

Beginnings pt. 1
January 9 2022
Genesis 1:1-3

Ask if there are any questions people have about the sermon, or the scripture we covered. Feel free to discuss as a group, but please let me know if there are any that no one can seem to answer!

Discussion questions:

1. Drew said, “We get to pick and choose the things we enjoy, but one thing we should never pick is *how* we read. The Bible is written *for* us, but not *to* us.” He went on to describe how we should not bring our own preconceived notions to the Bible, and we need to ask the right questions.

****Does it surprise you that we should not bring our modern questions to the Bible?**

To spur further discussion: Think of it this way: If you go to France, you are not going to walk around shouting English and hoping they understand. You are going to buy a French-English dictionary and seek to learn their culture instead of expecting them to adapt to you. Approaching the Bible should be the same way.

****What do you know (if anything) about the people who heard the story of creation for the first time?**

****What preconceived notions do we have when we read the Bible (or Genesis 1, specifically).**

2. Drew stated that the right questions to ask of Genesis 1 is not “how and when,” but “who and why.”

****Do you agree with this approach? (you may desire to get into theories of creation, evolution, theistic evolution, intelligent design, etc.)**

3. Drew stated that God created from nothing (*Ex Nihilo* is the Latin term) which is a very common interpretation of this passage. Read Genesis 1:1-2 (in as many different translations as you have) and ask:

****Was there really nothing when God created, or did he begin with something that was already there?**

For further discussion: Verse 2 describes God’s Spirit hovering over the waters.

****Did God create these waters, or were they already there?**

Even more discussion: Tim Mackie (co-founder of the Bible Project) translates the Hebrew words behind “formless and void” (Drew taught us the Hebrew - *tovu vavohu*) as “wild and waste,” as though it was a watery desert, devoid of life. This may suggest that this Genesis

passage does not intend to describe that God started with nothing, but that it was a chaotic watery desert that was present before God began to create, separate, divide and prepare the earth to support the life he gave it.

****How does this interpretation challenge your own ideas of Creation?**

To conclude this discussion: If we bring our preconceived notion that God created out of nothing to this text, we may miss the significance of the chaotic watery desert for the stories that follow. This theme of water and its use is a motif that will be developed. The theology of *Ex Nihilo* is true, but it comes from different passages (you can read some below)

Psalms 33:6 (RSV) By the word of the LORD [i.e., not by existing matter] the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth.

Isaiah 44:24 . . . “I am the LORD, who made *all things* . . . “

John 1:3 all things were made through him, and without him was not *anything* made that was made.

Romans 11:36 For from him and through him and to him are *all things*. . . .

1 Corinthians 8:6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are *all things* and through whom we exist.

The main idea of these scriptures: if God created *all things* then there is nothing that was present except himself before he created.

To end: How is this going to affect your life? We know what it meant to *them, then* so what does it mean to *us, now*? What does this teach us about God, and how does that affect how we live today?