

Bible Basics Conference 2012: “Genesis 1-12”

Part 1

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[00:00:01] Before we begin to speak our own words, I think we should turn first to the Word of God.

Let's read the opening verses of Genesis, verses 1-5 of chapter 1 and verses 1-3 of chapter 2.

Genesis 1, reading from the authorized version, which has been publicly read in this country for just over 400 years.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, Let there be light, and there was light.

[00:01:14] And God saw the light, that it was good, and God divided the light from the darkness.

And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night, and the evening and the morning were the first day. Now chapter 2, following six days of creation, we read in chapter 2, Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. [00:02:08] And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.

In this session we're going to have a look at creation. The second session is going to cover the same verses, but looking at the spiritual aspect, a particular spiritual application of those verses.

What is God's purpose in these verses? Well, first of all, it is a literal account. These verses are to be taken literally, word by word, and this is how I propose to speak of them.

[00:03:05] Not speak on every word, but to speak of it literally. God's purpose is to show Himself as the source of all creation, and to show how the world was prepared as a place for man to live in.

We're not looking at a scientific account. We're not looking at a detailed account of everything that God made. We don't find it in this chapter. We find other things elsewhere in the Scriptures that are not covered here. We don't read in this chapter of angels. We don't read of heavenly beings. We don't read of Lucifer, son of the morning, although we read of him elsewhere. But the world was made as a place for man to live in, and a place that God would work in. [00:04:05] For what? For his own glory, yes, and for man's blessing. And reading these verses, we can see some divine principles, the separation of things that differ. We'll come to that as we go through the verses. There is life. There is fruit bearing. There is the fact that God is made in the image of man. There's also the fact that man is to have dominion. Man differs from the animals of creation. Not necessarily in intelligence or strength, although man is more intelligent, doubtless, than the beings of creation. But not necessarily in strength, but God intended that man should have dominion. And he is given that dominion in the very first chapter. We know that man misused that dominion, but that's another story. That's another story. We don't get there until chapter 3 and onwards. [00:05:12] But God intended that man should have dominion. Man will have dominion in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. And finally, there is the thought with which we finish reading, the thought of rest. God ever had a thought before him of rest. What the verses don't tell us, as I've said already, they don't tell us about angels. They don't even tell us here how sin came into being. We look elsewhere for that. And that is not particularly our theme. Our theme is what we read in the scripture in this first chapter. And as we go through the first 12 chapters, it's what's there and what is suggested that is developed later in the scriptures. [00:06:04] We're not, by the way, going to try to refute wrong ideas. It may be necessary to say a word or two here and there. But I'm not approaching this from the point of view of putting right all those things that man has misinterpreted.

Nor am I standing on this platform to defend creation as opposed to evolution. I take it, am I right, that everyone in this room believes that the Bible is true? And that the Bible does not speak of everything growing out of a single cell, which grew out of who knows what. And that over the millennia, so gradually, it developed and developed and developed until we end up with a human being. [00:07:02] I take it that nobody believes that. Nor am I going to suggest that there was a big bang, that two bodies, and where did they come from, collided, and the result was what we see around us. I'm not going to suggest that. I take it that I don't need to speak about these things in an audience such as this. I say again, I'm just going to speak about what we have here. Through faith, we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God. Faith. Faith. Reading, I think it was that verse, I looked up a commentator, Mr. Kelly, and he said, what is faith? Faith is thinking as God thinks. I just commend that to you to take away and think about.

[00:08:04] First one, in the beginning. In the beginning, God, three persons. Later, we get, let us make man in our image, God in three persons. We now know as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He created heaven and earth. He created.

There was nothing before God created. There was God alone. But at some point, God created heaven and earth. There was no previous matter. And God made it. He fashioned it.

And the Lord Jesus Christ, too, is seen in creation. When we speak of God, we think of three persons. God, the Father. God, the Son. God, the Holy Spirit. [00:09:01] And we know that Jehovah was there. We know that Christ, the Messiah, was there. And we learn of his part in the creation in

the New Testament. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Without him was not anything made that was made.

And in Colossians 1.16, let us just turn to it and read it to you. Colossians 1.16.

We get, For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created by him and for him. [00:10:09] The subject is the earth. And what do we make of verse 2? If I speak of a noun clause and a verb clause, you'll say, what do you mean? I mean something like this.

If I say God is three persons, that's a statement. If I say the three persons are Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that is a description of what I've said already.

If I say something like, and that's a noun clause, if I say something like the Lord Jesus Christ gave himself on the cross for our sins, that's a verb clause because it gives another thought that wasn't in the first. [00:11:06] And I'm suggesting to you that verse 2 is a noun clause. It amplifies what happened in verse 1. It's not a subsequent development. Our version says without form and void, and I think that's quite a good translation. But you could also read it as being unformed and unfilled. Unformed and unfilled. The world was in a state of readiness to be fashioned into something that God wanted. It's not chaos. Unfortunately, during the last century, some people started using the word chaos. But I don't think any reliable translation uses that word. It was not chaos. Let me give a stupid illustration, but it's the only one I can think of. [00:12:05] Most of you will know what I mean when I talk of Lego. Little kits of bricks and blocks, and you can make them into a racing car, a building, an aeroplane, whatever, a bridge.

If you were to take one of those boxes and just simply tip it out on the table, there would be no order. But it wouldn't be chaos because you've only got to take each one of those bricks and stick it in its right place. And you've got whatever it was you wanted to make. Now, that's a feeble illustration, but what I'm saying here is that God made the world, and in verse 2, it's as he first made it. Now, time doesn't come into this. We don't read of time until we get to verse 5. Time doesn't come into it, but the earth was without form and void, unformed and unfilled. [00:13:12] Perhaps the stars were as well, but we're not told about the stars, we're not told about the heaven, we're told about the earth. And what we're told about the earth is that darkness was on the face of the deep. At this stage, at this stage, be it a second, be it an hour, be it a day, be it whatever, but the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters. Now, that indicates that something's going to happen. The Holy Spirit abode upon the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what John 1, verses 32 and 33 tell us. "...upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding on him." The words of John the Baptist. The Holy Spirit was there, abiding on the Lord Jesus. [00:14:09] And again, in the second chapter of Acts, we get the Holy Spirit coming into that scene and, as it were, hovering over it. When he was about to come down and indwell those eleven disciples, those twelve apostles, let's get the words right, twelve apostles, and to baptize the whole assembly into one body.

The Holy Spirit hovering over the face of the earth. An indication that God was about to act and complete his fabrication of the world for the blessing of men. Some of these actions are described in the verses that follow, and I've given you the verse in Isaiah there. [00:15:01] "...for thus saith the Lord that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth and made it. He hath established it. He created it not in vain. He formed it to be inhabited. I am the Lord, and there is none else." The first day, what happened? God said, let there be light. Is that different from saying God made light? I'm

not sure.

But what I do know is that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. We read also, in another place, that he called all worlds into being by the word of his power. And God said, let there be light, and instantly there was light, and the light was good. And he divided the light from the darkness. [00:16:01] Now, in your notes, I do hope that the notes are not confusing. I realized on Thursday, when it was too late to do anything about it, I have no one to blame except myself. But that we have to distinguish between light and darkness in creation, and light and darkness in the New Testament. Why? God made light, and he, God called light into being, and he divided light from darkness.

And God purposed that it should be so, that there should be daytime, that there should be night. The plant life revives and reactivates itself at night. And you and I are glad enough, are we not, at times, to go to sleep? And sleep is not a result of the fall. Sleep was ordained from the beginning, because we read in the second chapter that God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam. [00:17:11] So God ordained it this way, there should be light, and there should be darkness. But, as ever, man got involved, and man sought the darkness rather than the light, because his deeds were evil. That's what John's Gospel tells us. The light shone in the darkness, the darkness apprehended it not. But man preferred the darkness to the light.

And that explains why, in the New Testament, there are so many references to light and darkness. I've given you three there. But there we are, the evening and the morning were the first day, and that is the first mention in the Scripture of time. [00:18:02] Read Exodus 20 verse 11, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them in, and rested the seventh day. I am suggesting that time began with the first day in verse 3, and that this verse is actually speaking of the furnishing of this world, the six days creation, as the earth for man to dwell in. Others take the six days to begin in verse 1. The second day, heaven and earth are distinguished. The second day, God said, let there be a firmament.

Perhaps we ought to say, what's a firmament? What is a firmament? It's not a word we use every day, is it? Well, it's the overarching sky that we can see. That is what the firmament is. [00:19:10] And that hymn we sang, Mr. William Cooper's hymn we sang, number four, what was it? When like a tent to dwell in, he spread the skies abroad. That's what the firmament is. The earth was watered by dew from the clouds. Now it's watered by rain from the clouds. But things below, there is water below, there is water above, there is water below. God created this in perfect order. But this figuratively indicates to us the difference between heaven and earth. There is a difference between heaven and earth, which men confound at their peril. We will see when we get to chapter 6 that heavenly persons interfered with persons on the earth, and the result was disaster. [00:20:24] Isaiah puts it differently, it's a different thought, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my thoughts and your thoughts, my ways and your ways, saith the Lord. The third day, land and water were separated, and here we get the habitable parts of his earth, that well-known quotation in the eighth of Proverbs, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing over the habitable part of his earth. Generally, men are adapted to live on land, are they not? The habitable parts of the earth, you can think about that at your leisure, and ponder whether it is right to build things in the sea.

[00:21:18] The fourth day, lights to rule. Now, here we have the sun, the moon, and we have stars. We might say, how do we have light in verse 3 when the sun wasn't created until verse, wherever it is, verse 14.

And the answer is that God is God, God is all-powerful, God only had to say, let there be light, and there was light. God didn't need a sun, he didn't need a moon, he didn't need the stars for there to be light. [00:22:02] The scientists won't believe it, but it is true. God did not need any of these things, but he placed them there. Now, I put the sun supreme authority, and the moon derived authority, and I ought to explain that, because that is, okay, it's there in creation, but it's also there in the new creation. I'll come to that in one moment. The sun is the source of light as far as the earth is concerned, is it not? The light comes from the sun, it doesn't come from the moon, at least not the moon's own light, the moon doesn't have any. The moon reflects the light of the sun, except when the earth gets in the way and then it can't do that. The stars have their own light, not the planets, but the stars have their own light, but they don't, we see them in the sky at night, we see the brightness of the stars and we can admire them, but they don't really provide sufficient light as the sun does in the daytime. [00:23:06] Now, we can see this is a picture of the new creation. The Lord Jesus, the light, the sun, the source, the assembly, the assembly to reflect that light.

The stars subordinate authority, and perhaps that gives us the thought of the beauty of individual believers. One star differs from another star in its glory, the scriptures say this. Individual believers, we're all different. We all have something. We can't say, oh, you know, that brother, that sister has got nothing, you know, I can't see. No, maybe you can't, but each one has their own beauty, sufficient beauty that the Lord Jesus gave his life for them and he will achieve his purpose in them. [00:24:15] Subordinate authority, the stars, each one in its place in the heavens, doing what God would have it to do, and that is the thought of the individual. It should be the thought of the individual now in this world, but it certainly will be in a day yet to come. I must go on because I'm going to be trespassing on brother Michael's time if I'm not careful. Fifth day, creatures of the sea and of the air. There we are. On the sixth day, a double work. He completed, God completed making the animals, but he also went on to make man. Now, I haven't put a picture of man in because he was made in the likeness of God and that is impossible. It is impossible to attempt. It would be irreverent to do, to try to attempt a picture of God or of man in the likeness of God. [00:25:15] But God made man in his own likeness and we read also that he made them male and female. That's the creation order. When we read of man it includes a man and woman.

There is a difference which we'll come to no doubt in a later session. Man was made from the dust of the earth. Woman was made out of man, but God created them male and female. [00:26:03] Now, that is true that it is right to say that the order of creation is another issue, but it says male and female created he them. And man is to have dominion. We have, be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

God put man in charge of that earth, that beautiful earth that he had created. Man was to have dominion. Now, we know and will be coming on in future sessions as to how man fell. How man was really, he failed in the commission that God had given him. Till in the end God had to destroy the earth except Noah who found favor in God's sight and then Noah was given dominion. [00:27:12] But really, man after man has failed. But God's purpose that man should have dominion will not fail because that man whom he has ordained, the Lord Jesus Christ, will have dominion.

And when you read a psalm like Psalm 8, you see there in the first place you see man, but looking beyond that you see the Lord Jesus Christ filling that place as it is taken up in the epistle to the Hebrews. But in Ephesians 1, we read that speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, he has put all things under his feet and given him to be the head over all to the church.

[00:28:11] God saw at the end of the six days, God saw everything that he had made and it was very good.

The Sabbath. Now, we need another hour for this but we haven't got it. God always had before him rest, the prospect of rest. You find it throughout the Old Testament. The law enshrined it. Once a week they were to keep the Sabbath. The feasts, Leviticus 23, each one is based upon a Sabbath. God always had before him this prospect of rest, work being finished, rest, enjoyment of what he had made, enjoyment of what man was to be for him. [00:29:05] And God will have his rest. You can't say really that God has his rest at the moment. The Father worketh hitherto, or to this end, and I work. God and the Son and indeed the Holy Spirit are working at the moment. But God will have his rest. It will be anticipated or foreshadowed in the millennium but really it will be realised in the new heavens, the new earth, Revelation 21 verses 1 to 7. The final rest of God is associated with that new creation. Now, I feel I've not done justice to this subject but that is all we have time for. I'm going to sit down and let Michael speak to us about a spiritual application of the passage we've just been looking at briefly.