



Genesis 1:1

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO GOD

Until about a century ago, most persons living within Western culture found their answer to the question of cosmogony in the first words of the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." But today their descendants turn more and more to encyclopedias or other books on universal knowledge. There, both in text and in picture, an entirely different origin is presented. In place of God they find a cloud of gas, and in place of a well-organized universe they find a blob of mud. Instead of beginning with the Spirit of God, the new story begins with inanimate matter which, through some blind force inherent in the material substance, brought the world to its present state during the course of billions of years. This substitution of matter for spirit accounts for the death of Western civilization as known about a century ago. Why has the new generation turned from the theologian to the scientist for the answer to his nagging question about the origin of the universe? The switch came about because of an attack on the first chapter of Genesis... —Bruce Waltke

INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

Author: _____ (cf. Matt. 19:8; Mark 7:10; 12:26; Luke 16:29-31; 20:37; 24:27, 44; John 5:46-47; 7:19-22)

Date: _____

Purpose: To introduce God as the Creator and Lord of world history (Gen. 1-11) and as the covenant-keeping God of Israel (Gen. 12-50). As Israel stood on the edge of the Promised Land, they needed to know who God is, who they were, and where they fit in the grand narrative of world history. We need to know the same things today.

Outline: The Hebrew word, *toledot*, forms the structure of Genesis. "These are the generations of" the heavens and the earth (2:4), Adam (5:1), Noah (6:9), the sons of Noah (10:1), Shem (11:10), Terah (11:27), Ishmael (25:12), Isaac (25:19), Esau (36:1), and Jacob (37:2).

Genesis is the book of beginnings.

- I. **THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD (1:1-11:32)**
 - A. The Creation (1:1-2:25)
 - B. The Fall (3:1-5:32)
 - C. The Flood (6:1-9:29)
 - D. The Nations (10:1-11:32)
- II. **THE BEGINNING OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL (12:1-50:26)**
 - A. The Life of Abraham (12:1-23:20)
 - B. The Life of Isaac (24:1-25:18)
 - C. The Life of Jacob (25:19-36:43)
 - D. The Life of Joseph (37:1-50:26)

Genesis is probably the most important book ever written. The Bible as a whole...has exerted the greatest influence on history of any book ever produced. The Bible, however, is actually a compilation of many books, and Genesis is the foundation of them all.

—Henry M. Morris

All Scripture is in Genesis. Here we have in germ all that is later developed. The roots of all subsequent revelation are planted deep in Genesis, and whoever would truly comprehend that revelation must begin here.

—J. Sidlow Baxter

What you do with the Bible depends on what you do with the first sentence of Genesis.

—M. R. DeHaan

For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance, he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.

—Robert Jastrow

FOUR BASIC TRUTHS FROM GENESIS 1:1

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
Bereshith bara Elohim et hashamayim ve'et ha'aretz.*

1. All things have a beginning.

- Before creation, there was absolutely _____ in the universe. No time, space, matter, or energy.
- We are part of a grand _____, told in time, in a setting, with objects, with characters, with a purpose.

2. God is before all things.

- He is _____ — “the All-Powerful One.”
- He is _____ — “the Self-Existent One.”

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” —Exodus 3:14

3. God is the Creator of all things.

- He creates everything out of _____.
- He creates everything by His _____.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. —John 1:1-3

4. All things owe their existence to God.

- The whole universe is created and sustained by Him.
- You and I individually are created and sustained by Him.

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything... For in Him we live and move and have our being. —Acts 17:24-25, 28a

No other cosmogony, whether in ancient paganism or modern naturalism, even mentions the absolute origin of the universe. All begin with the space-time-matter universe, already existing in a primeval state of chaos.

—Henry M. Morris

It was monotheism that launched the coming of science, for it promised an intelligible world, sacred but disenchanting, a world with a blueprint, which was therefore open to the searches of scientists. The great pioneers in physics—Newton, Galileo, Kepler, Copernicus—devoutly believed themselves called to find evidences of God in the physical world.

—Holmes Rolston III

This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful being.

—Sir Isaac Newton (1643-1747)

Philosophically the notion of a beginning of the present order is repugnant to me. I should like to find a genuine loophole.

—Sir Arthur Eddington (1882-1944)

We are living in an age where there is a great revival of natural theology taking place. That revival is taking place not on the whole among theologians, who have lost their nerve in that area, but among the scientists.

—John Polkinghorne

An honest man, armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could only state that in some sense, the origin of life appears at the moment to be almost a miracle.

—Francis Crick