

“In The Beginning”

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” Gen. 1:1.

The book of Genesis may be referred to as “the book of beginnings.” In fact, “Genesis” (the word) means “origin,” “source,” “generation,” or “beginning.” Hence, in Genesis we read of the beginning of: (1) the heavens and the earth, 1:1-2, (2) the human race, 1:26-27, (3) sin, 3:1-6, (4) the gospel promise, 3:15, (5) the human family, 4:1-26, (6) nations, 10:1-32, (7) different languages, 11:1-9, and (8) the Jewish nation, 11:27-32. Perhaps other beginnings could be cited, but these are sufficient to prove that Genesis is indeed “the book of beginnings.” However, our purpose in this article is not to discuss all the beginnings contained in Genesis; to the contrary, we shall focus on a select group of words which are of great significance to sober-minded people directly connected with:

“In The Beginning”

1. “God,” (Gen. 1:1)! The first verse of the Bible begins with these words: *“In the beginning God...”* Herein we are not referring to the beginning of God, for God is from *“everlasting to everlasting,”* Psalm 90:2. He is called *“the eternal God,”* Deut. 33:27; He *“inhabits eternity,”* Isa. 57:15.

The word *“God,”* as used in Gen. 1:1, is translated from *Elohim*, a plural form of *“el,”* a word meaning “deity.” Further study reveals that there are three divine persons called *“God”* in the Bible. There is *“God the Father,”* I Cor. 8:6, Jesus Christ, John 1:1,14, referred to I Tim. 3:16 as *“God...manifested in the flesh,”* and the Holy Spirit, Acts 5:3-4. In view of the plural nature of *“God”* (*Elohim*), we are not surprised at the number of times when *“God”* (*Elohim*) used the pronoun *“us”* with reference to different activities proposed, or situations referred to (Gen. 1:26; 3:22).

2. “Created the heavens and the earth,” Gen. 1:1. *“Created”* is translated from *bara*, which primarily means to create out of nothing. Prior to *“the beginning”* nothing of a material nature existed! *“God created (produced from nothing!) the heavens and the earth!”* The Hebrew writer worded it correctly in stating that *“the worlds were framed by the word of God,”* Heb. 11:3. He spoke the universe into existence! The Psalmist put it this way: *“By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them.” “He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast,”* Psalm 33:69. *“The heavens and the earth”* did not come into existence because of a giant explosion! Sadly, many today subscribe to “the Big Bang theory,” or the belief that “the universe began 13.8 billion years ago as a tiny, dense fireball that exploded.” But what caused the explosion? And what brought about the existence of that “tiny dense fireball?” And how could the unplanned, unforeseen explosion of a fireball produce such an **orderly** universe in which every planet operates with perfect precision, and in which there are countless revolving planets traveling at precise speeds, and never bumping into each other? It is no wonder that the Psalmist said *“The fool has said in his heart there is no God,”* Psalm 14:1!

3. Created man “in His own image,” Gen. 1:26-27. Interestingly, of all things pertaining to *“the heavens and the earth,”* and of all forms of life upon the earth, only man was *“created”* in the *“image”* of God! This, within itself, in the words of Albert Barnes, suggests “the singular dignity of man.” In a real sense man’s very nature is patterned after the *“likeness”* (Gen. 1:26) of God! Of course, we are referring to *“the inward man”* (the soul) and not *“the outward man”* (the corporeal body in which *“the spirit”* or *“the inward man”* dwells (2 Cor. 4:16; Jas. 2:26). Being thus created, man has a conscience, a sense of shame, a fear of death, self-

consciousness, the ability to discern good and evil, and (unless deliberately suppressed) an innate awareness of the existence of a supreme Being. And, having been created “*in the image of God*,” then man alone was enabled to “*have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth*,” Gen. 1:28. But inasmuch as we were created “*in the image of God*,” it is axiomatic that we are **amenable** to God, and should not flounder around in life doing our “own thing!” In fact, even in our “youth,” we should “*remember your Creator*,” Eccl. 12:1.

4. “...He created him, male and female...” Gen. 1:27. Nowadays we hear much foolish talk about “gender,” and even about “transgender” people. If one consults modern sources, he will be told that there are over 100 genders in today’s world! Some words used to define various “genders” in today’s world are: Agender, Bigender, Intergender, Demigender, Greygender, Aporagender, Transgender, etc., etc. But Genesis shows God’s arrangement from “*the beginning*,” when He created them “*male and female*.” Each individual, at birth, possesses organs which identify him (or her) as “a boy” or “a girl,” and throughout history, even the least learned among human kind have been able to identify themselves either as “male” or “female.” But, sadly, many today are like those described in Rom. 1:26, “*Professing to be wise, they became fools*.” Males and females, functioning as God intended, can carry out God’s command to “*Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth...*,” Gen. 1:28. Beloved, you may not be satisfied with the sexual identity by which you were defined at birth, but the fact remains you are either a “male” or a “female.” The world already has enough problems without “males” (in their own minds) transforming themselves into females, and “females” (in their own minds) transforming themselves into males, or something in between!

5. Designed marriage as he intended it! It was **God** Who said “*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him*,” Gen. 2:18,. And it was **God** who “*caused a deep sleep to come upon Adam*,” and (while he slept) “*took one of his ribs*,” which He made “*into a woman*,” and brought her unto the man, at which time “*Adam said: This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man*,” Gen. 2:21-23. And then God **said**, “*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh*,” Gen. 2:24. Millenniums later, when Jesus came to the region of Judea, some Pharisees approached Him, and asked “*Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason*,” Matt. 19:1,3. And Jesus replied, saying, “*Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female; and said, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the **two** shall become **one** flesh*,” Matt. 19:4-5. Please note again; God made them “*male and female*,” and said “*a man*” shall be “*joined to his wife*,” and “*the two shall become one flesh*.” And Jesus further emphasized, saying, “*what **God** has joined together, let not man separate*,” Matt. 19:6. Hence, marriage “*from the beginning*” was intended to involve one man and one woman, or one male and one female, being joined together for life, with “*the two*” (not three, four, or more!) becoming “*one flesh*.” In view of God’s plan “*from the beginning*,” it is no wonder that He “*hates divorce*,” Mal. 2:16! The only sexual relationship God honors is that which exists between a husband and a wife who are lawfully married. Cf. Heb. 13:4. Without taking the space to cite the references, we simply state that the Bible clearly condemns fornication, adultery, homosexual relationships, lesbian relationships, incestuous relationships, and bestiality. Human-kind today would be wise to re-examine God’s plan “*from the beginning*!”

6. Divinely anticipated and designed “the church.” I recognize that the church Jesus built (Matt. 16:18) did not come into actual existence until the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:1-47. However, “*the church*” Jesus built (Matt. 16:18), and “*purchased*” with His own blood (Acts 20:28), was a part of that “*mystery*” relating to our salvation and which was “*according to the*

eternal purpose” of God, Eph. 3:8-11. Moreover, from Eph. 5:22-25 we learn that the relationship which exists between a husband and his wife is analogous to the relationship which exists between Christ and the church. Then a few verses later in the same chapter the apostle Paul quoted from Gen. 2:24, wherein God said “*For this reason shall a man leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.*” Then, in the very next verse, he said “*This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning **Christ and the church**,*” Eph. 5:31-32. It is obvious therefore that “*the church*” Jesus built was not an after thought in the mind of God; to the contrary, it existed in His “*eternal purpose*,” and the marriage of the **first** couple was divinely intended to pre-figure the relationship later to exist between Christ and His church. Viewed in this light, it is hard to imagine how informed people could ever conclude that “*the church*” is either unimportant, or unnecessary to man’s salvation!

Conclusion: As stated earlier, Jesus asked His questioners, “*Have you not read*” and then referred to what God did “*at the beginning.*” With regards to what we have cited in this article, what God did “*at the beginning*” was intended to serve as a **pattern** to follow from “*the beginning*” all the way to “**the end.**” It is a grievous mistake (which has eternal consequences) for man to try to improve upon, alter, ignore, or change God’s plan “*from the beginning!*” Consider ye well!

—Bobby Witherington
