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Everything Created by God

Genesis 1

Introduction

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

It is with this statement that the Bible begins.

The first chapter is the announcement *that* and *how* God has brought forth everything. The Bible does not start with the beginning of the history of mankind, or of mankind-after-the-flood, or of Israel, but it reaches back to the time before any course of history. One might speak of a pre-history, since Genesis 1 also is written in narrative style.

If we compare the history of mankind which is enacted upon earth with a great building, we might call the work of creation the laying of the foundation, which belongs to the building and yet is distinct from it.

In this way the Bible wishes to show us God as the Creator *and* also as Maintainer and Ruler of all that exists; to instruct us about His work of creation *and* His work of history.

It is remarkable that this is not preceded in the Bible by a brief explanation or declaration that God exists and Who He is, but that the Bible immediately begins telling of His works. Yet it can be no different. For, the work itself speaks of His existence. God has, as it were, set up a mirror in His works of creation, wherein He shows Himself in His eternal power and divinity, so that since creation men perceive these with their mind and no one has an excuse if he does not glory and thank God (Romans 1:20).

The story of Genesis 1 is therefore of fundamental importance. It is the foundation for all following revelation. It is no less self-revelation of God than whatever other part of the Scriptures. In it He reveals Himself to us as the Creator who has brought forth everything with wisdom, orderly and purposefully, since it was His sovereign will (cf. Revelation 4:11); we learn from it that everything is therefore His legitimate possession (cf. Deuteronomy 10:14, Psalm 24:1, 2); that everything finds its purpose in Him (Proverbs 16:4, Romans 11:36), and is created to His glory: for who is there among His creatures for whose glory God could have done it all? (cf. Psalm 104:31) And so we know immediately that we also, as creatures, are called to His service and honour.

The Story of Creation

It commences with the announcement that God created the heavens and the earth. Heaven is God's habitation and He populated it with angels (Job 38:6, 7). The earth was intended to be the dwelling place for men. Heaven and earth together formed the universe. When the Bible calls this the beginning, then it means the beginning of time, which was given immediately with the work of creation.

Verse 2 tells about the appearance of the earth. It was completely void and formless, a flood in darkness. We will have to think here of a sort of fluid or semi-fluid mass, without ordered form, without separation and definiteness, a watery but vital material which contained everything, as it is indicated in 2 Peter 3:5 where it is stated that there was an earth "...formed out of water and by means of water"; just as the origin of human life is in the darkness of secrecy.

And over this the Spirit of God moved back and forth (cf. Deuteronomy 32:11 where the same word occurs). The meaning of this is that the Spirit upon God's calling would bring the embryo of the earth to light, and give it shape to be an ornament in the universe. It speaks therefore of His preserving care and thus also of His love for that which is created. The world is brought forth through God's loving will, in order that His love might be revealed to it.

3. Of what are light and darkness in 1 Thessalonians 5:5 a metaphor?
4. How should we consider night-work in connection with the purpose of day and night?
5. Does Psalm 115:16 contrast the earth and heaven of Genesis 1:1 or those of Genesis 1:8?
6. May we attempt to penetrate into space?
7. Is it possible that there are people on another planet?
8. Do the heavenly bodies have significance also for the new earth?
9. Can the fall into sin among the angels in heaven have occurred already before the end of the sixth day?
10. Why is it useful to know in what order God created, and that He created man last of all?
11. Why do we call the doctrine of evolution a false prophecy?
12. If God allowed everything to develop, can we then speak of a work of creation, or should it be called a work of providence? What is the difference between the two?
13. Are we restricted only to Genesis 1 for the knowledge of God's work in creation, or does Scripture speak about it also in other places?
14. Is it possible and necessary that we explain everything scientifically?
15. Why does the small earth have such great significance?