

THE FOUNDATION

DIVINELY LAID IN GENESIS 1:1-2:3

By Arlen L. Chirwood

At the outset of His Word, God began by setting forth a skeletal outline of the whole panorama of that which He was about to reveal; and His subsequent revelation would be the sinews, flesh, and skin to cover the bones that form the skeletal outline.

Or, to state the matter another way, at the outset of His Word, God began by laying a foundational structure, upon which the whole framework of His revelation to man would subsequently be built.

Where and how does one properly begin a study of the Word of God? There's only one place and one way to begin in a proper manner. A person must begin where God began and study the Word after the manner in which God established matters at the beginning.

A person *must* begin where the skeletal outline has been given. A person *must* begin where the foundation has been laid. *If one begins elsewhere, he will have nothing upon which to build the structure; he will have nothing upon which to attach the sinews, flesh, and skin.*

And herein lies the very reason for the vast confusion which presently exists in theological circles today. Christians have failed to begin with the foundational structure. They do not know and understand this structure. *And, as a consequence, they have no bones upon which to place the sinews, flesh, and skin; they have no foundation upon which to build.*

GENESIS 1:1-2:3

Genesis is the book of beginnings, and the opening thirty-four verses (1:1-2:3) present a foundational outline in skeletal form, *revealing the whole panorama of Scripture, from the beginning to the end;* and if one understands

this foundational outline *first*, he will be in a position to see all which follows within a correct perspective. He will be able to see all which follows in relation to God's Own preestablished structure of His Word.

That would be to say, if one views the bones forming the skeletal framework after the correct fashion *first*, he will be in a position to properly and correctly clothe this framework with all of the God-provided sinews, flesh, and skin which follow — in complete keeping with that which God has revealed — placing them in their proper and correct positions upon the bones.

However, if one doesn't see and understand the skeletal framework *first*, he will be in no position to properly handle that which follows. He will have no beginning point of reference, negatively affecting his knowledge and understanding of any subsequent portion of Scripture. He will see only disconnected verses or disconnected sections of Scripture, and he will have no way to properly relate these verses or sections to the whole of Scripture.

Thus, two things could be said about the beginning point in Scripture:

- 1) A person *must begin where God began.*
- 2) A person, aside from beginning where God began, *must understand aright that which God has revealed in these opening verses.*

Nothing is more important than these two prerequisites in Biblical study.

Genesis 1:1-2:3 begins with a simple statement concerning God's creation of the heavens and the earth (1:1). Then disorder entered where only perfect order had previously existed (1:2a). The reason for this disorder is revealed elsewhere in Scripture.

Satan, God's appointed ruler over the earth, sought to "exalt" his throne and be "like the most High" (Isa. 14:12-17). And, as a result, his kingdom — the province over which he ruled, *i.e.*, the earth (Ezek. 28:14-16) — was reduced to a ruin.

In the words of Scripture, "And the earth was [*lit.*, 'But the earth became'] without form, and void; and darkness was ['became'] upon the face of the deep..." (Gen. 1:2a).

All of this occurred during a dateless past over 6,000 years ago. That's really all man can know about

"time" concerning that which is revealed in Gen. 1:1, 2a. The things revealed in these verses could have occurred over aeons of time or they could have occurred over a relatively short period within one aeon. We're simply not told.

Beginning with the latter part of verse two is where God begins to count time insofar as the revelation of Himself, His plans, and His purposes are concerned. The movement of the Spirit of God upon the face of the waters, covering the ruined creation below, marks the beginning point of a six-day period which God used to restore the ruined material creation (1:2b-25). Then, at the end of His restorative work on the sixth day, God created man to rule the restored domain (1:26ff). And on the seventh day God rested from all His work (2:1-3).

The preceding is the skeletal framework upon which all subsequent Scripture rests. The six and seven days foreshadow six and seven thousand years of time (II Peter 3:4-8; *cf.* Matt. 17:1ff; II Peter 1:15-18), and, with very few exceptions, the whole of Scripture concerns itself with events during these 7,000 years. Scripture reveals events preceding the 7,000 years (*e.g.*, Gen. 1:1, 2a; Isa. 14:12-14) or events following the 7,000 years (*e.g.*, II Peter 3:10-13; Rev. 21:1ff) only to an extent which God deemed necessary for man to properly relate and understand events within the framework of the revealed 7,000 years to events which both preceded and would follow.

As God worked six days to restore the ruined material creation in Gen. 1:2b-25, He is presently working six more days — 6,000 years — to restore two present ruined creations (ruined man, and the ruined material creation [under a curse]). At the end of His restorative work in Genesis, God rested on the seventh day, and He is going to do exactly the same thing at the end of His restorative work in the present restoration. At the end of six days — at the end of 6,000 years — He is going to rest for one day once again. That is, He is going to rest for 1,000 years, the earth's coming Messianic Era.

These events outlining God's activity within the six and seven days in Gen. 1:2b-2:3 are fraught with symbolism and meaning. The skeletal framework is complete within these verses (including vv. 1, 2a, for the "Restoration," and the "Rest" following the restoration [1:2b ff]), could not be understood apart from the prior revealed "Creation" and "Ruin" of the creation), and *noth-*

ing superfluous has been given. It is all by Divine design.

Thus, the foundational structure upon which all subsequent Scripture rests is given at the very outset of God's revelation to man, in the first thirty-four verses. And a person reading this book must either attach the sinews, flesh, and skin (all subsequent revelation) *to these bones alone* (Gen. 1:1-2:3) or lack a foundational structure upon which to build, *for God has provided no other.*

FROM MOSES TO JOHN

Scripture can be properly divided into seven parts, each forming a complete section of Scripture (though these sections *cannot stand alone*):

The first and second divisions (Gen. 1:1, 2a [Creation, Ruin] and Gen. 1:2b-2:3 [Restoration, Rest]), as has been demonstrated, cover the foundational structure upon which the remainder rests.

The third division (Gen. 2:4-11:26) covers the first 2,000 years of human history extending from Adam to Abraham.

The fourth division (the remainder of the O.T.) begins with Abraham and covers the next 2,000 years of human history, wherein God called one man out from Ur of the Chaldees to be the channel through whom He, from that point forward, would deal with mankind at large.

The fifth division (The N.T. through Rev. 19a) begins with the first advent of Messiah and covers the next 2,000 years of human history, wherein the Lamb of God dies (followed by burial, resurrection, and ascension), Israel is set aside, the Church is called into existence, and God subsequently deals with Israel again during a final seven years (after the Church has been removed).

The sixth division (Rev. 19b-20:15) covers Messiah's return, the next 1,000 years of human history (the long awaited Messianic Era), and events immediately following.

Then *the seventh division (Rev. 21, 22) has to do with the eternal ages which follow the Messianic Era (except for several parts which reflect back on events occurring during the 7,000 years [Rev. 21:7ff; 22:7ff]).*

Now, to illustrate how later revelation is inseparably connected with earlier revelation and how any revelation subsequent to Gen. 1:1-2:3 must be inseparably connected with these opening verses of Genesis, note the thousand years in Rev. 20:1-7. This is not the first time that the thousand years are mentioned in Scripture. Quite the contrary. Instead, this is the last time. The first mention of the thousand years in Scripture is within the skeletal framework at the beginning, in Gen. 2:1-3. The seventh day foreshadows these years, which comprise the seventh millennium.

Not only that, but the thousand years in Rev. 20:1-7 are mentioned numerous places throughout the Scriptures covering and dealing with the 6,000 years of time preceding the Messianic Era. This concluding 1,000-year period is *the point in time toward which everything moves*, with the repeated mention of this period, time after time, being a very natural and necessary part of Scripture.

For example, *the Sabbath* given to Israel was a "sign" pointing to a future Sabbath, a future seventh day of rest (Ex. 31:13-17). Every time that the Israelites kept the Sabbath, at the end of six days of work, they were acknowledging that which God had set forth in the foundational framework at the very beginning (vv. 15-17). They were acknowledging that God was going to work six days in the latter restoration (as He did in the former) and rest on the seventh day (as He did in the former).

(The pattern was set perfect in the beginning. And the latter restoration and rest, following Adam's fall, *must follow the pattern in exact detail, in every respect.*

The thousand years in Rev. 20:1-7 [which follow 6,000 years of work] carry exactly the same relationship to Gen. 2:1-3 as the Sabbath given to Israel [which followed six days of work] carried to these verses. "There remaineth therefore a rest [*lit.*, 'Sabbath rest'] to the people of God" — a rest which will follow six days of work [Heb. 4:9; *cf.* v. 4].)

Then reference is made different places in Scripture to part or all of the six and seven days, referring to 6,000 and 7,000 years, drawing from Gen. 1:2b-2:3 (*cf.* Num. 19:11-19; II Sam. 1:1, 2; Hosea 5:15-6:2; Jonah 1:17; Matt. 16:28-17:5; John 1:29, 35, 43, 2:1; 11:6, 7).

Then, beyond that, events surrounding the coming Messianic Era — events occurring during the seventh day, the seventh 1,000-year period — are mentioned time

after time after time throughout Scripture (*e.g.*, Isa. 2:1-5; 4:1-6; 14:1-8; Jer. 30:1-9; 31:31-33; Ezek. 36:24-28; 37:1ff; Matt. 24:30, 31; Acts 15:14-18; Rom. 11:25, 26).

It will be *in that day* that the blessings of Gen. 12:2, 3 will be realized in their fullness by both Israel and the nations; it will be *in that day* that Christ will exercise the Melchizedek priesthood, blessing the descendants of Abraham, both heavenly and earthly (Gen. 14:18, 19); it will be *in that day* that the seed of Abraham, both heavenly and earthly, will "possess the gate of [*i.e.*, rule over]" the enemy (Gen. 22:17, 18); it will be *in that day* that God will restore Israel to her rightful place (Gen. 25:1ff). And on and on one could go with that which God has revealed in His Word about *that coming seventh day.*

It is all as Nathaniel West said over one hundred years ago in his book, *The Thousand Years in Both Testaments*:

"What we find in the New Testament as its outcome in respect to the ages and the kingdom, has already lain in the bosom of the Old Testament from the beginning... Nothing appears in the later revelation that was not hid in the earlier, nothing in John that was not in Moses... If we study the eschatology of the Old Testament, we will find the *Eschata* there identical with the *Eschata* of the New Testament, and the Eschatology of both Testaments the same...if 'the thousand years' are not in Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets, they have no right to be in John."

Accordingly, any study of the thousand years cannot possibly begin with what God has revealed in Rev. 20:1-7. Rather, it must, of necessity, begin with what God has revealed in Gen. 2:1-3. Revelation 20:1-7 forms the capstone to the matter. This section of Scripture covers in very brief form that which the prophets have previously covered in great detail. And only the simple statement need be made in the capstone, for all the details have already been given.

The whole matter is really that simple if one remains within the framework of the way God has structured His revelation to man.

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