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Genesis 1:1-25

The Genesis of God's People: Created to Trust

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Introduction: (S#1)

1. One of the most beautiful places I've ever visited is the plitvice lakes in Croatia.
2. Several years ago I traveled with Monica and her family to visit these lakes.
3. It has a 255 foot waterfall, the bluest water I've ever seen, plank trails, and 16 cascading lakes. (S#2-3)
4. You could easily go and spend a whole week exploring the lakes and enjoying nature.
5. Genesis one paints a picture a bit like this, of a never ending garden we could explore forever.
6. The creation story is meant to overwhelm us with its beauty, refresh us, and teach us truths about God.
7. The author of Genesis is Moses—he wrote this book after the Israelites came out of bondage in Egypt.
8. Egypt had irrigation, the Nile, and was fertile, and when they left that, they entered a hot and dry desert.
9. As Moses wrote Genesis, he crafted it in such a way as to refresh the people with God's truth.
10. As we study Genesis one, I want us to look for 5 simple truths Moses taught his original audience. (S#4)

(When Israel left Egypt, they traveled to Mount Sinai where God gave them the 10 Commandments.)

(The 10 Commandments are likely the first written words of the whole Bible... God gave pattern to Moses.)

(God then gave the rest of the law to Moses which he would have needed to write down.)

(When Israel arrived at the promised land, they didn't believe God would give them the land.)

(So God sentenced them to 40 years in the wilderness, and when Moses disobeyed, he too couldn't enter.)

(A good translation of "formless and empty" in verse two is "desert and a wasteland.")

(Here are a people wandering in a formless and empty desert wasteland.)

(And God reminds them that even out of these circumstances, he can make a whole new creation.)

(Genesis 1:1-25 teaches us five truths and each gives us hope:) (S#5)

1. Truth #1: Our God created everything out of nothing. (Gen 1:1)

- A. The God of Christianity made creation ex nihilo ("creation out of nothing").
 - a. The Egyptians believed creation emerged out of a primeval watery mass named Nu ("abyss").
 - b. This comes from their belief that the Nile itself was a god and life came and left from it.
 - c. It would be tempting for Israel to worship the Nile as they wandered the desert looking for water.
 - d. So Moses shows them that before time and creation began there was only their God.
 - e. The heavens and earth are not extensions of God, or flow out from him, but are made by him.
 - f. All God needs to do is speak and light comes into existence and the water and sky are separated.
 - g. The Hebrew word for "create" is only used of God who speaks and things happen, not humans.
 - h. Our God created everything out of nothing. (Manna)
- B. One good reason to believe in God that everything in existence must have a cause.
 - a. This is the cosmological argument for the existence of God (universe can't begin for no reason).
 - b. God is the unmoved mover, the one who started it all. (Newton's cradle, ball clacker)
- C. This also reminds us God can supply all our needs no matter our circumstances.

- a. As soon as Israel left Egypt, they began complaining that God would let them starve (Ex 16:2).
- b. Then they disobeyed God in Numbers 14 and he banished them to wander for 40 years.
- c. They would have felt discouraged and at an end, but Moses reminds them of God’s faithfulness.
- d. If you’re feeling discouraged, believe in the God who can make something out of nothing.
- e. If you're going through a hard time (job, health, grades, family), God can help you through it.

(Truth #1: Our God created everything out of nothing.)
 (Come and trust your Creator God.)

2. Truth #2: Our God is a personal God. (Gen 1:2) (S#6)

- A. We catch the first glimpse of the Trinity in verses 1-2.
 - a. Christians believe in a triune God—one God nature existing in three persons.
 - b. We see God the Father in verse one and we see the Holy Spirit in verse two.
 - c. Spirit is “Ruah” and it means “wind, breath, spirit” (same Spirit Bezalel receives in Ex 35:31).
 - d. The Spirit “hovers” over the deep—hovering not like a cloud mass but like a bird.
 - e. Deuteronomy 32:11 uses this word to describe how an “eagle... hovers over its young.”
 - f. The Holy Spirit is like a loving mom and dad, he's present, he cares, he nourishes his young.
 - g. In the NT, the Holy Spirit is described as a dove descending on Jesus at his baptism. (Mk 1:10)
 - h. Moses is reminding his people the Holy Spirit is there for them and he's here for us today.
 - i. The Holy Spirit can take those who are a “desert and a wasteland” and make us into a garden.
 - j. No matter how thirsty and dry you feel, God can renew you.

(Truth #2: Our God is a personal God.)
 (Come and trust your Creator God.) (S#7)

3. Truth #3: Our God is a God of order and beauty. (Gen 1:3-25)

- A. First, there is order and beauty in the words.
 1. The six-days of creation are arranged as a poetic song.
 2. Hebrew poetry doesn’t rhyme, but uses repetitions and parallels.
 3. We see over and over again, “God said, God called, God made, God saw, according to its kind, it was morning and evening, it was good, day one, day two, day three, etc.”
 4. This poem is meant to move our spirits and move us to worship.
 5. First, there is order and beauty in the words.
- B. Second, there is order and beauty in the structure. (S#8-14 - chart)
 1. The first three days of creation correspond with the second three days of creation.
 2. God creates spaces and realms and then he fills those spaces and realms.
 3. On **Day 1**, God creates light (v3) and on **Day 4** he fills it with the sun, moon, and stars (v14).
 4. On **Day 2**, God creates oceans and sky (v6) and on **Day 5** he fills it with birds and fish (v20).
 5. On **Day 3**, God creates land & vegetation (v9) and on **Day 6** he fills it with animals & man (v24).
 6. Second, there is order and beauty in the structure.
- C. Third, there is order and beauty in the account.
 1. Another translation of “God saw that it was good” (NIV) is “God saw that it was beautiful.”

2. The Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible from 100-300 years before Christ.
3. That translation of Genesis says kalos “what is ordered, beautiful, attractive, lovely, good.”
4. God himself looks at what he has made and says, “Wow, look at what I have made!”
5. Israel is going through a time of chaos, they're refugees and following Moses day by day.
6. They were slaves in Egypt, life was ordered, but not here, where they're trusting God.
7. God is helping them see their future; he is going to bring them into the promised land.
8. Third, there is order and beauty in the account. **(S#15)**

D. There are several ways this applies to us today.

1. First, if your life feels like chaos, God can turn your disorder into order and beauty (Rom 8:28).
2. Do you trust him? The harder we cling to controlling our chaos, the worse it will get.
3. If the Holy Spirit lives in you, you can know without doubt that you're going to a promised land.
4. Second, we should love those who are going through chaos and hurt.
5. Third, it tells us our God is not a God of chance, natural selection, or survival of the fittest.
6. God doesn't love us because we're strong; he loves us in our weakness, need, and confusion.
7. When life breaks down, as it always will, God can build us back up.

(Truth #3: Our God is a God of order and beauty.) **(S#16)**

(Come and trust your Creator God.)

4. Truth #4: Our God is the only true God. (Gen 1:3-25)

A. There aren't a plurality of gods or ways to God, but one true God.

1. In Egypt, the sun, moon, and stars were all deities, but here they're almost an afterthought.
2. On the fourth day, God doesn't call them by their names but says lights so as to not confuse.
3. I want to go back a moment to the corresponding days chart. **(S#17)**
4. All throughout the Bible we read of God's covenants with his people.
5. A covenant is a promise made between a king and his subject.
6. Here we see God setting up kingdoms and appointing kings (sun/moon/stars rules light, birds/fish rules sky/water, animals/man rule land/vegetation). **(S#18)**
7. In Genesis 2:1-3, on the seventh day, we see God himself rule over all of creation. **(S#19)**
8. God invites people who he has created in his image to rule it with him (more next week).
9. This means there is only one true God, the God of Christianity, and we need to believe in him.
10. This means Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, atheism, and even agnosticism are not true.

(Truth #4: Our God is the only true God.)

(Come and trust your Creator God.) **(S#20)**

5. Truth #5: Our God doesn't tell us everything. (Gen 1:3-25)

A. Our God tells us a lot of things, but not everything, and that's okay.

1. In Genesis one God is introducing himself to Israel so they'll believe on him.
2. In one sense, he's posing a question to Israel, "Do I have to tell you everything to win your trust?"
3. In this passage, God doesn't give Israel a detailed record of the past or the future.
4. Instead, God invites Israel to trust in him no matter what they're going through.

B. Does God have to tell us everything for us to trust him?

1. Does he have to tell you if you'll be rich or poor, a great student or poor one, sick or healthy?
2. God doesn't give us these answers, but he does invite us to trust him in every moment.
3. Does God need to tell us everything about himself and how the world began for us to trust him?
4. Do we need to know the age of the earth for us to love God?
5. The Bible doesn't tell us whether the earth is 4,000 years old or 4 billion years old.
6. The Bible doesn't tell us if these are literal 24 hour days or symbolic.
7. Genesis one is poetic and uses analogies; it's God's view, not earth's view (God said, God saw)
8. Revelation is a vision, and one that feels just like Genesis one (tree of life, no sun, Rev 22:2, 5).
9. It's okay to disagree with me on this—I want Cornerstone to be a safe place to disagree.

(Truth #5: Our God doesn't tell us everything.)

(Come and trust your Creator God.) (S#21)

C. God reveals what really matters, himself.

- a. In Genesis chapter one we catch a glimpse of God, but it's not till the NT that we see him clearly.
- b. Next week we'll learn about people and the following week we'll read about the fall.
- c. Because of our fall into sin we all deserve to die, but God sends his son Jesus to rescue us.
- d. Timothy Keller says, “The maker had to be unmade so we could be re-made.”
- e. On the cross, Jesus became nothing so we might become all and all in him.
- f. On the cross, Jesus sacrificed his personhood so that we could have the Holy Spirit..
- g. On the cross, Jesus suffered disorder and chaos so that we might have order and beauty forever.
- h. On the cross, Jesus took on the false gods of this world, sin and death, and won.
- i. On the cross, Jesus unraveled the mystery of how sinners can be saved.
- j. Our creator God became nothing so that we might have everything.

(Come and trust your Creator God.)

Psalm 67:1-2 “May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us— so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.” (NIV®)