

Through the Bible - Genesis 1:1-8

by Chuck Smith

The sermon explores the beginning of the universe and God's creative power, highlighting the importance of understanding the creation account in Genesis.

Scripture: Genesis 1:1-8, Psalm 14:1, Romans 1:21-24

Topics: "Creation", "God's Design"

Description

Chuck Smith explores the profound themes of creation in Genesis 1:1-8, emphasizing that the book of Genesis signifies the 'beginning' of the universe, life forms, and God's redemptive plan. He discusses the significance of genealogies in tracing God's redemptive story through specific families, particularly from Adam to Abraham. Smith argues against the notion of accidental creation, asserting that the universe's complexity points to an intelligent Designer, God, who created everything from nothing. He also delves into various theories of creation, including the gap theory and theistic evolution, while highlighting the importance of understanding God's original intent for creation. Ultimately, he concludes that the narrative of Genesis reveals God's purposeful design and the foundation of faith in His existence.

Transcript

Shall we now turn in our Bibles to Genesis chapter one, verse one?

The word Genesis in Hebrew means "beginning." And so, it is "the book of the beginnings", and in Genesis we find the beginning of the universe, first of all, and then the beginning of the life forms within the universe, the beginning of man, the beginning of sin and death. Then we find the beginning of God's redemptive program by the beginning of a nation.

The majority of the book of Genesis has to do with God's redemptive plan by immediately narrowing down in the genealogies to one family from which family, all the nations of the world are to be blessed. Now, at various places in the book of Genesis, we will be given a listing of the genealogies of the people that were born, and the ages that they lived and all. Let me say at the outset that God did not intend to give us a complete genealogical record of all of the families of the earth.

Though Adam and Eve had many sons and daughters, their first two sons were listed because they were significant. Other sons and daughters were not listed. But then there came a son when they were one hundred and thirty years old, whose name was Seth, and he was listed because it was from Seth that we are going to follow a line. Now Seth had many sons and daughters that are not listed, only one is listed

because that is where the line is going to fall. And so each of them, though they had many sons and daughters, they are not part of the record because they have nothing to do with the redemptive story of God.

We are coming down from Adam on a certain genealogical line to Abraham. And that's the purpose really of these genealogical studies, to show you the line from Adam on down to Abraham. But many of the sons and daughters, no record, no names, nothing, because they are not important to the story of redemption. Just those families that have to do with redemption of man are really followed. Some of them are followed just a few generations, such as Cain's, but then it's dropped because they really do not follow down into the redemptive plan of God.

So inasmuch as the word Genesis means "beginning," it is only appropriate that the book begins with the words "In the beginning God." When was that? How long ago was that? Our minds cannot even fathom or grasp. I can understand that infinity does exist, I surely can't understand infinity. I cannot understand timelessness, eternity. I cannot comprehend space. I can understand that it just goes out there, and there is no end. I can understand that time can go back, and there is no beginning. I can understand that time will go out and there is no ending. But to really comprehend it is beyond my capacity, my limited faculties.

In the beginning God (Gen 1:1)

You can't go back any further than that. Now, there are certain people that would like to just eliminate the last word. They really don't want to retain God in their conscience or in their minds because their actions are opposed to what God has declared. And thus the fool has said in his heart, "there is no God" (Psalm 14:1) and the Bible, in Romans chapter one, speaks of them as "professing themselves to be wise, they have become fools, changing the glory of an incorruptible God and fashioning their gods like after corruptible beasts and creeping things. And because they did not want to retain God in their minds, God gave them over to minds that were reprobate, void of God." (Romans 1:21-24)

But if I eliminate God I've got a big problem. In the beginning, what? In the beginning, a mass of gases floating in space. Well that's not the beginning. Where did the mass of gases come from? Where did the space come from? Now it seems that ultimately every child will ask you, "where did God come from?" And for that we have no adequate answer. He always existed. He is self-existent. He has existed from the beginning.

But when I say "in the beginning God," I recognize that the whole universe is not just here by accidental compression of gasses and explosions and cooling off and the forming of planetary systems, and a particular planet with special atmospheric conditions and hydrology kind of conditions that have made it possible to support a form of life upon it.

"It just so happened" that the earth was ninety-three million miles away from the sun. "It just so happened" that the atmosphere became a combination of nitrogen and oxygen in a "just so happened" balance of about seventy-nine percent to twenty percent with a one percent of variant gasses. "It just so happened" that around the earth there was a blanket of ozone. "It just so happened" that there was a magnetic force also that is circulating around the earth, also protecting it from the cosmic rays.

And "it just so happened" that there is about a two-third water to one-third land mass ratio. And "it just so happened" that in that water there was a, somehow, a fortuitous combination of molecules of protein that happened to come together in just the right time at the right place in the right proportions under the right

pressure and under the right heat and so forth, and spontaneously, these generated into a first cell. But what is the chance of that just so happening? And if you really go ahead to figure it out, you'll find that the chances are extremely rare indeed. In fact, the chances are so great that it couldn't have happened "just so."

Within the universe we can clearly see a design. Certainly when we get to the human body, we can see a design as we study the various aspects of the human body, the blood stream, the nervous system and all of these apparatuses that God has built in, all the checks and balances and all, they all cry out of design, the fact of design. And you cannot have design without the Designer. "In the beginning the Designer", "In the beginning God", an all-intelligent, all-wise being. And that is much easier for me to comprehend and to believe than it is for me to believe that the whole thing is just a vast series of accidental combinations, because the chance of those accidental combinations are too remote.

If you really get down to it, and you want to study just the first protein molecule, you'll find that the chance factors for just the protein molecule are so great that if they are correct, and, of course, they keep making the earth older. When I was in school, I was taught the earth was two billion years old. Now the "latest discoveries," and they're really not discoveries, they're just necessities that have arisen as they've realized, more and more, how complex life forms are, that they've realized that they could not have spontaneously generated in just six billion years, and so now they say the earth is ten billion years old.

And so, when I went to school the earth was two billion years old, now it's ten billion years old, but I really didn't go to school that long ago. But even at ten billion years, grant them ten billion years, that isn't enough time for the proper circumstances and the proper conditions and all, to accidentally put together the first protein molecule. Even if you were putting these combinations together at the rate of a billion per second, it's impossible for me to believe.

At one time I thought, "well, maybe I am an atheist" and then I just couldn't handle that. It was harder not to believe in God than it was to believe in God. If you try to deny the existence of God in the beginning, then you have no basis to start from, and it just leaves you totally without a foundation. "In the beginning God", now the Bible doesn't tell us when that was, just "the beginning."

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Gen 1:1).

The word "created" is the Hebrew word "bara" which speaks of creating something out of nothing, a capacity that only God has. Man cannot "bara". We cannot, out of nothing, create something. We create with the idea of "asa," the Hebrew word "asa," which is the assembling together of existing materials. Now the word "asa" is used in much of the creative acts here in the book of Genesis, the assembling of an order from pre-existing materials. But the existing materials from which the things were assembled were originally created, and how long ago, we don't know.

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

But 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 (Gen 1:2).

Now, it is inconsistent with the nature of God to create something without form and void, to create something wasted and desolate. And thus, many Bible scholars see a time gap between verses one and two of Genesis. A time gap between "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" and the

next verse which declares "and the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep."

In Isaiah, the forty-fifth chapter, it declares that God did not create the earth without form and void, but He created it to be inhabited. Now, there are several fields of thought concerning creation, and each one of them has it's own peculiar problems. There are arguments for and against each concept:

There is what is called "Theistic Evolution." The acknowledging that God began everything, but then set it free to evolve. He formed the first protein molecule, but then He let it free to evolve into many forms of life. Acknowledging God in the beginning, but then it is sort of a god who is removed from His creation, because now the creation develops on its own evolutionary processes, with God's hand having been removed.

There is the theory that all of this happened just about between six thousand and ten thousand years ago. And the universe, in actuality, is not any older than ten thousand years. That all of the guesstimates of man for the long period of time are just that: guesstimates of man. They are without proof, they are only theories. And that in reality, the universe is an extremely young universe, rather than an old universe as would be supposed.

That the only reason why the scientists have sought to propound an old universe theory is to harmonize with the evolutionary theory, which would demand an old universe because surely all of the life forms could not have evolved in a ten thousand year period. And that the fossils, rather than having been laid down over eons of time, were actually laid down in one great cataclysm: the flood. And that the flood more accurately accounts for the fossil record than eons of time during the evolutionary processes of the world.

It is interesting that, as far as we can ascertain, there is not any current fossils being embedded in the strata of the earth. That most of the mammals and leaves and everything else disintegrate and disorganize. That there are not fossils really being formed on the ocean floors. That there is that process of disintegration and encrustation on the ocean floor that takes place, but not the developing of fossils now. So if the ocean is not presently developing a column of fossils, than what were the circumstances that caused it to develop this long column of fossils in the past?

Of course there are trees that grow up through several of the strata's of the fossilized forms, and how could one tree grow up through several millions of years? If you look at the fossil orders and the strata's in which they exist, it's difficult to explain how that you can have trees that grow up right through several millions of years of these fossil forms. How is it that you have the footprint of a man within the footprint of a dinosaur if the dinosaurs were extinct long before man ever inhabited the earth?

There is an interesting new book called "Earth in Upheaval" by Emmanuel Vilikovski, which is a great treatise against uniformitarianism, which is the basis of the evolutionary theory. And he points out in this new book, "Earth in Upheaval", how that there is definite evidence of a great cataclysm that has taken place upon the earth, that suddenly destroyed masses of animal forms. And all kinds of bones mixed together from the various kinds of animals that do not have a natural habitat together, which are naturally enemies. But yet their bones broken and crushed, mixed together in caves in England and in other places, showing that they were thrown in there violently by force and were buried in the sand together. And that there was some great cataclysm, a testimony against uniformitarianism.

Now, basically the evolutionary thesis is that all of the processes that are going on today have been going on for millions of years, so that any of the life forms can be understood by the processes today. That there has been an uniformity to the whole cycles of life, from the time that the planet first cooled sufficiently for the water bodies to be formed, and that all things are going on in a uniform way. Well, the book "Earth in Upheaval" is just a very powerful demonstration against that particular theory. If you destroy that theory, then you've really destroyed the evolutionary theory. And that's why so many scientists, without really good reason, cry out against Emmanuel Vilikovski's works, but more and more, his works are being tested and proved to be quite accurate indeed.

There are those who say that the "days" of Genesis were geological eras. That the word day, "Yom" in the Hebrew, has a variety of meanings, which indeed is true, it is used some eleven hundred times in the Bible and it's translated fifty-one different time spans, I think, even to an indefinite period of time, "the day of the Lord", "the Yom of the Lord," an indefinite period.

So that, they say that the "days" of Genesis are indefinite periods of geological eras, but that of course, as I say, each of the theories presents it's difficulties; if they be indefinite periods of geological eras, the difficulty with that is that if God created the plant life upon the earth in the third geological era, and did not have the sun really shining in it's position on the earth until the fourth geological era, how did the plant life survive for a whole geological era without the sun? And if God created man in the sixth geological era and He rested in the seventh geological era, it means that Adam would have been kicked out of the garden, at the earliest, the eighth geological era, and thus, was much older than the nine hundred and twelve years or whatever is ascribed to Adam's life span. So that creates problems too.

Now, the idea that God created everything just about ten thousand years ago is an interesting idea and an interesting concept. Which, if you look at it, it is difficult to argue against. There are scriptures that say "for in six days God created the heaven and the earth and everything that is in them." The fact that death entered with Adam's sin, then how could the fossil record testify of death before Adam's sin? Interesting arguments.

One of the things that makes it impossible to challenge is that how old was Adam the first day that God created him? He was one day old. Well then how could he have a full set of teeth, a fully matured body? We don't know if he had a navel or not. But he was created with age-dating factors. In other words, if you would look at Adam the day he was created, you'd say "why he might be thirty-five, forty years old," because he had certain designs that would testify to more than just a one-day old. So there were already, at his day of creation, age-dating factors.

Thus, God could have created the earth and the universe with age-dating factors, with fossils already there, or with the galaxies already at a certain distance from the planet earth. So that God could have created it with age-dating factors which, if you would look at it, you'd say "well, it's ten billion years old," when in reality, it was just created just a moment ago. And God is surely great enough and big enough to do it that way if He so desired. So, that makes that particular argument a very interesting argument, and a very plausible argument.

One of the major difficulties that I see with it is that it doesn't really give us much opportunity for the understanding of angels and their creation. When did God then create the angels? Now when God came to Job and began to challenge Job in the thirty-eighth chapter of that book, God said to Job, "where were you when I laid the foundations of the world?"(Job 38:4) And God speaks in the laying of the foundations

of the world: "when the morning stars sang together" or "the angels singing together" when God laid the foundations of the world. So the angels were existing when God laid the foundations of the world.

So when were they created? And how is it that if they were created, the foundations of the world, one day, and then a few days later, Satan is in the garden tempting Eve. When did Satan fall? When did he rebel against God? And if he was such a new creature, and had been in heaven or been also in Eden, the garden of God, and had a dominion, an authority, a reign until the day that iniquity was found in him, and then was cast forth, when did this all take place, because Satan was there soon into the garden, to lead man astray? And how could it be that, being created so newly, could he have such influence over the other angelic beings that he could draw with him, in his rebellion, a third of the angels? So that presents a difficulty to me, to the idea that the earth just has existed for maybe six thousand to ten thousand years.

The, what is known as "gap theory" seems to be, to me, a very plausible explanation and it is, of course, not without its problems completely. But I think the problems are not insolvable. Looking at it from the gap theory, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. How long ago? We don't know. As God created the heavens and the earth He also created the angelic beings. He created the earth to be inhabited and so there were inhabitants upon the earth. There is even the suggestion that Satan perhaps ruled over the sphere of the earth. The "anointed cherub that covereth in the garden of God, every precious stone his covering," (Ezekiel 28:14) and so forth, that in reality it was here upon the earth that he had his dominion and his rulership, and that there were life forms upon the earth prior to the introduction of man, that there was plant life, and various life forms.

But the earth became, and this is a possible rendering of the Hebrew in verse two rather than "and the earth was." "And the earth became wasted and desolate." How it became wasted and desolate; it is suggested that perhaps at Satan's rebellion, the wrath of God was poured out and the earth was sort of put in a "deep freeze." Waters covered the face of the deep and the Spirit of God moved over the waters. That the earth was just covered with water, frozen, and set aside for a period of time; a great "ice age".

Now there is a lot of evidence to show that the earth has emerged from the last ice age, maybe less than ten thousand years ago, and for this I would suggest the book "Worlds in Collision" by Emmanuel Vilakovski. And in this particular book he points out the fact, which is interesting indeed, that there is a canyon being created by Niagara Falls. This canyon is being created at a constant rate of one foot a year. Niagara Falls coming over, a tremendous amount of water, is eroding away that shelf at the rate of one foot a year.

There is a hotel on the Canadian side that a hundred years ago was built right at the edge of the falls. Now it's a hundred feet away from the falls, as the water keeps eroding away at a fairly constant one foot per year. The canyon that has been formed by Niagara Falls is seven thousand feet long. And it would stand to reason in the earlier time of the glacial regression, that the flow of water could conceivably have been much greater at that time than it is presently, and so the erosion rate could have been greater, hardly lesser. And there are other evidences that show that the earth emerged from the last ice age maybe less than seven thousand years ago. Which, of course, would be very interesting indeed as we look at the account of Genesis, which places man upon the earth in his present form just about six thousand years ago.

Now, what kind of life forms may have existed upon the earth prior to the destruction, we don't know. God doesn't say. But man in his present form has existed on the earth for about six thousand years from the

time of Adam. And so the adherents of the gap theory see Genesis 1:1 as original creation, and the rest of Genesis as a process of re-creation, as God began to re-create the earth in order to place man in his present form upon it. And thus, the days of creation in Genesis are actually re-creative days as God is now setting the earth to place man upon that earth. It is a very interesting theory indeed, a very plausible theory indeed. It would surely answer all of the problems that are raised by the scientists who are seeking to prove that the earth has been here for several million or billion years. It surely would not be out of harmony at all with what God has said here in Genesis one.

It is interesting that when Noah came out of the ark after the flood, when the inhabitants of the earth had been destroyed by the flood, the command of God to Noah was to "replenish the earth." The same command that God gave to Adam and to Eve, "to replenish the earth," speaking of perhaps a pre-existence of forms of life. But man in his present form has only existed for about six thousand years, and there is no way that anybody can prove that that is not true.

So we look at Genesis and we see in chapter one, the beginning, God creating the heaven and the earth. In verse two, we see the earth without form and void, darkness, covered with water, and the Spirit of God brooding over the face of the deep. In verse three, the beginning of the creative acts of God, notice: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth," which would of course include the stars and all.

But now we see the first thing that God declares, because the earth was covered with darkness,

God said, Let there be light: and there was light (Gen 1:3).

Now it could be that the earth was in a dark nebulae. That there was no light coming to the earth, that in this darkness, this dark nebulae, that the earth just froze, the great ice age.

It is interesting that when we look at the creative days, those forms of life, such as plant life, that could have survived in the earth during an ice age, are spoken of as not being created, "bara" but being assembled, "asa," the assembling. But the life forms that could not survive a great ice age are spoken of as being "bara," created. There are many forms of life that could have survived an ice age and all they needed was the proper environment to spring forth again.

Out here in the desert a few years ago, they had an unusual storm and a lake that had been dried for years was suddenly filled with water, and the next thing they knew, there was a form of shrimp in the water. That somehow the processes were there, still in the earth or whatever. When the water came, that was all that was necessary to bring forth this dormant form of life. And so there are many life forms that can survive. There are some that could not. When you get to the life forms that could not survive a great ice age, then you come again to the word "bara" as God began to form or create out of nothing the life forms that could not have survived a great ice age.

"Let there be light." The removing of those dark gasses which we do not understand, but we do know exist in the universe, that seem to shut out light, the dark clouds of the universe. Covered with a dark cloud, it would have frozen and could have been out here in its orbit, just a frozen mass, but now with the removal, coming out into the light.

And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness (Gen 1:4).

Now I'm sure that as this story was told, and as Moses later recorded from the records that were existent, they didn't realize the scientific implications of "God divided the light." But now with the coming of modern

science, we have learned how to divide the light. And light can be divided into many things. In the spectrum you have a division of light, and we know that there are, on one end of the spectrum, even light that you cannot see in the ultraviolet shortwaves, on the other end of the spectrum, other light that you cannot see in the infrared division.

Darkness only testifies to the limitations of visibility. And light is actually divided into darkness, into the infrared or the ultraviolet on both ends of the spectrum, but then within the spectrum, many divisions of light. Light is divided into light, color and sound. All three are basically the same thing: vibrations at different frequencies. Slow the frequencies and the vibrations down and you pick them up audibly, increase them and you see colors. And so the division of light. Very interesting statement.

God called the light day, the darkness he called Night. And it was evening and morning, the first day (Gen 1:5).

So on the first day, if you accept the "re-creation" process, the earth was brought out of the darkness of the gasses and, still shrouded with a fog, you could distinguish between the evening and the morning, or the night and the day.

And God said, Let there be a firmament (Gen 1:6)

The word firmament in the Hebrew is "rocweah" which means a limitless expanse. Now describe for me space. It's a limitless expanse. "Let there be a space," God said,

in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made this firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day (Gen 1:6-8).

So, the creation of the atmosphere around the earth, but above the atmosphere God put a great blanket of water, suspended the water in the atmosphere above the earth. Now that water suspended in the atmosphere above the earth would have done a tremendous thing as far as the climate of the earth is concerned. It would have caused a mild, equal kind of climate around the entire earth. It would have meant that you would not have violent storms. It would have meant that you would have had a balmy climate everywhere, even up in the North Pole regions.

It would surely explain the discovery of the mammoths in Siberia encased in ice that were frozen intact at some time in the history, who were living in a tropical jungle, because when they cut them open they found tropical vegetation in their digestive tracts. It would surely account for the forest that one time existed at the South Pole because we have found the charcoal deposits under two hundred feet of ice. This blanket of water around the earth would probably also have protected the earth from many more of the cosmic radiations that are constantly bombarding the earth.

Also, the earth would have been protected by the greater magnetic force that existed at that time that surrounds the earth. The earth is surrounded by a magnetic field. One hundred and thirty-six years ago, a Dutch scientist first measured this magnetic field. Each year since, we have been measuring the magnetic field around the earth, and we find that the magnetic field is diminishing at a constant rate. In fact, this is the longest age-dating factor that we have as far as the earth is concerned. We don't have anything that we've been able to observe over one hundred and thirty-five years. But this magnetic field around the

earth is something that they've been measuring for one hundred and thirty-five years, and we find that it is decreasing at a constant rate.

Now this magnetic field around the earth is very important to life on the earth. It seems that it moves in a, sort of, an "eight," coming through the heart or the center of the earth, the equator and going around the poles. This magnetic field just dashes down through the equator, comes up and surrounds around the pole back and around. And it seems to have an interesting kind of an effect of shielding off or bouncing off, much of the cosmic radiation is bounced off of this magnetic field that surrounds the earth. It's sort of a blanket of protection from cosmic radiation.

We know also that there is the ozone blanket. God, talking to Job about the creating of the earth, said he made a blanket around it. He made a moisture blanket, He made an electromagnetic field blanket, He also made an ozone blanket around the earth to make the earth inhabitable by man, by shielding off these cosmic rays that are constantly bombarding. These little rays that go shooting -- what do they call them? Neutrinos or something?

They go right through the earth. You can't really shield yourself; they come right through and hit you from your feet up as they're coming from the other side. And they go right through your body, but when they go through your body, they have an effect of causing a cellular breakdown, so that your cells begin a mutation form, an aging process somehow gets involved with the cosmic rays breaking down the cells and their ability to reproduce themselves sufficiently. And thus the aging process, they really believe, is being caused by the fact that we are being bombarded by these cosmic rays.

Now, with the water blanket around the earth giving greater protection, and with this electromagnetic field being at a greater intensity, bouncing off, it would stand to reason that at the time of Adam there was much less cosmic radiation coming through to the earth, so than man could conceivably live much longer periods of time. In fact, as we study the human body and the ability of the cell to reproduce itself, aging is some kind of a weirdness in nature. The breakdown of the cell is an abnormality that has somehow crept in.

The body is so designed, if it weren't for this beginning of the mutants within the cells, that you could just go on living forever. Your body would keep renewing itself, the cells would just keep reproducing themselves and you could just go on and on and on living in this body. But somewhere along the line, there came a stray little neutrino or whatever, an introduction into the body of that which began to cause the aging processes.

Now, prior to the flood, and at the time of the flood this water blanket that surrounded the atmosphere was removed. And at the removal of this water blanket, there was probably the removal of the protection, and thus after the flood, the lifespan dropped dramatically, from an average of around nine hundred years down to an average of maybe one hundred years. Just almost overnight, within one generation, the tremendous longevity was reduced because suddenly the protective blanket was taken away.

But God, here in the second day of creation, created this protective blanket, this water, suspended it in the atmosphere above the earth. And He separated the water in the atmosphere from the water, and the firmament He called heaven. And the gathering together of the water He called seas. Now it is interesting that He called it "seas" plural, because at the time of the writing of Genesis all they knew was one sea, the Mediterranean Sea, really. Why "seas" plural? Because God knew that there were many bodies of waters, different oceans and seas, and so the plural.

Who wrote Genesis? Well, it is commonly accepted that Moses was the author, but certainly Moses had to get his material from somewhere. It is conceivable that Adam himself wrote the first record.

This evening, I was just fooling around with some of the ages here in chapter five, and I came up with an interesting little fact, and that is that Lamech, the father of Noah -- Adam was still alive when Noah's father was born, and they lived contemporary for many years. So it is very possible that Noah's father heard directly from Adam himself about the garden of Eden, and about their being put out of the garden and the angels that was put there to protect and all. And Lamech told his son Noah. Lamech heard it directly from Adam. And Lamech told Noah. And Noah told his sons Ham, Shem and Japheth. And Shem was living at the time that Abraham was born. So you really don't have the story passing through too many hands to get it down even as far as Abraham.

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