

III. God's Blueprint in Biblical Perspective *Foundations from Genesis*

"Foundation #2: The Sanctity of God"

Genesis 1

Dr. Harry L. Reeder III

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We are in this series of God's blueprint which means we are staying in the book of Genesis as our foundational text as we look at these foundational issues of life (the sanctities of life) but we will be going to other texts of Scripture to back up what we see from Genesis. I am so grateful to be in this series with you. So, I want to start by looking at Genesis 1. Genesis 1:1–2, and 26 says *[1] In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. [2] The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

[26] Then God (singular) said, "Let us (plurality) make man in our (plurality) image, after our (plurality) likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever, and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

It is clear to me we are in a season that some have seen coming and some have not seen coming, but even those who saw it coming are amazed at the rapidity of this cultural movement of secular progressivism and its handmaiden. The Scriptures have indicated this has been true for 2000 years, since the ascension of Jesus, that is the book of Revelation informs us that Satan makes war against the woman (representative of the church of Christ, the bride of Christ – the war against Christ) and there are two beasts that serve the evil one. One is the beast of the sea and the other is the beast of the land. The beast of the land is subservient to the beast of the sea which is the tyrannical authoritarian domination of humanity by a deity consumed authority of governments, empires and totalitarianism served by a false religion – the beast of the sea. We've always had it but what the Bible indicates is toward the coming of Christ in the revealing of the man of lawlessness that will take on even greater proportions.

This is what we kind of see today in progressive secular movement and precinct fascism that is adopted supposedly by democratic federal governments that are to be ruled of the people by the people, of the people and for the people. It can and is often supported by false religion with progressive Christianity. But what do the people of God do? They don't live in fear or anxiety yet certainly have concerns and address them but what are we to do when the foundations are assaulted, even in the mainline church that is already dissipated but even in the historical evangelical church? As we see these things happen, we don't retreat or recoil, we meet it by making God our refuge.

What will the righteous do when the foundations are shaken? Psalm 11 says we take our refuge in the Lord and you strengthen the foundations in the Lord and for the Lord. About two years ago I did a series on the essential of the Christian life from the Apostles' Creed and the clear confidence of God is given in the 13 essential foundations we looked at in the creed. It is a creed that is focused upon God Himself – it is a Trinitarian creed. Moving from the essential foundations to what I call the effective foundations in this series, I will draw out 15 of them from the book of Genesis and we find ourselves in the same direction.

The Apostles' Creed starts off 'I believe...' and where does faith come from? Faith comes from hearing the word (Romans 10:17). So, we began with the first foundation of the sanctity of Divine revelation – general revelation and special revelation – and specifically the Word of God that gives us the ability to properly address general revelation. God's revelation of His Word is infallible (reliable), inerrant (without error and absolutely trustworthy), powerful, sufficient and that the original authors were carried along by the Holy Spirit. It is also a Word of perspicuity meaning a Word of simplicity, consistency and clarity. It is a Word that is accessible and available to us through the means of grace.

This is one of the reasons I love the Lord's Day for we gather around for the praise of God. How? We do it with the Word of God, enabled by the Spirit of God. Life worship is built upon Lord's Day worship and everything we do in gathered worship is expressly commanded in God's Word. Everything we do is a venue for God's Word as well. We confess, pray, sing, read, and preach God's Word. The Spirit of God always works with the Word of God. That is crucial in life so we have the Word of God's presence. John 17:17 says *[17] Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.*

Sanctity number two which we will cover in this study is the sanctity of God. The reason I didn't do this one first is because you can't know God unless the God whose attribute is light reveals Himself to you. He reveals Himself to you in general revelation but it is not sufficient for salvation and how to live for the Lord as the saved. It is sufficient to hold us accountable. It is efficient to reveal His realities so much so that the Bible says to deny Him in creation is imbecilic. It is only the fool who says in His heart there is no God (Psalm 14:1; 53:1). But it is not sufficient to save us. That Word is unstoppable to give us clarity and not just that there is a God of eternal power but who God is in His existence, His essence and subsistence. I know there is God for the creation shouts there is a Creator, but I would never know that He dwells as Father, Son and Holy Spirit nor would I know His provision for my redemption without special revelation – the Word of God.

The fact is, you can't savingly know the God of the Word without the Word of God and the power of the Spirit of God at work in your life. You can know the Word of God and not know the God of the Word. Now that we come to God's Word, what does God's Word do as it sanctifies us, as it sets us apart? We become a sanctity but that sanctity is rooted in who God is as He has revealed Himself to us as the God of glory and grace. So with the Word of God we begin to get a life view that is motivated by a life love that leads to a life style. The lifestyle is knowing how to live in a fallen world in which sin is at work in the creation, around us and in us and we do this by having a life view – a worldview that is Biblical, God-centered and Spirit filled. That life view is desired by those who know and love the Lord. The life view comes from a life love.

In other words, when you come to Christ and receive a new heart, now you have a life love for the love of God compels you in Christ. It compels us to go to the Word of God, surrender to the Spirit of God to get the mind of God – to learn how to subject every thought captive unto the obedience of Christ (II Corinthians 10:5). This is how our mind is renewed by the Lord. When you get saved you get a new heart, a new record, a new life, a new home but you don't get a new mind. You still have stinkin' thinkin' and so every morning you need to get out of the default of a self-absorbed mind that has been indelibly printed into your life (the old man) and get into the Word to get a life view that is framed by the Word of God and through His Spirit that filters life's claims and experiences. Stay focused on the God of the Word. How do you do that?

The first thing to do is to make sure you know who God is. While Genesis will be the origins of these foundations (sanctities) I will be taking you to other texts that will help flesh out, fill out and fill in Genesis 1:1 which say [1] *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth*. So, let's look at John 17 which is where Jesus prays His High Priestly prayer which was done in the Upper Room where the Lord's Supper was established and the commandment that we are to love others as He has loved us.

John 17:3 says [3] *And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent*. "That they know you" which is God who we will understand as God the Father and to know His Son. Before God spoke into being the world it was formless and unfilled and the Spirit hovered. Just a few verses later in Genesis 1 when man is created God says 'Let us..' and this is not the doctrine of the Trinity, but it is a plurality pronoun which would be two or more. We have this One God that has multiplicity though One. Deuteronomy 6:4 says [4] *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one*.

Here are three words I want you to remember – essence, existence and subsistence. Here is God who is self-existing. As Christian parents or grandparents what do you tell you children or grandchildren when they say to you 'who made the world?' You would likely tell them God made the world. You probably know what the next question from their little mouths will be, who made God? Your answer is – no one for God is self-existent. Agnostics and atheism has to embrace a self-existence universe of some size or scope and its trinity is space, time and matter. When Carl Sagan says the cosmos (space, time and matter) is all there is, was and ever will be that is a statement of faith. Sagan says if you give it billions of billions of years space, time and matter orders itself although the second law of thermodynamics denies that and what you observe in life is not an ordering up of space, time and matter that's alone I don't care how much time you give it, you find a disordering down called entropy. We will come back to this in another sanctity but we say no to the agnostic and atheist on this view and say God is.

How does God reveal Himself to us in His Word? He reveals Himself in a number of ways. One is by His acts and we call that Providence and history. Another way He reveals Himself to you through His Word His through His titles we find for Him in His Word. In His Word He gives you His Name. In Genesis it is El and then we'll get El Shaddai meaning I am God Almighty. There is His name, Jehovah Jireh – Yahweh provides. He gives us His names to tell us who He is. For us a name is kind of like catching someone's attention as we call their name in order for them to hear us, but that's not how we see a name in Scripture for when you name something you have authority over it and you define it. God is telling you who He is through that name.

We see an encounter with Moses as to how the people will know God sent him in Exodus 3:13–15 which says [13] *Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"* [14] *God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM."* (Jehovah) *And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"* [15] *God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.* This name doesn't mean 'I was' or 'I will be' or 'I'm becoming something' but it is I Am.

What is it that we know about this self-existing God? We know He dwells in plurality. The word 'one' is interestingly translated rightly from Deuteronomy 6:4. The word 'one' here means it is something that is singularity with multiplicity. For instance, we find it when the spies

get sent into the Promised Land. Number 13:23 says [23] *And they came to the Valley of Eshcol and cut down from there a branch with **a single cluster of grapes**, and they carried it on a pole between two of them; they also brought some pomegranates and figs.* ‘A single cluster’ is the same use of the word ‘one’ in Deuteronomy 6:4. Single cluster represents multiplicity. It is called grape because it is joined together and it’s of essence a grape yet its subsistence is multiplicity. This why that word is used because a Trinity has multiplicity to it but God is one in existence and in essence.

The book of Genesis reveals this to us and the rest of the Bible gives us that existence of God, that He is one God that dwells in three Persons. Those three persons are revealed in creation as the Father authors creation, the Son accomplished creation and the Spirit applies creation. It is shown in redemption as the Father authors our salvation and predestined us to be saved, He sent His Son who accomplishes our salvation and He sent the Spirit who secures, saves and seals us in the Redeemer. In God’s Providence God loves His people to care for them, the Son intercedes for them and the Spirit utters His request on our behalf in life that are too deep to be uttered. The same thing will be true at the Judgment as the Father appoints the Son as Judge and the Spirit brings forth those who are to be judged at the last day. If you want to see the Trinity at work in redemption read Ephesians 1:3–14. Ephesians 1:3–6 is the Father to the praise of His glory. Ephesians 1:7–12 is the Son to the praise of His glory and Ephesians 1:13–14 is the Spirit and His work to the praise of His glorious grace.

Let’s focus on creation for now from John 1. John 1:1–3 says [1] *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God. [3] **All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.***

The Word (logos) is an Old Testament title for Son of God. So here we see that the Word, the Son of God was in the beginning, was with God and He too is self-existent. He also does not have a beginning. What was He doing in the beginning? Here we have an insight back into Genesis 1:1 for we see that God is making all thing through His Son, the Word, the Logos. Not everything was made immediately for instance man was not made immediately because man was made from something that was made immediately – the earth. Man was made from the mediatorial dust of the earth and the woman is made from the rib of the man. Whether it is mediatorial or immediate creation God has created everything through His Son.

Let’s add a little more information to this from Colossians 1. Colossians 1:15–20 says [15] *He (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. [16] For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through Him and for Him. [17] And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. [18] And He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent. [19] For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, [20] and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross.*

Here we find out that God is a Spirit which means He can’t be seen but it doesn’t mean He is not real. How many of you when you suck air in see it? Yet it is real. We also see that Christ is the image of the invisible God. So, what was Christ before He was Incarnate? He was Spirit. The Trinity was Spirit. Then His Son was sent and made Incarnate and makes visible the invisible attributes of God. Here Jesus’ title is Firstborn and we see He again is self-existent. We find out that when the Trinity is working in creation, the One God is creating everything as

Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is creating everything through the Son superintended by the Spirit as He hovers over creation (Genesis 1:2) and we see here that it was made as the inheritance of the Son.

Also, we see that Jesus is the Provider in Colossians 1:17 because He holds everything together. This Triune (tri-unity) is One and this One subsists in three Persons. His existence is eternal and we find out that this One is self-sufficient. He doesn't need the creation. He created the creation for a purpose but doesn't need it. What else do we find out? He is a Person. We are persons made in His image. He is personal and has defining attributes from which He acts. He is also the Head of the body of the church so now we see the Son as Redeemer. He is Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. Realize that all this is important because to have eternal life is to know God.

My first ministry was a student minister at a Reformed Baptist church and we started with 17 people at Lookout Valley in Chattanooga, Tennessee. I met this couple who said they wanted to have a church that loved Jesus and I said 'I want a church that has Jesus.' They said 'We're so glad to have you, now one more thing, we don't want theology and all this doctrine stuff.' I said 'Well, you're going to have to call someone else. Do you believe the Bible is inerrant, profitable and sufficient?' She said 'Yes!' I said 'The Bible says it is profitable for doctrine so you can't profit from the Bible without doctrine.' She said 'Don't get tricky on me.' I said 'I'm not through.' I took her to the John 17 passage that says 'this is eternal life that you know (ology) God (Theo) so to be saved and have eternal life you have to theologize – you have to know God. I wish I could tell you I had a convert after that conversation but we were on the way to an understanding as to why we were going to do expository preaching while we were there.

We have to know God. You are in a category four or five hurricane in the culture and in the church and you need a refuge. You won't flee to God for refuge until you know how great and big your God is – until you know Him. You will never know God exhaustively but you can know Him accurately and intimately as He has revealed Himself in His Word and as He draws you to Himself by His Spirit. Why do we come together on the Lord's Day? To feel good? I'm hoping we feel good but that's not why we come together. We come together to praise God. We're not praising worship or ourselves. Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise Him all ye heavenly hosts, praise Him Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Your prayers ought to be Trinitarian. Jesus said 'when you pray, pray this way; Our Father which art in heaven'...in Jesus Name praying in the Spirit. Your worship ought to be Trinitarian. Most of the great hymns which stick around more than five years are Trinitarian – go look at them. The Apostles' Creed is Trinitarian. During the prayer of illumination in our service it is Trinitarian for I ask the Father to come and Jesus to speak through the Spirit using His Word in your life. I can't get more practical than this. This is your life – your life is God and God dwells in three Persons. When He does His covenant of redemption, He has no one else to swear by because there is no one greater. Therefore Hebrews 6:13 says *[13] For when God made a promise to Abraham, since He had no one greater by whom to swear, He swore by Himself.*

This is the God of glory, might and majesty and I believe, whether it's dealing with besetting sexual sins or a wayward church, our problem today is not technique, it's that we don't understand the Gospel and we don't understand the Gospel because we don't understand God. We don't even understand the Trinitarian Gospel therefore it is absolutely important that these

things are embraced and understood. If you don't think it's practical, I will finish with one passage of Scripture in Acts 17.

You are coming into a relatively pagan world. Now Alabama may be less pagan than other places but it's still pagan. In Acts 17 Paul is in the center of the power of paganism and what does he do in this pagan city? Here we will see Paul's love for the law of God – have no other gods before Me and do not make for yourself any graven images.

Acts 17:16–33 says [16] *Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, **his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols.*** [17] *So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace (the Gentiles) every day with those who happened to be there.* [18] *Some of the Epicurean (Hedonism) and Stoic (pragmatism) philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babbler wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities”—because he was **preaching Jesus and the resurrection** (the Gospel).* [19] *And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?”* [20] *For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.”* [21] *Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.*

[22] *So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious.* [23] *For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ (Know that every primitive tribe we find has religion and gods and that’s their curse of sin reading perverting their general revelation and everyone of them has a special god – pantheist or polytheists.)* *What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.* [24] ***The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man,*** [25] ***nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything*** (self-sufficient, self-existent), *since He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.* [26] ***And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth,*** (this did away with Darwinians and ethnicities with one human race) *having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,* [27] *that they should seek God (the God of redemption), and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him. Yet He is actually not far from each one of us,* [28] *for “‘In Him we live and move and have our being’ (the God of Providence); as even some of your own poets have said, “‘For we are indeed His offspring.’*

[29] *Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.* [30] *The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent,* [31] *because He has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead.”* [32] *Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, “We will hear you again about this.”* [33] *So Paul went out from their midst.* [34] *But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.*

Paul was moved to do something when he saw the city full of idols and I'm not saying that Christians shouldn't get involved in politics or economics, in fact I'm trying to equip people to go there, but what Paul does first is he begins to proclaim the Word of God. Paul reasoned with them from the Scriptures. Nothing is going to change until they change and their heart changes and that only happens through the proclamation of the Word of God.

Paul sees their inscription ‘to the unknown god’ as they say ‘we have a god that nobody can know.’ Paul says ‘no, there is One I want to tell you about and you can know Him.’ Paul starts off his preaching to them with God, who made the world. Paul shows God as Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer (of Providence), and shows the consummation in judgment. When Paul goes to a synagogue he doesn’t start with God because they already have that but when he goes to the Gentile he starts with the doctrine of God from the Word, not from human reasoning. Paul gets a mixed response – some are converted, some are not and some want to talk with him further.

To spend more time on this read the shorter catechism. Question 4 from the Shorter Westminster catechism is, what is God? Answer – God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. The ‘omnis’ ascribed to God in the Bible are omnipotent (God is all-powerful), omniscience (God is all-knowing) and omnipresent (God is all together everywhere all the time). As God is self-existing His essence is One (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

There will be a second part to this study on God for in the next study we will learn that this God made us in His image therefore you have some of His attributes, but some of them you can’t have. Did you see the list—wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth? We’re going to find out the attribute of all attributes is God is holy. Some of those attributes you have by creation and matured in redemption which are communicable attributes. Some you will never have for they are incommunicable attributes. That will be phenomenal to understand who we are now and in eternity.

Question number 5 from the Shorter Westminster catechism is, are there more Gods than one? Answer, There is but one only, the living and true God. Question 6 is, how many persons are there in the Godhead? Answer, There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance (essence), equal in power and glory. But in subsistence, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There are two errors in the doctrine of the Trinity here in the catechism and I will give those to you in the next study – part two – of this study. You don’t want to make either one of these errors.

Here is what we understand. God is one in essence, self-existent and sufficient, and subsists in three Person as one God equal in power and glory. That God made you. That God saves you. That God sustains you. Let’s pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we could be together in Your Word. Thank You for the way You work in our life and thank You that we may know our God through His Son, Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit who teaches us from His Word. God give us a passion to know You – know God – so that we might, like Paul, make God known, in Jesus’ Name I pray, Amen.

Power Point

The Sanctity of God

Q. 4. What is God?

A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

Q. 5. Are there more Gods than one?

A. There is but one only the living and true God.

Q. 6. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.