

Foundations
#2 in a Series on The Story: From Creation to Christ
Faith Community Church – January 13, 2008

Introduction:

1. Where are you from? How many of you were:
 - a. Born here in the United States
 - b. Born in South America
 - c. Born in Europe
 - d. Born in Asia
 - e. Born in Africa
 - f. Born in New Jersey
 - g. Have parents who were born in countries other than the US?
 - h. Have grandparents who were born in countries other than the US?
2. For how many of you is ethnicity still important in your family, in the sense that it is reflected in your cooking, family traditions, etc?
3. Genesis 1 and 2 is important for many reasons, but one reason is that it tells us where we come from.
4. Read Genesis 1 & 2

What Are Genesis 1 & 2?

Few passages of the Bible are as controversial as these first two chapters. How should we understand them? Let me share a few things that will help us as we read.

1. Genesis 1 & 2 is not intended to be a scientifically detailed report of creation.
2. At the same time, these chapters are not a fable. They are not an attempt to provide a religious twist on the question of origin. Genesis 1 & 2 raise questions, but they are questions that are apparently beyond the scope of the purpose of the author.
3. What *was* the purpose of the author? It helps to realize that Moses most likely wrote Genesis sometime between the time the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea and the time they entered Canaan. Moses' purpose is not to prove that there is a God. The people of Israel knew that from what they had seen with their own eyes. What they needed to see was the continuity of God's work in his people, beginning with creation itself. The God who made the universe had called them out of all the nations of the earth to be his people.

What Do Genesis 1 & 2 Teach Us?

That is why these chapters are not a lesson in science. Genesis 1 & 2 provides us with a foundational understanding of life. I want us to see five essential facts that these chapters present to us:

1. First, we see that God created actively, not passively.

- a. One of the ways that religion has attempted to co-exist with scientific theory is to suggest that while life evolved, there was a supreme being who started the ball rolling and then let things take their natural course.
 - b. Genesis affirms the opposite. When we read these chapters we see God being intimately involved in the details, supervising and approving each phase.
 - c. Scripture goes on to tell us that rather than being indifferent and hands-off, God remains active – not passive – in his creation, including the course of human history, moving history toward its predetermined conclusion, a conclusion that includes your life and mine. Matthew 25:34, Romans 8:28ff, Ephesians 1:4, 1 Peter 1:20, Revelation 13:8 – all tell us that God has a plan for humanity that has been in place since pre-history.
2. Second, we see that God created by his powerful word.
 - a. Ten times the phrase “and God said” (or something similar) can be found in these chapters. And the speaking of God results in something being created.
 - b. That is why David writes what he does in Psalm 33:6-9.
 - c. Genesis 1 & 2 establish the important truth that God communicates, that he speaks, and that therefore we need to be listening.
 3. Third, we see that God created men and women in his image (1:27-28).
 - a. What is “the image of God?”
 - b. One author says this: “Man has been made like God in a way that the rest of creation has not.”¹
 - c. We have personality, volition, have a spirit or soul, and were made to rule over creation. These and other things are part of what it means to be created in God’s image.
 - d. This has some profound implications on our view of life. For example:
 - i. Save the dolphins all you like, but only men and women (born and unborn) are made in God’s image. Man’s wellbeing transcends the well-being of any other part of God’s creation.
 - ii. There is no basis for asserting the superiority or inferiority of any gender, race or nationality, since God created *mankind* in His image.
 - iii. The fact that God created us in his image assumes a special accountability to God. See Mark 12:13ff.
 4. In addition, by looking at these chapters, we see that creation demonstrates God’s loving care.
 - a. Generally speaking, days 1-3 prepare a world suited for the creatures that will populate it and who are created in days 4-6.
 - b. Specifically, we see God’s loving provision for humanity in two ways:
 - i. A garden that met their physical and occupational needs (cp. 1: 28-30; 2:5-17).
 - ii. A companion specifically suited to each gender’s unique needs (2:18-23).

¹ New International Bible Dictionary (Accordance Bible Software)

5. Finally, in creation God establishes the family as the foundation of human society.
 - a. We see that marriage is a sacred relationship, the importance of which transcends any other human relationship.
 - b. We also see that same sex-marriage does not fulfill God's creative design. That is simple biology. Ladies and gentlemen, the plumbing is different for a reason.

Jesus in Genesis 1 & 2: Applying This Passage to Our Lives

Last week we read how Jesus was walking on the road between Jerusalem and Emmaus and fell in with two disciples who did not recognize him. And after listening to their discouragement over his death, Luke tells us (24:27) "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

The New Testament actually tells us a lot about Jesus in relation to creation. It teaches us that God created the world through Christ, speaks to us through Christ, and upholds this universe through Christ. It shows us that God, who made us in his image, would take on "our image" to restore in Christ what sin would ruin (John 1:1-18; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-3).

Moses wants his readers to say no to the false gods of other culture and to follow and obey God the creator. And we follow God best when we follow Christ, who made us, cares for us, speaks to us, provides for us and saves us.