

In The Beginning God . . .

An In-Depth Study of the First Three Chapters of Genesis

All Truth Begins Here



Why Study A 3,500 Year Old Story of Creation?

INTRO There has never been a time when the nature of truth was more questioned in the United States than today. The very nature of Postmodernism is to relegate truth to the realm of personal experience and relativism: “You can find your own truth; I will find mine. What is true for you may not be true for me.” This is the mantra of our age. There has also never been a time when the Church at large has been more skeptical of the accuracy of the Genesis account of creation and the origin of humanity.

Both of the questions, the nature of truth and the origin of humanity, are hills to die on for true believers: to answer these questions wrong is to undermine the whole foundation of the Gospel message and to lose the battle for true faith. It all begins in Genesis, the book of beginnings, and a right understanding of the first three chapters is essential to understanding the rest of the Bible, God’s special revelation to the only living beings made in His very image.

I. Chapters One to Three of Genesis are Unique in Content

- A. Just as Revelation gives us information about the future we would have no other way of knowing, the history and means of creation is a part of history no human can access—it can only be given by One Who was present.
- B. Augustine described a “God-shaped void” in the heart of every person, an emptiness and longing that can only be filled by God. A part of that longing is the universal desire to understand our origin. God Himself both instills the desire and provides the answer because it ultimately leads us back to Him.
- C. The message of Genesis 1-3 is a necessary backdrop for the Gospel: it explains who God is and who we are, tells us what has gone wrong with our world, and points the way back to God.

II. Chapters One to Three of Genesis are Pregnant with Meaning

- A. In these three chapters God lays the foundation for every important truth to be found in the Bible. Indeed, it is not an exaggeration to say that the entire meaning of life can be explained in these eighty verses.
- B. The seeds of the following teachings of the Bible can be found in the clear and unmistakable words of this passage, including: the Person and nature of God, The Person of the Holy Spirit and of Jesus Christ the Son, the nature of man—his personality, spirituality, and sexuality, the meaning of work and of rest, the nature of marriage and the Church, the deeper life in Christ, the power and purpose of intercessory prayer, the nature of sin and salvation, eschatology, Bibliology, apologetics, angelology, demonology, satanology and the nature of evil, cosmology and the origin of life.
- C. Specifically and importantly, these chapters address the problem of pain and suffering and give us insight into what has gone wrong with our planet and our race. In conjunction with the revelation about the character of God, they help us to have faith in a God Who is good while living in a world that is not, and to have hope in a future world when all that is now wrong will be made right.

III. Chapters One to Three of Genesis are Filled with Propositional Truths

- A. What is propositional truth?
 1. In logic, a proposition is a declarative sentence that is either true or false.
 2. In the Bible, propositional statements which are a part of God’s revelation are always true.
 3. My Definition: *Propositional revelation is “true truth” revealed by God using words and statements which can be understood as objective and universal absolutes and which can be combined in logically rational ways to form “teachings” on a given topic in the Bible. These derived teachings based upon the propositional revelation are called “doctrines” and form the foundation for our faith. The corpus, or “whole body” of these teachings combine to form a Biblical theology (or worldview) against which all other ideas and experiences must be tested.*
- B. Propositional revelation and the nature of the Bible: (PRM) *The Bible is not written as a series of formal, logical propositions—a list per se—it is revealed in the form of narrative containing these truths in a framework of history which is anchored in time and space. As we read the story it will draw us to conclusions that may be tested in other narrative (or didactic) passages which validate, expand, or correct our conclusions. In some books and passages (didactic or “teaching” sections) truth is revealed in statements that more closely resemble logical propositions and which may be understood in their simplest terms.*
- C. As we study the wealth of propositional truths revealed in these passages we will discover why it is essential that we interpret Genesis 1-3 in the most absolute and literal way possible expressed in the grammar. But we will not be left with truths that are hanging, unfounded, in mid-air; we will examine closely the cosmology of the Genesis record and discover that the literal sense of the Biblical account of creation is also the one that has the most objective support by the evidence: evidence that is denied or ignored by materialistic evolutionists, but which is abundant in every realm of scientific investigation for those who have eyes to see.

