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## CHAPTER 1

# IN THE BEGINNING, GOD

Read Genesis 1:1

**G**enesis is a Greek word. It means *beginnings*. Although the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, there was a Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint, translated about 280 to 200 BC. In this work, the first book is called Genesis.

As a Greek word, elements of Genesis appear in English words, especially technical words. Thus, *genetics* is a study of species' origins. We also see the word in such English words as *generation*, and *genealogy*.

Many people will start to read the Bible from Genesis, because it is the first book. If we made no consideration of any studies outside the Bible, we would expect Genesis to lay down the foundations for beliefs, history, and doctrine in the rest of the Bible. It is my contention that it is impossible to understand the rest of the Bible while ignoring this foundational book.

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Yet there are many scholars today who attempt to explain away the Book of Genesis. It is described by many as a myth, as legend, as moral teaching, as allegory, or as literature or poetry. Indeed, it is probably not an exaggeration to say that most evangelical scholars have given up on a literal, six 24-hour period creation of the world less than ten thousand years ago, in favor of theories that attempt to harmonize millions of years into the Genesis account. It will be one of the purposes of this study to challenge such aberrations of biblical interpretation.

I sometimes spend time in Christian bookshops, thumbing through the initial few pages of books, to see what position on the creation account is taken by authors. So that there is no confusion, let me set out my belief on this matter right now. This might not be the scholarly way of treating an argument. Some of you want me to examine all sides of the argument first, then tentatively come down off the fence. I believe that the position I take is inherently sound and have not been afraid to argue the issues elsewhere in this study. But for now, let's make a statement, so that those of you scanning the first couple of pages can find what you want to see.

I believe the entire Bible to be the Word of God, authoritative, sufficient, complete, and inerrant. In this, I include the Book of Genesis. I take the Bible at face value. Since the Bible says that God created the world in just six days and rested on the seventh, that is what I believe. I accept that these days were literally 24-hour periods of time. I believe that there are few, if any, gaps in the genealogies — I can accept none in the genealogies of Genesis 5 or 1 Chronicles 1. Thus, I believe the world to be *young*, compared to the millions and billions of years usually quoted. I take the earth to be about 6,000 years old.

Some wish to stretch the age to about ten thousand years, but I still think 6,000 is far more likely. Despite describing this as a *young-earth* position, I personally think that 6,000 years is a very long time and adequately explains verses in the Bible which refer to the earth as ancient. Six thousand years is pretty ancient to me. I do not accept pseudo-creationist

theories, therefore, such as progressive creationism, day-age theory, the gap theory, theistic evolution, or any other idea that waters down a belief in the literal, historical truth of Genesis.

There! I've said it all. I hope you will accept that these ideas are not some sort of blind faith. I will return to every one of those statements and justify them, biblically, scientifically, or both.

The question in a study such as this is always, "Where shall we start our study?" I have been speaking and writing on creationism for well over 20 years. I used to start by tackling the science, showing that evolution is wrong. More recently, I have come to the view that the main problem in today's church is a lack of belief in the Bible itself, so I now tend to start from the Bible's account and build the argument from there. That is why I have written this book in biblical order, examining Genesis chapters 1 to 11, passage by passage.

But how does Genesis itself begin the account? "In the beginning, God. . . ." This powerful set of four words tells us:

- God is central to everything.
- God was before everything.
- Everything had a beginning.
- God was there before that beginning.
- God is the key subject matter of the universe.

We can say nothing about anything in the Bible without reference to God. But this phrase goes further. It declares that we can say nothing about anything, anywhere without reference to God.

Thomas Aquinas argued a two-story model of the universe. This separation can be more fully expressed in the following example, taken from a work by F.A. Schaeffer.<sup>1</sup>

<b><u>Grace</u></b> <b>Nature</b>	
<b>Grace, the higher</b>	<i>God the Creator</i> ; heaven and heavenly things; the unseen and its influence on the earth; <i>unity</i> , or universals or absolutes which give existence and morals meaning
<b>Nature, the lower</b>	<i>The created</i> ; earth and earthly things; the visible and what happens normally in the cause-and-effect universe; what man as man does on the earth; <i>diversity</i> , or individual things, the particulars, or the individual acts of man

It is no exaggeration to say that Aquinas's model of the universe has had a profound and overwhelming influence on Western thought, right up to the present day. The result of this is to divorce God from His creation. It relegates all Western scientific thought to the lower story. It is possible that some academics will allow us the study of the spiritual, but these studies are confined to the upper story, and are seen to have no relevance to the world in which we live.

If modern scientific thinking allows for a god at all, it is a lower-story god. C.S. Lewis describes this type of god — and you thought he only wrote books about lions, witches, and wardrobes! Lewis describes the difference between Nature and Supernature in his book, *Miracles*, in which he describes a type of neo-Aquinianism.

Naturalism, without ceasing to be itself, could admit a certain kind of God. The great interlocking event called Nature might be

such as to produce at some stage a great cosmic consciousness, an indwelling “God” arising from the whole process as human mind arises (according to the Naturalists) from human organisms. A Naturalist would not object to that sort of God. The reason is this. Such a God would not stand outside Nature or the total system, would not be existing “on his own.”<sup>2</sup>

This type of god would be acceptable to physicists, like Frank Tipler. Tipler developed the so-called *anthropic principle*, in which he describes how he believes the universe could only have evolved along a path, which leads to the way it is now. Any other outcome would have been impossible. Although this is not a philosophy that I can embrace, convinced as I am in the truth of God’s Word, it is interesting that this new cosmology puts man back at the center of the universe, from which he was so rudely removed. Tipler argues that there must be a convergence point for all space, time, and mass, which he calls the *omega point*. This omega point, once conceived in this way, then takes on the attributes of God. He says, “The logically necessary histories collectively comprising the whole of reality can be regarded as ‘emanating’ from the Omega Point in his/her transcendence.”<sup>3</sup>

The Bible sets itself against the centuries of Aquinian teaching in these first four powerful words, “In the beginning, God. . . .” The Bible knows nothing of a two-story separation. Such a model is found nowhere in Scripture; it is rather the application of Greek thought to theology which has allowed such thinking to predominate.

There are too many pastors and teachers today who tell us that we just need to trust in Jesus — it doesn’t matter what we believe about Genesis. But the truth of the Bible stands or falls on these first four words. Either we believe God was there in the beginning, or we don’t. The early chapters of Genesis touch on real science. There are those today who believe that science has disproved the Bible. That is because of modern theories which are opposed to what the beginning of the Bible says. But

the Bible doesn't start to argue back. It is rightly said that the Bible is not a scientific textbook. After all, textbooks are re-written frequently. The Bible remains the same, because it is God's Word to the world. The Bible is not meant to be the book that argues for the existence of God — that's our job. The Bible is rather the book through which we observe and interpret the world. We are meant to start from the Bible. Once we make this start, we observe that our scientific facts, as we get to learn them, fall into place.

After all, what is the Bible's great statement about the existence, or otherwise, of God?

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have done abominable works. There is none who does good (Ps. 14:1).

The word translated as "fool" does not carry quite the same meaning as the English. It refers to someone who is *morally* deficient, as noted by the phrase, "They are corrupt." There is, therefore, a *moral* wisdom about believing in God.

That is why the Bible challenges us to believe in God in its first four words. At stake here is our entire belief system. If we don't believe in the truth of the Book of Genesis, then there is no basis for our belief in the *morality* taught by the Bible. The Ten Commandments become a waste of time, as does our belief in the Resurrection. And without our belief in the Resurrection, then, in Paul's words, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable" (1 Cor. 15:19).

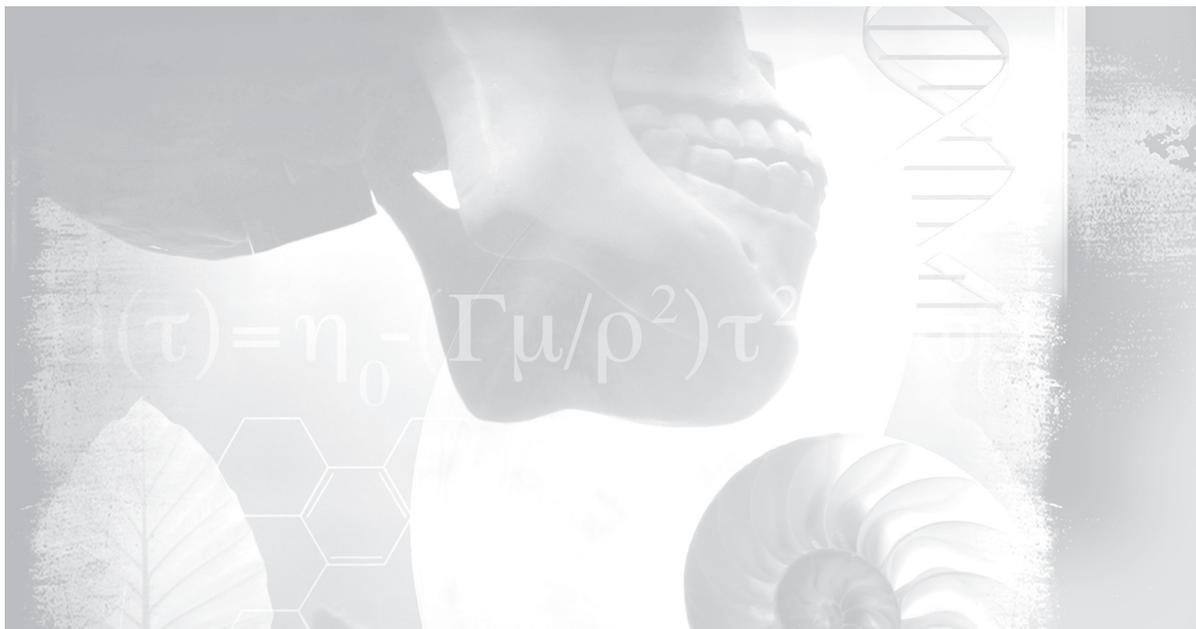
These four words — "In the beginning, God" — demonstrate to us the fact of God's existence and the futility of believing otherwise. Moreover, they state that God was there "in the beginning," so He was there before the creation of the world. This takes Him outside nature, and makes Him transcendent, as well as immortal. The four words tell us that everything else, other than God, had a beginning and that God

was the Creator of everything else. There was thus a beginning to time itself.

It is difficult to understand a world without time, but clever physicists like Stephen Hawking have tried to get us to do so, so there is no reason for Christians to doubt the beginning of time. However, our beginning is not the beginning of the new physics, as espoused by Hawking and others. They believe that the universe began in a big bang. Thus, the universe was once concentrated into one infinitesimally small dot that exploded. Much thought has gone into the mechanism of what matter might be like in such a big bang. Hawking is well known for his “popular” style-book, *A Brief History of Time*, which many have on their bookshelves, but which few have read or even understood. This is a shame, because God wants us to understand the beginning easily. There was no big bang, and no complex equations. What we need to know is, “In the beginning, God. . . .” This is at once a simple and yet profound statement. It is the statement through which the rest of Scripture is to be interpreted.

#### Endnotes

1. F.A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1976), p. 55.
2. C.S. Lewis, *Miracles* (New York: Macmillan Collins, 1947), p. 12.
3. F.J. Tipler, *The Physics of Immortality* (New York: Macmillan, 1994), p. 264.



## CHAPTER 2

# WITHOUT FORM AND VOID

Read Genesis 1:2

*Billions of years ago, the universe came into existence in a small point, as a massive primordial atom. This “exploded” and expanded over billions of years, to form the universe we now have.*

**T**his is the popular view of how the universe came to be. Readers might recognize this as the big-bang hypothesis, though, to be fair, it is actually a popularization of the big-bang hypothesis, and not quite the same as that believed by modern cosmologists.

The amazing fact is that this popularized, somewhat inaccurate view of how the universe came to be is believed by a majority of Christians today, including those who would claim to be Bible-believing evangelical Christians. There seems today to be a fear of believing what

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the Bible actually says in Genesis. This is presumably a fear of being made to look ridiculous by people in the world outside our churches. However, the fact that we are addressing this issue at all must be proof that we believe our faith to be a *reasonable* faith, capable of standing up to rigorous scrutiny. The God who made the universe and caused its scientific laws to happen is not suddenly going to be fooled by a scientific law that He hadn't considered. If we believe Genesis to be true, then we can expect science to confirm this, so long as science is sufficiently up to date.

Let us be clear on this last point. We believe the Bible because it is the Word of God. We don't believe it merely because of being convinced by the science. Nor do we disbelieve it if some science seems to be opposed to the Bible. Time and again it has been shown that when better science is available, this verifies God's Word. God's Word is the standard by which we judge all other academic pursuits. We can confidently use the Bible in this way, knowing that it will not let us down.

A scientist convinced by the progressive creationist view that God created progressively over millions of years said to me that it would have taken millions of years for the universe to cool down enough for God to make the earth. But that view is rather putting the cart before the horse. It presupposes that the universe was created in big-bang-like conditions, thus needing to cool down.

The Bible says, "The earth was without form, and void" (Gen. 1:2). This suggests that the material required to produce the earth had been created, but God had not yet put any form to it. This would suggest that the universe was made at zero energy and would not require cooling. The opposite would seem to be true. This matter requires some form of warming up. There needs to be an energy input. That energy input seems to be provided by the second half of verse 2: "And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."

Before we leave this verse, we should tackle the issue of God making the world without form and void. There are many Christians,

concerned by the apparent scientific evidence for millions of years, who propose that there must be a gap of millions of years between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. To such Christians, verse 2 should be translated, “The earth *became* without form, and void.” This is the well-known gap theory.

Gap theorists suggest that during the millions of years between these two verses, dinosaurs and other extinct creatures could have existed. Some even propose a race of pre-Adamic hominids, without souls, in this era. During this era, Lucifer was to be in control. The story goes that Lucifer’s rebellion, as described in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, could have happened in this period. God then destroyed this ancient world, in a great Flood — often referred to as “Lucifer’s flood” — (hence the “waters” and “the deep” of Genesis 1), which would account for much of the fossil record. God then had to re-create the earth, and that is what Genesis 1 is all about. In support of this theory, gap theorists quote Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, as stated. They also quote God being described as “the Ancient of Days,” for example in Daniel 7:9. Also, they quote Genesis 1:28, where God tells man to “fill the earth” — so they argue that the earth had to be re-populated — in the Authorized Version, this reads “replenish the earth.”

A plain reading of Genesis 1 does not seem to suggest the gap theory. The prime motivator for believing the gap theory is the belief in millions of years due to the geologic layers. Gap theorists primarily reject that the flood of Noah made the geologic layers, for the most part. For a full and detailed criticism of all aspects of the gap theory, I recommend you look at Fields’ masterly work on the subject.<sup>1</sup> For now, I would like to answer briefly the points made in the paragraph above.

When the AV was translated, the word *replenish* meant only to fill, not to fill again. That is why every English translation other than the AV uses “fill the earth” for Genesis 1:28, so that removes its use. Also, an argument that God is the Ancient of Days and so disproves young earth creationism is not valid. The phrase “young-earth creationism” is only

referring to a comparison with the millions of years that evolutionists want. In fact, 6,000 years seems pretty ancient to me, and God was there before that anyway.

As for Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 — whether these passages refer to the fall of Lucifer is open to debate. But one thing is certain: that event could not have happened prior to day 6 of creation, because “God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good” (Gen. 1:31). How could everything that God made have been very good if Satan had already become evil? This would make rebellion against God (sin) and evil “very good.” This is also one of the principal reasons for not accepting Lucifer’s flood. How could the earth have been very good if beneath Adam’s feet were the results of death and disease — it is also illogical, as death entered the world as a result of Adam’s sin! Moreover, as Ken Ham has said, why do we need a Flood that the Bible doesn’t talk about to explain the fossil record, when a Flood that the Bible **does** talk about can better explain it.

And darkness was on the face of the deep (Gen. 1:2).

I went to Moldova recently. A team from my church spent a week working with a large Pentecostal church in the north of Moldova. While we were there, another member of the church was driving a truck across Europe packed with humanitarian aid. The story of this truck journey and our time in Moldova is worth another book in its own right. On the night that the truck was to arrive, we were out on the streets of the village, scanning the horizon for signs of the truck. It was 7:00 p.m., but it was pitch black. The village had no streetlights. In the UK, we are so used to light pollution in our towns and cities that we forget what the absence of light really means.

In the beginning was complete darkness. God does not need light, because He is light. John’s Gospel says of Jesus, “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the

darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1:4–5). When the New Jerusalem comes, we read, “The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light” (Rev. 21:23). For that reason, some passages in the Bible refer to God as dwelling in darkness.

This is the darkness experienced by Abraham, as he came into the near presence of God. “Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him” (Gen. 15:12). Some versions translate this as thick darkness. It is a darkness that can be *felt*. The word *horror* is probably the best word, but it doesn’t carry quite the meaning of a Gothic horror movie. The NIV translates the phrase as “a thick and dreadful darkness.” The presence of God is no laughing matter. Even for us who are saved, and know that He loves us as our Father, it is still an awesome matter to be in the presence of God.

This is the same darkness experienced in Egypt at the time of the Exodus. “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt’ ” (Exod. 10:21).

This dreadful darkness, then, is indicative of the close presence of God. Someone has said that it is not an evil darkness, rather it is the darkness experienced when a bright light is shone into your eyes. And this darkness was on the face of the deep. Whatever the material God was using to fashion the universe, it was clearly deep. Dr. Russell Humphreys has suggested that “the deep” was a large sphere of water, at least two light years in diameter.<sup>2</sup> Humphreys has developed a cosmology that fits with current cosmological mathematics as well as a six-day creation, but it will be more appropriate to explain this when we reach day 4. Suffice to say that his cosmology influences much of what I have to say on these early verses. Further evidence of the original matter being water, is in the third phrase of the verse:

And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters (Gen. 1:2).

We have seen above that the *waters* cannot refer to the remnants of a pre-Adamic flood, so it would appear to be referring to the building material of the universe. What is interesting to note at this point is that the Spirit of God was hovering. God is the source of energy as well as matter. This we must expect, as we are now used to the equation linking mass and energy, even if it is not always fully understood.

#### Endnotes

1. W.W. Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled, A Critique of the Gap Theory* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2005).
2. D.R. Humphreys, *Starlight and Time — Solving the Puzzle of Distant Starlight in a Young Universe* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1994), p. 32.