The Story: “In the Beginning”

Based on Genesis 1-4, 6-9

Pearl: Creation: the beginning of life as we know it.

Function: To get a grasp of what the Bible teaches about the origin of all creation/life.

“In the beginning God…” says so much! You can stop after the first four words of the Bible and have you first lesson. The very first pages of the Bible and so the first chapters of the first book of the Bible give us a lesson on the origins of the world in which we live and the origins of the history of that creation.

1. We have within us a natural curiosity on the history of the world and the origins of human, animal, and plant life on this planet home that we call earth.
   
a. The Bible in its opening pages wastes no time in telling us the story of the origin of life on our planet earth and to the limits of all that we can see out into space.

2. The first lesson we learn which is I believe the all-important lesson is that God is the Source of all creation. God is the Creator and Source of all things.

3. We are all acquainted with the battles within our cultures through human history over theories of how things came into existence. These debates have been defined as being between those who believe in creation and those who believe in evolution. Today, myself included, many believers see the processes of the creation of life on this planet as including some aspects of the theories of evolution, all at the masterful hand of the composer God himself.
   
a. As with most human battles there is a certain futility because our understanding is imperfect and we live in a most complex world.

4. The main point of the biblical account of “Beginnings” is “Who” and the “Hows” and “Whats” are secondary.

Yet we do have an account of the creation of our planet home in these early chapters of Genesis. Actually we have two accounts of creation. Did you notice that in your reading? It is very important to note that our scriptural descriptions of origins are poetic and artistic. That speaks volumes!

1. I often teach that the Bible is not a “scientific textbook.” What I mean is that it does not tell everything. It does not explain the processes by which God
created life on earth. We do not have all of the details of how things came to be. We mainly have the One who did it. God is the central character in the early pages of scripture. He is the original mover and creator.

2. So what we have is an artistic and poetic explanation of how life came to be.
   a. Days 1, 2, and 3 are places created by God.
      i. Day 1—Light and Dark
      ii. Day 2—Sky and Water
      iii. Day 3—Land
   b. Days 4, 5, and 6 those places are filled with the things the places were created for.
      i. Day 4—Sun and Moon/stars
      ii. Day 5—Birds and Sea creatures
      iii. Day 6—Animals and human beings

3. So we simply see from the biblical creation story that God spoke into existence the created world. Whether a “day” was a literal 24-hour day is up for debate. These “creation” days could have been “ages.” Who knows? The Bible is not a scientific textbook as we have grown up with in all of our schooling, but it is a collection of ancient writings which tell us more about “Whom” than “How.” The Main thing is not a thing but a personal God and the relationship of God to his created world.

4. It appears that the crux of the Story is the relationship between God and humanity: the crown of God’s creation.

From the earliest biblical accounts of the origin of life on our planet earth, we gather that people are the pinnacle of God’s creative wonders. We find that God took great interest in people because he made people in his own image—that image being defined as being a combination of male and female.

1. The Bible’s explanation of origins includes an explanation for how so much bad stuff became a part of life on earth. Everyone wonders how death, disease, war, murder, abuse, evil, and so on came to be a part of this life on earth.

2. The explanation comes through the story of the two trees which grew in the Garden of Eden. We have a story describing how God created humans with the ability to obey or disobey Him. Human beings, while the crown of creation, are not puppets. God has made us in such a way that we can cooperate with him or we can reject him. This is the marvel of the human creation. God does not force us to cooperate and to respond to his love.

3. God told his people not to eat from the one tree—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. An oppositional being, which the bible refers to as the Devil, took the form of a serpent and suggested to humanity that God was
not trustworthy and was hiding something. The serpent said, “If you eat of the tree you will become like God knowing good and evil.”

a. So Adam and Eve ate from the tree and a fracture was created in the relationship between God and his creation. A breach appeared. Sin entered into the human condition. Sin became a cancer-like agent within creation. The symptoms of the cancer:

i. Animals were afraid of human beings—we see this today.

ii. People feel a special loathing for snakes—When God cursed the snake he said that humans will crush the heads of snakes and snakes will strike the heels of humans—this is why we are basically scared of snakes.

iii. Another condition of the fracture was pain in childbirth. Mothers, is childbirth still painful? (hear responses)

The rest of the Bible is about God’s pursuit to restore the relationship between creation, humanity, and God himself. The Bible is about God’s pursuit to “get us back” to that original relationship of harmony and loving trust between Creator and Creation.

1. In fact theologians throughout history, beginning with the Apostle Paul, have referred to Jesus the Christ as the Second Adam. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 15:45: “the first man, Adam, became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.” So Christ, as the second Adam, is the key clue to the restoration of God’s creation.

With the fracturing of the relationship and the advent of sin came the growth and expansion of sin’s damage to the human race. Adam and Eve chose a different vision than God’s vision, so sin became a part of human spiritual DNA and more sinners were produced.

2. This is repeated by God in scripture in the following way: “Every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood.” Did you notice that when you read the first chapter.

3. Genesis 4-9 presents the growth and expansion of the devastation of sin and its effects.

   a. The Bible gives the impression that God in human feeling terms was sorry that he made human beings. So he decided to destroy them all by a Great Flood. Yet he did not completely wipe away human beings because he saved one family with the head being a man named Noah. Noah was told to build a great floating vessel within which he would take two of every kind of animal species and his own human family. These would be spared from the waters of the Great Flood.

   b. When the waters finally dried up and the Noah family set foot on dry land again with the animal representatives sin was still with them. It
likely showed itself forth the first day into the flood on board the Ark. God probably immediately realized that this was not the final answer. 
c. When Noah and his family stepped off of the ark all was not well, all was by no means “Paradise Restored.”

The essence of the “Beginning” of life on earth is the story of the relationship between God and his “image bearers”: humanity. The rest of The Story, the rest of the Bible, is a clue to how God is restoring all things.

1. As you read through The Story you will sense many clues to what God is up to. There is one major clue in what happens in the covering up of the nakedness of Adam and Eve.

2. After they sinned, they became aware of their nakedness. They became ashamed. So they covered up their shame using fig leaves.
   a. The fig leaves were not good enough in God’s sight. They did not properly cover up their shame. So he killed some animals and used their skins to cover up Adam and Eve’s nakedness.
   b. This gives us a “salvation,” “restoration,” clue: The restoration of human beings and of all creation requires the shedding of blood. Ultimately, the Second Adam, Jesus the Christ, will shed his blood as the atonement for sin, to cover the shame of humanity, sin, once and for all (Hebrews 7:27, 9:26b).

In the beginning God…from the beginning God is at work to restore all things.

Every person and every nook and cranny of the created world will experience God’s re-creation, God’s restoration of all things!

And so The Story begins!