**IN THE BEGINNING**

September 10, 2017

Genesis 1:1-25

Key Verse 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Genesis is the first of the 66 books of the Bible. The word “Genesis” comes from the first word in the Hebrew Bible, “In the beginning...” So Genesis is a book of beginnings. It begins with the creation of the heavens and the earth. We find here the beginnings of the world, of all material things, of life, man, sin, salvation and faith. Here we also find the beginnings of death, curse, and judgment; the beginnings of the gospel, blessing and redemptive history. There are also the beginnings of culture, language and nations. Through the study of Genesis we can lay foundations for the study and understanding of the whole Bible. Jesus quotes Genesis, and he teaches us that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is also the God of Jesus Christ. God Almighty, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the Creator of all things. If we want to know God who created us, then we must study the Bible; and we must study Genesis. As we study this book, we want to meet and come to know the God of Genesis. So we must approach the study of Genesis with humble, learning minds and prayerful hearts.

Look at verse 1. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” This one verse is the foundation of the whole Bible. This one verse is the foundation of all Christian faith. Believe these words and you can believe all that follows in the Bible. The Bible never tries to prove the existence of God. The Bible assumes the existence of God who created all things. The Bible has a special name for those who choose to deny the existence of God. That name is fool (Ps 14:1). Just as the Bible begins with God, so he should be the first in our lives.

**First**, Our God is the Almighty Creator God. The Hebrew word of “God” in chapter 1 is “Elohim.” Elohim means all-powerful, Almighty One. It was by his almighty power that God created the heavens and the earth. Look at verse 3. God said, “Let there be light.” And light blazed out to fill the darkness. He said, “Sun, come into being.” (14) And the great, burning sun rose in the heavens. He said, “Sea, come into being.” And the seas became so full of fish that there were enough to be caught and eaten through eternity--with some left over (20). Men are so weak that they cannot begin to understand the greatness of God’s power. If the sun is a little too warm, we say, “It’s too hot.” If the weather gets cold, we shiver. If even small waves roll, we get sea-sick. We cannot even count the stars in the sky, so how can we comprehend the greatness of God?

Once God rebuked Abraham for his complacency saying, “I am God Almighty.” (Ge 17:1) God introduced himself to Moses as the “I Am Who I Am.” (Ex 3:14) God made the heavens and the earth by his almighty power and matchless wisdom. When we look at the beauty and harmony of the universe, and see how everything works according to unseen natural laws, we cannot deny God’s divine nature and eternal power. For example, the earth rotates once a day at 400 m/sec. The earth revolves around the sun at 25 km/sec for 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 48 seconds. It is simply amazing how precise it is, considering the size of the earth. So Paul wrote, “for since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made...” (Ro 1:20) Scientists who think honestly and make honest confessions about origins will tell you that there must be God who created this universe. Even Einstein said that.

There are two kinds of worldviews: God created this world, and there is no God. If we do not accept that God created this world, what is the alternative? From the ancient naturalistic philosophers to the modern atheistic existentialists, how have atheists viewed the world? And what are the problems of their world view? They have seen water or fire or air as the first cause or the origin of everything. Evolutionists theorize that man came from an amoeba. There are several problems that arise from this materialistic viewpoint. In the first place, there is the problem of origin. If we say that the world originated with fire or water or “something” or with an amoeba, we cannot find any answer to the basic question of the first cause. If men came from an amoeba, then where did the amoeba come from? Or where did the fire come from? They are totally unable to answer the question of the first cause, the origin. So those who take the atheistic position avoid the question of the problem of the first cause, the origin, and talk only about hypothetical process. They only succeed in confusing people.

That infamous organization called PETA, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, said that killing chickens is equal to the Holocaust perpetrated by the Nazis on the Jews. This kind of idiocy comes because these people really do believe that man is simply the end of an evolutionary series of chance occurrences that has no purpose and has no destiny and is not made in the image of God. He is not bearing any dignity beyond any other along the line in that evolutionary process. If evolution is true, you cannot argue with them; we are just animals; their argument may be valid. If man’s existence is only an accident, his life can have no meaning. If life has no meaning, and the grave is its goal, then we can only say, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” Such a life is not only tragic, but the influence of such a life on the world is harmful beyond description.

**Second**, The Creator God is the Sovereign Lord. In Genesis chapter 1 the word “God” is repeated 30 times. In each case, God is the subject of the sentence. This means that God is the central figure in creation. He is the Lord of creation, the Sovereign of all creation. He is the Author of life and Ruler of creation. In a word, he is the Creator. Practically speaking, this means that God is the Lord of my life, the Lord of my family and the Lord of my nation. God is the author of my life. He gave me this life as his most precious gift. It is to be lived during the time he has appointed. It is very important to be a good steward of my life. This means that we have to maintain our body and mind to be healthy with good diet and exercise so that God can use us for his glory at any time. So don’t eat junk food! Many people abuse their lives as if they are the owner of their lives. They are sinning greatly against God. He also established my family. The divorce problem is a very serious problem in our times. Children from broken homes live in a dark world. But when God is Lord of our families, there will be no divorce problem.

The meaning of a person’s existence must be absolute. Absoluteness comes only from God. For example, if anyone says, “I was born by my parents’ birth control mistake,” then his life can be nothing but an accident and a joke. No one can find his absolute meaning in life without the Creator God. And there is a danger for anyone to fall into fatalism, questioning, “Why was I born? Why, why?” Many people attempt to overcome fatalism by becoming men of fame and wealth. But it does not work that way. There are many who have committed suicide among Nobel Prize winners such as Ernest Hemingway (USA, 1954), and many others. But when we believe that God created the heavens and the earth and everything in them, we can say proudly, “I am a child of God. God created me according to his absolute purpose. I came from God and I go back to God (Jn 14:1-4). During my lifetime, I enjoy God and do the work of God and do something good to others.”

God made man according to his absolute purpose. For example, look at a watch. The watch was made by someone for a purpose. As long as the watch is used for the purpose for which it was made, it has meaning. Likewise, God made mankind with a clear purpose of life. God made mankind with a clear meaning of life. The words, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” tell us that because God created the world, all the people and things in the world have a necessary existence. Nothing is here by accident or chance. Every person’s life has meaning in God. When we know that we are the object of God’s glory and that we work for God’s glory, then whatever we do is meaningful, useful and indispensable. Whatever we do, we can say with conviction, “I do this for the glory of God.” Whatever sacrifice we make, we can say confidently, “I do this for the honor of God.”

**Third**, our God is a personal God. God created the world by the word of his mouth. He wants to communicate with his creatures. So his creative activity is described as “And God said…and it was so.” In chapter 1, the phrase, “And God said…” is repeated 9 times. It is followed by the words, “And it was so” (or equivalent) 7 times. This shows that God’s word has creation power. Our word also has creation power because we are made in the image of God. Our one careless remark can kill a person. Imagine that you live with someone who always says negative things such as, “My life sucks,” and many F-words. It would be very depressing and makes a toxic environment. Therefore, we have to be very careful in what we say. Our very words create the environment we live in. Even if our circumstances are difficult, we thank God and praise God with our mouth, and God will shape our lives according to what we say. God gave us mouths to praise God, not to complain.

One more significance of “God said”: it shows that he is a personal God. He is not just a spirit or statue and some force in the universe. He is a person. We can communicate with him. Many people have an idea that God is the policeman of the universe who tries to catch our wrongdoings. To them, God is very terrifying and remote. Or some people think that God is some kind of abstract force in the universe. To them, God is an impersonal God. Many who worship an impersonal God have a vague fear, fear that bad luck will come upon them if they do not pacify God. But we know that God is a loving God. We have to have a personal relationship with God so that we can cry out to God, saying, “Daddy,” in the time of joy and in the time of pain.

**Fourth**, God saw that it was good. Notice that the phrase, “and God saw that it was good,” is repeated many times. When I was young, my mother used to say, “You are the most handsome boy in the world.” Each of your mothers thinks that each of you is the most handsome or beautiful. That is how God sees each of us. But many people think they are ugly or useless. Why? Because they live according to social consensus. Peer pressure dictates what to think and how to behave. For example, many girls look at models in magazines and despair, thinking that they are not thin enough and pretty like them. What they don’t realize is that they alter the images of the models. In Facebook, they photoshop the images to make them look good. So many people looking at them think that other people are having wonderful life, while their lives are so mundane. It makes them depressed. So don’t believe everything you see. We live by faith, not by sight. We only need to believe that God is pleased with us. No matter how we look, the important thing is that we find God’s unique mission given to us. Then we can work hard to fulfill God’s great purpose for our lives. We can do our best, overcoming our despair. With God, we can win the victory. Never giving up spirit comes from having a sense of mission from God.

**Fifth**, Our God is the God of love. Beginning with Genesis 2:4, God is referred to as “the LORD God.” “LORD” is the English translation of “Yahweh.” This name means that God is the Savior: he is the God of love. We read in Genesis 3 that man in his pride took God’s word lightly. He was tempted by Satan and sinned against God. Because of his sin, man lost his paradise and had to live under curse. But God, in his great mercy, made a plan of world salvation through Jesus Christ. God’s love for sinners is so great that he did not spare his only Son; God sent his Son to die on the cross. God’s saving love is the theme that flows through the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. God is all powerful. But his great power does not express itself in power. His great power expresses itself as saving love. God reveals himself as God who is love (1Jn 4:8). The purpose of Bible study is to meet this God. I pray that all of you may know God and his love in Jesus Christ through Bible study.

**Sixth**, Our God is the everlasting God. The first part of verse 1 says, “In the beginning.” If we say “at the beginning,” it has a starting point and ending point. But “in the beginning” has no starting point or ending point. As St. Augustine defined it, “in the beginning” is “in eternity.” Our God is there in eternity before the creation. It means that God is the everlasting God who remains the same. Hebrews 13:8 says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” God transcends time. As we know, time changes everything, the world and people. Many people say, “I love you,” and then the next day, they say, “I don’t think I love you anymore. It is not you. It’s me.” So many people live with fear that their boyfriends and girlfriends will change their minds. But God never changes. We can depend on him absolutely.

Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance to do.” Without Jesus Christ, we were dead spiritually. So St. Paul compares believing in Jesus Christ with being born again. Just as God had a great purpose when he created us, God has a great purpose when we are born again through Jesus Christ. It is to live for the glory of God and be a blessing for all those around us. I pray that God may bless you to meet Jesus Christ and the God who created each of us.