

In the Beginning

by Gerald D. Edson

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)

So begins the first chapter of the book of Genesis, the narrative of how this earth and everything upon it came into being. The principle that God is the being who caused it to happen is stated in a very matter-of-fact manner, without any hint that it could have been accomplished any other way or by any other being. And thus it is, that only an all powerful, infinite and eternal being could have accomplished this task.

It appears that when the physical earth was first created that it was not suitable for animal (including the human family) or vegetable habitation, for it was dark and the surface was covered with water. God's spirit moved upon the surface of the water and the creation story that is familiar to us began. The fires of the sun were lit on the first day of creation, providing light for the planet. The waters were gathered to one place on the third day, allowing dry land to appear and various forms of vegetation to grow on the third day. Everything happened in a logical sequence, controlled by the one omnipotent being we know as God. Nothing happened by chance. It was all according to a master plan. We may wonder just how this was accomplished, but God has never revealed to anyone the process which He used (and continues to use) no doubt because we are incapable of understanding the process.

We have the story of the creation of this earth, however, the earth is not the only creation in God's repertoire. King David looked up and realized that God's work of creation extends far beyond the earth.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? (Psalm 8:3-4)

Here was the most powerful man in the Israelite kingdom acknowledging that beyond our limited environment there a greater power than any earthly kingdom. David was apparently in awe of just how small we are in the universe, and yet, God is concerned with the welfare of each of us.

Just how large is the universe, or how far does God's power and spirit extend? We look into space and see great distances which can be greatly expanded through various lenses, but just how great are these distances. The distances are so great that we

measure them in light years. A light year is the distance that light travels in a year. The speed of light is stated as 186,300 miles per second. When expanded to the distance light travels in a year, it becomes 5.78 trillion miles.

One of the closer phenomena in the sky is the Horsehead Nebula, which is estimated to be about 1500 light years from earth. The light that we see from this formation emanated from it about 1500 years ago, or about the time of the fall of the Roman Empire. Remember, this is one of the closer formations. Science has defined objects in excess of a million light years distant. It would seem that the light we now see was emitted from them before the Genesis creation took place.

So just how large is the universe? How far does it extend? Does it go a certain distance and stop, as if an invisible barrier blocked its further extension? Or, as some in the scientific community have suggested, does it at some point fold back on itself and return to the point of origin? Another option, and probably the correct one, is that the universe extends on forever in all directions to infinity. Infinity is an element that we humans cannot understand, simply because we are finite beings. God, on the other hand, does understand infinity because He is infinite. He is the defining element of infinity. He controls the infinite universe - His Spirit fills all of space and permeates all of the objects in the universe. This is God. And yet, as David observed, He is mindful of each of us, who are hardly a speck in the vastness of the universe. We are a part of His creation, and He cares for every speck of that creation.

God is also eternal, meaning He is without beginning or end. Time does not exist in the eternal realm. Everything we do is directly or indirectly connected with time. Our very mortal existence is limited by time. Consequently, we have restrictions of time to get various tasks completed - to meet obligations that we set for ourselves or those imposed upon us by others. God has no such limitations. Try to imagine an existence where time is not a factor. This is one of the properties of the eternal world. The apostle John wrote:

And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: (Revelation 10:5,6)

As the expanse of the universe is without limit, so the expanse of eternity is also without limit. Again, these concepts are difficult for mortal beings to understand because of our limited understanding of the infinite and eternal realm.

With this somewhat lengthy introduction, we come to the primary subject of this paper. We accept that God is, that He is infinite and eternal, that He created all things

that are, and that He cares for and controls the whole of all creation, which includes everything seen and unseen within the entire universe. This acceptance comes through faith. Faith begins where full knowledge and understanding end. King David looked out into the expanse of the universe and by faith acknowledged that there was (is) a greater being than the human family - one who created all that exists. We all have faith in something, whether it be in God or in earthly things. But the only enduring faith is faith in the one true, living God. All earthly things and false gods will fail, for they have no life of their own, no real substance, and no capacity to create and to love and care for any creation.

Various individuals have attempted to define faith. The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews wrote: *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* (Hebrews 11:1) One analogy of evidence of things not seen would be the wind. We cannot see the wind, but we have faith that it is there because we can see the evidence of its existence by the movement of the grass and trees and we can feel it as it touches our bodies, sometimes as a cooling breeze, as a hot scorching summer wind, as a bone chilling wind in winter, or as a devastating storm that can destroy any man-made structure. In like manner we cannot see the Holy Spirit of God, but by faith we can see how it interacts with us and all things around us.

Miracles are happening around us daily if we only had the faith to see them. The greater our faith, the greater the miracles that are available to us. God has promised that if our faith is sufficient we can move mountains. This does not necessarily mean literal mountains, although we cannot exclude that possibility. We all have figurative mountains that stand in our way - various difficulties that arise to block our way to a better life. Through faith there is no problem too big for the Lord to remove.

Faith requires some form of action on our part. We say that we "exercise our faith", for like our muscular system, without exercise it becomes flabby and useless. The apostle James says it this way:

Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the

messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. (James 2:17-26)

If we say that we have faith and go no further, we are the same as dead. There is a great need for workers of good to exercise their faith to bring about a better human society. At present, this nation, and all nations, are in a state of rapid spiritual decline for the very reason that not enough individuals are willing to exercise their faith by standing for the right and standing against the wrong. The world has allowed the voice of Satan to lull it to sleep - to entice it into believing that there is no such thing as evil or wrong-doing - that evil is only a figment of the imagination - that all is well. The commandments of God are very strict. They do not allow even a slight variance from them. Satan whispers in our ears that there is no harm in fudging or cheating a little, and we listen and react accordingly. One "little" sin is stacked upon another until Satan has us in his strong grip. This is the condition of the world today. This is not to say that there are no good people in the world, for there are many good individuals. There are just not enough good people.

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! (Isaiah 5:20,21)

The laws of this country now say, among other things, that it is bad to have prayer in schools and all public meetings, it is good to kill unborn children, homosexuality is good, and it is bad to believe that God created the earth and the universe, thereby fulfilling the words of Isaiah. As a nation we have written God out of the picture and substituted our own doctrines. Many of our churches have become ritualistic and have left out the real purpose for even being a church.

Religion has become an option, and many people, including many of our leaders, have opted to leave it out of their lives. In the spirit of tolerance we have been taught that we must accept all religious organizations as being equally good. We are led to believe that there is nothing wrong with any doctrine. Isaiah prophesied, "*O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.*" (Isaiah 3:12) He further prophesied, "*For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed.*" (Isaiah 9:16)

There is an old adage that says, "If you stand for everything, you stand for nothing." If Jesus would have accepted these principles we are led to follow He would never have been crucified but He stood against all false doctrines and, fortunately for us, allowed Himself to be executed for sins He did not commit.

If this nation does not come to its senses soon, it will go the way of the Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman Empires. They all fell as a result of the same things that are now happening in our country. If true faith and full trust in God is not restored there is no hope for this or any nation. The judgment is coming. Make no mistake, God will set things right in His chosen time. We do not want to be on the wrong side of the fence when this reckoning comes.

All scriptural references are from the King James version of the Bible.

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