

God the Creator by Jeff Strite

Genesis 1:1-1:31

OPEN: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28sqs5H5hao>

(It's a video "Creation Calls" by Brian Doerksen. I immediately followed video with quote by Abraham Lincoln and then immediately began to read from the entire chapter of Genesis 1)

Abraham Lincoln once said: "I never behold (the heavens filled with stars) that I do not feel I am looking in the face of God. I can see how it might be possible for a man to look down upon the earth and be an atheist, but I cannot conceive how he could look up, into the heavens and say there is no God."

Genesis 1:1-31 (READING AND PRAYER)

The very first book of your Bible is called Genesis.

Genesis means "beginnings"

It tells of the beginning of the world.

The beginning of mankind.

The beginning of sin.

The beginning of sacrifice for sins.

And the beginning of God's special relationship with the people He'd created.

Someone has said that it's nearly impossible to fully understand the rest of the Bible unless we understand the very first 12 chapters of Genesis. Those chapters form the FOUNDATION of the rest of what the Bible is all about.

For example, notice the very first words of Genesis:

"In the beginning... God"

Before anything else happened... there was God.

Scripture DIDN'T start out:

"In the beginning, the earth was without form and void."

OR "In the beginning before the sun and solar system existed"

OR "In the beginning in a land far, far away"

It simply says "In the beginning... GOD"

Many people get the mistaken impression that the Bible is Geo-centric (Geo - "Earth" as

in Geography)

In other words they believe the Bible is centered on the earth and mankind. And that's partly true.

But the Bible is actually "Theo-centric" (Theo - "God")

It's centered on God.

Hebrews 1:10-12 says: "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed.

But you remain the same, and your years will never end."

Everything in scripture is built - not so much around the earth or man - but around God.

Now, why is that important?

Why is it important that the Bible starts out saying "In the beginning God?"

1st – because God formed the earth.

He created it. He owns it. It belongs to Him.

We may be actors on the grand stage of life, but God owns the stage. He owns the props. He owns us. Everything that you see and touch in this world - belongs to God.

ILLUS: A group of scientists got together and decided they no longer needed God. One of them said to God, "We've decided we no longer need you. We can do all kinds of things through science. We can even clone people and make body parts, so we just don't need you anymore."

God listened patiently, "Let's have a man making contest just like in the days of Adam."

The scientist agreed and bent down to grab himself a handful of dirt.

And God smiled and said, "No, no, no – you get your own dirt."

It's all God's.

Everything is His.

Once you figure that out, everything else in Scripture begins to make sense.

But you have to START with God.

The 2nd reason Genesis starts out saying "In the Beginning God" is because without God nothing else matters.

Nothing has purpose. Nothing has real value.

You take God out of the picture and you end up with an empty, meaningless universe.

ILLUS: About 50 yrs. ago, a man named Hugh Morehead wrote several famous people - people who were accomplished and had made something of their lives - and he asked if they'd help him by telling him what they thought of the following question: "What is the purpose of life?"

* Isaac Asimov wrote back, "As far as I can see there is no purpose to life."

* Arthur Clark, the author of "2001", wrote, "I'm afraid I have no concrete ideas of the purpose of life."

* A famous American Philosopher Thomas Nagle "I'm afraid the meaning of life still eludes me"

* Comedian Fred Allen replied. "I say: 'Life is a slow walk down a long hall that gets darker as you approach the end.'"

* With a sense of resignation Joseph Heller (author of "Catch-22") wrote, "I have no answers to the meaning of life and I no longer want to search for any."

These are famous people. They were people who had "arrived" in their respective fields of endeavor. They were successful in this world... but they were apparently people without God in their world. And because of that - they had no answer as to purpose of life.

You see, it's God that creates value in this world and in us. Without God you're left nothing that has any intrinsic value to it in this world. Everything you see is becomes a mere accident... a chance collection of atoms and molecules. There's no plan and no purpose.

But once you put God back into the picture life suddenly has value.

David wrote: "...The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare." Psalm 40:5

In Jeremiah 2:11 God declared "I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

And in Ephesians 2:10 God tells us that once we become Christians we "are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Over and over and over again in the Bible God tells us we are valuable and that He has a plan and purpose for our lives. But if God isn't in your life, you don't have that. And life becomes empty and void.

It's God that gives this life value.

ILLUS: (TAKE OUT A \$20 Bill)

This is a \$20 bill.

How many of you would be pleased if I gave you this \$20 bill?

What if I tore it? Would you still want it?

What if I were to crumple it up into a ball, would you still want it?

What if I were to stomp on it – would you still want it?

Too bad. I'm not giving it to you.

Now why is this \$20 bill worth \$20?

Is the paper worth \$20?

Is the ink worth \$20?

Is that little strip of plastic they put inside the bill worth \$20?

Well if the paper, the ink and the plastic strip inside aren't worth \$20, what makes this bill worth \$20?

It's worth that much because the US Government says it's worth that much. And to verify this bill's value, the Federal government puts its IMAGES on that bill.

So, how do I KNOW that I (as a person) have value?

Because God put His image in me.

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27)

You are made in the image of God.

You have intrinsic value.

If for that reason alone – you are WORTH a great deal.

ILLUS: Norman Vincent Peale told of seeing a tattoo parlor in Hong Kong. In the window were displayed samples of the tattoos available. On the chest or arms you could have tattooed an anchor, flag, mermaid, whatever.

He said: “what struck me with force were three words that could be tattooed on one's flesh:

‘Born to lose.’

“I entered the shop and, pointing to those and, pointing to those words asked the Chinese tattoo artist, “Does anyone really have that terrible phrase, Born to lose, tattooed on his body?”

“He replied, ‘Yes, sometimes.’

‘But,’ I said, ‘I just can't believe — that anyone in his right mind would do that.’

“The Chinese man simply tapped his forehead and in broken English said,

“Before tattoo on body, tattoo on mind.”

In other words: What you THINK you are shapes WHO you are.

If you THINK you were born to lose, if you think you have no purpose or value, that's how you'll live.

But if you realize you have intrinsic value... you will tend to live up to that image.

And God says you have value because His image is tattooed onto your very soul.

But that's not the only reason we have value.

God tells us that everything in this world was created for us.

God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." (Genesis 1:26)

That's our commission. We are stewards of this world; it has been placed in our hands to take care of God's creation. No other part of God's creation was entrusted with that responsibility and no other part of creation even thinks about preserving the world around them.

ILLUS: I have a ferret and a cockatiel in my house. I love the ferret (we call him "Pickles") and I tolerate the bird – he squawks too much.

Like I said, I love the ferret. He loves to play fetch and hide and seek and I'll slide him across the linoleum and he comes back for more. He's just a fun pet to have.

He is also a very smart animal. I've had to work very hard at securing his cage because he's an escape artist.

Now, what would happen if I left both those animals free of their cages at the same time? That's right - I'd only have one animal in my house... the ferret would eat the bird.

Why would he do that? He doesn't need the food, I feed them ferret food and peanut butter. In fact I don't think he's EVER eaten a live animal, he's always eaten prepared food.

So, why would my ferret eat my pet bird?

Because he doesn't care.

It's not that he hates the bird or anything... it's just that it's a bird.

It's something for him to kill and eat.

Ferrets have NOT been entrusted with the responsibility of preserving the world around them.

God gave that responsibility to us. That's how much God values us. He created this

world FOR us and gave us the stewardship of the entire earth.

And Genesis 1 not only tells me that God created this world just for US, it goes into great detail to show the lengths God went - to prepare this world for us. The opening video showed the vast diversity and beauty of this world God has created.

It's the only known planet in the universe with the advantages FOR LIFE that ours has. Our planet is in what's called the "Goldilocks zone" – not too close to the sun and not too far away.

- If the earth were 1 degree closer to the sun, we'd fry! If we were 1 degree further from the sun, we'd freeze!
- If the moon was any closer or larger, the tides would destroy the coast lines. If the moon was any smaller/further away -oceans would die from a lack of nutrient movement.
- If our distance from Jupiter were any greater, asteroids and comets would pepper the earth. If we were any closer to Jupiter our orbit would become unstable.
- If earth's surface gravity was any stronger, it'd retain too much ammonia and methane and we couldn't breathe. If it were any weaker, earth's atmosphere would lose too much water and we'd not have the liquid necessary to survive.
- If the earth's crust were any thicker, it would absorb too much of our oxygen and we wouldn't be able to breathe. If it was any thinner; the earth would move and shake beneath our feet and would make life impossible.
- If our oceans were half their present size, we'd receive only $\frac{1}{4}$ the rainfall we do now. If they were just an $\frac{1}{8}$ larger, we'd get 4 times the annual precipitation we do now and our planet earth would become a vast, uninhabitable swamp.

And I could go on and on and on about the uniqueness of this planet God created just for US.

There are Scientists who pretend they can find a planet out there that has the ability to sustain life but the very fragile balance and the intricateness of it's various parts makes our planet a good place for life that is virtually impossible to duplicate. No matter how many billions of planets there may be out in the universe, it is statistically improbable any of them would match the life giving perfection of this simple planet we call earth.

That's why Genesis is so specific about the care God took in preparing Earth for mankind. It had to be just so... or life could not exist.

ILLUS: One man compared it to the time he decided he wanted to raise fish. He said

“The first thing we did was to go out and buy an aquarium. We also had to get supplies - Stones, Aerator, Filter System and a background for the aquarium. We took everything home - put the aerator and filter system in, filled the bottom of the aquarium with stones, put the background on it and filled it with water. Then, we went and bought some fish - brought them home – put them in the aquarium and sat... and watched them all die.

Why did they die?

Because the water wasn't properly treated with certain chemicals.

The fish needed an environment that would support their life.

(Steven Kellett, sermoncentral.com)

In the same way, God was very particular on how He built our environment on this planet. If it weren't “just so” - without the proper combination of chemicals and minerals and gases - we'd never survive.

Now, one last thing that caught my attention

What did God create on the first day? (LIGHT)

This wasn't the Sun and Moon kind of light – God created the sun, moon and stars 3 days later - this light was a DIVINE light. A light that came directly from God to light our world.

But – this is what's odd – that light was the ONLY thing God created on that 1st day. And I thought to myself: Why just create light? Why not do something else while He was about it?

If I go into a dark room I don't turn on the light and leave. I turn the light on to see what what is there. The light is only a tool for me to use to do what I REALLY came into the room to do. Turning the light on is never the primary reason I flip the switch.

But in Genesis 1 it's like God entered the room specifically to turn the light on. He turned on that divine light and then essentially turned around and just left the room.

That's all He did on that first day.

WHY?

Well, because “turning the light on” was WHY God came into the room.

You see, God wasn't just creating the world for us. From the very first day of creation God intended to send us a message of His plan for us from the beginning of Eternity. And what was the message?

Well, let me set the stage for this:

Jesus said "I am the LIGHT of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the LIGHT OF LIFE." John 8:12

And in John 1:4 we're told that "in (Jesus) was life, and that life was the LIGHT of man."

Jesus was THE light of the world. But what did Jesus do to give us that light?

He died for our sins. He was buried... and He rose from the grave.

In when He rose from the grave Jesus conquered DEATH... and gave us hope of life eternal.

Now guess which day of the week Jesus rose from the grave and conquered death?

The FIRST DAY!

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.

God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night."

And there was evening, and there was morning— the first day. Genesis 1:3-5

When God created the world, He lit the world with a divine light.

There was NO OTHER light for the world

Without that divine light, the world was cast in complete darkness.

And without that divine light there would be NO LIFE on the earth God created.

In the same way, Jesus is the Divine Light. Without His light the world is in darkness.

And He is the ONLY light that can you and I hope for life. And it is His light that can change the lives of people plunged in the darkness of a sinful world.

CLOSE: Rose Crawford had been blind for 50 years. Then she had an operation. When the doctor took the bandages from her eyes she said, "I just can't believe it". She wept. For the 1st time in her life she actually see. And what she saw a dazzling and beautiful world of form and color.

The amazing thing about her story was that 20 years of her blindness was unnecessary. She didn't know that surgical techniques had been developed and that an operation could have restored her vision at the age of 30. Her doctor said, "She just figured there was nothing that could be done for her condition. Much of her life could have been different."

The Bible tells us that without Jesus people live their lives in spiritual darkness. They've failed in their lives and sinned so much that they begin to feel worthless/without value.

They figure that nothing can be done to remove their shame and hopelessness.

But Jesus said, you don't have to live like that... "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

The question now for many of you is – do you believe that? Do you believe that Jesus is the only true light of this world, and if so – do you care enough for your neighbors and friends to tell them of what God wants to do in their lives?