

The Vincennes Voice

"...The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight..." (Matt. 3:3)

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AT THE BEGINNING

John Isaac Edwards

The book of Genesis is a book of beginnings. Genesis, meaning origin, ascribes an origin to all things except God.

There are many different beginnings in the Bible. A lot of people fail to understand how the word "beginning" is used in the Bible. A failure to make a distinction in these beginnings has led us to not understand some simple Bible truths. This study involves a look at some of the different beginnings in the Bible.

1) The Beginning of Creation. The book of Genesis is a book of beginnings. Genesis, meaning origin, ascribes an origin to all things except God. The first chapter of Genesis reveals the beginning of creation. The first verse says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). There were six days of creation and on the seventh day God rested from his work (Gen. 2:2-3). The first day was the creation of light (Gen. 1:3-5). The second day was the creation of the firmament, called Heaven (Gen. 1:6-8). The third day was the creation of land and vegetation (Gen. 1:9-13). The

fourth day was the creation of the sun, moon, and stars (Gen. 1:14-19). The fifth day was the creation of sea animals and birds (Gen. 1:20-23). The sixth day was the creation of land animals and man (Gen. 1:24-31). This is what the Bible refers to as "the beginning of the creation" (Mk. 10:6; 13:19; II Pet. 3:4). The phrase "And God said," appears ten times in Gen. 1 and suggests that "the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Heb. 11:3). The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ was the agency through which God created all things (Jn. 1:1-3; Col. 1:16-17; I Jn. 1:1). The Hebrew writer declared, "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands" (Heb. 1:10).

2) The Beginning of the Family and God's Marriage Law. When the Pharisees questioned Jesus about divorce, he pointed them back to the beginning of the family and God's marriage law (Matt. 19:3-9). This beginning is found in Gen. 2. The Lord saw that it was not good that man should be alone and

decided to make a suitable companion for him (Gen. 2:18). "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:21-24). This marks the beginning of the family in the home and God's law concerning such. God's law from the beginning was one man for one woman for life. The apostle Paul wrote, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband is dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord" (I Cor. 7:39). The Lord added fornication as being the one exception to the rule (Matt. 19:9).

3) The Beginning of the Work of the Devil. Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees,

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"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (Jn. 8:44). Jesus spoke of the devil being a murderer from the beginning. The apostle John stated, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 Jn. 3:8). We read of the beginning of the work of the devil in Gen. 3. The Lord placed man in a garden eastward in Eden and gave him a law to abide by (Gen. 2:8, 16-17). The devil, or Satan, appears on the scene in the form of a serpent (Gen. 3:1). The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety (II Cor. 11:3) and Adam and Eve were made subject to death. This is the beginning of the devil's work. He used three avenues in tempting man to sin: (1) Lust of the flesh; (2) Lust of the eye; and (3) Pride of life.

Satan is a tempter (I Thess. 3:5); a liar (Acts 5:3); a murderer (Jn. 8:44); a deceiver (I Tim. 2:14); a hinderer (I Thess. 2:18); a thief (Lk. 8:12); and a sinner (I Jn. 3:8). Satan's devices are many (II Cor. 2:11) and his appearance can be among any (Job 1:6; Matt. 26:20-25; Lk. 22:1-6). The devil is always at work in trying to lead as many as he can into apostasy and ruin (I Pet. 5:8). He is the enemy (Matt. 13:39) and we must resist him (James 4:7).

4) The Beginning of the New Testament Era. In rehearsing the conversion of the military officer named Cornelius unto those of the circumcision (Acts 11:4), Peter declared, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15). Peter affirmed that the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles just as it fell on the apostles at the beginning. This does not go back to the beginning in Genesis. The Holy Spirit fell on the apostles in Acts 2. Therefore, Acts 2 is another Bible beginning. The second chapter of Acts records

several beginnings. We read of the beginning of the Holy Spirit guiding the apostles into all truth (Acts 2:1-4; Jn. 16:13).

We have the beginning of repentance and remission of sins being preached in the Lord's name among all nations (Lk. 24:47; Acts 2:38). Also, we have the beginning of the Lord's church (Acts 2:47). For the first time the church is spoken of as being in existence. The church was produced by the seed, God's word (Lk. 8:11), being planted in the hearts of men.

Every time some folks read the word "beginning" in the Bible they automatically think it refers to Gen. 1. Not so! These are all Bible beginnings. Yet, they did not begin at the same time. Perhaps this will help us to better understand how the word "beginning" is used in the Scriptures.

**** John Isaac Edwards works with the Lord's people in Terre Haute, IN. We appreciate his work in this article.*

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MEETING TIMES (EST)

SUNDAY

Bible Study – 10:00 am

Worship – 11:00 am & 3:00 pm

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study – 7:00 pm