

## V. God's Blueprint in Biblical Perspective

### *Foundations from Genesis*

#### "Foundation #3: The Sanctity of God"

Genesis 1:1–2:11

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Having looked at the importance of foundations from Psalm 11, foundations are crucial but they can be shaken. We don't put our confidence in the foundations but we take refuge in the Lord, therefore we can address the foundations and also solidify them by the Lord and in the Lord. It is my conviction that God's Word is inspired, inerrant and infallible and it is our confessional position which means it's utterly reliable not only in its content but also its order. I believe that the book of Genesis, the book of origins, covers what it covers and is of itself foundational.

The first sanctity we are confronted with from the book of Genesis is the book of Genesis. We have from God His revealed Word. God has made Himself known in general revelation but He has made Himself known in a primary and saving way in special revelation that we have in the 66 books of the Bible that the Holy Spirit inspired through 40 plus authors within 1500 to 1600 years.

The second sanctity is since the Word has been given by the God of the Word then we can know God. 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.* Now we can know God by how He has revealed Himself in His Word, beginning but not finishing in the book of Genesis.

Now we come to a third sanctity, the sanctity of creation. I want to first give you two qualifying statements. I am fully aware of the discussion among evangelicals and also within the PCA (Presbyterian Church of America), as to whether the days in creation are 24-hour days or not. There four views that are included in a study report we have done that are acceptable exegetically from the text. They are not the only views for I will acquaint you with seven views on this in this study. I will give you my conviction on this and why I have this conviction. My conviction from the text is that these are 24 hour days and will cover why in this study although I can't do extensive on these other presentations.

The reason I am doing this is because creation week is not simply about creation. It is also about salvation and consummation. It is not only origins but it is also soteriology – the doctrine of salvation which it is pointing to and anticipating, for its pattern is toward salvation. It is also anticipating eschatology, that is the new heavens and the new earth. The patterns are unmistakable and that is the reason I want to spend time going through it.

Acts 17 is a text I could show you this from for in this chapter Paul is evangelizing the philosophers at the Areopagus and he doesn't start with the doctrine of salvation, but starts with the doctrine of creation. I don't have time to go through this with you, but there are things that he affirms as sanctities in his preaching. Paul doesn't debate them, he proclaims them. He proclaims that we are one race, we have one Creator and that we have one historical Adam where all the human race comes from. He proclaims the reality of creation as well as the reality of Providence and he also proclaims the glories of salvation through Jesus Christ. It is Christ through whom all things have been made, by whom we are sustained in Providence and through whom alone we are saved.

The doctrine of creation is really crucial and I don't think there is any doubt as to why the book of Genesis comes under such constant attack in terms of its integrity and veracity. This is the first book of the Bible and if you get it wrong then you are on a trajectory to get so much else wrong as you work your way through the Bible. There is a connectedness that cannot be denied. In this study I will not have the time to footnote everything that I have been indebted to from many authors on this subject matter, but I do want to provide a list of those who have greatly affected me in my study of the book of Genesis. One, is Dr. Douglas Kelly and his three volume systematic theology, now retired but still teaches at Reformed Theological Seminary. Two, Dr. Jonathan Gibson who I think is unparalleled in his studies on the book of Genesis. Three is my dear friend Dr. Richard Phillips who has an excellent commentary on Genesis 1 that I highly commend. Four, is Dr. James Boice, whom I miss so much and the insights he has in his sterling commentaries on Genesis. Also Dr. Francis Schaeffer's wonderful commentary titled Genesis In Space and Time. There are more but I wanted to get these to you up front.

Let's get into this creation week. Genesis 1 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.*

*[3] And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. [4] And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. [5] God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.*

*[6] And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." [7] And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. [8] And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. [9] And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. [10] God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.*

*[11] And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. [12] The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. [13] And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.*

*[14] And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, [15] and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. [16] And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. [17] And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, [18] to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. [19] And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.*

*[20] And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." [21] So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. [22] And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." [23] And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.*

*[24] And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. <sup>25</sup> And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.*

*[26] Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our 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." [27] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

*[28] And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." [29] And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. [30] And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. [31] And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*

*Genesis 2:1–4 says [1] Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. [2] And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. [3] So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. [4] These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.*

There is a lot in this text I'm not going to deal with because I'll be coming back to this text to deal more with the creation of man – the sanctity of man, male and female, the sanctity of gender, the sanctity of work. We will come back to all of that in our 15 essential foundations but in this study I'm just dealing with the creation week itself and its implications. I want to point out some things in this text about things we can see clearly here about God Himself.

God has revealed Himself by this His Word. What do we know immediately from this opening chapter? Number one, we know that God is self-existent. I want to be very careful how I say what's next. There was a time when there was nothing and God was sovereign over nothing but there never really was nothing because God is everything. God exists and God exists well.

Secondly, God is self-sufficient. Nothing He made was added to Him. Nothing He made was needed by Him. The reality is, if God is not sovereign over the nothing, He can't be sovereign over the everything so He is sovereign over everything and sovereign over the nothing. Everything that you see, at one time, was not here – there was nothing. It's pretty tough to talk about nothing. Stop right now and try to think about nothing. You can't do that, it's impossible. Dr. Sproul said, 'The closest you can get to nothing is when you are raising junior high kids, because when they come home you will ask them 'what did you do today' and they will say 'nothing.' So, there was nothing yet even when I say there is nothing I am making a non-sensical statement because the word 'was' is the derivative of 'is' and 'is' is a word of being. We are using a word of being to talk about nothing and nothing by definition has no being. Yet

there was God and God is sovereign over the nothing, then God brought into existence everything – visible and invisible – through His Son Jesus Christ.

If He didn't, I believe you are left with only three propositions. Proposition number one is that somehow nothing made something. That is not only illogical but irrational and it has no ability to be true. Nothing by definition cannot create something because it is nothing. The second proposition is that you believe in another trinity and you're a materialist in which you believe that space, time and matter are eternal. If we can give enough time – although we don't know where the time came from – to space, time and matter then the space and matter over a period of time will organize itself in opposition to the second law of thermodynamics that is entropy and in opposition to that it actually will run everything up if we give it enough time through its various accidents and mutations.

The third proposition is actually the most rising option in academic circles in terms of explaining everything – who we are, where we came from, why we're here and why we're doing what we are doing. I just read two articles on it last week. This rising option is that you are the result of a computer simulation. Somehow there was a race before us where now they have gotten to the point that they can build us from a computer simulation and we're just working out whatever the computer simulation says. Then I have to ask 'The people that built the computer simulation that explains us, where did they come from?' It is amazing to see the truth of God's work being played out, that professing to be wise they become fools (Romans 1:22).

I have a great explanation for all this – God spoke and now the worlds exist. There is a reason that God reveals Himself the way He does. When the Bible was written by the first human author, Moses, inspired by the Holy Spirit, this was like dropping an atomic bomb, because how did everybody explain everything? They made a God of everything. Then they would make an unknown god or an over the mountain god because these gods couldn't have done it for there had to be another God somewhere. When Moses writes this in the surrounding polytheistic, pagan nations this just dropped a bomb. There is the one true and living God whom they refer to in their agnosticism but that is the One who made all things that you are worshipping. He is self-existent, self-sufficient and almighty, because He has the power to self-exist eternally, be self-sufficient and to make time, space and matter. And reveal to you how He did it.

Therefore, you now have before you this God that also reveals Himself as Spirit – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They are Spirit in their self-existent, self-sufficient existence. This God is light. He doesn't need the sun for light, for He is light and gives light. He is the One who reveals Himself.

Now, we have, not a speculation, but a revelation – we have the only eye witness account of creation. He unfolds for us this revelation and that He has put everything into existence, *ex nihilo* – that is, from nothing God sovereignly made everything. He reveals to us how He brings it into existence and when He does, He shows us in this creation week that He brings things into existence that He has created then fashions them in mediate creation. He speaks and there is the earth, then He takes the dust of the earth to make the man and then with mediation He takes that dust of the ground makes man.

I have to tell this joke for I don't really get the opportunity to do this. This junior high kid asks his mother, 'Is it true that man was made from the dust of the ground?' Mother says 'Yes son.' He says 'Mother is it true that when we die, man returns to the dust of the ground, dust to dust?' Mother says 'Yes son.' He says 'Then you better come look under my bed because we either have someone coming or going.'

Then by the mediation of the man he takes from the side of the man and makes the woman who is a reflection of man – ish – and now the woman is isha. We see God bringing everything into existence directly, immediately and mediatorially as He takes what He has made in order to flesh out and work out the creation. Then He superintends this creation. In other passages of Scripture, we're informed the Father has authored the creation but everything was accomplished in the creation through His Son and for His Son. This Genesis text tells us the Holy Spirit is superintending that creation and this creation week that we now look at.

To me what stands out obviously, is this notion of day. I think we are given the Hebrew day which is evening and morning. We have articulated seven days all with the phrase, evening and morning, except the seventh day. They are also numbered consecutively – first day, evening and morning, second day, evening and morning, etc. Why did the Hebrews do this? I think they did that because the next day starts when the previous day finishes in the evening. When the day starts on the evening it is then enunciated the next morning when you arise from the rest that you had. This is the view of the day from Hebrew cosmology and each day is numbered.

What are these days? Number one there is the view of the days that these aren't really six actual days but they are revelation days. In other words, when you write a book you divide it up into chapters. So, this is God telling you about creation as He is using these days like chapters in the narrative. They are six days of revealing the creation, not six days of the creation.

Number two, is that each day represents an age. There are ice ages, the bronze age, the age of enlightenment, etc. so what they are saying is that there are actually ages of what has happened and these are the foundational ages and how God brought forth everything. It is the day-age theory as they represent millions of years.

Number three is the one I was inundated with because it was popularized in the Schofield Bible when I was growing up, and it's the gap theory. We have this problem of all these years but we have this week of creation and it's exegetically difficult to make this into anything else but a real week, so how do we accommodate these millions of years? By the way, just when did Satan fall into sin? It couldn't have happened before the creation because he wouldn't have existed, right? So, it had to happen after the creation. That's what the Schofield Bible camped on.

Another theologian (Scottish), Thomas Chalmers actually posited something very similar. In Genesis 1:1 which says *[1] In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth*, there are three little divisions which the gap theory gives. Genesis 1:1 is the ex-nihilo, the first creation of God. Then it is theologically imposed upon the text that Satan fell and was cast down to that earth. The curse came upon that earth and brought ruin. What is the result? There is a gap that could have lasted millions and millions of years between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. Satan was cast down sometime between these two verses and then Genesis 1:2a which says *[2a] The earth was **without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep***. We see the foreboding evil in the first sentence of verse 2. In the Hebrew 'without form and void' are the words *tohu va bohu* and it was chaos as evil reigned by the fallen Satan.

Then there was another gap, the third division, that could have covered been millions of years as we read Genesis 1:2b which says *[2b] And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters*. Here, the Spirit of God comes to set up the creation week to bring order to this fallen earth that is then described in the following verses of Genesis 1. So, there were two gaps in these three little divisions which is known as the gap theory.

The gap theory is taking theological facts, that you don't know where they land and you're trying to create a place for them to land because there is nothing in the grammar of the

text that would call for that. In fact, if it did here is the way it would have to read; In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, then the earth *became* without form and void (unfilled). But that is not what it says. Clearly, this belongs in the context of the first day. After the initial act of creation in Genesis 1:1, the earth is now unformed and unfilled and God in the week is going to form it and fill it, but it now exists. The darkness was over the face of the deep, why? It is because He hasn't made light yet to shine there and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters, where God is superintending His creation. Now note the continuation as God continues due to the conjunction used at the beginning of Genesis 1:3 which says [3] **And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.** God addresses the darkness.

Exegetically and grammatically, there is no reason to create these gaps there. We think we have to create a time when Satan fell but maybe he fell before that week. Then they say God comes in order to create things afresh and anew where you actually have a new heavens and a new earth from the old heavens and the old earth that were there when Satan fell. Therefore, you have created something that the Bible doesn't support at all and certainly the text does not support.

Number four is what we call progressive days. This is another attempt at the gap. In other words, there are these days of creation, but that is a progression of what God is doing and there is all kind of time between there.

Number five is one that has become extremely popular among evangelicals and also the PCA (Presbyterian Church of America) and it's the framework day where these are not actual creation days, but they are literary days where God has set up literary frameworks. The first three days God is setting up three kingdoms and the next three days are filling those three kingdoms. This is God giving us a picturesque and marvelous presentation of a literary framework.

There is a problem with this because the text is not poetry. In Hebrew if you are doing what they are calling the framework analysis there is always poetry and parallelisms – antithetical, synthetic, comparative parallelism etc. – and contrary to that these are all narrative statements. This is not poetic grammar that is being used, nor poetic structure that is being used. It is stylized, yes, but it is not poetic structure.

Number six, the last one, is known as the analogous days. There is a professor in one of our seminaries of the PCA who teaches this. I have said this before but in order for you to understand God He speaks to you in baby talk, which is anthropomorphisms – anthro (man), po (like), morphisms (bodily parts). An example would be that God is Spirit but He speaks of Himself as having a strong right arm in order for us to get the concept. God speaks of His eye moving about all the earth in order for us to know He is omnipresent. So, this position is saying these are not real days but they are actually God days but God speaks of His God days as human days to help us understand.

There is one problem with the analogous days. The text doesn't bear this out. Analogies, allegories, parables, anthropomorphisms, anthropopathism (human like emotions), when the Bible uses them there is always one of two words present which would be 'like' or 'as.' Those two words are not in this creation account. This is not setting up an analogy for us for this is actually giving us a narrative and it's a historical narrative. If it's a historical narrative then the days are being present as a historical reality, not analogies. On the contrary, look at Exodus 20.

Exodus 20:8–11 says [8] *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. [9] Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, [10] but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your*

*female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. [11] For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.* There is no ‘like’ or ‘as’ in verse 11 – there is no ‘this is what God did like your days.’ He is clearly speaking of it as a historical event that was done in the context of days, therefore the seventh day is a 24-hour day as to how we are to live out our days, made in the image of God.

So, if I believe these are actually 24-hour days why would I do that? Here we have this creation where God speaks everything into existence and it’s unformed and unfilled. In the first three days He forms everything – heavens, earth, light, dark, land and sea. The next three days He fills. He puts the sun and the moon into the light and dark. On the fifth day He fills the land and the sea with the creatures of the land and air. When man is created on the sixth day he is given a task to fill the earth, to rule over the creation, subdue it and to fill the earth.

Then we get to the seventh day of rest, interestingly I believe is a true 24-hour day but God doesn’t put morning and evening, why? It is because the Sabbath is going to be a covenant sign. God gives this day to His people, not only as a creation pattern but it is pointing to salvation. It’s pointing to the Lord of the Sabbath who will give us rest from our sins. Then it is pointing to the eschatological Sabbath which we see in Hebrews 4:9 which says [9] *So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.* This is the eternal Sabbath where we rest from the labors and the futilities of a sin cursed world in the presence of the Lord. The Sabbath is a sign that points us to the new heavens and the new earth but no sign can be a sign for a sign is a symbol and you can’t have a symbol without a historical reality.

So, this notion of a Sabbath rest for our salvation in Christ and a Sabbath rest eschatologically for eternity in the consummation, that is now being set up by not putting evening and morning anticipating how God is going to use this Sabbath to point to the work of Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath, who gives us rest from our sins in salvation and pointing to the coming of the Lord of the Sabbath who will take us into the everlasting Sabbath of a new heavens and a new earth.

Every time in the Pentateuch the word day (Hebrew word is Yom) and a number is in front of it, it’s always a 24-hour day. There is no exception. One might be thinking how can you grow up plants and everything and have light without the sun? It is easy for God is light. In fact, we are told that in the new heavens and the new earth there is no need for the sun (Revelation 21:23), but that’s not telling you that there won’t be one, why? The Lord is our light. God can set up the light and the darkness and put the earth on a rotation. Check the text – the sun is not there to give the light for God’s already given the light. The sun is there to measure the light, to govern the light.

I confess to you that the word day is used multiple ways. Sometimes the word day is used to refer to a 12-hour time and sometimes a 24-hour time which I believe is the way it is used in the creation account. Sometimes the word day refers to a season. Sometimes, like in Genesis 2, the word day refers to an event – the day that God created the heavens and the earth. I understand how day is used but, in the context, literary, narrative, with the days that exist and are numbered that is the way it is always interpreted in the Scripture, unless we feel the necessity not to do so.

Liberal theologians who write commentaries on Genesis, none of them of any repute, believe that the days are anything but 24 hours. In fact, the only people who seem to have trouble with the 24-hour day are evangelicals, why? It is because we have to accommodate the claims of something else. Liberals don’t, but that doesn’t mean they believe it. In fact, some

will say this is so clearly 24-hour days that that is why they don't believe it's true. But they believe it's 24 days because linguistically, grammatically, functionally and stylistically there is no other choice in the text but we have manufactured all of these ways to deal with it. Exodus 20 so declares these six days as actual days. The Apostles and Prophets and Jesus all dealt with this text as a historical reality and historical narrative – and the days as days.

You will also see that binary has also been put into the creation. There is God and nothing. God is a Creator and now there is a creation – God, Creator, creation – and that's a binary. God builds binary throughout the creation in the creation week – light/darkness, land/sea, male/female. He builds the binary in which is why Romans 1 tells us that when men and women in their sin rebel against God over and above the creation – the way you rebel against Him is to rebel against the binary. You rebel against God, binary, over His creation by rebelling against His creation sexually, gender, marriage, etc., for that becomes the way you strike at the weaker creation. We'll be looking more in depth on that in the coming studies.

Another thing is that this week is set up to tell you that creation, by putting the Sabbath day with no boundaries of morning and evening, it's not that it wasn't a real day for that is grammatically being done to anticipate it pointing to salvation and a consummation. God has made us to work and then lead us to rest – we're headed to a rest. God built in the creation the pattern – work, consummation – work, rest – work consummation – not only our work in a week and resting on a Sabbath day, but our work throughout the creation until we get to the final consummation, the Sabbath of eternity, itself, having been given the Sabbath of salvation. We'll also come back to this in coming studies.

Do you see it right here? God creates man on the sixth day to work and then a consummation. Who is the second Adam? It is Jesus Christ. What does He do? He does the work of redemption and on the sixth day He works to save us at the cross, then on the seventh day He rests in the grave and He comes forth on the eighth day, which is the first day of the week. Now, we're in a new heavens and a new earth. This creation pattern is anticipating what Christ is going to do.

I want to give you one more aspect of the new heavens and the new earth. God makes His creation – the heavens and the earth – and makes a man with his bride to subdue the earth, rule over the earth and fill the earth. Then He sends a second Adam, Christ, and He doesn't put Adam and His bride, His church in a new heavens and a new earth. He created the heavens and the earth, created a man and his bride to rule over it and to fill it, but when Christ comes for His bride He is filling what is yet to be rolled out – a new heavens and a new earth. The second Adam and His bride is still in the heavens and the earth, whereby the Great Commission – evangelism and discipleship – we are filling up the heavens and the earth yet to be renewed – the new heavens and the new earth. This pattern is being established for us in this creation week which is all the more why it needs to be looked at carefully.

This Christ has come into the world and on the sixth day He did the work of atonement, on the seventh He rested, on the eighth He arose and now He has purchased His bride. On the eighth day, now the first day of the week – the Lord's Day – now we are sent out to do the work that is going to fill up the new heavens and the new earth as those who are joined to Christ and Christ is in us. We are one in Christ. This new Adam, with His bride, is doing our work of evangelism, discipleship, baptizing and teaching in order to prepare those He is going to put in the new heavens and the new earth.

We will be continuing this study with gender, marriage, sexuality, shameless sexuality, etc. which is all right in this text, but we have to deal with this text with integrity. I don't know

what all that means scientifically but here is what I know. General revelation cannot contradict special revelation and I have to deal with special revelation as it reveals itself. In the next study we will look at the sanctity of the marriage of the man and the woman. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we could be together in Your Word. We love you because You first loved us. You are our Creator and You are our Redeemer so we give You praise even as You uphold us, our Sustainer. Thank You Father for we have confidence in Your Providence and Your redemption because we know the majesty of our creation and woven into that creation is the anticipation of our salvation in the new heaven and the glorious hope and expectation surely secured in Christ of our everlasting rest with Him in a new heavens and a new earth. We give You praise in Jesus' Name, Amen.