

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## **Our Beginnings and The Bible**

### **Genesis 1:1**

**Keywords:** Truth, Inerrancy, Authority, Infallibility, Creation, Trustworthiness

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** NONE

**SermonAudio Blurb:** At the core of the massive number of articles, sermons, speeches and books dealing with the first eleven chapters of the bible is actually not about those chapters. It is how we view the bible and what we actually believe about the bible. Many well-meaning believers buy into certain interpretations without really considering what is happening in the background that drives those interpretations. In this sermon we deal with what the bible says about itself as opposed to what some so-called scholars say about it.

#### **I. Introduction.**

A. Last message.

1. I sought to bring a message that put the bible forefront in your minds to get each of you to ask what you really think about it.
2. There is a host of opinions on how we should look and treat the bible and so many of them show a marked lack of knowledge about the bible itself or they show a disturbing level of double-talk.
3. Behind this are several issues that are pressing upon the Church and the individuals in the Church and they need to be identified because they affect the health of the Church. Let me describe three:
4. One challenge is the way we are teaching our younger generation in the schools.
  - a. This is not intended to be a cheap shot so don't block me out here.
  - b. There is a loss of reading skills and how to listen and read in critical/discerning manner.
    - (1) If you doubt me then ask yourself how many of you are taking notes of the sermons here? How many of your children sitting in the service are taking notes?
    - (2) Ask yourself how often your books you read are marked up as you interact with the author?

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- (3) How many of you are able to give the central point of the sermon a few hours after hearing it?
- (4) How often are you reacting emotionally to what is heard rather than critically?
- c. There is also a serious reduction in reading itself which is a terrible threat for the Church.
  - (1) How many nonfiction books have you read in their entirety this year? In a recent poll almost 30% of adults have not read a single one this year.
  - (2) It is notable that the number goes down in relation to your youthfulness.
  - (3) It is common in schools today to not read whole books; rather only portions.
  - (4) If this is you, may I suggest you designate a time each day that is for reading for your home? Start your children early.
  - (5) I have often recommended books to people to read and find out later that they never were read or they were started, but because there was not a certain level of enjoyment, they stopped reading.
- d. A final aspect of this is a loss of basic grammar.
  - (1) We therefore fail to grasp how a sentence and paragraph are put together.
  - (2) That there are necessary logical points made.
  - (3) How grammar and sentence structure helps identify main points vs subordinate points.
5. A second challenge is post-modernism.
  - a. This world-view began in the 50's and really caught on in the 60's and now is fully grown and bearing its fruit in abundance.
  - b. It affects the Church by not seeing anything as absolute. This is what I described last sermon about a two tier approach to truth.

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- c. Truth is relative and therefore we can't know for certain what is right or wrong.
  - d. It is now a common assumption that a person reading something cannot know for certain the intent of the author and that knowing that intent is even important.
  - e. This sermon series is designed to be a full-frontal attack on this thinking.
6. A third challenge is a loss of theology in the pulpits.
- a. In the relentless pursuit of getting people in the seats sermons are shorter and filled with stories and videos but not a careful examination of the biblical text.
  - b. Instead of being constrained and directed by the text sermons are often developed by first coming up with an idea and then attaching passages to fit the idea.
  - c. Only when a pulpit is consistently pointing the people of God to look at their bibles verse by verse and letting the text say what it says can theology become established in the hearts of people.
  - d. And then people think theologically and live out that theology.
  - e. The end result is that the bible becomes a book all about me and you and not all about God.
- B. Ligonier and Lifeway (SBC) just came out with their latest theology poll.
- 1. You can look it up by going to: [www.thestateoftheology.com](http://www.thestateoftheology.com)
  - 2. Very disheartening and yet utterly unsurprising findings in the study.
  - 3. To be blunt, many people who would consider themselves to conservative, evangelical Christians have almost no theological faithfulness. Which then calls into question if they are even truly a Christian.
  - 4. "God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam." 51% agree with that statement. So much for Jesus' own statement that He alone is the only way to God the Father (John 4:34).
  - 5. 78% believe that Jesus Christ is the first created being by God the Father. This is heresy of the highest order. It is an ancient heresy called Arianism.

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6. The same percentage believe that humans are intrinsically good in their nature. In utter disregard to the clear teaching of the bible when says that there are none good and that all humans have sinned and fall short of God and His glory.
  7. 46% agree that a person's gender is a matter of choice. This is in direct contradiction to Genesis 1-2.
  8. "The Bible, like all sacred writings, contains helpful accounts of ancient myths but is not literally true." 53% agree that the bible is not literally true and another 10% are not sure.
  9. Matt Miller and I are abundantly aware of this trend and it is to this sort of reality that we are preaching to counter and to both attack and to defend.
- C. These are not small points to agree to disagree about.
1. Heaven and hell literally hang upon these sort of issues.
  2. Each church and each pulpit in America must make hard choices on what is said or not said. But I can say with absolute certainty that this is not a time to be vague and round-a-bout but to be clear and firm.
  3. It is a time for men to be men like the men of old who would stand and without fear or shame say, "Thus says the Lord....."

## **II. What do we do with the first eleven chapters of Genesis?**

- A. It all begins with Truth. That is where the battle will always lie and it is where the battle began clear back in the beginning. And it begins with certain presuppositions:
1. Axiopistic.
  2. Autopistic.
- B. What does the bible say about itself?
1. 2 Timothy 3:15-17.
    - a. In vs. 15 we have the power of the scripture.
      - (1) Note how central the belief in the truthfulness of Scripture is when speaking of one's soul.
      - (2) Notice how the bible is described as the source, the place, of true wisdom.

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- (3) Notice then what that type of wisdom exists to do.
- (4) And why? Because it ultimately points us to Jesus Christ where salvation is found and in Him alone.
- b. In 16 the product of the scripture.
  - (1) Because it is God-breathed it brings value and power into those who read it and believe it.
  - (2) It become “profitable.”
- c. In 17 the purpose of the scripture.
  - (1) Jesus prayed on behalf of us that we would be made holy and set apart for God. How this was done is in the word of God (John 17).
  - (2) The bible is effective. It accomplishes something. Here in vs 17 it says that the Christian, through the Word, because it is God-breathed, equips us for all that we are to be and do.
2. 2 Peter 1:19-21.
  - a. This is a very important passage for many preachers, teachers and parents to obey.
  - b. Too often when men get up to preach or teach they are really relying on whatever comes to their mind rather than by being faithful to teach out of the actual bible passage.
  - c. Even worse they will often claim that the Holy Spirit gave them this interpretation or sermon, even though it is not conforming to the bible’s message which is explicitly said to be from the Holy Spirit. That is blasphemy.
  - d. The ultimate Source.
    - (1) From God.
    - (2) In verse 21 it tells us how the prophecy was given. They were “moved” by the Holy Spirit.
    - (3) In verses 17-18 the term in Greek for moving is also used. There it is translated in English as an utterance was “made”

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or “carried” to him. In Acts 27:15 and 17 it is used to refer to the wind pushing the ship.

(4) The channels used.

(a) The prophets were important and were appropriate vessels to be used by God. But that is all they were ultimately, vessels.

(b) The scriptures therefore are Divine, but not merely a human invention. In the same way, the scriptures are both divine and human.

3. In John 17:17 Jesus says it as plainly as can be said, “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”

a. Note it is not that in the bible is truth found.

b. It is that the Word of God is, itself, truth.

4. Why? Because it is God’s word to us.

a. Titus 1:1-2.

b. Note how God’s truthfulness is vitally connected to our salvation. You cannot separate them and have enduring hope.

C. The trinity of bibliology.

1. Infallibility.

a. This is the doctrine that says that the bible is incapable of teaching anything in error.

b. This means that the human writer not only did not make errors, but he could not make an error. This is due to the fact that the entire process was superintended by the Holy Spirit.

c. Therefore the bible is incapable of leading a person in error.

2. Inerrancy.

a. Inerrancy simply means the Bible, in the original manuscripts, doesn’t make any mistakes in anything it affirms.

b. Translations may contain errors but not the original writings.

c. God’s innate truthfulness:

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- (1) Numbers 23:19, “God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”
- (2) Titus 1:2.
- d. The testimony of the scriptures themselves.
  - (1) Psalm 12:6, “The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.”
  - (2) John 17:17.
3. Authority.
  - a. The grass withers, the flower fades, When the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever. Get yourself up on a high mountain, O Zion, bearer of good news, Lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news; **Lift it up**, do not fear. Say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" (Isaiah 40:7-9)
  - b. 2 Timothy 3:15-17.
  - c. This doctrine is so lacking today. So when a person hears preaching or teaching that acts upon the bible’s authority they feel it lacks grace or is too hard.
  - d. But it is often forgotten the passion of God for His name and His Word—Jeremiah 23:29-34.
- D. So, what do you do with this statement? “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth?”
  1. That is the question.
  2. Do we embrace that as it is written?
  3. Do we begin to back away from it in shame or indecision?
  4. Or what?

## III. Conclusion.

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- A. And this is where we stop today. How and where is your hope? And how shall you endure when your world you live in turns against you?
- B. The Apostle Paul writes much about enduring in faithfulness and in all of his words the driving force behind it is a settled conviction of the truthfulness of God and the Word of God.
- C. Will you rise up as men and women of God and shake off the fetters of this world that bind your conscience and your convictions? Will you stand and contend for the faith that was once delivered to us?
- D. Behind all of this stands our hope. For the gospel cannot stand in the midst of error.
  - 1. To reject the Word of God in some way is to begin to cut away from the gospel.
  - 2. "Christianity is not just an experience, we need to remember, but it is about truth. The experience of being reconciled to the Father, through the Son, by the work of the Holy Spirit all happens within a worldview. This worldview is the way God has taught us in his Word to view the world. That is why the Bible begins with Genesis 1:1 and not with John 3:16.1". (David Wells, "The Courage to Be A Protestant")

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## Small Group Questions

- Discuss reading habits and possible hindrances for those in the group. Consider thinking about a topic that is of interest for the group and agreeing to all read a book and discuss it briefly together. If you need suggestions Matt Miller or Matt Henry can give you suggestions.
- What are the various ways you have personally heard to describe the bible?
- Of the three points: infallible, inerrant, and authoritative, which is hardest to embrace both in word and deed? Why do you think?
- What might you hope to see come about due to this brief series through Genesis 1-11?