

God – The Creator of New Beginnings
The Book of Genesis
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“In the beginning God”—this is how the book of Genesis and the Bible begins.

We can pause right here with the first four words of the Bible and spend some time because there is a lot of information packed in these four words: “In the beginning God...”

These words say that God is unexplainable.

We cannot explain how God could be present in the beginning because this implies that God was present before there was a beginning.

Even a child can formulate the question, “Where did God come from?” Every parent knows the answer to that question. “Honey, go ask the preacher. Let him tell you.”

But the child learns quickly that the preacher knows no more than the parents. God is mysterious and much too big for us to comprehend all there is to know about Him. Genesis teaches that we can know God, but we cannot know everything about God.

“In the beginning, God” is the prelude for everything else that is to come in the created order. Were it not for God, there would be no heavens, no earth, and no us.

The book of Genesis is a story about the beginning of God’s interaction with humanity.

It is not a story about the beginning of God because God has no beginning or no end. Again, this is a concept that we cannot comprehend.

In our world, things have beginnings and endings. God is not confined to our world. God is not limited by time and space.

Genesis is the story of God’s relationship with His created order.

It tells how God initiated that relationship and how that relationship became fractured after we failed to live out the commandments given to us by God.

God is the Creator.

We are the created.

As the Creator, God has the inherent rights of ownership and authority to instruct, guide, and direct the lives of the created.

The movies have imagined what would happen if robots took on the component of independence and sovereignty to the point of making decisions that were independent of their programmer.

We are not robots. God didn't program us, but from the very beginning made us autonomous creatures.

God gave us the ability and the freedom to choose right from wrong.

God gave the man and woman he placed in the Garden of Eden very few rules to live by, but Adam and Eve decided they didn't want to live by the one primary commandment God did give to them.

In essence, when Eve and then Adam reached for the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, it was paramount to saying, "I don't want to be the created. I want to be the Creator."

Whenever we rebel against God, whenever we go against God's guidelines for living our lives, we are saying the same thing. "I don't want to be the created. I want to be my own god. I know better than God. I'll choose my path. I don't need to follow His."

Genesis wasn't written to explain all aspects of God. Genesis wasn't written to answer the unanswerable. While God's existence will remain unexplainable, Genesis was written to help us establish a relationship with the one who cannot be explained.

We started out living in a garden of paradise where there was no suffering or death. We were then cast out of that garden where suffering and death became a reality. What happened?

When Eve and Adam disobeyed God, their daily communion with God ended. All the beauty of the garden, the responsibility for caring for it, the serenity of living in it, the innocence of physical attraction, and the lack of pain and suffering, all ended abruptly.

Death entered the world, just as God promised. Physical death didn't come immediately, but it came. Because of sin, death entered the world.

Sin works this way in our lives today. There are immediate issues that result from trying to live without listening to God, and then there are those things that develop over time. Sin works in our lives like cancer.

One reason the Bible is written is to tell us that sin erodes our souls. God does not want us to be surprised that the decisions we make contrary to His will have consequences.

As we read further in Genesis, with each new generation, the need for God remained, but the desire for God lessened.

Just six chapters into the Bible, we have these challenging and discouraging words:

5The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. 6The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. 7So the Lord said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them." 8But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. (Genesis 6:5-8)

No one was living the Word.

It raises questions about what God knows about the future. If God is all-knowing, then would God have known when he created the world that this was going to happen? If He knew it was going to happen, why would He have had any regrets?

God could have known this was going to happen but still allowed it to occur because love demanded it. Where there is love, there is grief.

Let me show you what I mean.

In Jesus' parable of the loving father, the younger of his two sons came to him and asked for his share of his inheritance before his father died. When that father gave his son his part of the estate, in his heart, he knew his son was going to waste that money.

Even though the father in his heart that his son was going to leave him and squander the money, love demanded that he give him the choice. When he made the wrong choice, the father grieved.

God made us all with free will. We all decide whether to work for the Lord or to run off and do our own thing.

In the Genesis 6:6 passage, God says, "The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain" (NIV).

The Hebrew word for grieved is "naw-kham." It means to sigh, to breathe forcefully; to be sorry, to pity, to repent.

God's patience had run out.

With a show of wrath like we've never seen since God erased what he created in the beginning and started completely over with seven people and an ark full of animals.

But the result was no better. The shame of nakedness felt by Adam and Eve as their sins were exposed was soon felt by Noah and his family.

The text says that Noah, a man of the soil, planted a vineyard. “When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent.”

His son Canaan found him, and he told his brothers. They went into the tent backward to cover him. When Noah came to his senses and found out what Canaan had done, he placed a curse on him, gave away his land, and made him a servant of his brothers.

While all of this seems odd and strange to us, what we need to know is that the flood did nothing to change the brokenness of humanity.

Nor did it change people’s hearts or the distance that sin had placed between humanity and God.

In the story of Babel in chapter 11, the population of the world had grown, and so had the ingenuity of people.

But the people were still not living as God commanded.

The story of the Tower of Babel is written to explain how so many different languages came to be in the world.

It’s also written to remind us once again that God is the Creator, and we are the created.

The people were building a tower-like city that they said would reach the heavens. Their purpose was to make a name for themselves and not be scattered over the face of the earth.

But God’s word to Adam and Eve was to “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it...” (Genesis 1:28)

The story of Babel implies that these people knew they were supposed to be doing that, but instead, they were defying God. They were trying to prove that they didn’t have to go anywhere and that they could create for themselves whatever they wanted. The tower of Babel is about the sin of arrogance.

Once again, the people had forgotten that God was the Creator, and they were the created.

How often do we forget that we are not the Creator? We do not control the destination of our lives. What has to happen to us before we bow our knees to God and acknowledge that we are the created and He is the Creator?

The scripture says that “The Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it’s called “Babel”—because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there, the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole world.” (Genesis 11:8-9)

Not more than eleven chapters into the Bible, a pattern has emerged. Let me show you.

God placed humans in the Garden.

In the Garden, there was no barrier between Adam and Eve and God. There was communion between God and his creation.

But God's created rebelled and sin became a barrier between the created and God. Communion was broken. Communication continued, but sin caused a break in their relationship.

May I take a married couple as an example?

What happens in the relationship when one individual in a marriage has broken his or her wedding vows?

Communication may not stop, but intimacy does. The two are no longer functioning in a one-flesh relationship because they are no longer sharing a covenant.

For them to act civilly toward one another and keep one from destroying the other, a mediator is often needed. The couple needs someone both of them can trust to either help them put things back together or to part ways.

If you read the rest of Genesis, what you discover is that God did not give up on us.

God has not given up on the world.

God is still in the business of redeeming His creation, and He began working and setting the stage to bring in a mediator to help people engage in the process of communion with Him once again.

The name for that mediator in the Old Testament is a "priest."

The most direct hint that we need a mediator to help us in our relationship with God is found in Genesis 14.

God called a man named Abram to leave his country in Haran and set out for a land that God would show him, the land of Canaan, a land that would eventually become the land of Israel.

On his way, Abram had to fight his way through some of the territories.

After one battle, the king of Sodom came out to meet Abram. Along with him was Melchizedek, the king of Salem.

He is called the priest of the Most High God. His name meant "King of Righteousness."

This man brought bread and wine and gave it to Abram and blessed him with these words:

“Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.” (Genesis 14:19-20)

This priestly king reminds Abram that he is created. God is the Creator. God is the one who blesses.

Abram is the soldier.

God gives victory.

As a priest, Melchizedek became a mediator, blessing both Abram and God. He served the role of bringing Abram into the presence of God.

He served bread and wine. Perhaps you see some symbolism here of our observance of communion.

As an acknowledgment of the role the priest played and of as a sign of thanks for God’s hand in his life, Abram gave a tenth of what he had to the priest.

The Bible teaches us that we need a priest, a mediator, to get to God. The kind of priest that we need is not an earthly one, but a heavenly one.

Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6 NIV).

The writer of Hebrews wrote:

25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

26 Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. 27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the son, who has been made perfect forever.
(Hebrews 7:25:28)

This is beautifully written and explains why we worship Jesus.

Like the people of Genesis, we fail to live the word. Our sin separates us from God, and the wages of our sin is death. Our communion with God was severed from the moment you and thought our first sinful thought or disobeyed one of God’s commandments.

That hasn’t stopped God from reaching out to us. Oh, no.

God came in the flesh. Jesus came from heaven, offered himself to make right the wrongs we have done against God. Jesus came to mediate a solution to our broken relationship with God.

When we read Genesis, we need to remember that we are all like Adam and Eve. We are like Noah and the people of his day. We are like the people that built the Tower of Babel. We all forget that we are the created and not the Creator.

We are all guilty of not living the Word. We are guilty of going our own way.

When that son went away from his father and squandered his money, he eventually had enough humility to pick himself up out of the pigsty where he was working and head home to ask his father for a job as one of the servants.

What he received when he arrived home, he could never have expected.

His father had been looking down the road every day, hoping to see him come home. When he saw him, they had a celebration unmatched in his lifetime because the Father said, "He was dead, but he is alive again."

That's how it is with the Lord when we realize that we have gone our own way but one day realize that we are somewhere far away from home. When we decide to head home, heaven celebrates.

Jesus said, "I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10).

If your communion with God is broken, Jesus invites you to come to Him. He is your mediator.

Romans 8:34 says that "Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us."

Right now, will you pray and ask Jesus to forgive your sins, and walk with you daily, and help you live the way the Creator wants you to live?

Even though it's been a long time ago since God created the heavens and the earth, every day, God is busy creating something new, especially new hearts, a new spirit, new direction, a new attitude, new hope, and new beginnings.

Perhaps today is the day that God begins something new in your life.

In just a moment I'm going to pray with you and if you make a commit to the Lord today, let me know. Send me a message at fbcjefferson.org/connect.