

Genesis 1:1-2:3 — Foundations Lesson for September 30, 2018

Applicational Thoughts

Who is God? The God of Genesis 1:1-2:3 is...

- 1) **King of All** — God creates with no hint of chance or competition. He is not in competition with sea monsters or celestial bodies. He reigns without rival.
- 2) **The Only God** — With no mention of rival deities, God creates all that is. Before creating, nothing else existed. He is God alone.
- 3) **Eternal and Uncreated** — “In the beginning,” God was. God created everything that is. He himself is the only eternal and uncreated being. His origin is unmentioned and unaddressed; he does not need to justify his existence to any creature. His creatures must understand their own existence in light of him.
- 4) **Transcendent** — God stands alone, over and apart from his creation, ruling it, distinct from it.
- 5) **Imminent** — Despite transcending creation, God draws near to it and interacts with it. He speaks to and will dwell with his people.
- 6) **Dignified** — Pagan creation myths often depict the world emerging from sexual perverse or brutally violent acts by the gods. We find God to be neither. He calmly, wisely, majestically brings all things into being without a hint of corruption.
- 7) **Creator of All** — Everything but God was created by God. Creation is dependent upon God for its existence from first to last (Rom 4:17; Heb 11:3; 2 Pet 3:5; Col 1:15-17).
- 8) **Orderly** — God is a God of order, creating with a pattern and purpose, separating and assigning realms to his creations.
- 9) **Law-giver and Judge** — God declares and sets boundaries, gives names, appoints rulers, and determines purpose. He alone declares his verdict—“it was good.”
- 10) **Love** — God does not create and abandon. He gives life, blesses life, and provides what is necessary for the sustaining of life. He bestows honor upon those made in his image, providing them with meaningful work, a land, and food. God loves and delights in his creation.

Who is Man? Genesis 1:1-2:3 teaches us that man...

- 1) **...is the “image of God”** — Formed from the stuff of earth but animated by the breath of God, man is a truly fitting creation to represent God to the world.
- 2) **...is the “likeness of God”** — Humans are created as “sons of God,” resulting in a unique relationship with the Creator.
- 3) **...is royalty** — Created in the “image and likeness of God” man is royalty on earth. This classification is not reserved for a class of humans but extends to all, just as redemption will not be limited to ethnicity, gender, or social class.
- 4) **...is a kingdom of priests** — Man has a priestly function in the cosmic temple, ministering the image of God to all creation.
- 5) **...is ordered by God’s Word** — Man is not anonymous and independent, but finds their origin and purpose through the Word of God.
- 6) **...rules under God’s rule** — From this text, the Israelites entering the promised land are given a vision of what it means to be a kingdom of priests to God. In the same way, it lays a foundation for God’s people today.
- 7) **...is the culmination of creation** — God rests after creating humans because his creative work is done. The creation of man is the superlative act of creation. The image of God will be the supreme display of his glory.
- 8) **...is male and female** — Everything said above can and should be said equally of both men and women, who exercise dominion together.

How Does Genesis 1:1-2:3 Connect to the 21st Century?

Here are just a few ways it connects to our lives:

1. **We are equipped to combat false ideas.** Like the Israelites, we live in a world rich with modern myths, false gods, and alternative religions. With an understanding of God, humanity, and the universe we can correct the false ideas of materialism, secularism, and post-modernism.
2. **We learn how to know and relate to God.** He condescends to us. We depend on him. His word gives us meaning and purpose.
3. **We have a foundation for ethics,** covering both how to treat other humans and how to treat creation. Humans still bear the image of God (1 Cor 11:7; James 3:9). How we treat other humans communicates what we think God is worth.
4. **We see our purpose**—to represent God’s rule in the way we rule. How we act as humans communicates what we think God is like.
5. **We have a mandate to care for creation.** It is not ours to exploit, exhaust, and trash. The earth is a stewardship from God.
6. **We have a basis for vocation, for work, and for knowledge.** Every calling is a holy calling—whether designing and building houses, changing diapers, fixing meals, teaching the Bible, leading a church, crafting sculptures, painting murals, collecting garbage, farming, composing songs, writing books, etc. Because God created and upholds the world, we have confidence to experiment, to explore, to reason, and to learn.

How Does Genesis 1:1-2:3 Connect to the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

The creation account gives us hope in the midst of our broken world. Though things will go horribly wrong in a few chapters, God does not abandon his purpose. He will have a royal sonship subduing and exercising dominion over the heavens and the earth. This finds its fulfillment in the Gospel:

(1) The one supreme and sovereign Creator-God is none other than Jesus the Incarnate Word (see John 1:1-5; Colossians 1:15-20).

As both God and Man, Jesus is uniquely both the Creator and the Culmination of creation.

(2) The image of God finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus the Messiah (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15; Phil 2:6; Heb 1:3; Heb 2:5-8).

As though repeating the creation week, Jesus is covered in the darkness of water and led into a wilderness (Mt 3:16-4:1; Mk 1:9-13; Lk 3:31-4:1). He emerges as the true temple-builder (John 2:19-22; 1 Pet 2:4-5). His life and teaching demonstrate authority over animals, plants, wind and wave, demons, people, sickness, sin, and death. He subdues and exercises dominion as the Son of God. Crucified and risen, he completed his work and sits in God's temple at rest (Heb 1:3; 10:12-13).

Granted all authority from God, he issues a Great Commission that parallels the Creation Mandate—those recreated in his image are to go into all the earth and teach others to live under his dominion (Gen 1:26-27; Mt 28:18-20). With his bride (the church; Eph 5:23-32; Rev 22:5), the Last Adam is fruitful and multiplies and fills the earth (John 1:11-13; Rom 8:29; Gal 3:29; Rev 7:9), exercising dominion (Eph 1:22; Col 1:18-20), until all those adopted as sons enter his rest through faith in him (Heb 4:9-11).

(3) Redemption is an act of re-creation.

Through Jesus' sacrifice for sin and resurrection from the dead, those who trust in him are regenerated (given a second-genesis). The God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shines in our hearts through the light of Christ, making us new creations (2 Cor 4:1-16; 5:17). We are his workmanship (Eph 2:10), renew after his likeness (Eph 4:23-24), once in darkness but now in light (Eph 5:8; 1 Peter 2:9; Col 1:12-13).

Whereas God originally created the Heavens and Earth and then filled it with his image bearers, the pattern is now reversed. God is recreating image bearers who are waiting for a New Heavens and Earth in which to dwell with him.

(4) Redemption includes adoption as sons and conformity into the image of Christ.

Through union with Christ, we receive adoption as sons (Gal 4:5-7). As such, our royal status is restored. We are kings and priests to our God, who shall reign on the earth (Rev 5:9-10). We are being conformed into the true image of God (Rom 8:29; 2 Co 3:18; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10; 1 Cor 15:49). We exercise dominion with him now and forever (Mt 28:19-20; 2 Co 5:20; 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 22:5), representing him to the world (1 Peter 2:9). We receive grace when we fail to rule in a way that represents him and power to do so moving forward.

(5) We enter his rest by becoming new creations through faith in Christ.

When Christ's new-creation work is done and every authority is brought under his dominion, we will be resurrected to dwell in a New Heavens and New Earth—an unending rest with God, which we both enter now and await in the future by faith (Heb 3:7-19; 4:4, 3-11; Col 2:16-17; Gal 4:10; Rom 14:5, 12; 1 Tim 4:3-5).