



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Basic Bible Doctrine, Genesis 1:1-2

"The Creation of the World"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] We thank Thee Father for the privileged of the study again of Thy word, and we especially praise Thee for the truths that are found within it, the touch upon our daily lives, and we thank Thee for the truth of creation, for the place that it has in the program of God, and we pray tonight as we look at some of the opening words of the Bible that Thou wilt give us an understanding of this important truth, and will help us in our understanding of the word of God. We pray Thy blessing upon each one present, and we ask, Lord, that our time together may be fruitful and profitable for us, not only in our minds, but also in our daily lives and actions. We ask now that Thou will be through this hour, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for tonight in the continuation of our series of studies in Basic Bible doctrine is the Creation of the World, and we are turning to Genesis chapter 1, and I would like to read the first two verses of this first book of the Bible. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." The question of origins, who we are, and where we have come from, for what we are intended, is one that has intrigued modern man, philosophers and

psychologists and scientists as well as theologians have wrestled with the question. It's surprising in one way if we wish to know nature we don't look into the past and ask ourselves about the origin of nature.

We find the finest flowering of nature in the present, and we study that, and if we wish to know technology, we do not poke around amongst the artifacts of an Indian cave, nor do we meditate upon the tombs of the Egyptians, in the Metropolitan Museum of New York City. We go to the great scientific institutions, and ponder an electronic brain or the meaning of DNA or the latest in computers. With man however, it's different. We go backward, and we look for what someone has called the original design. In other words, we are interested in origins. We are not thinking about man as he is about to conquer the social miseries of our times by means of social welfare. We don't examine man in that way. We go back to origins.

Now, failure to do this is one of the causes of man's ignorance of himself. There is a famous imperative associated with the Delphic Oracle, which says, "Know thyself." That's a mocking, shattering, unattained mirage. That is why Genesis is so important. Genesis was called, by Arthur T. Pierson, one of the great Bible teachers of the earlier part of the 20th century, as the stately portal to the superb structure of Holy Scripture." It is the seed plot of the Bible, and it contains the beginning of everything but God, like an acorn to the oak or like a spring to some of the great rivers of our great universe. It stands at the beginning of the stream of divine revelation, and it unfolds the beginning of creation, the beginning of life, the beginning of sin, the beginning of redemption, the beginning of the nation Israel, the beginning of the plan of ages in a most unique way.

One of the leading interpreters of the book of Genesis wrote just a few years ago, "No work that is known to us from the ancient Near East is remotely comparable in scope to say nothing of less measurable qualities with the book of Genesis."

Now, when we come to the book of Genesis, and we want to talk for a little while about theology, it's probably important that we state our presuppositions. We presuppose

that the book of Genesis is part of the divine revelation, and thus we presuppose the fact that God has spoken. It's easy to ask unanswerable questions about the book of Genesis, and one of the interesting things about it, is that these unanswerable questions are constantly changing. We also presuppose the precedence, or precedence of revelation over science, and we also presuppose that Genesis is history, and not myth. What we have in Genesis is a picture of man. We have other pictures of man. A doctor and a professor of anatomy may give us one picture of man, and it's a valid picture of man. In the book of Genesis we have theological picture of man, or an exegetical picture of man. In a sense they are different from one another, and yet in another sense they are just different aspects of the same thing.

One of the questions that's always interested me about the book of Genesis is in what way was Moses given this great picture of the creation? That would be a natural question for someone to ask if he reflected upon this, and i have often wondered just exactly how it was that Moses got this picture of something at which he was not present. It has been suggested that perhaps he got his picture of what happened in the book of Genesis in the same way that Daniel, and the prophets of the Old Testament were given their picture of the things of the future. Daniel, when he was speaking between the banks of the U'lai, gives us some remarkable pictures of visions that were given to him. What is to prevent the origin of the book of Genesis in arising in a vision that God gave Moses? In other words, we might have before Moses eye the panorama of the evolution of light from God, the uplifting of the atmosphere, the parting of the waters, the placing of the orbs in the sky, the filling of the land, the sea, the sky with life, while he listened in awe struck silence to the voices of Elohim as they uttered the opening words which begin these sections of the book of Genesis. Something like this is perhaps the way that Moses got his picture of the what we have here in the book of Genesis, but that of course is not the most important thing for us. The most important thing for us is the analyze these verses, and see what they have to say concerning the creation.

Now, we are going to look at this by way of the outline that I have before you here, and Roman I is the creation of God, and A. The problems of grammar and syntax. In one sense, this opening verse of the Bible is the most important verse in the whole of the Bible. It surely is the foundational verse of the Bible. If the book of Genesis is the Bible's foundational book, then the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis are foundational for that foundational book, and the first chapter of the book of Genesis are foundational for those eleven chapters, and this first verse of Genesis chapter 1 is foundational for that first chapter. So it is possible to consider this the foundations of all foundations, and thus the most important verse in the Bible. It's a verse in which we ought to know, and it's a verse upon which we have ought to reflect a great deal. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Now, as you might suspect, there have been some discussions concerning the nature of this opening verse, and some questions rose about how it should be translated. On the surface, as we read this in the English text, it seems to be one of the simplest in the whole of the Bible, and yet the translation of it is disputed. For example in some of the Bibles we read this, the New English translates Genesis chapter 1, verses 1 through 3 in this way, "In the beginning of creation when God made heaven and earth, the earth was without form and void with darkness over the face of the abyss, and a mighty wind that swept over the surface of the waters. God said, Let there be light, and there was light." One of the newer Jewish versions translates it this way, "When God began to create the heaven and the earth, the earth being unformed and void with darkness over the face of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water, and God said, Let there be light, and there was light." So in spite of the fact that it seems rather simple for us, and reading the English version, there has been quite a bit of discussion over the translation of it.

Now, it is written in a very simple style, and to begin with a more complicated verse at the beginning, which is what these translations would make of these opening

verses is an argument against these translations. "For in the beginning of creation when God made heaven and earth, the earth was without form a void," gives us a dependent clause in the opening of this particular verse, and that's contrary to the general style of this chapter which is very simple as you read through it, you are impressed, I'm sure with the simple style of these verses in the first chapter of the Bible. In addition, the punctuation of the Massorites, the later Hebrew interpreters responsible for the vowel pointings of the Hebrew text, their punctuation is contrary to these more recent translations of this text. Incidentally, not all of contemporary scholars accept these more recent translations, and so we are not suggesting that modern commentators agree on this particular type of rendering of Genesis 1:1-3.

Now, you know of course the Bible was translated into other languages. You've heard many of the teachers here in Believer's Chapel speak about the Septuagint version. Now, the Septuagint Version was a translation of the Old Testament into Greek, made before the time of our Lord. There are also other versions of the Old Testament. These versions were done very early in the history of the transmission of the biblical text. They too favor a rather simple translation with the opening words being an independent clause. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." So it's more likely that we are to take these verses as simple independent statements. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Now, I do not think however that this is a title, but he's beginning with the beginning of matter. If we were to think of this as a title, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." And then the creative activity begins with verse 2, we would not have an explanation of the origin of matter, so I think that what we have here is a simple independent clause in verse 1, I wish it were possible to talk in more detail about some of the questions of the Hebrew text, what we have is a simple independent clause, and then we are to take this opening verse as part of the account, part of the narrative, so that we have here a reference to the beginning of the existence of matter.

There is a very popular interpretation of verses 1 and 2 that I think it's important to refer to before we talk about some of the theology of the creation account, and that is the Gap or Cataclysmic Theory. The Gap Theory has been very popular in dispensational interpretation, and not only in dispensational interpretation, but also in some other types of interpretation too, but it has been characteristic of a great deal of dispensational teaching to treat these opening verses as containing a kind of gap or reference to a cataclysm, which took place in the distant past, and that what we really have in the book of Genesis is not an account of the creation, but of the Reformation of the matter that was blasted by a cataclysm due to disobedience that occurred either among the angelic hosts or among pre-Adamic men. This was very popular.

It is usually traceable to Thomas Chalmers, who was not a dispensationalist, but a reformed man, who was a well-known Scottish theologian, and usually dated around 1814. According to this theory, verse 1 represents the initial creation. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," but then verse 2 describes a chaos that occurred as a result of disobedience, "And the earth was without form and void." And it is usually pointed out by those who hold to the Gap or Cataclysmic theory that the Hebrew word translated "was here" is a word that frequently is translated "become."

Now, in Hebrew we do not have two words. One for "to be" and one for "to become." In Greek, there are two such. In Greek, there is the verb *eimi* which means to be, and there is the verb *genomai* which means "to become," but in Hebrew, the Hebrew word *eheyeb* does duty for both, and so it is translated upon occasion to 'become' rather than "to be" and the proponents of this theory have translated this, "and the earth became without form and void." So that verse 2 represents a chaos that came from a catastrophe, and verse 3 and following then represents the renovation of theology earth.

Now, there are some arguments for this theory that are good arguments. We must not discount the arguments, and say they are useless arguments or they are not good arguments. They are good arguments. It is true that "was" may be rendered 'become' on

occasion. In fact, we have a case in Genesis chapter 2, in verse 7, where we read, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul." There is the verb eheyeh translated as become, however the construction is slightly different in the original text, and so has not totally paralleled, but it is translated become. And then in chapter 19, in verse 26, we don't have time to look there, but there too the word translated "was" in verse 2 is translated "become" and properly translated "become," but generally speaking if it did mean become, the construction should be somewhat different. We should probably have a waw consecutive with an imperfect tense rather than the perfect state which is found in our Hebrew Bibles at Genesis 1:2. So that argument, while an interesting argument, is not a convincing one.

Then it is often said that the expression, formless and void is unsuitable for creation. If we read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," then we should not expect to read, "And the earth was without form and void," because God surely does not create chaos. In fact, a created chaos is according to some a kind of non-entity. One well-known Hebrew scholar said, that it was a kind of non-entity, and does not Isaiah have something to say on the point because he uses these words in the description of the earth in chapter 45, in verse 18. There we read, in the prophecy of Isaiah, "For thus saith the Lord who created the heavens, God himself who formed the earth and made it, he hath established it, he created it not in vain. He created it not." As Genesis says, "It was created not in vain." For this is one of the same words used by Moses in Genesis 1:2. He formed it to be inhabited. So there we have a clear statement to the effect, it is said that God did not create the earth, in vain, that is formless, uninhabitable or empty. But now you'll notice that the remainder of that text in Isaiah chapter 45, verse 18, says he formed it to be inhabited. He's really talking not so much about how earth was created, but the purpose for which it was created, and it would be true regardless of how we take this text to affirm that God created the earth to be

inhabited. He did not create it to be formless and void or uninhabitable. So again that argument, while an interesting argument, is one that is unconvincing.

The idea of verse 2 is that of uninhabitableness, or emptiness. The earth was uninhabited. It was empty, but the remainder of Genesis 1 describes how God brings order out of the original creation of matter. Another argument, which has been advanced in favor of the Gap or Cataclysmic or Chaos Theory is that the word darkness is always a figure of sin and judgment, and when we read, "And the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep," that indicates that there has been some sin and some judgment that has transpired or taken place. And that must be because of some disobedience that has previously occurred, so in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and then there was disobedience, and as a result of the disobedience the earth became without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. That's not a bad argument.

Now, those who think it's just a silly argument have not given it its full force. It's not a bad argument at all. It is however one that is not completely convincing because we read right here in this very chapter that God created the heavens and the earth, and then he goes on to speak about the fact that it was day one morning and evening. God called the light, day, and the darkness he called night, and the evening, and the morning were the first day, and when he finished everything, with it's six days inclusive of morning and evening, he said it was very good, so evidentially God passed or expressed his approval of the twenty four hour period of time, in all that he had created within them, and so it seems plain to me at least, that darkness is not always evil in this opening chapter.

There is a passage in Exodus chapter 20, verses 9 through 11 that seems to refute the Chaos Theory aside from other things that might be argued against that particular theory. In exodus chapter 20, verses 9 through 11, we read,

"Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it."

Now, that text appears to refute the idea of a chaos or of a catastrophe between the days because Moses seems to understand the whole creative activity as composed of one week of activity on the part of God, and so it would be very difficult to understand the first verse to refer to a time in the distant past, and then the six days following to be of a different series of days. I'm inclined to think that the Gap or Cataclysmic Theory, while an interesting one, and I must confess, I used to teach this theory. That's embarrassing you know to have to admit that you were wrong. That's one of the many things on which I have been wrong. I think there are two or three others through the [laughter] years, but I may as well admit it because it's on tape unfortunately, [laughter] and I do think that that theory does not really command support at the present time, so I'm inclined to think then, that what we have here is a simple creation account of seven days. Six days in which God labored and then on the seventh day, we have God resting on that the Sabbath day. What are the points that Moses makes here in these opening verses? How did man come to inhabit the world?

Now, so far as we can tell, he does not speak about God's works before creation. That's one of the things that when we get to heaven we would surely like to have some information about. Now, you've heard all of the funny things that have been said about this, I'm sure. Augustine when asked what God was doing before he created the universe said, he was creating hell for people who asked questions like that, [Laughter] and Luther, Luther read Augustine, because he said, he cutting switches to flog inquisitive questioners. That was Luther's own vivid way of saying the same thing that one of his greatest teachers, Augustine said.

Now, what is said here is said about the creation itself, so questions about what God was doing before hand, well, God gives us a few indications of what he was doing in other passages of Scripture, but he doesn't tell us here what he was doing in the eternity past. He does tell us, however some things that are important. He speaks about the time of the creation, and he calls it in the beginning. He does not date it, and so the most that we can say is that the time of the creation is the dateless past.

Now, I know that scientists and some theologians like to date the creation. They like to date the creation of man. That is all speculation, and I know at times, simple Bible believing Christians are very disturbed when they read that scientists claimed to have demonstrated that the earth is ten million years old. Well, just remember that that is speculation, and remember also that scientist's views constantly change. And when they date man at ten thousand years, well, then that too is scientific speculation. At the same time, we remember that the exegesis of biblical interpreters is also something that changes, and so we should not be too uptight about differences of opinion between the theologians and the scientists because neither one of them are giving us absolute truth. The scientists are speculating using a method of scientific investigation that in the nature of the case philosophically, can never give us absolute truth. One cannot really ever come to absolute truth using an inductive method, which is the method of the scientific method, and at the same time too, we must remember that theologians and expositors and exegetes such as I try to be, we are human too, and we must be guided by the Holy Spirit, and we are not giving you revelation. We are giving you interpretation. We are telling you what we think the Bible says, and it's possible for us to be wrong. Many have been wrong down through the years, and as I mentioned a minute ago, I think I was wrong concerning what I used to teach, concerning Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2.

So, so far as Genesis is concerned, it's well for us to remember that all that Moses says, is that the time of the creation is in the dateless past, whether it was five or ten thousand years, well, when we get to heaven, we shall come to understand. It'll be

interesting to see how close the scientists were, and how close the theologians were too. It does not tell us anything about God's method of creating other than that it came from the word of God out of his own power. The Bible does not, the scientists have engaged in a great deal of speculation recently over whether the creation is the result of a gigantic explosion, and there is arisen a great deal of support for the Big Bang Theory of the origination of the book of Genesis. Well, now that would be in harmony with what the book of Genesis teaches in large measure. That is if we assume that the one responsible for the Big Bang is the Lord God, but scientists can only get back there.

Robert Jastrow wrote a little book concerning this a couple of years ago, and I noticed that in the most recent issue of *Reader's Digest*, there is a condensation again of an article, or of that book. It's a rather interesting thing, but don't get your hopes up too much. Mr. Jastrow says he's an agnostic himself, but he said as far as scientific information is concerned, what appears in the Bible is in harmony at the present time, with what scientists are saying about the origin of our creation. In fact, he concludes with a rather clever paragraph in which he says that the scientists have climbed a mountain, and finally have just gotten over the top to discover that the theologians have been there all along. [Laughter] But he is an agnostic, and he doesn't believe the Scriptures give us the real truth about how this creation arose, so bear that in mind. The next thing that we want to notice about this is that Moses traces the creation to an individual, a person whom he calls God or Elohim.

Now, I put this Hebrew word out here in the margin, *Elohim*. Elohim is a plural word. Literally it means something like Gods, but interpreters of the Hebrew text have debated this for centuries. Is the reason that the Bible uses a plural for God the desire to express the fullness of his attributes and powers, and thus the term for God is Gods? At times it is clear, it is a plural when it speaks of the heathen gods, but at the time it's used of the Lord God, and in the Old Testament it is expressed that this Lord God is one. Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and that word Eloheinu is used there, our God, and

it's clear from that passage that the reference is to one God, so it this a plural of majesty because he's great person? Is it a plural of intensity? A *pluralis intensitatis*, or is it a *pluralis trinatatis* -- is it a plural of the Trinity as some have claimed? We just note that the term that Moses uses of God is a plural, Elohim.

Now, perhaps it is safest at this point to speak of this as expressive of his almighty power, but it may be a foreshadowing of the Trinity. Some of the interpreters who have believed this have been Cocceus, an outstanding interpreter. Luther, himself felt that this word Elohim anticipated the Trinity, and many others have also claimed that. When we turn to verse 27, and we read in verse 27, "And God said," (That is Elohim said,) "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Well, that gives some further support to plurality. As expressed in this word Elohim.

Now, there is a great deal of difference between plurality and Trinity however. If we were to prove that this word refers to a plurality within the deity, that would not prove that Trinity, for the doctrine of the Trinity, as we have studied, is the doctrine that there is one God who subsists in three persons. Plurality is in harmony with Trinity, but plurality is not the same as Trinity. There might be two or four persons, or eight persons, so far as plurality is concerned, so even if we were to say that this is a plural, that indicates plurality, we still do not have the doctrine of the Trinity.

Now, some other things in this passage suggest that of course. We have in verse 1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and then in verse 2 we read, "And the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, and then we have reference to the Word of God in verse 3, and God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." And we know that that term word is one of the terms for the Lord Jesus Christ, so we have here reference perhaps to three divine individuals, but nevertheless there is no clear proof of this. We're also taught in the gospel of John in chapter 1 that the Word of God was the one through whom the creation has taken place. All things were created by him the word, and without him was not anything made that was made, John the Apostle says. So

the most that we can say, I think, to sum it all up is that the creator is Elohim, and plurality may be involved.

Now, we just finished, some of you in the audience, have been with me through the studies of Genesis. I think there were about sixty-six of them, and you'll remember that a number of times in the book of Genesis we came across the expression the angel of the Lord. We had it in Genesis chapter 18, Genesis chapter 16, Genesis chapter 3, was probably a reference to this, though the term angel of the Lord is not found there. Genesis chapter 32 and so on, and in these passages, there was a clear indication of a divine being who came down in the midst of men, and fellowshiped with them. It was this man who turned out to be God, who wrestled with Jacob at Pineal. And Jacob called the place Pineal, because there he saw the face of God, but the text of Scripture says a man wrestled him, but then later on it become evident that this man is more than a man, for all he needs to do in order to wound Jacob for the rest of his life, is to reach out and touch his hip joint, and from that time on his hip is dislocated, and Jacob limped for the rest of his life, in token of his encounter of the Lord God at the ford of Jabbok. So this is perhaps a foreshadowing of the Trinity, but all that Moses says is that Elohim is the creator.

Now, as far as the content of the creation, the remainder of the verses of Genesis 1, through chapter 2 in about verse 7, gives us that. We have the creation. Now the Hebrew word *bara'* is a word that is very interestingly used through this section. It may be written like this, *bara'*. That may be translated b-a-r-a, and then a little apostrophe in order to signify it in transliteration. *Bara'* is the word that means "to create." It's the word that is used here in the first verse. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." It's used three times in this opening chapter. We have it here in verse 1. We have it in verse 21. "And God created great sea monsters, and every living creature that moveth." And then again in verse 27, "So God created man in his own image."

Now, here are three significant places where this word *bara'* is used. It's not used elsewhere here. When God creates out of nothing matter it is used. When God moves from inorganic to organic life, in verse 21, it is used again, and then when he moves from organic life, to the creation of man it is used again, so at three significant critical places, this word *bara'* is used.

Now, *bara'* itself does not mean creation out of nothing, but it is never used of a human act of creation, always of a divine. Some contexts seem to make it no more significant than to make, but it's never used with the accusative of matter. And so most of the students of the book of Genesis are agreed that though the verb itself does not mean creation out of nothing always, that is taught here. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." He created it out of nothing. The author of the epistle of the Hebrews commenting upon this seems to agree because he says, in the third verse of the 11th chapter, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." So what we are taught then it would appear is that the creation is the content of God's creative activity, the universe and that it is something that he has created out of nothing.

Now, the word heavens is a term that refers to space, and earth to matter in a basic space, mass, time, universe. In fact, one of the men who has studied scientific matters in connection with Scripture quite a bit has said that this opening verse may be phrased in this way, "The transcendent omnipotent Godhead called into existence the space, mass, time, universe."

Now, that's an interesting statement from several reasons. It's interesting because space, mass, time, universe suggests a triune universe. That's not the same as a triad, a trinity, or a triunity, is not the same as a triad in which there are three distinct and separate components comprising a system, but rather a Trinity is a continuum in which each component is itself coexistent, and co-terminous with the whole. That is, the universe is not part space, part time, part matter, but rather, all space, all time, all matter,

and so is a true triunity, so that it is rather interesting is it not that the creation might itself reflect the triunity of the Godhead responsible for it.

Now, that's a little speculative, and so we don't want to risk our necks for that, by the way. I wouldn't want to be martyred for belief in that particular doctrine. Let's move on to the resultant conditions following. You know, there are some texts for which you should be willing to be martyred, and then there are some that you would be willing to sacrifice. Those you don't hold quite as definitely and dogmatically as you hold others. I always believed that John Knox was the wisest of all of the reformers because he had a doctrine very similar to that, and when he counted the numbers opposite him, he said to himself, well, I don't think I want to be a martyr at this particular place, and so he would flee, and as a result he ultimately won the battle, and Scotland became a reform notation, as a result of his wisdom in flying or fleeing when the odds were against him. There wasn't all together human reasoning. Knox suffered a great deal. He spent a lot of time in a French galley in punishment for some of his activities, and Mary Queen of Scots was always after him, and it's terrible to have a woman after you all the time. [Laughter] So he did have to suffer. Martyrdom may be easier than that, but he was a wise man, and so I do not want to be martyred for that particular text.

Now, let's move on here and say just a word or two about the resultant conditions following. Verse 2 begins with a kind of circumstantial clause. "Now, the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." So Moses says that as a result of the opening creation of matter, we had unformed and uninhabited elements on the earth, and the presence of darkness unenergized. It was perfect, but it was not complete. And then he describes the energizing activity of the Holy Spirit making of this particular material the sphere that it later became. When he says that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, he uses a Hebrew term that is later on used of the fluttering of a mother bird over her young, and so the idea is of the Spirit of God brooding over God's creation just

like a mother bird over her birds, and bringing out of this unformed and uninhabited mass of matter, what we now read about in the six creative days of the book of Genesis.

Well, let me draw some conclusions, and I'll just state these because we only have about five minutes, and so I'll just list them. What we may conclude from this is that from the preexistent God there comes all history, all other cosmogonies that is theories of the origin of the earth. There are a number of them, Chaldean, Babylonian, Egyptian, Phoenician, Indian, Ovid's even, and in them there are traces of doctrines that relate to the book of Genesis, but all other cosmogonies are echoes of the one that is set forth in the word of God. This one verse, the opening verse of Genesis, it has been often pointed out, refutes all of men's false philosophies concerning the origin and meaning of the world. It refutes atheism because the universe was created by God. It refutes pantheism, for God is transcendent over that which he has created. It refutes polytheism, for the one God created all things, and it refutes materialism, for matter had a beginning.

Many scientist who do not accept the Big Bang Theory, accept the eternity of matter, but the opening verse of Genesis is contradictory of that. Matter had a beginning. It refutes dualism because God was alone when he was created. If matter is eternal, then it's infinite, but two absolutes cannot exist independently. Whence came matter? Well, matter came from the hand of God from the word of God. It refutes humanism because God not man is the ultimate reality. And it refutes evolutionism because God created all things. This chapter's verbs revealed a personal God. There is energy of mind. Energy of will. We have the eternal God, as over against eternal matter, but Genesis presents the creation as a product of a person who has mind and will and purpose, and third there is only one God who is the creator of all and he dominates this account. Thirty five times reference is made to God. What we have in Genesis is a Monergism, not several gods, not different gods as the polytheists teach, but one God.

Now, we may have different persons. That does not contradict one God to have different persons within the Godhead. We also have here the doctrine that we have a

sovereign creative God who exists and who acts. We are craftsmen. He is the creator. Creative activity belongs to God. Man likes to take over the things of God, and so often we have the adjective used today is very popular. You know of course how I despise it. Creative, he is a creative person, or she is a creative person. There is only one person who is creative. Well, original you might use. Even that's not totally satisfactory. Only God is creative. This universe is the product of God.

It is one, and yet it is not simple. In age it is one, and it's one vast system, but it's not simple, it's a complex system, consisting of the mundane sphere in those shining heavens with their starry hosts and angelic beings. It's vast. The nearest fixed star, so remote that three years are required for its light to reach the earth. From some light has been traveling millions of years. Some galaxies are moving from us at a speed of one hundred million miles an hour. Amazing thing when you think about how fast the universe is moving away from us. And yet it is not infinite, this universe, it is measured by God. It is old, but it is not eternal. It's existent, but it's not self-existent. Only God is self-existent. Moses teaches perhaps a plural God, but not a monolithic unity. The remainder of the book and the remainder of the Bible indicate that the God who is the creator is a unity, but also a triunity in person, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is an immanent God.

Now, I hate to do this because it means I am talking down to you, and I don't want to talk down to you because you probably have more sense than I have, but I am talking about immanent with an a not an with an I, an immanent God, ultimately our origin. He hovers over the universe. There is no impression of a God with an Olympian kind of detachment. He is a great mother bird, interested in everything that transpires down here upon this earth, and he's manifested this most significantly in the gift of the Son of God, and in the gift of the Holy Spirit to his believers who are in dwelled by him permanently. And finally the God of creation is a God of grace also, and he must be known as creator

before he can be known as Savior, but creation is the first of many steps that issue in the bringing of many sons the glory.

Before the foundation of the world there existed a great love, a great purpose, and out of that great love and purpose has come the doctrine of election, the doctrine of efficacious grace, or of effectual calling. The doctrine of justification by faith, and ultimately the doctrine of glorification and all of the things associated with that. Here begins the embodiment of all the great thoughts that lead on to the costly work of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Creation is the first of God's steps in this sphere that will lead on to the salvation of his people. Do you know him? Is your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you one of those of whom the prophet writes when he said, "They will call his name Immanuel? And they shall call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins." Do you know you have that life? Are you a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and are you resting in the merits of his finished work? Let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are thankful to Thee for the doctrine of creation, and we worship Thee because of the greatness of Thy power and for the greatness of Thy purpose, and when we reflect upon the fact that creation is just a step along the way to the cross and to the ultimate glory and the ages that are to come, we are amazed at the majesty of our Triune God, and so we worship Thee, Father, Son and Spirit through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.