

Building on Biblical Foundations Genesis 1:1(a) In the Beginning

Karin Paparelli Peters

In the Beginning God . . .

We are going to take this real slow. There is so much packed into the book of Genesis. I don't want to bog us down, but I believe in order to build a foundation we first need to level out the ground underneath it.

So let's take a minute to do that.

I will be teaching out of the bible. I may use other sources to help explain important historical facts, fill in datelines, or expound on the language used at the time of the writing, but regardless of the supplemental material I include, the Bible is my original source. This is the reference that will be at the center of everything we learn. Why?

As an attorney I was taught to go to the original source. If it is a real estate matter, look at the deed. If it is a contract dispute, look at the contract. Original sources are admissible in court. You've all heard the word "hearsay." If Amanda and Travis have a conversation and then Amanda comes to me and tells me what Travis said, that is called hearsay. It's information you receive without being personally present. The reason courts use original sources and reject hearsay is because original sources are more reliable.

The Bible is our original source. Now some argue that we have all these different translations, how can we rely on it? Well I say, if God is not big enough to preserve his Word, He is no God I would want to follow. Seriously, the translations may interpret a word or phrase differently but not enough to lead you astray. The Holy Spirit has been sent to teach us all truth, to remind of the things that Jesus taught, and to pray for us when we are at a loss. If we search it out, we will find the truth in the Word of God – just as Jesus said we would. I think you will understand what I mean as we go along.

It has been said that the Bible is the most authentic historical document in existence. Further, that there are "more evidences confirming the authenticity of scripture than there is to prove Caesar was emperor in Rome, or that Washington crossed the Delaware."

"The unity of scripture is a miracle in itself. The Bible was written over a 1,400-1,600 year time span, it had forty or more different writers (one author – God), and they all varied greatly in their backgrounds. The writers were made up of poets, kings, farmers, fishermen, doctors, philosophers, and statesmen. They not only lived in different times periods but they also lived on three different continents. Yet with all

this diversity, they wrote with continuity. They wrote with doctrinal unity, one moral system, one plan of salvation and one major theme – the redemption of mankind. From the fall of man and the loss of paradise in Genesis to paradise being regained in Revelation, the theme is consistent, the redemption of man.”
<https://answersingenesis.org/bible/>

Our premise as we begin – at the beginning – is that this book – is:

- True
- Reliable
- God’s message to humanity

If you do not agree, that is fine. You do not need to agree today, just listen. I would also ask you to pray before we begin that God would show you His Truth. I will let the Lord speak for Himself. I am merely the messenger.

However, for the sake of argument we will agree that this book, the Bible, is indeed truth – God breathed – and is irrefutable. If anything within these pages is found contradictory, then *we* must press in and inquire how *we have missed the truth*. Is it historical error, has something been taken out of context, is there a language barrier? The issue is with **us**, not the Word of God.

Now if we can agree to this, we can move on. For we must agree on the validity of the bible, if we are to build upon it. Genesis is to be regarded as every other book in this Bible, for the word of God says:

¹⁶ **All scripture** is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:” *2 Timothy 3:16*

We start our year – and our morning – in Genesis. What do we know about Genesis?

The first five books of the Old Testament – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy were written by Moses. These are known as the Pentateuch – also known as the Torah. The word Torah originates from the Hebrew root of YRH that means, "teach." These books tell the story of the Hebrew nation.

Genesis 1:1 In the **beginning**. . . our first question is “the beginning of what?”

The beginning of everything? No. For God existed before this account . . . so this is not about the beginning of everything. No, this is the beginning of Earth and of humanity, of humanity on Earth. This is the beginning of the story of redemption. The redemption of humanity, and the redemption of the Earth from death, decay and sin.

You see, we cannot begin to understand the end as found in the book of Revelation without first understanding how it all began. It’s like the Star Wars movies. How many

are there . . .6? They started the first film at #3. There were two movies that needed to come first. Those of us who watched it back in 1979. . . yes that long ago – please don't do the math – thought it was a good story. But when you add the first two prequels to it, the story makes a lot more sense.

We are going to do that. Coming to Jesus is awesome and most of us start reading the Bible in one of the gospels and that is really a great place to start.

But it is similar to jumping into the story in the middle.

Let's call the Gospels the mid-point of God's story of redemption, Revelation is the end and Genesis is the beginning. It is difficult to know a thing at the middle or the end without having first learned about the beginning. Our understanding will only be partial, or incomplete.

So starting in Genesis has more to do with understanding Jesus than it has to do with talking serpents, floods and fires, and giants walking the earth – which we will be learning about before we finish Genesis.

So In the Beginning of the story of redemption, what? **God**. Who? Which god? Our next question is who is this “god” That detail matters doesn't it?

We watched the Exodus movie Friday night – the new one – (you know made 10 years ago!) and the Egyptians had all these gods – lowercase g – which are actually counterfeits of the One True God also known as demonic principalities. So the God of whom we speak . . . the God of Genesis 1:1 is Elohim (pronounced: EL O HEEM) - which actually means the SUPREME GOD in Hebrew. According to Britannica: Elohim, (Hebrew: God), the God of Israel in the Old Testament. A plural of majesty, the term Elohim is usually employed in the Old Testament for the one and only God of Israel, whose personal name was revealed to Moses as YHWH, or Yahweh (q.v.).” Further, “the Hebrews used the plural Elohim – (the plural of Eloah) - as the ordinary name of God, the difference being that to the one God was simply *power, strength* (the root-meaning of Eloah); to the other He was the union of all powers, the Almighty. The plural thus intensified the idea of the majesty and greatness of God; but besides this, it was the **germ of the doctrine of a plurality of persons in the Divine unity.**” Excerpted from *EXCURSUS B: ON THE NAMES ELOHIM AND JEHOVAH-ELOHIM*

Why is this important to know? Well this sets the stage for the Trinity, the doctrine of God being three in one. And also affirms that all three persons of the Trinity were present at the creation of the world.

That's a lot packed into 4 words! We are only 4 words into the Bible and yet I already have 9 pages of notes and I am trying in earnest to give you the 40,000 foot view. If we were to dive in deep, we could linger here a whole lot longer.

So moving on: What do we know?

1. This is the beginning of the story of man's redemption.
2. God – the Supreme Being – in the plural (that is as the Trinity) was there in the beginning.

These are our first two building blocks. We will add more as we work our way through the scriptures.

I am moving slow because we are laying a foundation. If we were building a house – we would spend a considerable amount of time in preparation. If I misplace a stone, or omit a stone, the result will be a structure that is unstable and can be knocked down. So each stone – each tenet of truth – is vitally important to the building as a whole.

We are building a foundation – but not just any foundation the LORD himself is our foundation, not just his word or his promises.

Taken from Hannah's prayer:

“The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high;
he will fill Zion with his justice and righteousness.
⁶He will be the sure foundation for your times,
a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge;
the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure.” Isaiah 33:5-6

In LUKE 6:46-49 Jesus instructs us to not just listen to his words but to do what he says:

⁴⁶“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like.

⁴⁸They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.

⁴⁹But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.”

So if we follow the instructions of the Lord we will build our foundation upon the rock and that rock is the Lord himself.

Putting his words into practice is the foundation of our lives. But not just some words. Not just new testament words. All of his words. Beginning with . . .Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning. . .”

We cannot separate the word of God from God for scripture teaches us that:

“In the Beginning was the word (Jesus), and the word was with God and the word was God. He (Jesus) was with God in the beginning. Through him (Jesus) all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” *John 1:1-3*

That is yet another reason to study all of the Bible and another reason why we are in the book of Genesis.

To build our lives on the foundation (rock) of Jesus is the same as to build our lives on the foundation of the Word.

JESUS = The WORD

Which word? Every word of scripture – 1 Timothy 3:16

We will lay a foundation of truth, block by block, so that when the storm comes we will not be destroyed but will be able to withstand it. We will build a foundation so sturdy that when someone or something challenges your faith, you will be able to stand firmly on what you believe.

Next week we finish this verse, Genesis 1:1(b), and behold the supernatural, the creation of all things.

Sermon notes will be made available on our website each week for additional study. Next week we will dive into creation.

As we study creation you may want to visit this site: Answersingenesis.org
website for creation information

Also – field trip coming this spring to the Creation Museum and Noah’s Ark in Kentucky. Get ready to pack your bags.