

## Gen 1:2

Last week we started our study with Gen 1:1. To summarize we noted there are two world views to keep in mind when thinking about our origins, the Theistic or Divine Creation view which states God created the universe for a Divinely revealed purpose and destiny. This view places you within a divine order, with a God given meaning and moral framework in which to make decisions. There is an absolute truth which is independent and external to us and where ultimately you are accountable to your maker.

The other world view is the Secular, or Post Modern view, which states that matter self-existed or self-birthed, and organized itself into increasingly complex systems to produce life and ultimately human beings. In this view there is no purpose or 'grand strategy' hence meaning and purpose are self-determined and self-defined. There is no objective truth, order is dependent upon personal and collective power, ethical and moral decisions are relative, and accountability is only to those with greater power than you.

We then examined verse 1 and noted that time and our universe has a beginning; that God created *the heavens and the earth*: that God declares his self-existence and his sovereign and powerful creative genius through the creation of our present universe.

When we read Gen 1:1 and see that God created the earth, one can easily ask what is next and where is the story going? I am going to give you a quite simple answer as to the grand narrative of God's plan. First, God created. We have this explained in Gen 1 and 2. Then, what God made was wrecked because of our sin. This is recorded in Gen 3. In Gen 4 extending through Rev 3, God conserves and preserves. This is the part of history we are now in. God, through the restraining, and sustaining power of his Spirit is keeping, preserving, and moving our sinful world toward the climatic point of history when Christ returns (the events preceding and detailing Christ's return are noted in Rev 4-19). Then we will enter the Millennial Kingdom, when God restores. This is a thousand year time of making life more like the garden than ever before (Rev 20). Finally, history culminates in one last rebellious event, called the battle of Gog and Magog, when Christ will destroy all his enemies, the final judgement will occur, and God will create the new heavens and the new earth for all eternity (Rev 21-22) We can call this final time, the age of recreation, where we enjoy God forever. That's the story; creation, fall, conservation and preservation, restoration, then recreation. You can recite it with each of your fingers on one hand.

Today, and for the next few weeks, we are in the creation part and we now start with verse 2, often called the Chaos verse. At the end of our chat, I will introduce verses 3 through 31, the section that follows, called the Six Days of Creation.

### The Chaos

Gen 1:2, *Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*

In Gen 1:1 we had the creation of the heavens and the earth. Now in verse 2 the focus shifts to the earth as that is where the story of the Bible unfolds. Note the verse consists of three phases: two describing

the earth (formless and empty, and dark), and the other, the presence of God's Spirit over the waters. The verse is describing a chaotic state. The question is, what does the chaos mean?

There are two interpretive views to explain the chaos of Gen 1:2. The first is called the Initial Chaos View. It sees verse 1 as giving a general account and summary of creation; verse 2 as giving a description of the chaos at the beginning of creation, and verse 3 describing the initial work of creation. In this view the original creation is not told, as the construction blocks for creation (verse 2) are already in place before verse 3. So, in this view, verses 1-3 all describe the first day of creation and creation is out of something that was already in place. In other words, the starting point for Genesis is not creation from nothing, rather it begins with chaos (and material already present) and then order is established.

The second is called the Gap Theory View. In this view Gen 1:1 describes the original creation (ex-nihilo, from nothing) in a perfect state. Then between verses 1 and 2 there is a gap of time in which something happened to cause the original creation to become chaotic. That something was the fall of Satan (Ez 28:12-19, *You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. <sup>13</sup> You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl.<sup>[b]</sup> Your settings and mountings<sup>[c]</sup> were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. <sup>14</sup> You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. <sup>15</sup> You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. <sup>16</sup> Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So, I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. <sup>17</sup> Your heart became proud on account of your beauty and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So, I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.* This expulsion of Satan resulted in the chaos of verse 2. Verse 3, then describes the first day of creation (out of material already present). Fruchtenbaum postulates that Gen 1:1 describes God's original creation. He sees Ez 28:13 as part of this original effort. In other words, the earth was not as we see it today, but rather it was a beautiful mineral garden adorned with the precious stones mentioned in verse 13. They exuded light and hence were called the stones of fire in verse 14. God had given the original earth to Satan as his abode (vs 14), yet it had access to God's presence via the mountain of God (vs 14). When Satan fell, God judged him and that which was under his authority (the original earth). What was once a beautiful mineral garden was now covered with empty, formless, and deep primordial ocean, and Satan, who Paul says disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14), is now to live in a world that is utterly dark.

This Gap Theory view has also been used to explain the dinosaurs and other scientific conundrums, but scripture is clear that death only entered the world after Adam's fall, so the gap is there only in reference to Satan's fall and nothing else.

Vs 2a, *Now the earth was formless and empty.*

The Hebrew word for *now* can also be interpreted as *become*. This interpretation maybe a better fit as it corresponds well with Is 45:18 which states that God did not create the form of the world as described in Gen 1:2 (*For the Lord is God, and he created the heavens and earth and put everything in place. He made the world to be lived in, not to be a place of empty chaos.*).

The words *formless* and *empty* are also translated as *waste* and *void*. They are used as a pair two other times: once in Is 34:11, where they are translated as *confusion* and *emptiness*, and in Jer 4:23, where they are translated as *waste* and *void*. In both Isaiah and Jeremiah, the pair is used to describe divine judgement. This pairing is known as a syntagm, which is a pairing of words used to convey a singular meaning. So, in verse 1 we have the *heavens and the earth* denoting an ordered universe. In verse two we have *waste and void* denoting judgement and chaos. You cannot have order and chaos at the same time, therefore the events of Gen 1:1 and Gen 1:2 cannot be contemporary, but rather chronological as one follows the other. Verse two describes a state of unformed matter. It is confused, unorganized, void, and lifeless.

*Vs 2b, darkness was over the face of the deep,*

There are two key words in this phrase, *darkness* and *the deep*. Darkness is also a symbol of judgement in the OT. For example, Ex 10 describes the plague of darkness. Death is described as darkness (Job 3:4-5, Ps 35:6, 105:28), the Day of the Lord is a day of darkness (Joel 2:2). Hence Gen 1:2 is describing a state of divine judgement.

The word *the deep*, literally in Hebrew means salty deep. It is a description of the primeval ocean. The word is mentioned three other places (Ps 104:6, Prov 8:24, and Is 51:10). In Gen 1:2 it describes a vast formless, space covered by the judgement of darkness.

Note, in Rev 21:1-22:5, John describes the new earth. It will be the abode of all believers of all time and for all eternity. It says the new earth will be a return to the original condition. There will be no sea and the new Jerusalem will be made of precious stones (some of which are the same as mentioned in Ez 28).

*Vs 2c, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*

Here we have the third and final phrase of the verse. Note we are introduced to the third person of the trinity, God the Spirit. In 1:1-3 states it is through the Son, or by means of the Son, things were created. Here we see the Spirit of God hovering. Other translations say "moved." The Hebrew word literally means to hover over a nest with the idea of watching, caring, and protecting. The imagery here is like a bird watching over her nest watching to see if her eggs have hatched. Similarly, the Spirit of God is watching over the earth, expectantly waiting for the Son to act.

The word *waters* is different than the *deep*. Whereas the *deep* means salt and unfathomable depth and lack of life, the word *waters*, means life giving water. The Spirit of God hovers over the deep and transforms it into life giving water, expectantly waiting, watching, protecting, and nurturing, in anticipation of the Son's creative act to come in verse 3.

To summarize so far:

- a. Verse 1 describes God original creation.
- b. Between verse 1 and 2 there is a gap of time in which Satan falls and the original earth is judged.
- c. Verse 2 describes a time chronologically after verse 1, where we find the earth in chaos because of Satan's rebellion and fall.

