginning, not millions of years after the earth appeared. And I say, "Thank You, God, for helping us to understand what You really meant by what You really said."

Wayne Shepherd. Thank you, Dr. Whitcomb. With that, we conclude this initial broadcast in our brand new series "Genesis – History of Beginnings." Next week, we'll resume this study with a message entitled "The First Family" from Genesis 2.

"Encounter God's Truth" is a broadcast outreach of Whitcomb Ministries and you can learn much more about us on our Facebook page at facebook.com/whitcombministries. God's word is true from the beginning to the end and we are examining that beginning in depth in this new teaching series.

Once again, I'm Wayne Shepherd wishing you God's best as you serve the Lord this week.