

Intelligent Design or Chance

February 7, 2010

By Rev. Lonny R. Bower

Scripture References – Genesis 1:1-26; Psalms 14:1-3; 19:1-4; Romans 1:18-25; Colossians 1:16-18; Revelation 4:11

Unit Theme: Bible Answers to Crucial Questions

Central Truth: God is to be acknowledged and worshiped as the Creator

Focus: Affirm that creation is by God's design and glorify the Creator

Key Verse: Genesis 1:1

Introduction:

It must be kept in mind that the Bible was written for instruction and edification, not to prove or disprove scientific theories. It was not written in scientific terms or to provide every detail of how God created the cosmos ex nihilo (out of nothing). It is a book of faith and salvation, written to provide "His-story" of God's desire to have fellowship with His people and the interaction involved to make that happen.* Before we delve into the lesson for today, I would like to talk about the uniqueness of the Bible. It was written over a period of 1600 years by 40 different men, but has only one author – God (2 Peter 1:10-21**). Men have discounted its validity and importance, governments have banned it and tried to destroy it, yet it remains the number one selling book worldwide having sold more copies than any other book. It has been translated into over 200 languages and exists in over 50 different versions in English alone. ¹The Bible has as its source over 14,000 manuscripts with the earliest dating to 130 AD. The manuscripts validate the accuracy of our Bible today and where there are variations (between the manuscripts) the majority of them are spelling, of the others (such as two manuscripts leaving out Acts 2:37), none alter any article of faith. God has preserved his word (**Matthew 24:35**). But this isn't the only uniqueness about the Bible; it also maintains an unparalleled record of history that is continually proven to be accurate by modern day archaeology and corroborated by secular historians. In **John 5:2** John writes about the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem which before the 19th Century was otherwise unknown. However, it was 19th century archaeologists that excavated the site and found it just as John described – there was even a fresco depicting an angel stirring the water. For the sake of time and space I will not list the many other archaeological discoveries that verify the historical accuracy of the scriptures. However intriguing the historical accuracy may be, it does not substantiate the claim that the Bible is God's word. For that, we must look into the actual prophecies and the subsequent fulfillment of those prophecies. Only an omniscient (all knowing) God would be able to accurately, 100 percent of the time reveal the future. As we are about to see this is what the Bible has done. ²There are over 2,500 prophecies recorded in scripture, of these 2,000 have been fulfilled. Let's look at a few. **1 Kings 13:2-5** a prophet of the

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Lord prophesied that a son named Josiah born in the house of David would sacrifice the bones of the priests of the high places on their own altar. 300 years later (**2 Kings 23:16**) Josiah did this exact thing. Isaiah prophesied that a conqueror named Cyrus would destroy Babylon and subdue Egypt. He also prophesied that Cyrus would decree that the temple in Jerusalem and the city itself be rebuilt and he would commission/empower the Jews to do it (**Isaiah 44:28, 45:1, 13**). Note that Isaiah's prophecy took place 150 years before Cyrus was born and 80 years before the Jews were taken into exile. In 700 BC Micah (**Micah 5:2**) prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem – Christ indeed was born in Bethlehem just as the Lord revealed. In the fifth century BC Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah would be betrayed for the price of a slave – 30 pieces of silver. It was fulfilled in Christ (**Matthew 27:3-10**). Prior to 500 BC Daniel prophesied that the Messiah would begin his public ministry 483 years after the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and that he (the Messiah) would then be cut off (crucified) (**Daniel 9:25, 26**). The decree to rebuild Jerusalem was issued by Persia's King Artaxerxes to the Hebrew priest Ezra in 458 B.C. – it is generally accepted that the public ministry of Jesus started around 26 AD – 483 years after the decree. Without fail, prophecy after prophecy has been fulfilled, one would be foolish to ignore the validity or write them off as mere coincidence. Hebrews 1:1, 2 proclaims that Christ is the heir of all that God spoke through the prophets. When one studies the prophecies pointing to the Messiah only one fulfills them all, His name is Jesus. Not only did He fulfill the prophecies written about him, everything He spoke has so far come to pass. We are simply awaiting the fulfillment of the rest of the story, His-story. It is with this knowledge and mindset that we must go into today's lesson. God has a plan and that plan includes you and me, but apart from faith we will never realize it. Therefore, God has given us just enough evidence to believe on Him, and fully realize His plan for our lives – to disregard His word would be to disregard His plan for us and likewise forfeit everlasting life. The alternative (eternal damnation) is not worth the risk.

I. Witness God's Design of Creation Genesis 1:1-26, Psalms 19:1-4

In the beginning, refers to the beginning of time, not God since God has no beginning. God exists apart from time, that's how He is able to see to the end of time. He has always been, we however have not always been. The fact that mankind had a beginning is acknowledged by all. The great philosophical questions that have been pondered throughout the ages are: who am I, why am I here and where am I going? It is not a coincidence that the Bible answers these

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questions. Genesis means beginnings, it stands as the historical account of God creating time (the beginning) and creating us to live in it. It further details the fact that God is involved in our lives and desires that we worship Him. He is not a “create and forget” God, His desire was and is to fellowship with us and be involved in every aspect of our lives. It was God that brought order to the universe; He established the seasons and provided food for His creatures. So from the very beginning we see God as Jehovah Jireh (God the Provider). Of all His work we stand as His best, simply because we were created in His image. Not a physical form specifically, but a spiritual form, we are like Him spiritually, intellectually, and morally. However, sin has marred this likeness and kept us from living in our full created potential. A potential that He will one day restore – the scripture says in 1 John 3:2, when He (Christ) appears, we shall be like Him.

➤ Notes:

“The eternal God created time and placed us in it for a purpose – His purpose”

II. Folly of Denying God – Psalm 14:1-3; Romans 1:18-25

Starting with creation (because we can't go back before the beginning) God has continually revealed himself through not only the works of creation, but the supernatural. He has provided enough evidence that He says there will be no excuse for those who deny Him. Ironically, those who deny God's existence believe that everything we see and everything we are is a result of chance. The issue is not that they are so much unwilling to acknowledge there is a God; it is more that they are unwilling to live as He commands. Therefore, they deny His existence in order to live their own way. The scripture says that they changed the truth of God into a lie. Yet God continues to call out to them from His living word, through His servants and even through signs and wonders, but few will surrender to His call. Rebellion has a way of blinding one to the truth. During the Great Tribulation Revelation chapter 9:13-19 reveals the consequence of the

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Sixth Trumpet where one third of mankind will be killed. Keep in mind this is after several signs and wonders to include the rapture (taking) of the Church; verses 20 and 21 sum up the hardness of their hearts. Even in the midst of His terrible wrath God provides a way for them to repent and turn back to Him, but they will refuse to do so – the Bible appropriately refers to them as fools.

➤ **Notes:**

“A fool is not just he who says with his mouth “there is no God,” but as the scripture says who “says in his heart,” so then, the one who knows there is a God, but does not live for Him, has said in his heart – there is no God.”

III. Worship the Creator – Colossians 1:15-18

As we have already seen, we are created in God’s image, which is not necessarily a physical image, but spiritual. However, this does not mean that God is not observable in physical form. In fact, the scripture makes clear that God is indeed observable. But it is also clear that since Adam fell, no man has seen God in all His glory. Adam and Eve did, but sin interrupted this relationship and separated them from His presence. Moses longed to see God’s face, but God would not allow it, lest he die. God did allow Moses to see His back though and the result literally changed Moses’ appearance (**Exodus 33:18-23, 34:29, 30**). It has always been God’s desire to dwell with man, but because of sin, He could not. Therefore, God would provide a way for us to again dwell in His presence. The scripture says (**Philippians 2:5-11**) of Jesus that He left His glory and became a common man – Immanuel (God as man). Since Adam and Moses’ brief encounter, no one has seen God, though many have heard Him speak, He is the invisible God. Now the scripture declares that Christ is the exact representation of God. The realities of this are simply unthinkable! Adam opened his eyes and beheld God his creator, Eve opened her eyes and beheld God her creator, since then man has longed to see God. So then, at just the right time Christ shows up and man beheld his creator face to face, but did not recognize Him as God. This is the consequence and power of sin, it is deceptive at its core, far reaching and opposed to all truth. Through the Lord Jesus Christ all things hold together, remove Him and everything unravels rather rapidly. This is first proven in the lives of those who reject Christ – the normal

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way of living (that is, the way we were created for – righteousness) becomes the abnormal as righteousness is traded for unrighteousness (the truth for a lie). Not only is it proven in the lives of individuals, but also holds true for churches and governments that remove Christ. Their end result is chaos because they have removed the source that holds all things together. Imagine then if Christ removed himself from creation – life as we know it would cease to exist.

➤ Notes:

“Jesus said “no man comes to the father except through me” He is indeed the exact representation of God, apart from Christ we cannot know God”

Conclusion - Revelation 4:11

Our purpose in life is to live for God and glorify Him as God, He desires our worship. His children are known by their desire to offer Him worship. Romans 12:1 says: that our reasonable worship is to present our bodies a living sacrifice. This simply means that the flesh must be denied, in Romans 8 Paul speaks of the carnal (flesh) nature leading to death. Christ makes all things new for those who look to Him in faith – the old passes away (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). What we become is a dim reflection of what God created us to be, but as we continue to serve Him and live for Him we begin to look more and more like our original created purpose. The people of faith await His appearing, when He will change us in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, this mortal will put on immortality and we shall appear as He is (**1 Corinthians 15:50-55**). However, while we wait we should not waiver in our faith, but hold strong against the wiles of the enemy. For he is in his last bid for the souls of man, but he cannot have what is not surrendered.

**Title and outline taken from the Evangelical Sunday School Lesson Commentary ©2009 Pathway Press Cleveland TN*

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Except where I have paraphrased all scripture is taken from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

¹<http://www.bible.ca/b-many-versions.htm>

²<http://www.reasons.org/fulfilled-prophecy-evidence-reliability-bible>

This study and others can be found at www.fullmessage.org