

Exegetical Notes – Genesis 1:1-2

“By Right of Creation”

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(The Book of Genesis answers three critical questions. The first question it answers is, “Whose world is it anyway?” It answers this question with one word, **GOD’S**. It is God’s world because God made it. The second question it answers is, “How do we get along in God’s world God’s way?” It answers this question with the phrase, **TRUST and OBEY**. To get along in God’s world God’s way we must trust Him and obey His word. The third question it answers is, “How do we get along in God’s world God’s way with other people, especially the members of my own family?” Again, it answers with a phrase, **FORGIVE and FORGET**. Although the questions are listed sequentially here, they are not handled sequentially in the Book. The questions are intertwined throughout the book of Genesis as they are in life.)

Genesis 1:1-2

Verse 1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth

The opening words of the Bible are, “In the beginning God created.”

- The existence of God is not questioned. The noun translated “God” is the Hebrew word “Elohim.” It is a plural Hebrew noun. Scholars regard the plural noun as an honorific. It magnifies God as above and beyond all others. But it also suggests the nature of God. He is above and beyond comprehension. He was before the beginning. Everything else is after the beginning. But God is there before the beginning begins.
- The verb in the opening sentence of the Bible is “created.” It means that God made it. However, this Hebrew word is reserved for the divine in the Old Testament. Only God, never humans nor any other being “create.” Creating is the special activity of God reserved to Him alone. Only God creates. The verb is a Hebrew singular verb. It does not match but sets off the plural noun. In number, though God is plural, He is one. In creating, He is above and beyond every other creature. There is no one like our God.

- God created “the heaven and the earth.” In the New Testament recording of the first truth in the Bible (see John 1:1-11), the third verse (John 1:3) says, “Through Him,” Jesus Christ, “ALL THINGS WERE MADE.” These words define the meaning of “heaven and earth.” God, through Jesus Christ, created everything. To quote John 1:3, “without Him nothing was made that was made.” God created everything.
- THIS IS THE FIRST TRUTH STATED IN THE BIBLE. If this truth is rejected nothing which follows in the Bible can be trusted as truth. If the Bible’s first words are a lie, everything else it says can be thrown away. That is why, in our time, Satan is working so hard to destroy this truth. If this truth falls, everything else the Bible says falls, too.
- Question #1: Whose world is it anyway? It is God’s world by act of creation. He made it, therefore, it is His.

Verse 2

2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

- The earth was “formless and empty, darkness was over it.” The words imply that, prior to the beginning, there was nothing but disorder. No visible reality existed. Things were out of order.
- The phrase “The Spirit of God,” indicates that the whole person of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are active. John 1 declares that Jesus Christ, the Son of God was the active voice through which God created everything. Elohim is the plural noun for YHWH (see Exodus 3). The presence of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, indicates that God was fully involved. His entire being is found in the act of creating.
- “AND” the Spirit of God was “hovering over the waters.” The word translated “and” can also be correctly translated “but.” It implies that something is about to happen. God is about to move over the chaos and impose order through His light giving, life giving, ordering word.
- This is the hold-your-breath moment. Everything is about to begin. Everything will come to be. God is about to move to bring order to chaos. What follows is the account of God’s creation.

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