

## TRUSTING GOD'S PLAN, PURPOSE, AND DESIGN

*"In the Beginning...." Genesis 1:1*

January 28, 2024

**INTRO.:** What covers 71% of the surface of the world? **WATER!!** Did you know there are some very interesting facts about water?

### **Why Water Is Weird**

Researchers reported recently that it is striking that water is the "least understood material on Earth." In an article, researchers ask, "What could we not know about water? It's wet! It's clear. It comes from rain. It boils. It makes snow and it makes ice! Does our government actually spend taxpayer money to study water? Yes, water is common—in fact, it is the third most common molecule in the universe. But it is also deceptively complex." From steam to ice, water continues to mystify. Here are several of the weird facts about water:

### **Why Does Ice Float?**

Researchers tried to tease apart what makes water unique among liquids. It's got anomalous properties, like expanding when cooled below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. (This) explains why lakes freeze downward, from top to bottom, rather than up. Normally frozen solids are denser than their liquid equivalents, which would mean that frozen chunks would fall to the bottom of a lake instead of staying on top. But when water freezes, it creates an open structure, mostly empty space and less dense than ... liquid water, which is why water props ice up.

### **Why Can Insects Walk On It?**

Water has an uncanny level of surface tension, allowing beings light enough, like insects, to walk or stand atop it. Since it's these distinctive features among others that power our climate and ecosystems, water can appear to be "fine-tuned" for life according to the researchers.

### **How Does Water Evaporate?**

The rate of evaporation of liquid water is one of the principal uncertainties in modern climate modeling. ... The addition of salts to water raises the surface tension ... and so should reduce the evaporation rate. But experimental studies show little or no effect when salts are added. The exact mechanism for how water evaporates isn't completely understood. *These researchers point out some of the weird anomalies of water, which covers 71% of the surface of our world. Although they do not acknowledge God in their research, they do admit that "water can appear to be 'fine-tuned' for life." Christians would respond that without its God-given properties, lakes would freeze from the bottom up, killing all fish in them. And, although the salt in oceans should inhibit evaporation, the water in the oceans evaporates, producing rain over the land. These are some examples of "Intelligent Design" in which our wise creator fine-tuned the earth to sustain life and provide for our needs and enjoyment of life.*

*Source: Adapted from Jackie Ferrentino & Richard Saykally, "Five Things We Still Don't Know About Water," Nautilus (6-6-2020); Brian Gallagher, "Why Water is Weird," Nautilus (4/23/18)*

There isn't one of us that can survive without water and yet we can't adequately explain it either. This points us to God, the One who's plan, purpose, and design we can trust.

Two weeks ago we gave the introduction to our series in Genesis. We asked the question, "*Why Genesis?*" What do we learn from this book of the Bible? I shared the following things:

- \*We learn of the character of God: creator, almighty, holy, just, gracious, truth
- \*We learn of creation and the uniqueness of mankind in the plan, purpose, and design of God
- \*We learn of the awful consequences of sin
- \*We learn of the prophecy of the deliverer
- \*We learn how God chose Israel and of His desire to bless others through Israel
- \*We learn about some of God's covenants (binding promises) to His people

Speaking of water, as we dive in today, we are going to look at the first verse: only ten words (seven words in Hebrew) and the significance of these first words. I believe that if you and I get this wrong we get all of life wrong. If we start with the wrong place, we will end up in the wrong place. So, let's begin by saying the first verse together.

**Genesis 1:1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Let's say that again. We are going to concentrate on the first 5 words and conclude with what this tells us.

***"In the beginning*** God created the heavens and the earth."

As I mentioned two weeks ago this beginning three-word phrase is only one word in the Hebrew (*bereshit*). This tells us that matter did not always exist. This universe did not always exist. This tells us there had to be a Creator. *Genesis* in the Greek means, "Book of Origins."

"In the beginning **God** created the heavens and the earth."

If you and I do not start with God we are doomed for eternity.

"God:" this is the word *Elohim* which is actually a plural Hebrew word which many believe points to the trinity. It does not mean there are multiple gods because this goes against the rest of the Bible. This tells us that God is the beginning of ALL things!

It is interesting that Genesis does not seek to prove the existence of God because His existence is assumed to be true. The Bible, as a whole, does not look to prove the existence of God.

**Psalm 14:1** The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.

To say there is no God, is to be a fool according to the Bible.

Henry Morris, "It is remarkable that, when there have been so many anti-theistic philosophies (ancient and modern) affecting untold millions of people, the book of God makes no attempt to prove that God exists. The opening verse of Genesis simply takes this fact for granted, as though it were so obvious that only a fool could say "there is no God" (Psalm 14: 1).

This word for God (*Elohim*) is used throughout the first chapter of Genesis, stressing His majesty and omnipotence. It is obvious that this is important because the first book of the Bible begins with God. When you and I start any other place we are without hope. This also tells us that God existed before all things.

John, in his gospel speaks of Jesus Christ existing from eternity.

**John 1:1-4** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was with God in the beginning. **3** Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. **4** In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

*"In the beginning God...."* The late physicist Arthur Compton once said, these words are "the most tremendous ever penned."

"In the beginning God **created** the heavens and the earth."

The word "*created*:" is the Hebrew word *bara* and it is actually before the word *God* in the Hebrew.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum: The second word in the Hebrew text is *bara* is a word that is used only of God and only of the work that only God can do. It is never used with anything that man does. This can take on several forms:

- 1) Can mean to create something out of nothing, but can also be used to create out of something  
The universe were created out of nothing, but Adam & Eve were both created out of something
- 2) When something is created, what is produced is new, fresh, and good
- 3) The word carries the concept of shaping, forming, and transforming

This word (*bara*) is used 3 times in Genesis 1:1-2:3

**Genesis 1:1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

**Genesis 1:21** So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

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

When God created the universe He did so out of nothing. The official Latin term is *ex-nihilo* (out of nothing).

**Isaiah 42:5** This is what God the LORD says— he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it:

**Isaiah 40:26** Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

**Isaiah 40:28** Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

**Psalms 51:10** Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

**Isaiah 65:17** “Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.

This tells me:

What do the beginning verses tell me? These truths tell me something about the false belief systems of our day (and days in the past) and they also tell me some things about God.

Several of these things were taken from Arnold Fruchtenbaum, James Montgomery Boice, and Henry Morris.

### **About False Beliefs:**

This opening verse refutes:

*Atheism:* because God created the universe

*Polytheism:* because there is only one true God (in three persons) who created all things

*Pantheism:* because God is a personal God and separate from His creation (pantheism asserts that God is in matter or is matter)

*Humanism:* because God and not man is the ultimate reality

*Evolutionism:* because God created all things instantaneously

*Dualism:* because God was alone when He created (pantheism asserts the belief in two supreme opposed powers or gods, or sets of divine or demonic beings, that caused the world to exist)

*Materialism:* because all matter had a beginning and there is a clear distinction between God and His material universe

*Naturalism:* because nature was created and had to have a beginning

All the false beliefs begin with man or matter and work their way up to God. True belief begins with God.

### **About God:**

*He is eternal:* when the beginning rolled around, He was already here.

**Genesis 21:33** Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called upon the name of the LORD, the Eternal God.

**Psalms 90:1–2** Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. **2** Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

**Revelation 21:6** He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life.

James Montgomery Boice:

1) He can be trusted to remain as He has revealed Himself to be. God is unchangeable in His attributes. His love will always be the same, he will always be holy, sin will always be sin...His purposes remain fixed from generation to generation.

2) He is inescapable. If He were a mere man and if we did not like either Him or what He was doing, we might ignore Him, knowing that He might change His mind, move away from us, or die. If we ignore Him now, we must reckon with Him in the life to come. If we reject Him now, we must eventually face the One we have rejected and come to know His own eternal rejection of us.

**Philippians 2:6–11** Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, **7** but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. **8** And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! **9** Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, **10** that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

*He is self-existent:* He is the uncaused cause.

James Montgomery Boice: This is not true of anything else. Everything else depends on some other thing or person and ultimately on God. Without these prior causes, the thing would not exist. We recognize this truth when we speak of the laws of “cause and effect.” Every effect must have an adequate cause. But God is the ultimate cause and is Himself uncaused. God has no origins; this means: first, that as He is in Himself He is unknowable, and second, that He is answerable to no one.

**Isaiah 64:8** Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

**Romans 9:18–21** Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. **19** One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?” **20** But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? “Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’ ” **21** Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

*He is Omnipotent:* In creation God displays that he is all powerful! He is the only one who can create something out of nothing!

Not a real story but can you imagine if a group of scientists got together and decided that humanity had come a long way and no longer needed God. So they picked one scientist to go and tell Him that they were done with Him. The scientist walked up to God and said, “God, we’ve decided that we no longer need you. We’re to the point where we can clone people, manipulate atoms, build molecules, fly through space, and do many other miraculous things. So why don’t you just go away and mind your own business from now on?”

God listened very patiently and kindly to the man. After the scientist was done talking, God said, “Very well. How about this? Before I go, let’s say we have a human-making contest.” To which the scientist replied, “Okay, we can handle that!”

“But,” God added, “we’re going to do this just like I did back in the old days with Adam.”

The scientist nodded, “Sure, no problem” and bent down and picked up a handful of dirt. God wagged a finger at him and said, “Uh, uh, uh. Put that down. You go find your own dirt.”

**Romans 1:20** For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Job 38 speaks of the omnipotence of God.

**Job 38:4** “Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand.

**Job 38:12** “Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown the dawn its place,

**Job 38:32** Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the Bear with its cubs?

*He is self-sufficient:* some people have the idea that God got lonely and that’s why He created man and woman. God has no needs and does not depend on anyone. This is so unlike us: this time of year we need heat, every one of us needs oxygen, we depend on gravity.

Many are attempting to derive their value by what they can do for God. Our value doesn’t come through what we can do. Our value comes from God! We are special because we are created in His image!

Man cannot thwart the purposes and plans of God! The religious leaders of Jesus' day thought they were the ones driving Jesus to His death, but God had planned this from eternity past.

**Luke 23:44–46 (NIV84)** — **44** It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, **45** for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. **46** Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last.

**John 19:28–30 (NIV84)** — **28** Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” **29** A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. **30** When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

God doesn't need us to accomplish anything, but in His grace and mercy He uses us. What an amazing thought: we get to be used by God. I know for sure He has better specimens than me. His use of us is solely upon His amazing grace. This book (the Bible) is full of some of the most unlikely people used by God. God even spoke through a donkey! The strangest part of that story is the man answered the donkey!

### **SO WHAT???**

Does what I believe line up with what the Bible says?

Henry Morris III: “If God—the One who could speak the universe into existence with a command—is indeed the Creator, then He is the Owner of all that exists. Man is, therefore, a steward (rather than an owner) and is ultimately accountable to the Owner for all that is done with life and resources.”

To believe Genesis 1:1 is to believe that I am accountable to God! Whether I choose to believe it or not, I am accountable to God!

The creation account tells me that nothing is impossible with God! He created the entire universe out of nothing! This is the God that I call on when I pray.

This reminds me of what a privilege it is to serve the Only true God and that this is possible only through His great mercy and grace.

By accepting Genesis 1:1, I am admitting, as a finite human being, I cannot understand or explain everything. Am I willing to admit that the Word of God is trustworthy and will be the guide to my life.

To believe Genesis 1:1 brings me to worship and obedience of God!

**Psalms 19:1–4** The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. **2** Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. **3** There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. **4** Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,

We cannot duplicate God's creation