

Principle Faith: Genesis One

Part 2

The audio and print files for this class can be found online at <http://www.etspm.org/audio/principlefaith>

Introduction:

“Cosmology is the study of the structure and changes in the present universe, while the scientific field of cosmogony is concerned with the origin of the universe. Observations about our present universe may not only allow predictions to be made about the future, but they also provide clues to events that happened long ago when the chemical evolution of the cosmos began. So--the work of cosmologists and cosmogonists overlaps.” [<http://genesission.jpl.nasa.gov/educate/scimodule/Cosmogony/CosmogonyPDF/CosCosmolTT.pdf>]

We often turn to the first chapter of Genesis to explain the origin and purpose of the physical world. Though that topic certainly occupies center stage in the early verses, we must remember that it remains but one of many chapters in the book that focuses on beginnings. The expression “these are the generations” (or beginnings) appears throughout the text (2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2), not with reference to the beginning of all things, but with reference to the beginning and continuation of the genealogy that leads to Israel (Moses’ first/primary audience), and eventually to Christ (Gal 3:6-9, 16; cf. Mt 1:1; Rom 1:3, et. al.).

The initial audience, the children of Israel during the early days of the Mosaic law, needed to see their connection and purpose with God’s plan from eternity. The creation account clearly provided the existence of that creation, not just to historical figures like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but all the way back to Adam and all the way back to God.

The principle faith (or principles of faith) that we derive from this first chapter must always keep that key element at the forefront. The philosophical/metaphysical premises we encounter there but always have a theological association. As we will note later in the first chapter, God does nothing except that mankind lies at the heart of his actions.

1:1: In the beginning

1. time is not eternal
2. everything physically existing thing had a beginning
3. metaphysical “things” have no beginning
4. metaphysical “things” are responsible for physical things
5. creation assumes time
6. creator assumes timelessness
7. no infinite past
8. no infinite future
9. time is finite/not infinite

1:1: God

1. is distinct from time
 - a. God transcends time
 - (1) is aware of time
 - (2) acts in time
 - (3) stands above/outside time

- (4) can be “found”/“discovered” in time
- b. God *measures* time differently
 - (1) a day vs. 1000 years
 - (2) time vs. eternity
 - (3) before time - during time - after time
 - (4) from eternity to eternity (beginning/end; alpha/omega)
- 2. is distinct from space/matter
 - a. God created (cf. next section)
 - b. the Creator \neq the creation
 - (1) ancient thought - “gods” are part of the creation, not distinct
 - (2) ancient thought - “gods” are subject to everything creation is subject to
 - c. the essence of God \neq the essence of creation (ontology)
 - (1) necessary/infinite vs unnecessary/finite existence
 - (2) eternity vs time
 - (3) non-contingent (aseity) vs contingent

1:1: Created

- 1. creation is an act of power
- 2. creation is an act of mind/intelligence
- 3. creation is an act of benevolence
- 4. creation is an act of will
- 5. creation is an act of ultimate concern
- 6. self-creation is neither physically nor metaphysically possible

1:1: The Heavens and The Earth

- 1. the cosmos
 - a. is not eternal
 - b. is time bound
 - c. is contingent: it owes its existence to something outside itself
- 2. time and space/matter
 - a. both are created
 - b. both are contingent
 - (1) everything physical is dependent spatially
 - (2) everything physical is dependent temporally
 - i. everything metaphysical is independent
 - the cosmos is not self-existent
 - it owes its existence to something outside itself

1:1 The Plurality of God - elohim

Gen 1:26 3:22 11:7 20:13 31:7, 53 35:7; De 4:7 5:23 Jos 24:19 1Sa 4:8 2Sa 7:23; Ps 58:6 Isa 6:8 Jer 10:10 23:36

see also Pr 9:10 30:3 Ps 149:2 Ec 5:7 12:1; Job 5:1 Isa 6:3 54:5 62:5 Ho 11:12 12:1 Mal 1:6 Da 5:18, 20 7:18, 22

Assignment: Examine the rest of Genesis 1, and into Genesis for additional principles.