

Genesis. 1:- The Creation – chapters 1 -2

These selections from the Book of Genesis all have something to say about the reality of the human condition. The Westminster Catechism asks “What is the chief end of man?”. Answer :- “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever.” In the Book of Genesis we read of the beginning of all things. The Lord God, present from all eternity, from before time, speaks into nothingness and creates all things.

It would be good if you could read both chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis. Chapter 1 gives an overview of the creation of the heavens and the earth. Chapter 2 concentrates on the creation of mankind and the beginning of inter-human relationships.

Chapter 1, verses 1 -2:- “*In the beginning God . . .*” is a wonderful link to our last study from the Book of Revelation. As we saw then, the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God was there and active in the creation of all things. Read again John chapter 1, verses 1 – 5. When God the Father spoke, He was speaking in and through the Son, the living Word of God. In Genesis chapter 1 we read of all three persons of the Godhead being active in creation. In verse 2 we have the picture of the Spirit of God hovering (brooding like a devoted mother bird ?) over the darkness and chaos of the newborn world.

Verses 3 – 5:- The order of creation begins with the making of light and the separation of light from darkness. Here in Genesis 1 there is the emphasis over and over again that everything that God made was good.

Verses 6 – 20:- Gives the preparation of planet earth for living creatures. Water is brought under control (verses 6 – 9) Dry land appears, also vegetation including “fruit trees”, food for the yet to be created “living creatures” and for mankind.

Verses 21 – 25:- When planet earth was ready for habitation, God spoke into life creatures of the sea and air. Because these were sentient beings, we read for the first time of God pronouncing a blessing on them. They were to “*Be fruitful and multiply . . .*” “*God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds*”. As someone who has been involved in farming, I know that inter-breeding between “kinds” is very restricted. When it does take place the offspring are usually sterile e.g. male donkey x female horse = mule which is sterile. Left to nature, even in a fallen world (wait for next week!) God given breeding traits are inbuilt within species.

Verses 26 – 31:- The supreme moment of creation arrived as God created man. The making of man was to be of a different order to what had gone before. For the first time God announces His intention and the plural word for ‘God’ is used. “*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;*”. As we reflect on the order of creation it is worth reading Psalm 8. The image and likeness of the human race to God the Father is supremely seen in our Lord Jesus Christ; see John chapter 14 verses 8 – 11 and Hebrews chapter 1, verses 1 – 4. Human beings, even in those we regard as being wicked, are in some way made in the image and likeness of God Himself. In his God-likeness mankind was given authority over all living things. Along with all other living beings he was given all plants and fruit as food. Here in the perfect creation of God there was no killing necessary! “*And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.*”

Chapter 2, verses 1 – 3:- Give a reason for the Sabbath rest as in the fourth Commandment.

Verses 4 – 6:- are a brief introduction to the rest of the chapter which concentrates on the creation of mankind. It reads as though man would be an essential part of God’s plan for the earth. Things were not complete because “*there was no man to till the ground*”

Verse 7:- Notice that the name of God is used – “*the Lord God*”. “The Lord” is the title “Yahweh” = Jehovah and it comes for the first time in this chapter and is intimately connected with the creation of humankind. The other living beings in chapter 1 were spoken into existence. Man is formed by the Creator God himself and brought to life by the very breath of God. Man’s body was formed from the dust of the earth = earthly, while his spirit came from the very breath of the Lord God himself = heavenly. The living being is literally a creature of two worlds. Both earth and heaven can claim him!

Verses 8 – 14:- The Garden in Eden was part of the Lord God’s special creation. Notice that the “*Tree of Life*” is described as being “*in the midst of the Garden*” along with “*the Tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil*”. Verse 9.

Verses 15 – 17:- The man was placed by the Lord God in the Garden of Eden “*to till it and keep it*”. Along with his authority, man was given a responsibility. For food he was given the fruit of any tree with the exception of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. At that point of creation there would be no evil present because “*God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.*” Chapter 1, verse 31.

Verses 18 – 20:- Notice that man begins to assume his responsibility for the creation. He was alone and needing companionship. In the creation of the animals the Lord God brings them to the man “*to see what he would call them;*”. In naming the animals man was in fact taking responsibility for them as we do at present when we name our pets.

Verses 21 – 25:- Because man was endued with the breath of the Lord God and a “spiritual being”, the animals could not be fit helpers to work alongside him. In creating a helper, the Lord God formed her out of man himself. An intimate part of man’s being became his partner in life. They were part of one another and belonged together. See Mark chapter 10, verses 2 – 9.