

## GENESIS

### Week 2, chapter 1

#### READ GEN.1 ALL

We could spend several weeks just in Genesis 1. But, I'm going to assume that most of you have some basic knowledge of this chapter; and because what came first, second, third and so on is plainly stated and pretty straightforward, there's not a lot of need for me to comment on those things after having read them to you. Therefore I'm going to deal with issues that some of you might not have thought about. I'm also going to deal mainly with spiritual principles, and things I call God's Governing Dynamics, that are shown to us Genesis 1. Principles and Dynamics that never change, and are the basic building blocks upon which the Torah, then the Tanakh, and finally the NT is built.

Immediately in Genesis 1 we are given some of these fundamentals. And while these fundamentals are foundational and basic, they are hardly simple or easy to deal with.

The first thing we must deal with is the word "God", for there are two ways in which we can know God: His name, and His characteristics. Let me qualify that: by means of the 4 dimensions that make up our Universe (length, width, depth, and time) we can only know God by His name and characteristics. Yet, by means of the Holy Spirit, we can "know" God in another way, which is ONLY open (in our era) to Believers. This Holy Spirit way of knowing God incorporates an extra-dimension, a 5<sup>th</sup> dimension at the least, of reality that does not exist naturally in our 4 dimensional Universe that we live in. We'll get into the subject of extra-dimensionality soon, because far from being a sci-fi deal, or something only for the egg-heads to contemplate, it is such a help in framing some of the more difficult statements in the Bible that we need to take a hard look at it.

In the earnest cry for world peace in our day, an interfaith movement has gained steam. And, the basis for this movement is that no matter what one calls god...Buddha, Krishna, Brahma, or Allah....we're all speaking of the same god, just from a different cultural perspective. Not true. For, not only are the *names* of these various gods, and what they mean, completely different, the characteristics of each of these gods are also different. Therefore, they cannot possibly be the same god.

The true God is introduced to us in the first verse of Genesis, and we are also given the first of what will prove to be many of the unchangeable, sometimes inscrutable, characteristics of God. The Hebrew word that our Bibles translate to "God" is Elohim. First, we must understand that Elohim is NOT God's name....we won't be advised of God's name until much later in the Torah. Rather, Elohim is a title. And, it is a *plural* title....plural as in more-than-one. Elohim, and its various usages is a complex matter that we are only going to barely touch on today. However, we need to know for the moment that Elohim is a word that is not only used in the Bible to refer to the one true

God, it is also used occasionally when speaking of false gods.....as we talked about in the introduction last week, context is everything when dealing with Hebrew language and culture.

So, with the introduction of this plural title for God, Elohim, instantly the door is opened to dealing with this incredible truth and paradigm: God is one, but He also is many. The “I-M” at the end of the word Elohim makes this word a masculine plural noun. In fact, as a basic Hebrew lesson, whenever you see the letters “I-M” ending a Hebrew word, you can know that it is speaking of more than one....plural. However, there is another usage in Hebrew of the “I-M” ending, and it’s called the “plural of Majesty”. That is, adding the “I-M” at the end of a word can also denote greatness rather than plurality.

Christians, rightfully so, take the word Elohim as indicating BOTH greatness AND plurality.....and from this eventually grew the concept of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit....3 gods in one. Or better, a single God consisting of 3 persons or essences or manifestations. The use of the word Elohim does not in and by itself prove that God is plural. Rather, there are several more critical pieces of evidence that we will encounter to show that God is indeed a plurality.

The next point of interest we should take notice of is this matter of the first day of creation. There is ongoing debate among scientists and theologians as to just what, or how long, a “day” was at the time of creation. And, the primary basis for argument goes something like this: “how can God have created everything in 6 days, and how can it be that Hebrews say by counting generations we find the earth to be nearing 6000 years of age....when all of our science says that the universe is BILLIONS of years old....around 15 of those billions, in fact.” Well, if we take a close look at what is said in the opening words of Genesis, some of the matter seems to resolve itself, and we don’t have to engage in scientific debates at all.

If you read carefully, you will see that the creation of the heaven and the earth did NOT occur on the first day; it occurred at “the beginning”. The first day was not the beginning.....the 1<sup>st</sup> day was sometime later. The thing that occurred on the first day was the creation of light, and its separation from darkness. The heaven and earth were created sometime BEFORE the first day of what we have dubbed “Creation”. How long the heavens and earth sat there, lifeless, dark, chaotic, we aren’t told. But, at some point God decided to take the universe He had created, and spark it with life and a new order.....He began that new process by creating light, and that’s when we encounter the first “day”.

Now, there is absolutely no reason to try to defend the use of the word “day”. Often we hear people say, “but the Bible says ‘to God, a day is as a 1000 years’ “. That is simply an idiom that means that God lives in a place without time....NOT that during creation the length of a period of time called a “day” was 1000 years. And, there is no proof that the first day is any different in length of time than our current 24 hours.....except that it would be helpful to explain the age of the earth if the first 6 days WERE very long. Oh, there is some proof that the Earth’s

rotation may have slowed a tad over the last several thousands of years, but a slower rotation (now versus the past) of the Earth would make the days of eons ago SHORTER than a current day, wouldn't it? After all, since one full rotation of the earth equals 1 day, if it takes LONGER to make that one rotation, then the day is longer. If the earth was spinning faster long ago, then days would have whizzed by quicker than today.

One other thing: in case you might not have been aware, Hebrews, including today's modern Jewish community, have ALWAYS counted the day as BEGINNING at sunset, and ending at sunset. That is, the day begins in the evening. This is, of course, totally unlike our picking midnight as the start and end of a day; and it is also unlike our tradition that morning is the beginning of a day, and nighttime the ending. Now, this difference in the definition and method of plotting time has caused all sorts of interesting problems in attempting to ascertain with any degree of accuracy WHEN certain Biblical events happened. What we need to grasp for the moment is that the modern method of time keeping is done mechanically, and for all practical purposes it does not vary. There was an international agreement some years ago to have central clock from which all clocks would harmonize. We don't need to observe stars or the moon to determine what time it is any more. We could be in a tunnel a mile underground, and if our watch is working, we can know precisely what time it is...indefinitely.

But, for the ancients, including the Hebrews, no such mechanism was available. Time was determined by viewing the skies; when the sun went up and down; when the moon appeared; when certain stars and star groupings appeared in the night sky. Using our mechanical system, we divide the day into two equal parts: 12 hours of day, 12 hours of night. The length of a Hebrew day and night varied from day to day and season to season, because the proportion of time between daylight and nighttime was constantly shifting. Yet, one full day was still 24 hours, and one week was still 7 full days. At all times in the Bible, the Hebrew system is being used; so whether studying Torah or the NT Gospels, we need to set aside our modern notion of time keeping.

Now, where did the Hebrews get the idea of STARTING and ending a day at sunset? Look at verse 5..... ".....so there was evening, and there was morning, the first day". Evening came first; evening marked the transition from one day to the next. BTW, I don't think we are committing some terrible sin by how we moderns determine the start of the day.

Now notice something strange: on the first day, God said He created light. Yet, it was on the *fourth* day that God created the Sun....or as the Bible puts it, "the larger light to rule the day". What gives here? How is it that God lit up the Earth on the first day, but didn't create the Sun until the fourth day? Have we found our first inconsistency?

This gets interesting: in verses 3 and 4, the Hebrew word for “light” is “owr”. This word does NOT mean an object that emits light....like the sun or the moon or the stars, or a lamp. Rather it means illumination, enlightenment. When the Bible says God is light, it says Elohim is “owr”. This word is closely associated with life and joy and good. In fact, when we read about the 1<sup>st</sup> day, notice something that the Hebrew sages have hung their hats on for millennia: it says God created the light, AND SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD. Then this light was divided from the darkness. Only the light is called “good”.

Now, lets move down to verse 14, when it starts to talk about there being lights in the sky to divide day and night, and in 16 when God says he created the larger light (the sun) to rule the day and the smaller light (the moon) to rule the night. We see an entirely different word is used for “light” here, than what is used in earlier verses. Here, the Hebrew word is “meotor”. Sound familiar? It’s the word from which we get the modern word Meteor. Meotor means an object that emits light.....if I may use a poetic word, the luminaries....things that illuminate....the sun, the moon, the stars, and lamps, and of course meteors.

Since the state of the Universe before day 1 was darkness, it must have been that darkness was an unsatisfactory state, or God wouldn’t have created light. At the least, darkness was not capable of supporting life; and as we’ll find as we get into the later parts of Exodus and then Leviticus, things that go against, or inhibit, or end life are considered against God. So, when God created “light”, “owr” (singular), He created illumination and enlightenment, a basic requirement for life. When God created “the lights”, “meotor”(plural) He created objects that emit light waves. Light waves of a certain type that allow humans and animals to use their light sensors....their eyes, and for plants to engage in their method of living, photosynthesis. In Revelation, we’re told that when God destroys the old earth, and then creates a new one, there will no longer be meotors...light emitting objects like a sun or moon, but that God will be our light.....our illumination. It’s this same type of “godly light” that is being spoken of here in verses 3 and 4, but NOT in verses 14-16.

Conversely, lets look at the word “darkness”. The Hebrew for this word is “choshek”. In the Hebrew culture, this word was used as the opposite of “owr”.....the opposite of illumination. Choshek carries in it the tone of blindness, of misery, of falsehood and ignorance. It means something that leads to death and destruction. This is not a word that is the opposite of day. It is not a word that describes the natural, and good, phenomenon of nighttime. In Hebrew, night is layil....an entirely different word than chosek. Choshek is negative.....and it carries spiritual overtones with it...evil spiritual overtones. Night, layil, is simply the opposite of day. It carries no negative OR spiritual sense to it.....except in the odd case where it is used metaphorically.

So, let us be clear: in verses 3 and 4, what God created was illumination and enlightenment of which HE was the source; but it was also divided away from what was the opposite of those things: darkness, blindness and falsehood. What exactly was this illumination and enlightenment? It could well have been the primordial essence of God that we call the Shekinah, or Shekinah glory.....this mysterious illumination, or glory,

of God that we read of in several places in the Bible. The illumination that is suitable for us to see by, and apparently necessary when the new earth is formed, will come from God Himself. While I cannot be sure, I see no reason not to suggest that the light of Genesis that was in the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Creation is the same light that is in the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the NEW creation as revealed in Revelation 21 and 22 (you can go read it for yourself). And, it is also interesting that the spiritual counterpart of light...darkness, choshek.....will also be absent in the NEW creation. In it's purest *spiritual* sense, light is goodness and darkness is wickedness. We're told that in the New creation there will be ONLY good, no wickedness. And, so in the new creation we find the complete absence of darkness.....there is only light. But, as certain as I am that what I have told you is correct, I readily admit that there is some amount of speculation involved.

Now, besides *resolving* the issue of light being created on the 1<sup>st</sup> day even though the objects which MAKE light were created on the 4<sup>th</sup> day, I'd like to point out that this is the first hint of a principle that is going to haunt us all through our studies of Torah. An abstract but real principle that can be stated in words rather easily but is NOT so easily grasped. So, be pre-warned that it takes some time and study before the concept starts to become comfortable for us. As a point of reference, I have given this concept a name: the Reality of Duality. Basically, the idea of the Reality of Duality is this: in the Scriptures and in the NT, physical things are often but a shadow of something spiritual. If we've spent any time at all in Church, we've heard this term "shadow" used to describe many OT things that Jesus eventually transformed into something of a higher order. But, what exactly does that mean.....*a shadow* of something that is to come?

A shadow is but an outline of something, without all the details filled in. A shadow is real....that is, it's not a mirage or an optical illusion. But, it is LESS real than the object that creates the shadow. Example: I stand outside in the sun. I cast a shadow. I am real and the shadow is real. But, as the source of the shadow, I am the complete original and the shadow is but a representation of me that is very incomplete; the shadow has no animation or power of itself; it does not have life, and is stuck in absolute lockstep with me. The existence of my shadow is 100% dependent on my existence. If my shadow ceases to exist, I can still exist, right? If the sun goes down, my shadow disappears, but I'm still here. But, if I cease to exist, it is impossible for there to be a shadow of me. Therefore, I am preeminent; I am greater than my shadow; I am not a manifestation of my shadow, my shadow is but an inferior manifestation of me. The shadow does not cause me, I cause the shadow.

When the physical and the spiritual attributes of many things exist simultaneously, the spiritual came first and is always preeminent. The spiritual is almost unlimited in its attributes and it operates in number of dimensions; the physical is severely limited in its attributes and can occur in no more than 4 dimensions (remember, our entire Universe only consists of 4 dimensions: length, width, depth, and time). Therefore, the physical is inferior to the spiritual, and the physical can only partially mimic or reveal it's spiritual counterpart.

The creation of humans is a fairly obvious example of this; for humans are simultaneously creatures that consist of the material and the immaterial; the physical and the spiritual. That is, we are 4 dimensional beings, physical, visible, subject to time, BUT we also have an invisible property as well. The Bible calls this invisible property soul and spirit. The ancient Hebrew sages point out that God formed Adam from the dust of the ground. God created the Universe from nothing, but He created man from something; something physical....dirt. Yet, in addition, God put the breath of life into man, and put into him a soul and spirit which was NOT physical....it was spiritual. So, whether man admits it or not, we are a prime example of the Reality of Duality.

The creation of light and its attributes is another good example of this concept. No doubt the “light”, this ovr, made on the first day of Creation was real physical light that was of a kind that, at the least, allowed time to be measured (after all, 3 MORE days of Creation passed before there were light emitting objects set into the sky that were to be used to indicate seasons, and years, and events). Yet, mysteriously, it was also a type of light that did NOT come from a physical object.....because no object that emitted light was created until the 4<sup>th</sup> day. Further, because light is the opposite of darkness, and light is characterized by God as good, but darkness is not, we have a firm connection between the KIND of light created here and goodness. Good and evil are spiritual, not physical, attributes. So, this light, this ovr, has a dual reality to it; it has both a very real physical quality, and a very real spiritual quality to it. Now, typically, men’s doctrines cannot stand this kind of dilemma; it must be one or the other, it cannot be both. I’m telling you that not only CAN many created things be both physical and spiritual at the same time, but also they often ARE both. In fact, matters such as the attributes of the type of light created on the 1<sup>st</sup> day MUST be both, or the first few verses of Genesis are nonsensical. It is this foundational principle that I term the Reality of Duality; it is where the physical and the spiritual elements of something exist simultaneously. And, we’re going to have many more examples of this that, over time, will start to make some sense to you; in a year or so, when we get to the Wilderness Tabernacle, we’ll have one of the prime Biblical examples of the Reality of Duality; so don’t get concerned if you’re thinking “is that guy even speaking English?”

Now, in verse 20, some statements are made for which I want to make a point that you should tuck away in your memory banks; and it concerns this list of living creatures that God created. It speaks of swarming creatures in the water, and birds flying in the air. He populated the oceans with giant sea creatures; and He proclaimed all of these creatures to be GOOD. In verse 24 He goes on to speak of land creatures of all kinds.....domestic and wild....even including crawling things like lizards. And, He also declares THESE to be good. I emphasize this, because later in the Torah, mainly in Leviticus, we’re going to find God enumerating several of these same creatures He has named here, as UNCLEAN. And, we’ll also eventually see that long before the Torah was given to Moses, the clean and unclean designations of created living things already existed. How is it that something can be both GOOD and UNCLEAN? Did God change His mind about some of His living creatures? Well, you can either wait a year or so to find out, or pick up some of the Torah Class studies on Leviticus and find out. But, the key Biblical principles of clean and unclean have their foundation here in the first chapter of Genesis.

Next, we get a statement that has been pondered by the greatest minds for 1000's of years.....and there is little agreement as to exactly what it portends. It is the statement that we, as human beings, are made in the image of God.

Now, we're not going to spend much time here, but let me give you some basics to consider. First, it says that God created humankind....later that it was both male and female that He created. And, second that all humans were made in his image.

So, we can immediately show Darwin and secular humanists the door. If this is not a true Biblical statement...if, rather, we evolved from chance and mutation of non-living substances.....then there is no point to continue, is there? I don't imagine I have any arguments from those of you in this room. But, what does it mean to be made in the image of God? It means that we have certain attributes that He has. Yet, we also know that we don't have *all* of His attributes....for if we did, then WE would be god. Rather, God, who values all the types of living creatures He created, made man unique among them. Only man has the capacity to know God. And, this is by means of a spirit component of man. Animals can have bodies, they can have brains. They can even have something resembling emotions, because many (but not all) animals have living souls.....the seat of emotion and intellect. But, ONLY humans among all living creatures have spirits. And, it is our spirits that allow communion with the living God.

Next week we'll begin Genesis 2.