

GENESIS

Lesson 2 - Chapter 1

READ GEN.1 ALL

We could spend several weeks just in Genesis 1 but I'm going to assume that most of you have some basic knowledge of this chapter; and because what came first, second, third and so on is plainly stated and pretty straightforward there's not a lot of need for me to comment on those things after having read them to you. Therefore I'm going to deal with issues that some of you might not have thought about. I'm also going to deal mainly with spiritual principles and important foundational things that I call God's Governing Dynamics, which are laid out for us Genesis 1. Here there are Principles and Dynamics that never change and are the basic building blocks upon which the Torah, then the Tanakh, and finally the NT are built.

Immediately in Genesis 1 we are given some of these fundamentals and while these fundamentals are foundational and basic they are hardly simple or easy to deal with.

The first thing we must deal with is the word "God" because there are two primary ways in which we can know God: by His name and by His characteristics. Let me qualify that; by means of the 4 dimensions that make up our physical Universe (length, width, depth, and time or in the words of physicists, space-time) we can know God only by His name and characteristics. Yet by means of the Holy Spirit we can also "know" God in another way, which is ONLY available (in our era) to Believers. This Holy Spirit-way of knowing God incorporates an additional dimension, a 5th dimension of reality that does not exist naturally in the 4 dimensional Universe that we live in. We'll get into the subject of extra-dimensions soon because far from being a sci-fi deal, or something only for the egg-heads to contemplate, it is a significant help in framing some of the more difficult statements in the Bible that we need to take a hard look at it.

In the earnest cry for world peace in our day an Interfaith Movement has gained steam. And the basis for this movement is that no matter what someone calls god (whether that is Buddha, Krishna, Brahma, or Allah) that we're all essentially speaking of the same god, just from a different cultural and language perspectives. This is not true. For not only are the **names** of each of these various gods and what they mean completely different, the characteristics and attributes of each of these gods are also different. Therefore it is impossible that they can be speaking of the same god.

The true God is introduced to us in the first verse of Genesis and we are also given the first of what will prove to be many of the unchangeable, sometimes inscrutable, characteristics and

attributes of God. The Hebrew word that our Bibles translate to “God” is **Elohim**. First we must understand that **Elohim** is NOT God’s name; we won’t be advised of God’s name until much later in the Torah. Rather **Elohim** is a title and it is a **plural** title (plural as in more-than-one). **Elohim** and its various usages is a complex matter that we are only going to barely touch upon today. However we need to know for the moment that **Elohim** is a word that is not only used in the Bible to refer to the one true God, it is also used occasionally when speaking of the false gods; as we talked about in the introduction last week, context is everything when dealing with Hebrew language and culture.

So with the introduction of this plural title for God, **Elohim**, instantly the door is opened to dealing with this incredible truth and paradigm: God is one but He also is many. The “I-M” at the end of the word **Elohim** makes this word a masculine plural noun. In fact as a basic Hebrew lesson, whenever you see the letters “I-M” ending a Hebrew word you can know that it is speaking of more than one (plural). Yet there is another usage in Hebrew of the “I-M” ending and it’s called the “plural of Majesty”. That is adding the “I-M” at the end of a word can also denote greatness rather than plurality.

Christians, rightfully so, take the word **Elohim** as indicating BOTH greatness AND plurality, and from this eventually grew our uniquely Christian concept of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.....3 gods in one. Or better a single God consisting of 3 persons or essences or manifestations. The use of the word **Elohim** does not in and by itself prove that God is plural. Rather there are several more critical pieces of evidence that we will encounter to show that God is indeed a plurality.

The next point of interest we should take notice of is this matter of the first day of creation. There is ongoing debate among scientists and theologians as to just what, or how long, a “day” was at the time of creation. And the primary basis for argument goes something like this: “how can God have created everything in 6 days and how can it be that Hebrews say by counting generations we find the earth to be nearing 6000 years of age when all of our science says that the universe is BILLIONS of years old....around 15 of those billions, in fact.” Well if we take a close look at what is said in the opening words of Genesis some of the matter seems to resolve itself, and we don’t have to engage in scientific and theological debates at all.

If you read carefully you will see that the creation of the heaven and the earth are not said to have occurred on the first day; rather it occurred at “the beginning”. The first day was not necessarily the beginning; the 1st day could have been sometime later. If we take those opening words of Genesis literally then the thing that occurred on the first day was the creation of light, and its separation from darkness. The wording leaves open the distinct possibility that the heavens and earth were created sometime BEFORE the first day of what we have dubbed “Creation”. How long the heavens and the earth sat there lifeless, dark, chaotic, we aren’t told. But at some point God decided to take the universe He had created and spark it with life and give it a new order. And He began that new process by creating light, and that’s when we encounter the first “day”.

Now there is absolutely no reason to try to defend the use of the word “day”. Often we hear people say, “But the Bible says ‘to God, a day is as a 1000 years’”. That is simply an idiom

that means that God lives in a place without time, NOT that during creation the length of a period of time called a “day” was 1000 years. And there is no proof that the first day is generally meaningfully different in length of time than our current 24 hours (except that it would be helpful to explain the age of the earth if the first 6 days WERE very long). Oh, there is some proof that the Earth’s rotation may have slowed a tad over the last several thousands of years, but a slower rotation (now versus the past) of the Earth would make the days of eons ago SHORTER than a current day, wouldn’t it? After all, since one full rotation of the earth equals 1 day, if it takes LONGER to make that one rotation, then the day is longer. If the earth was spinning faster long ago, then days would have whizzed by quicker than today. Thus if the earth’s rotation was the issue, then long ago the earth would have had to almost not rotate at all if one full rotation took what we would count as 1000 years.

One other thing: in case you might not have been aware Hebrews, including today’s modern Jewish community, have ALWAYS counted the day as BEGINNING at sunset, and ending at the next sunset. That is the new day begins in the evening. This is, of course, totally unlike our picking midnight as the start and end of each day; and it is also unlike our tradition that morning is the beginning of a day and nighttime the ending. Now this difference in the definition and method of plotting time has caused all sorts of interesting problems in attempting to ascertain with any degree of accuracy WHEN certain Biblical events happened. What we need to grasp for the moment is that the modern method of time keeping is done mechanically and for all practical purposes it does not vary. There was an international agreement some years ago to have a central clock from which all clocks would harmonize. We don’t need to observe stars or the moon to determine what time it is any more. We could be in a tunnel a mile underground and if our watch is working, we can know precisely what time it is...indefinitely.....without ever observing the sky.

But for the ancients, including the Hebrews, no such mechanical way of timekeeping was available. Time was determined by viewing the skies; when the sun went up and down; when the moon appeared; when certain stars or star groupings appeared in the night sky. Using our mechanical system we essentially divide the day into two equal parts: 12 hours of day, 12 hours of night (but that varies according to season and latitude). The length of a Hebrew day and night also varied from day to day and season to season because the proportion of time between daylight and nighttime was constantly shifting. Yet one full day was still 24 hours and one week was still 7 full days. At all times in the Bible the Hebrew system of measuring days is being used; so whether studying Torah or the NT Gospels we need to set aside our modern notion of time keeping if we want to understand the timing of events.

Now where did the Hebrews get the idea of STARTING and ending a day at sunset? Look at verse 5: “.....so there was evening, and there was morning, the first day”. Evening came first; evening marked the transition from one day to the next. By the way I don’t think we are committing some terrible sin by how we moderns determine the start and end of the day but it can get confusing when comparing it to the Bible.

Now notice something strange: on the first day, God said He created light. Yet, it was on the **fourth** day that God created the Sun.....or as the Bible puts it, “the larger light to rule the day”. What gives here? How is it that God lit up the Earth on the first day but didn’t create the Sun

until the fourth day? Where did that light come from if there was no Sun? Have we found our first inconsistency?

This gets interesting: in verses 3 and 4, the Hebrew word for “light” is “**owr**”. This word does NOT mean an **object** that emits light.....like the sun or the moon or the stars, or a lamp. Rather it means illumination, enlightenment. When the Bible says God is light it says Elohim is “**owr**”. This word is closely associated with life and joy and good. In fact when we read about the 1st day notice something that the Hebrew sages have hung their hats on for millennia: it says God created the light, AND SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD (**tov**). Then this light was divided away from the darkness. Only the light is called “good”, the darkness is not.

Now lets move down to verse 14 when it starts to talk about there being lights in the sky to divide day and night, and in verse 16 when God says he created the larger light (the sun) to rule the day and the smaller light (the moon) to rule the night. We see an entirely different word is used for “light” here, than what is used in earlier verses. Here, the Hebrew word is “**maorot**”. Sound familiar? It’s the word from which we get the modern word Meteor. **Maor** means an object that emits light (**maorot** is plural, lights). If I may use a poetic word, the luminaries (objects that illuminate) like the sun, the moon, the stars, and lamps, and of course meteors are the meaning.

Since the state of the Universe before day 1 was darkness (or at least it was darkness from the vantage point of someone living on planet Earth) it must have been that darkness was an unsatisfactory state otherwise God wouldn’t have created light. At the least darkness was apparently not capable of supporting life; and as we’ll find as we get into the later parts of Exodus and then Leviticus, things that go against, or inhibit, or terminate life are considered as against God. So when God created “light”, “**owr**” (singular), He created illumination and enlightenment, a basic requirement for life. When God created “the lights”, “**maorot**” (plural) He created objects that emit light waves. Light waves of a certain type that allow humans and animals to use their light sensors. (their eyes) and for plants to engage in their method of sustaining life, photosynthesis. In the Book of Revelation we’re told that when God destroys the old earth, and then creates a new one, there will no longer be **maorot** (light emitting objects like a sun or moon) but instead God will be our light, our illumination. It’s this same type of “godly light” that is being spoken of here in verses 3 and 4, but another kind is referred to in verses 14-16.

Conversely let’s look at the word “darkness”. The Hebrew for this word is “**choshek**”. In the Hebrew culture this word was used as the opposite of “**owr**” (the opposite of illumination). **Choshek** carries in it the sense of blindness, of misery, of falsehood and ignorance. It means something that leads to death and destruction. This is not a word that is the opposite of day. It is not a word that describes the natural, and good, phenomenon of nighttime. In Hebrew, night is **layil**.....an entirely different word than **chosek**. **Choshek** is negative in its nature and it carries evil spiritual overtones with it. Night, **layil**, is simply the opposite of day. It is neutral; it carries no negative OR spiritual sense to it except in the odd case where it might be used metaphorically.

So let us be clear: in verses 3 and 4 what God created was illumination and enlightenment of

which HE was the source; but it was also divided and separated away from what was the opposite of those things: darkness, blindness and falsehood. What exactly was this illumination and enlightenment? It could well have been the primordial essence of God that we call the **Shekinah**, or Shekinah glory; this mysterious illumination, or glory, of God (sometimes visible, sometimes not) that we read of in several places in the Bible. The illumination that is suitable for us to see by, and apparently NOT necessary when the new earth is formed, will come from God Himself. While I cannot be sure I see no reason not to suggest that the light of Genesis that was in the 1st day of Creation is the same light that is in the 1st day of the NEW creation as revealed in Revelation 21 and 22 (you can go read it for yourself). And it is also interesting that the spiritual counterpart of light which is darkness, **choshek**, will be absent in the NEW creation. In its purest **spiritual** sense the, light is goodness and darkness is wickedness. We're told that in the new creation there will be ONLY good and wickedness will no longer exist. So in the new creation we find the complete absence of darkness; instead there is only light. But as certain as I am that what I have told you is correct, I readily admit that there is some amount of speculation involved with it.

Besides **resolving** the issue of light being created on the 1st day even though the objects which MAKE light were created on the 4th day, I'd like to point out that this is the first hint of a principle that is going to haunt us all through our studies of Torah. An abstract but real principle that can be stated in words rather easily but it is NOT so easily grasped or imagined in our minds. So be pre-warned that it takes some time and study before the concept starts to become comfortable for us. As a point of reference I have given this concept a name: the Reality of Duality. Basically the idea of the Reality of Duality is this: in the Scriptures and in the NT physical objects are often but a shadow of something spiritual. If we've spent any time at all in Church we've heard this term "shadow" used to describe many Old Testament things that Jesus eventually transformed into something of a higher order. But what exactly does that mean: **a shadow** of something that is to come?

A shadow is but an outline of something without all the details filled in. A shadow is real; that is it's not a mirage or an optical illusion. But it is LESS real than the object that casts the shadow. Example: I stand outside in the sun. I cast a shadow. I am real and the shadow is real. But as I am the source of the shadow I am also the complete original and the shadow is but a representation of me that is incomplete. Further the shadow has no animation or power of itself; the shadow does not have life and is stuck in absolute lockstep with me. The existence of my shadow is 100% dependent on my existence. If my shadow ceases to exist, I can still exist, right? If the sun goes down my shadow disappears, but I'm still here. But if I cease to exist it is impossible for there to be a shadow of me. Therefore I am preeminent; I am greater than my shadow; I am not a manifestation of my shadow, my shadow is but an inferior manifestation of me. The shadow does not cause me, I cause the shadow.

When the physical and the spiritual attributes of many things exist simultaneously, the spiritual came first and it is always preeminent. The spiritual is almost unlimited in its attributes and it operates in number of dimensions. The physical is severely limited (as compared with the spiritual) in its attributes and can occur in no more than 4 dimensions (remember that our entire Universe only consists of 4 dimensions: length, width, depth, and time). Therefore the physical is inferior to the spiritual, and the physical can only partially mimic or reveal its spiritual

original.

The creation of human beings is a fairly obvious example of this because humans are simultaneously creatures that consist of the material and the immaterial; the physical and the spiritual. That is we are 4 dimensional beings, physical, visible, and subject to time, BUT we also have an invisible property as well. The Bible calls this invisible property soul and spirit. The ancient Hebrew sages point out that God formed Adam from the dust of the ground. God created the Universe from nothing but He created man from something; something physical (dirt) that He had already brought into existence. Yet in addition God put the breath of life into man, and put into him a soul and spirit which were NOT physical things; they were spiritual. So whether mankind admits it or not we are a prime example of the Reality of Duality.

The creation of light and its attributes is another good example of this concept. No doubt the "light", this **owr**, made on the first day of Creation was real physical light that was of a kind that, at the least, allowed time to be measured (after all, 3 MORE days of Creation passed before there were light emitting objects set into the sky that were to be used to indicate seasons, and years, and appointed times). Yet mysteriously it was also a type of light that did NOT come from a physical object because no object that emitted light was created (or at least they weren't visible from Earth) until the 4th day. Further because light is the opposite of darkness, and light is characterized by God as good but darkness is not, we have a firm connection between the KIND of light created here and its attribute of goodness. Good and evil are spiritual, not physical, attributes. So this light, this **owr**, has a dual reality to it; it has both a very real physical quality and a very real spiritual quality to it.

Typically men's doctrines cannot stand this kind of dilemma; all things must be one or the other, not both simultaneously. I'm telling you that not only CAN many created things be both physical and spiritual at the same time but also they often ARE both. In fact matters such as the attributes of the type of light created on the 1st day MUST be both or the first few verses of Genesis are nonsensical. It is this foundational principle that I term the Reality of Duality; it is where the physical and the spiritual elements of something exist simultaneously. And we're going to have many more examples of this that will over time, start to make some sense to you. In a year or so when we get to the Wilderness Tabernacle, we'll have one of the prime Biblical examples of the Reality of Duality so don't get concerned for the moment if you're thinking "is that guy even speaking English?"

Now in verse 20 some statements are made for which I want to make a point that you should tuck away in your memory banks and it concerns this list of living creatures that God created. It speaks of swarming creatures in the water and birds flying in the air. The Lord populated the oceans with giant sea creatures and He proclaimed all of these creatures to be GOOD. In verse 24 He goes on to speak of land creatures of all kinds (domestic and wild) even including crawling things like lizards. And He also declares THESE to be good. I emphasize this because later in the Torah (mainly in Leviticus) we're going to find God enumerating several of these same creatures that He has named here as UNCLEAN. And we'll also eventually see that long before the Torah was given to Moses, the clean and unclean designations of created living things already existed. How is it that something can be both GOOD and UNCLEAN? Did God change His mind about some of His living creatures? Well you can either wait a year or so

to find out, or pick up some of the Torah Class studies on Leviticus and jump ahead. But the core Biblical principles of clean and unclean have their foundation here in the first chapter of Genesis.

Next we get a statement that has been pondered by the greatest and most brilliant minds for thousands of years and there is little agreement as to exactly what it portends. It is the statement that we, as human beings, are made in the image of God.

We're not going to spend much time here but let me give you some basics to consider. First it says that God created humankind and later that it was both male and female that He created; second that all humans were made in his image.

So we can immediately show Darwin and all secular humanists the door. If this is not a true Biblical statement (if we evolved from chance and mutation of non-living substances) then there is no point to continue in our Torah study is there? I don't imagine I have any arguments from those of you in this room. But what does it mean to be made in the image of God? It means that we have been given certain attributes that He has. Yet we also know that we don't have **all** of His attributes because if we did then WE would be gods. Rather God, who values all the many types of living creatures He created, made man unique among all these creatures. Only man has the capacity to know God. And this capacity comes by means of the spiritual component of man. Animals can have bodies and they can have brains. They can even have something resembling emotions because many (but not all) animals have living souls, the seat of emotion and intellect. But **ONLY** humans among all of God's living creatures have spirits. And it is our spirits that allow communion with the living God.

Next week we'll begin Genesis 2.