

THE PERFECT CREATION

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

Introduction

The name of Genesis is from the Greek word, *geneseos*, which is the word for "origin," and also for "life," the result of origin. "Beginning" is the first word of Genesis. It is a book of beginnings, origins and life. It gives the beginning of creation, of sin, of salvation, of the nations and of Israel. It introduces the major doctrines of theology, i.e., the doctrines of God, of creation, of man, of sin, of salvation, of judgment, of worship and many others. Genesis gives the first promise of a Savior (3:15), and that He would be a Semite (9:26), a son of Abraham (12:3) and of the tribe of Judah (49:10). Genesis is a very practical book which tells man what God expects him to be and what He wants him to do. It also gives him many answers to problems and questions he encounters. Genesis is the foundation book to all the other books of the Bible. The author of Genesis was Moses, who also wrote Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These five books are known as the Pentateuch. Genesis can be divided into two parts: (1) the early history of mankind (Gen 1-11); and (2) the early history of Israel (Gen 12-50).

I. The God of Creation (1:1-2:3)

1:1 — "In the beginning" - there are five areas of thought in this phrase: (1) it gives the historic beginning of the universe - the first creative act; (2) it tells of an actual event, not a myth or a legend; (3) matter is created, not eternal; (4) creation was revealed by God; (5) faith is necessary to understand creation.

"God" - this word is Elohim in the Hebrew. It speaks of God's might and power. He is the supreme one. It is a plural noun, but it takes a singular verb. It suggests the Trinity in a unity - three Persons in one Godhead. This plurality in a unity is illustrated in 1:26, 27. All three Persons of the Godhead were active in creation. The Father planned it (1 Cor. 8:6); the Son created it (Jn. 1:1-3, 10; Col 1:16); and the Spirit gave life and perfected it (Gen 1:2; Job 26:13; Ps 104:30; Jn 3:5-7; 16:7-11).

"Created" - there are four words used in Genesis 1-2 that describe God's work of creation. The word used in this verse is *bara*, the most basic of the four words. It is the only word that can be used to express the creation of something without the use of pre-existent materials. It is also used of something that is made distinctively new without an organic connection to that which preceded it. It is always used of God's activity, not of man's. This word is used in 1:1, 21, 27; 2:4. Another word is *asah*, which is used to describe the making of something out of created materials. It is used in 1:16, 25, 26; 2:2. A third word is *yatsar*, and it is used of fashioning some material as a potter does to clay. It is used of God's work of fashioning man from the dust of the earth and also the beasts and birds (2:7, 19). The fourth word is *banah*, which means "to build." It is used when God made the woman from man's rib.

"Heaven and the earth" - there are three areas of thought in this phrase: (1) the creation of the universe was "in the rough" -- all the elements were there, but it had no topographical features; (2) the "earth" had at this point all the minerals, but it had no life; it was spinning; it had a cool crust -- no steam; and it had its foundational rocks; (3) "heaven" should be translated "heavens" (Hebrew) which includes all three heavens, namely, the atmospheric heaven, the heaven of planets and stars, and the heaven of God's dwelling place. This is probably when angels were created (Neh. 9:6; Job 38:7).

1:2 — "And the earth was without form, and void" - God is giving the conditions that existed at the time when He called for light to appear (1: 3). The earth was created in the first few seconds of the first day, but it was far from its finished form and it was not inhabited on that first day.

"Darkness" - this is not necessarily a sign of evil, because the Spirit hovered over it and blessed it. Darkness was made by God and is a blessing under certain conditions; i.e. for sleep.

"Deep" - this refers to the original ocean which covered the entire earth. When the dry land appeared, this water was gathered into seas and some of it may have been trapped in subterranean areas.

"Spirit of God" — this is the third Person of the Trinity who was active in the creative act. The Spirit was not a "wind" that blew over the waters as some commentators contend.

"Moved" — the Spirit brooded over the earth like a hen broods over its eggs or little chicks. He provided life and gentle protection for all life on the earth, bringing the creation to perfection.

1:3 — "Let there be light" - this is created light, not the glory of God; it was fixed outside of the earth to give a day/night cycle before the sun was created on the fourth day.

1:5 — "And the evening and morning were the first day" - here are seven arguments for a 24-hour day: (1) numerical adjectives (one-two-three) are used with each day; (2) evening and morning are used; (3) the creation week is an example of man's work week and God's rest day is an example of man's rest day; (4) the hermeneutical principle says that a word should be taken in its normal meaning unless other circumstances force a different meaning; (5) the day-age theory would make the day of rest for Adam and Eve a very long time the day after they were created; (6) "days" are included with "seasons" and "years" in v. 14, making the last two designations of time meaningless if a day does not mean a day of 24 hours; and (7) God did not need more than 24-hour days to create -- only evolutionists need more time. The "day-age" theory claims that one day is equal to a thousand years and geologic time tables are equal to the six days of creation. This theory was developed to accommodate evolution, but it contradicts the Genesis account in several ways: (a) land plants were created on the third day and marine life on the fifth day, but evolution claims that marine life preceded plant life; (b) earth was created on the first day and the sun, moon and stars on the fourth day, but evolution says the sun was first and the earth was a spin-off from the sun; (c) birds and fish were created on the fifth day and reptiles probably on the sixth day but no earlier than the fifth day, but evolution claims that both fish and reptiles came before birds; (d) flying insects were created on the fifth day and flowering plants on the third day, but evolution insists that insects preceded flowering plants; (e) Genesis teaches that creation was perfect and without death, but evolution is based on death and the survival of the fittest; and (f) the "day-age" theory cannot account for the day-night cycle, because long nights of hundreds of years would have killed all of the plant life.

1:6 — "Firmament in the midst of the waters" – "firmament" is better translated as the "expanse" between the waters on the earth and those above the earth. Some believe the waters above the earth refer to a canopy of water that circled the earth and acted as a protective shield from the harmful rays of the sun and accounts for the longevity of life up to the time of Noah. It acted as a huge bubble to give the earth a greenhouse effect, making a temperate climate in all parts of the earth. This huge canopy of water may have been destroyed by God in Noah's day and was the source of much of the water that caused the great flood at that time. However, others have said that the canopy around the earth would have trapped the heat from the sun and made life on earth unbearable. So they say the waters above the earth refer to the water in the clouds of the heavens. This is an area of uncertainty.

1:9 — "Let the dry land appear" - great changes were made in the earth when land masses were shifted to create large basins for seas and high dry land for habitation. As the water drained from the earth, it caused rivers. Four are mentioned in chapter two.

1:11, 12 — "After his kind" - see notes on 1:21.

1:14, 15 — "Lights in the firmament" - if we take the canopy theory to be correct, the lights of the sun and moon shone on the canopy, thus putting the lights in the firmament (expanse between the waters on the earth and above the earth). If, on the other hand, this is speaking of the light-bearers themselves (the sun and moon) being in the firmament, it is the language of appearance. The sun and moon appear to be in the atmospheric heaven above, even though they are far above it.

1:17, 18 — The purposes of the sun and moon are five-fold: (1) to regulate the day/night cycle; (2) to be signs that declare the glory of God and warn of future judgments; (3) to make seasons on the earth; (4) to give days, months and years; and (5) to give light to the earth.

1:20 — "Let the waters bring forth abundantly" - this translation may lead one to the conclusion that the waters themselves brought forth the marine life, whereas a literal translation would read, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures."

1:21 — "God created great whales, and every living creature . . . and every winged fowl" - God created (*bara*), without the use of pre-existing materials, these creatures. The word for "whales" includes all sea-monsters and possibly dinosaurs. This word is most often translated "dragon." The word for "fowl" includes not only birds, but also all creatures that fly, i.e., bats, butterflies, insects, locusts.

"After their kind" - there are four areas of thought to keep in mind: (1) a "kind" includes organisms that can reproduce among themselves; (2) a "kind" is able to produce offspring with reliability and stability; (3) a "kind" has variety; and (4) there is no cross-breeding to develop new "kinds" and so some "kinds" may have become extinct or are seriously impoverished.

1:24 — "Creeping thing" - refers to "creepers" including non-flying insects, worms, animals with short legs that move close to the ground, and possibly some kinds of reptiles.

1:26 — "Let them have dominion" - man was given the rule of God's creation on earth. God appointed him to be the king of the earth – to rule it for the glory of God.

1:27 — "God created man in His own image" - man was created in the moral likeness of God, i.e. knowledge (Col 3:10), righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24), but he lost this likeness in the Fall and needed it renewed through the new birth. He also was created as a personal being with intellect, emotions and will, which God has, and these he still retains.

1:28 — "Replenish the earth" - should be translated "fill the earth." The earth was not being refilled.

"Subdue it" - has reference to the cultural treasures that he needed to discover and master for the enrichment of society and for the glory of God.

1:29, 30 — "For meat" - men and beasts were vegetarian eaters until man sinned. Man may not have eaten flesh until they came off the ark after the Flood (Gen 9:2).

1:31 — "It was very good" - God's creation was perfect in every way. This means that Lucifer had not yet fallen, that disease and death had not yet entered the universe, and that the first law of thermodynamics (the conservation of energy and matter) was in force, but not the second law (energy and matter become less available for useful work, so there is disorder, corruption and degeneration).

2:2 — "God ended His work" - means He completed His work of creation, but He did not cease His work of sustaining and directing it.

"He rested on the seventh day" - no sense of fatigue or weariness is implied, but only that God finished His work and was pleased with it. Nothing needed to be added to it. It is a model for man's physical rest of one day in seven, but even more, it is a type of his eternal spiritual rest provided by Jesus "Christ.

II. The Man of Creation — 2:4-25

2:4 — "The LORD" - this word is Yahweh (Jehovah) in the Hebrew. This name speaks of God's grace to man, His covenant and salvation, His care and love; but it also speaks of God's self-sufficiency: His power and knowledge, and His will to do as He pleases. The combination of this name with Elohim was very fitting when dealing with God's creation and care of man.

2:6 — "A mist from the earth" - this is the only place that the word for "mist" occurs in the Bible. Its meaning is uncertain. It may mean a mist or a subterranean stream.

2:7 — "Formed man of the dust of the ground" - God formed (*yatzar*) man as a potter would shape his pottery. "Dust" does not mean it was dry pulverized earth, but a damp lump of clay.

"Breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" - the breath of God is something special that man has that the other creatures do not have. The sea creatures, the air creatures and the land creatures have all been made living souls like man, but only man has been made in the likeness of God's image and he alone was given the breath of God.

2:8 — "Eden" – means "delight." It probably was located near the place where the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers join. The other two rivers are unknown, but must have been in that locality before the Flood.

2:9 — "The tree of life" – it could not produce life by eating its fruit, but it was a symbol of abundant life for those that obeyed God (cf. 3:22). The tree of life will be found in the New Jerusalem (Rev 22:2).

"The tree of knowledge of good and evil" – God chose this tree to give man the knowledge of good and evil. It was a symbol to test Adam's obedience. God said more about it in v. 17.

2:15 — "To dress and keep it" – Adam was to keep the Garden of Eden beautiful. Work is honorable and divinely given to man. It was so from the beginning, before man sinned. It is just as honorable today and even more necessary.

2:16 — "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat" - God was gracious in providing abundant food for Adam. It was good food and it was free.

2:17 — "You shall not eat of it— ... you shall surely die" - God spoke these words to Adam about the tree of knowledge. God gave Adam a strong command with death as its penalty for disobedience. It was a symbol to test man's obedience. Its fruit was not poisonous, but its fruit would reveal who Adam truly feared and highly respected. If he obeyed, it was God. If he disobeyed, it was the world, the flesh and the devil. This tree would bring about the knowledge of good and evil whether Adam obeyed or disobeyed; if he did not eat of its fruit, he would learn about good and evil from God's side, be confirmed in righteousness and live forever. If he ate of its fruit, he would learn about good and evil from Satan's side, become a sinner and die. Death means separation: (1) physical death in which the soul is separated from the body; (2) spiritual death in which the sinner is separated from God, but can be restored to fellowship with God in this life; (3) second death or eternal death in which the sinner is separated from God forever.

2:18 — "A help meet for him" - means a helper which would be suitable for him. God would provide Adam a helping mate that would be his counterpart, his second-self.

2:20 — "Gave names" - Adam only named the various "kinds" of air-breathing animals (cattle, birds and beasts) and nothing is said about the fish and creeping things. He did not have to hunt for these animals; they were brought to him. He had a superior intelligence to determine their characters and he gave them names that fit their characters. This implies that man was created with the ability to speak. The purpose of naming the animals was to find a help-meet for him, but none of the animals met his need.

2:21 — "Ribs" – literally, it is a "part of the side." It can refer to the "side" of a house, or the "side" of a mountain, or as in this case, the "side" of Adam. It may refer to more than Adam's rib (cf. 2:23). God took a part of Adam to make him a mate, so that she would be inseparably a part of him.

2:22 — "Made He a woman" - the word for "made" is *banah* which means "to build." God built a woman from the side of Adam so she would be of his flesh and of his bone (cf. 2:23).

2:24 — "They shall be one flesh" - what was true of Adam and Eve is also true of each man and woman that marries. They are one flesh and should not be separated by divorce. But they should be separated from their parents. Leaving parents and cleaving to each other is vital for a sound marriage.