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Genesis – The Beginnings

Overview

Well, as Jesus said to His disciples, “I long to have this meal with you,” I’ve been longing to have this study with you. The book of Genesis, what a great book as we think about the beginnings of everything. It’s an amazing book. We’re going to be focusing specifically on what I would say is the purpose of the book, and sometimes it gets lost in the scientific and academic pursuit and the way that it’s oftentimes dissected. However, we know that all Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for correction, reproof and for training in righteousness. Ultimately, every book of the Bible, every word of the Bible is to bring us closer to God. So, we’re going to see the purpose of this book as we go into this, and we’re going to be focusing on the beginnings of two things. One is the beginnings of God’s grace, and the other is the beginnings of God’s reconciliation. At the very beginning, you’re going to see the grace of God being poured out upon man in all the things that are created. It is the goodness of God and His loving-kindness that is seen in everything that we have, and the realization that everything was created by the word of God.

This is the main point of John 1; it’s conveying to us that all things are created by Christ. That is to say that the one, as John will go onto say in chapter 1, is full of grace and truth; created all things which means that He created everything in grace and truth. So, the things that were created were by the hands of Jesus Christ. You’ll see that being proclaimed at the very beginning of John 1.

(John 1:1) “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

(John 1:2) He was in the beginning with God.

(John 1:3) All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”

That’s pretty inclusive, isn’t it?

(John 1:4) “In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

(John 1:5) The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.”

Then it goes onto say,

(John 1:9) “There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.”

What a wonderful passage.

(John 1:14) “And the Word became flesh...”

That is the Word that created all these things.

“...and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

It is grace that created all things. So, we’re going to be seeing the grace of God and the reconciliation of God throughout this wonderful book; the beginnings of God’s dealing with man and the beginnings of these wonderful truths.

When you think about the book of Genesis, obviously it is a book of beginnings, and the word I have up here, “*rē’sīt*” is dealing with beginnings. When we think about that, we usually think about the start of something, but we don’t think of all the things that are attached to that. That’s what I want us to talk about today as well as the introduction that we’re going to be looking at in this book.

The things that are attached to this is a sense of conception or origination. When he uses the word “*rē’sīt*”, it’s talking about first choice, chief, but it has the sense of conception, a birth; in other words, you’re dealing with something that is existing and coming out of something. So, we’re going all the way back to the origination. That’s why it starts off, “In the beginning God...” It’s talking about the origination of all things. You’ll oftentimes read, whether it’s in Ephesians 1 or other passages that deal with the fact that before the foundation of the world. So, one of the reasons why he uses the word “beginnings” instead of “beginning” is because the emphasis is on the fact that this has ever been on the heart and the mind of God; we’re not as much learning anything new as things are being revealed to us and actually taking on form. So, an interesting study as we come into this book of beginnings.

Now, as we come to this, I want you to note a few things. As it starts off, “In the beginning God...”, I want you to note that the passage in no way debates the existence of God. It just starts off, “In the beginning God...” So, man would like to debate whether He exists or not, God goes, “we’re not going to debate that. I’m here.” The second thing that I want you to notice is that the way that God creates is not in any way explained within the passages. Did you notice that? It just says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1) How’d You do that? “I just did that.” Once again, we often get into these debates and the perception is that perhaps God cooperatively worked together with nature and things were created.

I love that Isaiah 24:33 says, "I created the heavens and the earth by Myself, alone."

So, just in case you and I are a little confused about that or we begin to think that it's a process, God is very clear about His creative plan.

You can see that if you look with me in Psalm 33.

(Psalm 33:1) "Sing for joy in the LORD, O you righteous ones; Praise is becoming to the upright.

(Psalm 33:2) Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; Sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings.

(Psalm 33:3) Sing to Him a new song; Play skillfully with a shout of joy."

One of the reasons why it's being written within the passage is because God works skillfully for us in His creation.

So, the parallel in verse 6 is:

"By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host."

The passage is making reference to the Word; which we understand according to John 1 is Christ Himself and the spirit of God's love, grace, mercy, and truth are personified in the person of Christ.

(Psalm 33:7) "He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deeps in storehouses.

(Psalm 33:8) Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.

(Psalm 33:9) For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."

So, the clarification in this is inarguable; you can't debate what it was about. Creation just starts off, "In the beginning God..." and there is no doubt who is the one that is center stage. That's the next point I want to bring up, that is as you go through the very beginning of Genesis, it starts off with "God". I know that man likes to worship the creation rather than the Creator, but this is a book about God, and I think it's very important that we keep Him center stage. So, it starts off by no doubt the subject being God, and you can see this very clearly throughout the chapter because the name "God" is used at least 35 times in the first chapter.

“In the beginning God created...” (Genesis 1:1)

“...the Spirit of God was moving...” (Genesis 1:2)

“God said...” (Genesis 1:3)

“God saw the light...” (Genesis 1:4)

“God called...” (Genesis 1:5)

I mean, there's no doubt that God is center stage in this book. So, for us to in any way deter from making the focus about Him because this marvelous book is telling us God's eternal purpose and plan; for us to just see it as an academic exercise or a scientific design which we begin to get ourselves involved in how things are made (which once again, Scripture purposefully leaves that out), would not only be erroneous but detracting from the main purpose of the book.

So, as we come to this, we're going to be talking about the main subject; that is the Lord. Obviously, God and creation; it's not a corroborative work and the fact that God is at center stage. The next thing that I want us to look at is of course that this is Scripture. Just as a reminder, I already gave you 2 Timothy 3:16, but look with me in 2 Peter. It's always good to have these passages clarified because of the fact that it's easy to think in some way that maybe this was kind of made up or this is another philosophy.

(2 Peter 1:20) “But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,

(2Peter 1:21) for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

Scripture is letting us know that this is not an invention of somebody's imagination, but this is the word of God. Now, with it being the word of God, we know that it has clear purpose. We also know this, that it's impossible for us, man, science, philosophy to understand what God is saying apart from the Spirit of God.

Once again, if you look with me in 1 Corinthians, I know these are all foundational points, but it's especially important with this book because of the confusion that oftentimes arises in this. In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul begins to talk about this wisdom that the world doesn't have; had they had the great wisdom of God, they wouldn't have crucified the Lord of glory. So, that's pretty summarizing.

(1 Corinthians 2:6) “Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;

(1 Corinthians 2:7) but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory".

Now, that is an important point. In other words, what is Genesis all about? Well, it must have something to do with us. It must have something to do with a plan. It doesn't seem to be an accident or an arbitrary act; it seems to have clarification, a purpose and an end. One of the statements that we made here is that the word itself, "רֵאשִׁיט" has the sense of being pregnant with the concept of the end in mind. So, when it's talking about beginnings, it's talking about a beginning with a purpose. It would be something like somebody saying, "So, you're expecting?" and we would say, "Yes." So, expecting would be, ok, you're pregnant now, but we're expecting something to happen at the end of that. That's fundamentally what the word "beginnings" is making reference to.

So, Isaiah 46:10 states very clearly that God declares the end from the beginning. So, there is that clarification that when he talks about "declaring the end from the beginning," he's saying God is making it evident in showing His purpose.

So, as you look at 1 Corinthians 2, you realize that there is something that (2 Corinthians 2:7) "God predestined before the ages to our glory;

(1 Corinthians 2:8) the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;

(1 Corinthians 2:9) but just as it is written,
'THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD,
AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN,
ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.'"

So, obviously there's preparation involved.

(1 Corinthians 2:10) "For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God."

Genesis is a spiritual book; it has to be understood in a spiritual way. So, though it is giving information and unveiling obvious points of creation, that's not its main concern. Its main concern is to show God and His gracious act towards man even though man will ultimately not only disobey Him, and I would say ultimately, pretty quickly would rebel against Him. The story then goes into reconciliation mode. So, here you have Adam and Eve, and of course you couldn't find any more privileged people on the face of the planet. They are given everything; "it's good, it's good, it's good, it's very good." He not only places them in this place on the earth, but in the grandest place on all the earth; in paradise. There they are in the garden, this wonderful garden. Do you need gold? They've got gold in the rivers. Whatever you need or

want, it's there. Yet, they choose to disobey Him. Now, when in time they do this, we know that they do it within 130 years of their lifespan. The reason why we know this is we come to Genesis 5, and Seth is born when Adam is 130 years old. Now, Adam will live 930 years. So, he's just a babe at this point, but at his early stage, this is what's already happened, they've rebelled against God, Cain has murdered his brother, and now the third son is born, Seth; that's within the first 130 years. That's an early stage to rebel against God. From that time on, it is God pulling back, reconciling, working in the lives of the people. So, you see at the very beginning the graciousness of God. Throughout the span you see the rebellion of man and the contrast is stark.

(1 Corinthians 2:11) "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God."

If in fact you're trying to dissect the book of Genesis without seeing the Spirit of God in this, moving you, helping you understand and enlightening you to see the purpose in it; that's a key point because everything that God is creating is a purpose. The way that He begins to delineate and convey the creation of all things has a purpose to it and we'll see that as we go through. As we look at this, it is clear that God has appointed, God is ordaining, and God is moving.

One of the great passages, when we think of time, is Ecclesiastes 3:1 which says that God has appointed a time for every event. So, the events that come into play are obviously a point of all this.

If you look with me in Isaiah 45, this will parallel to the point that God makes things for a reason.

(Isaiah 45:12) "It is I who made the earth, and created man upon it.
I stretched out the heavens with My hands
And I ordained all their host."

Now, He's wanting to say this, once again in the context of the prophecy in which God anoints Crys the king to rebuild the city of Jerusalem in Isaiah 45:1. The thought is "You're getting a foreigner to give us money and to build for us for free?" and God goes, "Yeah, because I appoint everything." Oftentimes the thought is "How could God be working through an ungodly situation?" God goes, "I've created everything for a reason."

"Everything?"

Yeah, in case you're not really sure about that, look at Proverbs 16. There's a verse that has been a good reminder to me.

(Proverbs 16:1) “The plans of the heart belong to man,
But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.”

Did you miss verse 4?

“The LORD has made everything for its own purpose,
Even the wicked for the day of evil.”

I don't know if you caught that or not. Accident? Mishap? Maybe something God doesn't know was going to happen? Not going to happen. The passage is very clear, “I ordained all their host.”

In Isaiah 45, it's great to see the sense of purpose in verse 17 as he talks to Israel, and He says, “Israel has been saved by the LORD
With an everlasting salvation;
You will not be put to shame or humiliated
To all eternity.”

There is no doubt that He's dealing with an eternal plan and purpose in all this.

(Isaiah 45:18) “For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place) ...”

The word “*tôû*” is the same word that was used at the beginning of Genesis. The emphasis of the word is that He didn't create it in vain. He's fundamentally saying, “What, do you think I created this stuff for nothing? I have a purpose for it.” Even the way that it's described here in verse 18, “He is the God who formed the earth”. The word “formed,” is “*yāšar*” which means He fashioned and framed it. It's telling us that it was not a meaningless, arbitrary or erratic movement that brought this stuff together; it was a purpose and a plan that He had orchestrated. According to verse 17, it has something to do with everlasting salvation. Everything that He made has something to do with that.

He sums up this way at the end of verse 21,

“... A righteous God and a Savior;
There is none except Me.”

“I'm creating a salvation in your life.”

(Isaiah 46:10) “Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things which have not been done,
Saying, ‘My purpose will be established,
And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’”.

Genesis is fundamentally telling us that God is going to be doing this.

In Isaiah 10, He emphasizes the fact that the king of Assyria thinks that he's going to destroy Israel, and He says, "No, I just raised him up to scare them. When I'm done using him, then I'm going to destroy him, but I have a purpose for everything that I created." So, when we see creation, there is not that sense of God's out of control, or He doesn't control everything. That's why He can say, "I'm causing all things to work together for your good."

If you look in Isaiah 33, I want to solidify the Proverbs text.

(Isaiah 33:1) "Woe to you, O destroyer,

While you were not destroyed;

And he who is treacherous, while others did not deal treacherously with him.

As soon as you finish destroying, you will be destroyed;

As soon as you cease to deal treacherously, others will deal treacherously with you.

(Isaiah 33:2) O LORD, be gracious to us..."

Now, why do you think he throws that in? I can tell you why. I'm glad you asked. The reason why he throws it in at that juncture is because he's showing us the purpose of the destroyer. The purpose of the destroyer is to make us run to the Gracious One. We know that the destroyer is not gracious, but our tendency is to ignore His graciousness; that's seen in the garden. God gives him everything, "God doesn't want my best." Ok, just have a destroyer chase you around. Then, you'll find out who's gracious and who's not, and you realize the necessity of these things that God has to save us. These are not confusing points. People say, "Why does evil happen?" Well, first of all, you invited it. Secondly, God's going to use it in spite of you. He's going to use the very thing that you embraced to push you back to Him; that's exactly what He does. So, as you consider this whole subject of creation, I just want to emphasize God is using all of creation. Now, the passage is dealing with the conception, origination, and that always goes back to the person of Christ.

Colossians 1 is very clear about a number of things. Obviously, the reason why all things were created is probably number 1, but how it describes that is very clarifying.

(Colossians 1:9) "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

(Colossians 1:10) so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

(Colossians 1:11) strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously

(Colossians 1:12) giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

(Colossians 1:13) For He rescued us from the domain of darkness...

How did we get into the domain of darkness? Yeah, we gave the title deed over to the serpent. I mean, once you submit to somebody else, you give them authority over you.

“... and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

(Colossians 1:14) in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

(Colossians 1:15) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.”

Now, we read that, and we go, “Ok, so, Jesus was created.” No, that’s not what it says.

“Firstborn” of creation. What does he mean by that? That all of creation was born out of Him. He was the venue by which all things were created; by the word of His mouth all things were created. We’ll put it another way, He birthed all things. His name is Jesus which means that His goal from day 1 is to save.

(Colossians 1:16) “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.”

Who’s the originator? When you understand who the originator is, you understand what the plan is.

(Colossians 1:17) “He is before all things...”

So, He wasn’t created at that time.

“... and in Him all things hold together.

(Colossians 1:18) He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

(Colossians 1:19) For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,

(Colossians 1:20) and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.”

What’s His plan? To reconcile all things to Himself. You’re going to see this throughout the book of Genesis; you’re going to see God reconciling the world back to Himself. You’re going to see it begin with His grace upon man in all things and benefits that He gives them. I mean, you can’t read Genesis 1 and say that God was holding back and that He didn’t want us to have good. You

can't read it and believe that. It's all about the grace of God. Yet, what is in stark contrast is the hatred of man towards Him. Once again, it's sad to say that oftentimes in any situation when you give somebody a lot of things, you would think that appreciation would be the natural outflow of something like that, but it's oftentimes just the opposite; they get this sense of entitlement and they become more demanding. You see that in the spirit of man, and these things reveal the heart of man, but it also reveals the graciousness of God. Something that is oftentimes missed in this whole journey of creation is God, and He's center stage in all of this. So, as we go through this, we're going to see the evidence of God, His grace, and His reconciliation in the ministry.

In Romans 8 you'll see this wonderful truth as well. Besides John 3:16, it's probably one of the most loved texts in all of Scripture.

(Romans 8:18) "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

(Romans 8:19) For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God."

He then goes into explaining why things had to happen the way they happened.

(Romans 8:20) "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope"

"Hope" (confident expectation)

(Romans 8:21) that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God."

It's amazing that you have the children of Israel and they're not necessarily happy about living in Jerusalem. So, they're perception is "maybe we can court the big cities like Ninevah or Babylon or perhaps Egypt. They have it far greater." and God says, "Ok, you like those places. Let's have you visit there." So, he takes them into captivity. Then, you read in the psalms that they're playing songs on the harps and they're saying, "I wish I were home." God says, "So, absence makes the heart grow fonder." It is necessary, oftentimes, for us to go through difficult times to appreciate the things that are truly valuable. All these things that happen, whether it's the futility of creation or the problems that ensue because of what we've done, it's all part of God's plan and the process of bringing us back to love Him more than we ever had. It is a consonant picture of the prodigal son, in which he had a home that he was loved and cared for, he had no needs or wants; he didn't appreciate it. So, a famine comes as he takes all the things that he thinks are rightly his and he deserves. Then, he squanders it. Thus, the word "prodigal". He then finds out that maybe the world isn't that fantastic a place after all. "I want to go

home.” The love and affection that comes out of going back home is stronger than as if he had been with his dad the whole time; as the comparison is given to the other son. This is why, within the context of that, in Luke 15, it talks about the ninety-nine sheep, one being lost, and there’s more joy over the one that comes back.

Literally, we’re seeing this progression throughout Scripture. If you follow a little bit further in Romans 8, this theme follows through as we read verse 28; one of our favorite verses, that we know that God is causing things, once again, talking about the sovereignty of God in this, but finish reading verse 29.

(Romans 8:29) “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren”.

Once again, the originator; one who conceptualizes, brings about by virtue of who He is, the brethren and their salvation.

(Romans 8:30) “and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”

There seems to be a clear for-ordained purpose in this. The very word “beginning” is wanting you to have the understanding that God is moving methodically for a purpose; everything that happens from this beginning state all the way through is God bringing His people to love Him with all of their heart. What a wonderful story it is when you consider.

Look with me in Psalm 145. The way that some of the psalms are worded makes them such great passages.

(Psalm 145:1) “I will extol You, my God, O King,
And I will bless Your name forever and ever.”

How do you know that you’re able to bless somebody forever and ever, unless you’re alive forever and ever?

(Psalm 145:2) “Every day I will bless You,
And I will praise Your name forever and ever.”

(Psalm 145:3) Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised,
And His greatness is unsearchable.

(Psalm 145:4) One generation shall praise Your works to another,
And shall declare Your mighty acts.”

What’s he talking about? All the things that God has done, including creation.

As Romans 1:20 would say, “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made...”

He’s stating here that men shall speak of the power of God.

(Psalm 145:6) “Men shall speak of the power of Your awesome acts, And I will tell of Your greatness.”

In this, we’re seeing the divine nature of God.

(Psalm 145:8) “The LORD is gracious and merciful; Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness.”

That’s the nature of God, isn't it? That’s the nature of God, and the nature of God is seen in creation.

(Psalm 145:9) “The LORD is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works.”

Right from the very beginning, you’re going to see the gracious acts of God.

(Psalm 145:16) “You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing.”

Is that not the grace and the mercy of God? I was talking about the deer that I was watching on the other side, and I go, “Wow, you have more grass than you know what to do with.” He would sometimes eat, and then he would go, “Eh,” and walk around. Another one would come up, they’d look at each other, “Maybe we’ll eat.” Then, they’d eat a little something. I’m going, “These guys have more than they know what to deal with.” That’s just the graciousness of God, right?

Psalm 144 talks about the greatness of God within this particular passage. It compares man with God, and you have to ask the question, “Why would God consider me at all?”

(Psalm 144:3) “O LORD, what is man, that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You think of him?”

Now, that same phrase is in Psalm 8, but that verse is in the context of “I consider the heavens and all the things that You have made, and I say, ‘What is man that You are mindful?’” So, Psalm 8 is dealing with the recognition of how great God is; Psalm 144 is dealing with the transientness and weakness of man, and “Why would God even think about me?” Both of those would cause you to think in that particular vain.

Psalm 136 has a repetitive theme in it; you’d probably notice it right away.

(Psalm 136:1) “Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good,
For His lovingkindness is everlasting.”

The way that the psalmist will put it in Psalm 111:4 is:

“He has made His wonders to be remembered;
The LORD is gracious and compassionate.”

The point is that you can see His grace in creation and all the things that He makes. Of course, that was one of the things that irritated Jonah. He knew that God would be gracious in Jonah 4.

(Psalm 136:2) “Give thanks to the God of gods,
For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

(Psalm 136:3) Give thanks to the Lord of lords,
For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

(Psalm 136:4) To Him who alone does great wonders,
For His lovingkindness is everlasting;

(Psalm 136:5) To Him who made the heavens with skill...”

Why is it tying it with lovingkindness? The point that is oftentimes missed is that everything that was created was out of His love for us. It’s an amazing thought when you consider it.

(Psalm 136:6) “To Him who spread out the earth above the waters,
For His lovingkindness is everlasting;

(Psalm 136:7) To Him who made the great lights,
For His lovingkindness is everlasting:

(Psalm 136:8) The sun to rule by day,
For His lovingkindness is everlasting”.

Why do you think He made everything? He puts a time clock in the sky so that we don’t have to wear watches, but it’s the grace of God all the way through. You begin to see His handiwork and His love for us. Grace is just pouring out of all creation.

The fundamental point in Isaiah 30:18, God longs to be gracious to us, and He’s looking for us to reach out to Him.

You’ll read in the book of Genesis that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. It’s sad to say that the history, as you go through the book of Genesis, the majority of mankind is continually rejecting the love of God. This is fundamentally what Thessalonians is going to say; the reason why people go away from the presence of God and suffer great hurt and pain for eternity is

because they did not obey the gospel and receive the love of God so as to be saved. There's nothing ambiguous about this.

One of the great parables that Jesus gives in Mark 12, Matthew 21, as well as Luke 20, is the parable of a master who had a vineyard, and he sends his servant to go check on his vineyard. The one he sends gets beat up and tortured. According to the gospel of Mark, he sends another one and they kill him. Finally, he says, "I'll send my son." and they kill him. We fundamentally see the pattern of man, the hatred of man, and how he rejects God. It's just a bizarre thought to me that man reads the Old Testament, and he goes, "God is mean." Well, you're not beginning with the right premise because everything about Genesis is saying the very opposite of that.

Acts 17, we oftentimes put this in the context of all this as well. Verses 24-30, that God is orchestrating even where we live and the times that we're born; that he might bring us to Himself. So, everything is literally being orchestrated and God is not simply informing us in this book of beginnings, He is drawing us to Himself, and the whole book of Genesis is wanting you to see this. I do think it's interesting that when you look for traces of the book of Genesis in the Old Testament, you'll see very few quotes from the book of Genesis in the Old Testament. However, you'll see many quotes in the New Testament. Jesus will be asked about the relationship of divorce between man and a woman, and He will use this phrase, "From the beginning, it was not so." and He will go all the way back to the beginning. It will be in the book of the Old Testament that you read about Abraham and his faith. You'll even see that Lot's wife is mentioned in the gospels, "remember Lot's wife." All the way through, you see the traces of the book of Genesis in the New Testament. So, the passage right off the bat is bringing us to that relationship with God and it's going to take us on that journey. It is this that's going to be the main subject as we go through this, and my hope is that you will see the grace of God through every page that we read and how He's working, calling, beckoning in everything that He does. Even as we start the very beginning of this book, as it says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;" it's not only letting us know that He's the source of all things but how He creates is now going to be telling the story of salvation.

If you read Genesis 1:1-2 with me, we'll connect these together.

(Genesis 1:1) "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

(Genesis 1:2) The earth was formless and void..."

The two words that he uses are "tôû" and "bôû". It's fundamentally dealing with a world that is meaningless and empty.

Now, that same quote is going to be in the book of Jeremiah, and Jeremiah is going to use it in terms of because they rebelled against the Lord, He looks to the earth, and He sees these things.

(Jeremiah 4:23) “I looked on the earth, and behold, it was formless and void; And to the heavens, and they had no light.”

Now, as you read in Genesis, “The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep...”

Is there a parallel there? Obviously, there’s a parallel there. What is the parallel that God is wanting to draw? Scripture is telling us that God is actually giving us the story of salvation? What’s going to happen? Though God created all these things for you and me to enjoy, we’re going to reject Him, and without Him life is going to become meaningless and empty. Now, what has to happen in order for salvation to come is the Spirit of God has to move and beckon us for Himself.

“The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the...”

I would use the phrase “tumultuous waters”.

Now, once again, couldn’t God have snapped His fingers and said, “Everything, together in one place”? Yeah, if He wasn’t telling a story, but everything that He’s doing has purpose; everything of that purpose has to do with demonstrating His grace and ultimately bringing reconciliation to all of His creation.

Colossians then heads that up with “it’s the Father’s good pleasure to bring all things back to Him.”

You see the same thing in 1 Corinthians 15. Of course, this is a wonderful chapter on resurrection.

(1 Corinthians 15:20) “But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.”

Of course, that He would have first place in everything.

(1 Corinthians 15:21) “For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.

(1 Corinthians 15:22) For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

(1 Corinthians 15:23) But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming,

(1 Corinthians 15:24) then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

(1 Corinthians 15:25) For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

(1 Corinthians 15:26) The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

(1 Corinthians 15:27) For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, 'All things are put in subjection,' it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him.

(1 Corinthians 15:28) When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all."

Does that sound like reconciliation? I know it sounds a little confusing, but does that not sound like reconciliation, that God is bringing everything back to Him? That's exactly what it's doing. So, what's the purpose of creation? You have to know what the purpose of creation is to understand why things are written the way that they are written. You have to know the purpose of creation to realize that God is working out salvation; He is demonstrating His grace to us, and it will be His grace that causes these things to be. "Bring many sons to glory" will be the emphasis. God is doing a work. There's not a mistake in any of this. There isn't an "oops". It is a pre-ordained plan.

One of my favorite verses is found in 2 Timothy, if you look there with me. You know, you just have in your mind sometimes, "This verse should be here." I don't know if I would necessarily put this one here, but it just so clarifies what God has done. As Paul is writing Timothy, his desire is to encourage Timothy to be strong in the Lord, "God's not given us a spirit of timidity, but of love, power and discipline."

(2 Timothy 1:8) "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,

(2 Timothy 1:9) who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity".

That's an amazing verse. That's telling us that the number one plan to begin with, if I understand this right, is to grant us the grace of God. Was that true? "Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose..." which according to Isaiah, was established before the world.

There are two things that God demonstrates in the book of Genesis that often get overlooked, and that is the grace of God and the reconciling power of God. We're going to see them as God

begins to first build boundaries to man and say, "Don't go there." Man goes there, and then God says, "Ok, you don't want this to infiltrate humanity." and it does. All the way through, every step that God takes is a redemptive act. God preserving Noah was preserving humanity because Scripture tells us that the thought of man was continually evil all the time. Another way of using the word "evil" was "continually destructive" which means that man would have self-destructed. Man was at each other's throats, and God says, "For Me to preserve humanity, I must find one that will act in faith with Me." As Hebrews 11 will begin to say, "By faith, by faith, by faith". You see him pulling out individuals, and with that they go back, they build a tower of Babel, and God goes, "Ok, Abraham, through your lineage, your seed, all the world will be saved." You see His redeeming act all the way through. This is going to be Genesis. So, we're talking about the beginnings, the conception of things, origination of things, the beginnings of God's grace and His reconciliation. So, I'm looking forward to this and we're going to go into some detail of what's being said, obviously, as we go through the different passages, but my hope is that you just see God in His glory and more specifically, that you see Jesus in all of His glory.

Just in ending, in John 5, Jesus will make an interesting statement in this particular gospel. As you come to the end of chapter 5, obviously He's dealing with people that knew the Scriptures well.

(John 5:39) "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me".

Then He begins to say, "I know you can't believe because you're not concerned with truth; you're concerned with how you can impress everybody else."

(John 5:44) "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?"

(John 5:45) "Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope."

(John 5:46) "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me."

Now, it's very important that you understand as it goes onto say in verse 47,

"But if you do not believe his writings..."

We clearly understand that it's Moses' writings of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; the Pentateuch. In fact, he is the writer of the beginnings. You see this as well throughout as Jesus begins to remind in the gospels that it was Moses who was the author of these things. We're going to see him proclaiming Jesus in this.

If you look at the end of the gospel of Luke 24, and we'll just end with this passage, Jesus, the resurrected one, comes to the two on the road to Emmaus. Of course, they were thinking that perhaps Jesus didn't rise from the dead as He had promised. Jesus responds to them in verse 25.

(Luke 24:25) "And He said to them, 'O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!'"

(Luke 24:26) 'Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?'

(Luke 24:27) Then beginning with Moses..."

Where does the Old Testament start? Where Moses begins to write.

"Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning..."

...the science of creation.

If God wanted us to know exactly how something came out of nothing, as Hebrews puts it, then ok, but He didn't. That wasn't His point; His point was that He created it and He's going to demonstrate His grace in that. Faith is the substance of things not seen, right? So, He starts explaining all these things, and what is He explaining about? Himself.

Once again, just to reiterate, Hebrews 11:3,

"By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible."

Ok, why doesn't God explain that?

"Molecules, where did they come from?"

"Me."

"Ok, how did You do that?"

"I'm God."

There's no real explanation beyond that.

We long for the wrong things, and we don't perceive the love of God to be the grandest of His attributes. As John will say in 1 John, "God is love." Yet, God's calling us to that. We all say that we want to be like God, and God goes, "Ok, sacrifice, be selfless; think of others and not yourself. Have this mind in you which is also in Christ Jesus." We respond with, "Not that. I

don't want to do that." Then God goes, "Ok, you don't want to be like Me." Certainly it's His desire for us to be. So, what a wonderful book this is. I just want to make sure that we're not thinking of it outside of what its purpose is.

Closing prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your word, and we give You thanks for Your purpose before the foundation of the world in which Your calling us. Your desire is to not withhold any good thing; that's obvious at the very beginning. Your grace is poured out, grace upon grace. Little did we know that grace upon grace would be You dying for us; little would we know that You would demonstrate Your love for us while we were rebellious and sinners, You would die for us. I mean, we can see Your love in creation and all the wonderful things that You made for us, but that You would want to reconcile somebody that not only disobeyed You, rebelled against You, hated You, spit on You; it's unimaginative to us. Yet, as we take this journey throughout the book of Genesis, we'll begin to see that not only did You continue to call, not only did You continue to rescue, not only did You continue to save, but oftentimes it was with individuals that were obstinate and very hard of faith to believe. Nevertheless, You did not give up, and we take this journey. Thank You for Your grace, thank You for Your reconciliation. In Jesus' name. Amen.

