

# Genesis

David Rodabaugh

## I. Genesis 1

### A. Gen 1:1 J Vernon Mcgee CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE

*This is one of the most profound statements that has ever been made, and yet we find that it is a statement that is certainly challenged in this hour in which we are living. I think that this verse is all we have of the actual creation—with the exception, as we shall see, of the creation of man and animals later on in the Book of Genesis. But this is the creation story, and I'll admit that it is a very brief story, indeed.*

An incident was told by Paul Bellamy, the late city editor of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, that while he was making the rounds of the reporters' desks one night, he noticed one of his men grinding out a "tapeworm" on what Bellamy regarded as a relatively unimportant event. "Cut it down!" he said. "After all, the story of the creation was told in Genesis in 282 words." The reporter shot back, "Yes, and I've always thought we could have been saved a lot of arguments later if someone had just written another couple hundred."

*It is interesting to note that God certainly has given us an abridged edition. The question arises: What did He have in mind when He gave us this particular section? What was the Author's purpose here? Was it His purpose to teach geology? There is a great deal of argument and disagreement at this particular juncture. Sometime ago here in California, the state board of education voted to include the biblical so-called theory of creation in science books. Now frankly, I'm not so sure that I'm happy about that. Someone will say that I ought to be because it is a step in the right direction. My friends, I'll tell you why I'm not happy. My concern is relative to the character of the teachers who teach it. We don't have enough teachers with a Christian background and with a Bible background to be able to teach it properly. Very few of the public school teachers are prepared, really, to teach the story of creation.*

Dr. Ralph Girard, professor of biology and dean of the graduate division at the University of California at Davis is reported by the press to have made the comment that the "theory of creation" makes about as much sense as teaching about the stork. He asked if a scientific course on reproduction should also mention the stork theory. The very interesting thing is that the stork theory is not mentioned in the Bible at all, but the creation story is mentioned. His comparison is not quite warranted, because the Bible deals literally with this matter of procreation, and if you read your Bible carefully, you never could have the viewpoint of the stork theory! So what this man says is certainly beside the point but reveals a very antagonistic attitude toward the Bible. I'm of the opinion that this man probably knows a great deal about this particular subject, which seems to be biology, but he knows very little about the Word of God. This is quite obvious from the type of statement he has made.

*This problem of origin provokes more violent controversy, wild theories, and wide disagreement than any other. Always there is the inclusion of men's hypotheses, and as a result there is a babble of voices that has drowned out the clear voice of God. Actually, there are two extreme groups who have blurred the issue, and they have muddied the waters of understanding by their dogmatic assumptions and assertions. One group is comprised of the arrogant scientists who assume that biological and philosophical evolution are the gospel truth. Their assumed axiom is "the assured finding of science," and we'll look into that in a moment. The other group is comprised of the young and proud theologians who arrogate to themselves the super-knowledge that they have discovered how God did it. They write and speak learnedly about some clever theory that reconciles science and the Bible. They look with disdain upon the great giants of biblical expositors of the past as being Bible dwarfs compared to them.*

I would say that both of these groups would do well to consider a statement that was made to Job when the Lord finally appeared to him. God asked him the question: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding" (Job\_38:4). In other words, God is saying to man, "You talk about the origin of the universe, but you don't even know where you were when I laid the foundation of the earth!"

*There are a great many theories as to how the world began, but all of them can be boiled down to fit into a twofold classification: one is creation, and the other is speculation. All theories fall into one of these two divisions.*

The theory of evolution is comprised of many different theories in our day, and some of the most reputable scientists of the past, as well as of the present, reject evolution. So we can't put down the theory of evolution as being a scientific statement like  $2 + 2 = 4$ . Then there is the creation account in

Genesis 1, which must be accepted by faith. It is very interesting that God has made it that way—by faith is the only way in the world by which you can accept it. Notice what the writer to the Hebrews said: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb\_11:1-3). So today the great problem still remains. How did it get from nothing to something? The only way that you can ever arrive at an answer is by faith or by speculation—and speculation is very unscientific.

*Now let us look at some of the theories of origin. There are those who tell us that we should accept the scientific answer. I would like to ask, what is the scientific answer? What science are we talking about? In the year 1806 Professor Lyell said that the French Institute enumerated not less than eighty geological theories which were hostile to the Scriptures, but not one of these theories is held in our day.*

Moses is the human agent whom God used to write the Book of Genesis, and I think he would smile at all the disturbance today regarding the creation story because he did not write it with the intention of giving a scientific account. Paul tells us the purpose of all Scripture: *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2Ti\_3:16-17). The purpose of the Scripture is for instruction in righteousness. It was not written to teach you geology or biology. It was written to show man's relationship to God and God's requirements for man and what man must do to be saved. You can write this over the first part of the Book of Genesis: "What must I do to be saved?"*

May I ask you, if God had given a scientific statement of creation, how many people of Moses' day could have understood it? How many people even in our day could grasp it? You must remember that the Bible was not written for only learned professors but also for simple folk of every age and in every land. If it had been written in the scientific language of Moses' time, it certainly would have been rejected.

Therefore, men have proposed several solutions relative to the origin of the universe. One is that it is an illusion. Well, that is certainly contrary to fact, is it not? And yet there are people who hold that theory. There are others who believe that it spontaneously arose out of nothing. (In a way, this is what the Bible states, although it goes further and says that God spoke it into existence; He created it.) Another view is that it had no origin but has existed eternally. A fourth view is that it was created, and this breaks down into many different theories which men hold in an attempt to explain the origin of the universe.

I have before me some of these theories which men have advanced down through the history of the world. Here is a statement by Dr. Harlow Shapely, the former director of the Harvard Observatory, who commented that we are still imbedded in abysmal ignorance of the world in which we live. He observed that "we have advanced very little, relative to the total surmisable extent of knowledge, beyond the level of wisdom acquired by animals of long racial experience. We are, to be sure, no longer afraid of strange squeaks in the dark, nor completely superstitious about the dead. On many occasions we are valiantly rational. Nevertheless, we know how much the unknown transcends what we know." In other words, we are still absolutely in the dark relative to the origin of this earth on which we live.

*Dr. Loren C. Eiseley, Office of the Provost, University of Pennsylvania, was asked about this; he answered that "we do not know any more about matter and how it is produced than we know about spiritual things. Therefore, I think it is unwise to say in our present state of knowledge that the one precludes the other. The universe seems to exist as a series of emergent levels, none of which is like the level below. That man and all the rest of life have evolved and changed is undeniable, but what lies beneath these exterior manifestations, we do not know. I wish I could answer your question, but to clothe my ignorance in big words would benefit neither yourself nor me."*

One article says that man is on the verge of discovering the mystery of the origin of the world. That happened to be written back in 1961. We haven't had anything new on that since then, by the way.

*The biologist Edwin Conklin, speaking of evolution, stated that the probability of life originating by accident is "comparable to the probability of the unabridged dictionary originating from an explosion in a print shop." That sounds very unscientific, coming from a scientist, but it's true.*

There seem to be at least three theories of the origin of the universe which even astronomers have suggested, and it is interesting to note them. One is known as the "steady state" theory, one is the "big bang" theory, and another is the "oscillating" theory.

A Caltech scientist, Dr. William A. Baum, speaking at UCLA, told the National Academy of Science that new findings tend to rule out the "steady state" theory that the universe has always existed and that new matter is continually being created. Several years ago that was the accepted theory; now

they have a new theory for the origin of the universe. Dr. Baum apparently held the "big bang" theory, which is that a great explosion took place billions of years ago and that we are in for another one in probably another ten billion years. I don't think we need to worry about that a great deal, but it is an interesting theory and one that was fathered in Great Britain.

*Several years ago, Dr. Louis Leakey, an anthropologist (the son of a missionary, by the way) discovered in Africa what he called a missing link. He dug up pieces of a skull with well-developed teeth, called it the "nutcracker man" and claimed it belonged to a teenage youth about six hundred thousand years ago. Well, we have had theories like that before, and since we've heard no more of this one since 1961, I guess the scientific world didn't fall for it.*

There are other ways for explaining the origin of man. Dr. Lawrence S. Dillon, associate professor of biology at Texas A and M College, says that man is not an animal but a plant which evolved from brown seaweed. Now maybe you have been looking in the wrong place for your grandpa and grandma. Some folk have been looking up a tree. Now we are told that we should be down at the beach pulling out seaweed because that is grandpa and grandma! Some of this speculation really becomes ridiculous.

A long time ago I read in a leading secular magazine that: "After centuries of bitter arguments over how life on earth began, an awe-inspiring answer is emerging out of the shrewd and patient detective work in laboratories all over the world." You would think that by now we would be getting some straight answers or at least a little encouragement, but none has been forthcoming.

It was the practice, according to J. V. N. Talmage, that the dogma which scientists followed was this: "The archaeological finds of prehistoric cultural objects must be so arranged that the cruder industries must always be dated earlier than those of a 'more advanced' type, regardless of where they are found." It has been a little disconcerting to find some of the advanced civilizations underneath those who seem to be of prehistoric time.

So many other theories are offered today about how the earth began. Dr. Klaus Mampell from Germany reportedly said that he didn't see any more reason for seeing us (the human race) connected with apes than with canary birds or kangaroos.

The evolutionary theory is divided up into many different phases and viewpoints. It has never been demonstrated as being true. It is unfortunate that when you get down to the level of the pseudo-scientists, and I'm thinking of the teachers today in our public schools who teach science, they really are not in a position to give a fair view because they were given only one viewpoint in college.

There is no unanimous acceptance of evolution even by scientists. Here is a quotation from Dr. G. A. Kerkut, of the Department of Physiology and Biochemistry at the University of Southampton in England. Though he himself is an evolutionist, in his book, *The Implications of Evolution*, he writes: "There is a theory which states that many living animals can be observed over the course of time to undergo changes so that new species are formed. This can be called the "Special Theory of Evolution" and can be demonstrated in certain cases by experiments. On the other hand there is the theory that all of the living forms in the world have arisen from a single source which itself came from an inorganic form. This theory can be called the "General Theory of Evolution" and the evidence that supports it is not sufficiently strong to allow us to consider it as anything more than a working hypothesis." Now listen to the statement of the Swedish botanist, Dr. Heribert Nilsson, who is also an evolutionist: "My attempts to demonstrate evolution by experiment carried on for more than forty years, have completely failed.... At least I should hardly be accused of having started from a preconceived antievolutionary standpoint...." It may be firmly maintained that it is not even possible to make a caricature out of paleobiological facts. The fossil material is now so complete that it has been possible to construct new classes, and the lack of transitional series cannot be explained as due to the scarcity of material. Deficiencies are real. They will never be filled.... The idea of an evolution rests on pure belief."

May I say to you, he is moving into the realm of religion! My friend, to be an evolutionist you have to take it by faith. Evolution is speculation and always has been that. But, unfortunately, a great many folk have accepted it as fact.

In our day a group of theologians (young theologians for the most part) who, not wanting to be called intellectual obscurantists, have adopted what is known as "theistic evolution." If you would like to know what one scientist says about it, Kirtly Mather, in *Science Ponders Religion*, says: "When a theologian accepts evolution as the process used by the creator, he must be willing to go all the way with it. Not only is it an orderly process, it is a continuing one. The golden age for man—if any—is in the future, not in the past.... Moreover, the creative process of evolution is not to be interrupted by any supernatural intervention. The evolution of the first living cells from previously existing nonliving materials may represent a quantum jump rather than an infinitesimal step along the path of progress, but it is an entirely natural development." Theistic evolution is probably the most unrealistic of all

theories. It is almost an unreasonable tenet and an illogical position. There are those today who are trying to run with the hare and with the hounds. They would like to move up with the unbelievers, but they also like to carry a Scofield Bible under their arm. My friend, it is difficult to do both. It is like that old Greek race in which a contestant rode with one foot on one horse and the other foot on another horse. It was marvelous when the two horses kept on the same route. But, believe me, when one of the horses decided to go in another direction, the rider had to determine which one he was going with. That is the condition of the theistic evolutionist. He ordinarily ends up riding the wrong horse, by the way.

In our day there is so much misinformation in the minds of intelligent human beings. For example, before me is a clipping from a secular magazine from several years ago. It posed a question, then answered it. First, the question: "What, according to biblical records, is the date of the creation of the world?" Now listen to the answer that was given: "4,004 B.C." How utterly ridiculous can one be?

An article in Life magazine concerning the origin of life said that at some indeterminate point—some say two billion years ago, some a billion and a half—life miraculously appeared on the surface of the deep. What form it took, science cannot specify. All that can be said, according to this article, is that "through some agency certain giant molecules acquired the ability to duplicate themselves." My friend, are you willing to go along with the theory that giant molecules acquired the ability to duplicate themselves?

Other ridiculous theories have been advanced. One is that man began on this earth from garbage that some prehistoric intelligence left on this earth in the dim and distant past. That statement comes from a scientist! While some scientists send us out to look for our ancestors in the trees, another sends us out to look at the seaweed, and now some send us to the garbage can! This is getting worse and worse, is it not? I don't know about you, but I feel that God's statement of creation still stands in this modern age.

A famous definition of evolution which Herbert Spencer gave stated that: "An integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent, homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity, and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation." You ponder that one for awhile, friend!

It still makes more sense to me to read: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Who created the universe? God did. He created it out of nothing. When? I don't know, and nobody else knows. Some men say one billion years ago, some say two billion, and now some say five billion. I personally suspect that they are all pikers. I think it was created long before that. My friend, we need to keep in mind that God has eternity behind Him. What do you think He has been doing during all the billions of years of the past? Waiting for you and me to come on the scene? No, He has been busy. He has had this creation a long time to work with. You see, He really has not told us very much, has He? It is presumptuous of little man down here on earth to claim to know more than he really knows.

You cannot put one little star in motion;  
You cannot shape one single forest leaf,  
Nor fling a mountain up, nor sink an ocean,  
Presumptuous pigmy, large with unbelief!

You cannot bring one dawn of regal splendor,  
Nor bid the day to shadowy twilight fall,  
Nor send the pale moon forth with radiance tender;  
And dare you doubt the One who has done it all?

—Sherman A. Nagel, Sr.

It behooves us to just accept that majestic statement which opens the Word of God: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." And with the psalmist let us consider His heavens, the work of His fingers, the moon and the stars, which He has ordained (Psa\_8:3) and realize that "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork" (Psa\_19:1).

*The apostle Paul wrote this to the Romans: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom\_1:20). And the writer to the Hebrews says: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb\_11:3). We must accept creation by faith. Even science cannot tell us how something can be made out of nothing. God apparently did it just that way. And man today cannot tell when this was created.*

*When we compare the Genesis record with other creation accounts, the contrasts are striking indeed. Most nations have a legend of creation, and probably all of them are corruptions of the Genesis account. For example, we find one of the best accounts of a secular nation in the Babylonian tablets of creation. Notice some of the contrasts: The Babylonian tablets begin with chaos. The Bible account*

*begins with cosmos, with perfection. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." According to the Babylonian account, the heavenly bodies are gods, but they are nothing in the world but matter according to the Bible. There is a polytheistic theology in the Babylonian account but a monotheistic truth in the Bible account. The Babylonian account says the universe is just the work of a craftsman, but the Bible says that God spoke and it came into existence. The Babylonian account is characterized by its puerility and grotesqueness, whereas the Bible presents grand and solemn realities of the Creator God who is holy and who is a Savior. The Babylonian account is definitely out of harmony with known science, but the Bible is in accord with true science.*

*I reject evolution because it rejects God and it rejects revelation. It denies the fall of man and the fact of sin, and it opposes the virgin birth of Christ. Therefore, I reject it with all my being. I do not believe that it is the answer to the origin of this universe.*

There are three essential areas into which evolution cannot move and which evolution cannot solve. It cannot bridge the gap from nothing to something. It cannot bridge the gap from something to life. It cannot bridge the gap between life and humanity—that is, self-conscious human life with a free will.

The press, of course, is always looking for something sensational and comes up with interesting findings. One of the things which has been put in my hands is a clipping from a fellow Texan. They have found near Glenrose, Texas, down near a place where I used to live, the tracks of dinosaurs. Now, I've known about that for years. You might expect that in Texas they would find the biggest of everything, and apparently the dinosaurs were there. But now they have found something that is quite disturbing: they have found some giant human tracks in the same place. You know, that's really upsetting because it is very difficult to start out with a little amoeba or a little scum on top of the water and then find that walking back there with the dinosaurs were human beings who were much bigger than any of us today. Evolution is going to have a lot of problems in the next few years. May I predict (and I am merely echoing a prediction of a scientist) that by the end of this century the theory of evolution will be as dead as a dodo bird.

While there is a great deal more that could be said on these issues, there is a third question that arises. Not only are folk asking who created and when did He create but also why did He create. Believe me, this gets right down to the nitty-gritty. This is very important.

The Word of God tells us that this universe was created for His own pleasure. He saw fit to create it; He delighted in it. In the final book of the Bible we find these words: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev\_4:11). He created this universe because He wanted to create it. He did it for His pleasure. You may not like the universe, but He does. He never asked me about where I wanted this little world on which I live to be located in His universe. In fact, He didn't even ask me whether I wanted to be born in Texas or not. Of course, if He had given me the opportunity, I would have chosen Texas. But He didn't give me that choice. May I say to you that this universe was created for His pleasure. He saw fit to create and He delighted in the act.

The second reason that He created this universe was for His own glory. The original creation, you remember, sang that wonderful Creator's praise "... When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job\_38:7). It was created for His glory. And in the prophecy of Isaiah are these words: "... I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him" (Isa\_43:7). God created this universe for His own glory.

The Word of God also tells us that God created man in this universe for fellowship. He wanted to have fellowship with mankind, and so He created him a free moral agent. God could have made a bunch of robots. God could have made mechanical men and pushed a button to make them bow down to Him. But God didn't want that kind of a man. God wanted a man to be free to choose Him and to love Him and to serve Him.

My friend, in the midst of all the unbelief, the blasphemy, and the hostility toward God which is around us today, the greatest thing you can do as a human being is to publicly choose the Lord Jesus Christ. To believe in God the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth and to receive His Son, Jesus Christ, is the most glorious privilege that you and I have. We hear a lot of talk about freedom of speech and freedom of every sort, but this poor crowd around us who talks so loudly of freedom doesn't seem to know what freedom really is. We have real freedom when we choose Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Now let's return to the first verse of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This is a majestic verse. It is a tremendous verse. I am of the opinion that it is the doorway through which you will have to walk into the Bible. You have to believe that God is the Creator, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." *"In the beginning"—that is a beginning which you cannot date. You can estimate it as billions of years, and I think you would be accurate, but who knows how many? Certainly man does not know.*

"God created." The word "create" is from the Hebrew word bara, which means to create out of nothing. This word is used only three times in the first chapter of Genesis, because it records only three acts of creation. (1) The creation of something from nothing: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (2) The creation of life: "And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth ..." (v. Gen\_1:21). That's animal life of all kinds. (3) The creation of man: "So God created man in his own image ..." (v. Gen\_1:27). Theistic evolution is not the answer. *It attempts to follow creation until the time of man, then considers Adam and Eve to be products of some evolutionary process. The theistic evolutionist considers the days in Genesis as periods of time, long periods of time. I do not believe that is true. God's marking off the creative days with the words, "And the evening and the morning were the first day," etc., makes it clear that He was not referring to long periods of time but to actual twenty-four hour days.*

"God created the heaven and the earth." The earth is separated from the rest of creation. Why? Well, the earth is the hometown of mankind; that's where he is to be placed. We are very much interested in him because we belong to this creature. We need to realize, my friend, that you and I are creatures, creatures of God, and as creatures of God, we owe Him something.

It was years ago that Herbert Spencer said, "The most general forms into which the manifestation of the Unknowable are re-divisible are time, space, matter, force, motion." Those were his categories of division. A very fine personal worker, George Dewey Blomgren, was talking to an army sergeant who was a law graduate. Mr. Blomgren was attempting to witness to him. The sergeant mentioned Herbert Spencer, so Mr. Blomgren replied, "Did you know that both the Bible and Spencer teach the great principle of creation?" The sergeant's eyes widened and he asked, "How's that?" The reply was, "Spencer talked about time, space, matter, force, motion. In the first two verses of Genesis we find: 'In the beginning [time] God created the heaven [space] and the earth [matter]. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God [force] moved [motion] upon the face of the waters.' It took Spencer fifty years to uncover this law, but here it is in fifty seconds." The sergeant had no grounds for argument and soon trusted Christ as his Savior. It is very interesting that God has put down these great principles in the first two verses of Genesis. How important it is for us to see that.

B. Gen 1:2 And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters

#### 1. Gen 1:2 J. Vernon McGee

*Although this view has been discredited by many in the past few years, I believe that a great catastrophe took place between verses Gen\_1:1 and Gen\_1:2. As far as I can see, there is an abundance of evidence for it. To begin with, look out upon this vast creation—something has happened to it! Man's trip to the moon reveals nothing in the world but a wasteland up there. How did it get that way? May I say that there came a catastrophe in God's universe.*

That is specifically mentioned in regard to the earth because this is to be the place where man lives, and so the earth is described as being "without form and void."

*"Darkness was upon the face of the deep" indicates the absence of God, of course.*

"Without form, and void" is a very interesting expression. "Without form" is the Hebrew word tohu, meaning a ruin, vacancy; "void" is the Hebrew word bohu, meaning emptiness. Notice this statement in the prophecy of Isaiah: "For thus said the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else" (Isa\_45:18). Here God says that He did not create the earth "in vain," and the Hebrew word is tohu, which is the same word we found in Gen\_1:2. God did not create the earth without form and void. God created this universe a cosmos, not a chaos. This is the thing which Isaiah is attempting to make clear. He created it not tohu va bohu, but the earth became tohu va bohu. God formed the earth to be inhabited, and it was God who came to this wreck and made it a habitable place for mankind.

Our current study and exploration of space has revealed, so far, that you and I live in a universe in which only the earth is habitable for human beings. I believe that Genesis is telling us that this earth became without form and void, that it was just as uninhabitable as the moon when the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

I believe that the entire universe came under this great catastrophe. What was the catastrophe? We can only suggest that there was some pre-Adamic creature that was on this earth. And it seems that all of this is connected with the fall of Lucifer, son of the morning, who became Satan, the Devil, as

we know him today. I think all of this is involved here, but God has not given us details. The fact of the matter is that He has given us very, very few details in the first chapter of Genesis.

"And the spirit of God moved." The word for "moved" means brooded, like a mother hen broods over her little chicks. He brooded upon the face of the waters. The Holy Spirit began a ministry here which we will find Him doing again and again. It is re-creation! He comes into this scene and He recreates. This is precisely what He does for us.

You will remember that the Lord Jesus said, "... Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (Joh\_3:5). The water is the Word of God. Now, if you want to make baptism the symbol for it, that's fine. But the water means the Word of God. And the Holy Spirit is the Author of it. This is very important for us to see.

## 2. Don't come too quick a reading – Ex 20:8-11 may prove something else

- a) Ex 20:1-2 J. Vernon McGee on the Commandments  
J Vernon McGee on the Commandments

### b) THE GIVING OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

*The first part of the Law given to Israel was the Ten Commandments which was a moral code.*

*God says, "I brought you out of Egypt and the house of bondage, and upon that basis I want to give you My law." Israel asked for the Law and God obliged them and He gave them the Ten Commandments first.*

Several things need to be mentioned as we look at the Ten Commandments. The first one is the "new morality." The new morality goes back before the giving of the Law. In fact, it came right out of the Garden of Eden when man first disobeyed God. The new morality existed before the Flood and after the Flood. Today it is far from new. We love to think that we are sophisticated and refined sinners. We are not—we are just crude sinners in the raw—natural sinners. The Ten Commandments put before us God's standards. No man can play fast and loose with the Ten Commandments and get by with it.

On Blackwell's Island there was a graveyard for criminals. On one grave was a marker which read, "Here lies the fragments of John Smith who contradicted His Maker, played football with the Ten Commandments, and departed this life at the age of thirty-five. His mother and wife weep for him. Nobody else does. May he rest in peace." That grave marker revealed a man who tried to defy the law of God. No person can play football with the Ten Commandments and escape the punishment of God.

Often times the charge is made against those of us who preach the grace of God that we do not have a proper appreciation for the Law. We are charged with despising it, rejecting it, and actually teaching that because we are not saved by the Law, it can be violated at will and broken with impunity. This is not true at all. On the contrary, every preacher who teaches the grace of God and has a true perspective of the nature of salvation by faith, realizes the lofty character of the Law. Paul answers the problem in [Rom\\_6:1-2](#) which says, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

If you think you can continue to live in sin and break the Ten Commandments at will, then, my friend, you are not saved by the grace of God. When you are really saved, you want to please God and want to do His will which is revealed in the *Ten Commandments*. *Therefore I think every preacher of the grace of God has a respect and reverence for God's Law. We say with the psalmist, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."*

What is the Law? Someone has defined it as the transcript of the mind of God. That is a defective definition. The Law is the expression of the mind of God relative to what man ought to be. There is no grace or mercy in the Law at all. The Law is an expression of the holy will of God. The psalmist in [Psa\\_19:7](#) says, "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple." The Law requires perfection on your part. I have never met anyone who has measured up to God's standard. The Law is not some vague notion, and it does not have anything to do with good intentions. It requires perfect obedience, for the Law of the Lord is perfect.

The Law of the Lord is right. Our notions of right and wrong are colored by our environment and by the fact that we have a fallen nature. The Law is a revelation of God. God has drawn the line between right and wrong. How do you know what is right? God tells us what is right. This present generation who wants freedom so badly is questioning what is right. "Why is it wrong to steal?" they ask. They do

not mind stealing. But they like the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" because they say it is wrong for the government to commit murder by executing criminals. How inconsistent this crowd is! How ignorant they are of the Law. Why is it wrong to lie or to steal? Because God says it is wrong. You may say, "It is for the good of mankind." Of course it is. The Law would be a wonderful thing if man could keep it. Man cannot keep the Law, however, and the jails, the locks on the doors, and the fact that you have to sign ten pieces of paper to borrow money from a bank because they do not trust you, are all testimony to this fact. There was a day when a man's word was his bond, but that is no longer true today. The Law is a norm for human conduct. Stealing, lying, and adultery are wrong because God says they are wrong.

The Law never enforces itself. The Law-giver must have power. God enforces His laws with a tremendous impact. Take the law of gravitation, for example. You can go up as high as you want to but you had better not turn loose. The law of gravitation is in operation and you cannot reverse it. You may think you can, but in the long run you will be the loser.

Many people think they can break the Ten Commandments right and left and get by with it. That reminds me of the whimsical story of the man who jumped off the Empire State Building in New York City. As he went sailing by the fiftieth floor, a man looked out the window and said to him, "Well, how is it?" The falling man replied, "So far, so good." That is not where the law of gravitation enforces itself. Fifty more floors down and the man will find out, "So far, not so good." The interesting thing is that a law must be enforced to be a law and therefore God says in Eze 18:4, "... the soul that sinneth, it shall die." The Law must be enforced and the breaker of the Law must pay the penalty.

There is another viewpoint that needs to be corrected and that is the confounding of law and grace and putting them into one system. Putting law and grace into the same system is to rob the Law of its majesty and meaning. There is no love in the Law. There is no grace in the Law. Grace is robbed of its goodness and glory when it is mixed with the Law. Grace is stripped of its wonder, attractiveness, and desire. The sinner's needs are not met when law and grace are bound together. The Law sets forth what man ought to be. Grace sets forth what God is. The majesty of the Law is something that we do need to recognize.

*The Law reveals who God is and the vast yawning chasm between God and man. Paul asked the question in Gal\_4:21, "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?" You had better listen to what the Law says because man has been weighed in the balances by the Ten Commandments and has been found wanting. You do not measure yourself by others. It is very easy for the man on Mt. Whitney to look down at the man on the ant hill and say, "I am higher than you are." The man on Mt. Whitney, however, did not make it to the moon, or to heaven either. You just do not measure up to God's standard.*

*The Law also reveals who man is and his inability to bridge the gap between himself and God. Rom\_3:19 tells us, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Paul says in Rom\_8:3, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." The fault does not lie in the Law but in us.*

The Law is a mirror, as we have already seen, that reveals man in his sinful condition. Many people look in the mirror and think they are all right. This reminds me of the fairy story in which a queen looked in her mirror and said, "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who is fairest of them all?" She wanted the mirror to say that she was, but the mirror told the truth and said she wasn't—someone else was fairer. And the interesting thing today is that a great many folk look at the mirror (the Ten Commandments in the Word of God) and they say the same thing, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is fairest of them all?" The difference is that they answer their own question and say, "I am." They think they are keeping the Law. My friend, you need to look in the mirror more closely and let the mirror do the answering.

The Law never made a man a sinner; it revealed the fact that man was a sinner. The Law was given to bring a man to Christ, as we have seen. It was our schoolmaster to take us by the hand, lead us to the Cross, and tell us, "Little man, you need a Savior because you are a sinner."

- c) We should note that the commandment on Sabbath is not repeated in Paul. He specifically says otherwise in Col. 2:16-17

- d) Paul repeats nine of the 10 commandments  
 a. *no other gods – Ex 20:3*

(Act 7:40 KJV) Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for *as for* this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.  
 (Act 14:11 KJV) And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.  
 (Act 17:18 KJV) Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.  
 (Act 19:26 KJV) Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:  
 (1Co 8:5 KJV) For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)  
 (Gal 4:8 KJV) Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

*b.no idols – Ex 20:4*

(Act 7:41 KJV) And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.  
 (1Co 8:4 KJV) As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* none other God but one.  
 (1Co 8:7 KJV) Howbeit *there is* not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat *it* as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.  
 (1Co 8:10 KJV) For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;  
 (1Co 10:19 KJV) What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?

*c) not take name of Lord in vain – Ex 20:7 compare with Rom 13:4; 1Cor 15:2*

*d. Honor father and mother – Ex 20:12 – Eph 6:2*

*e. not murder – Ex 20:13*

*f. not adultery – Ex 20:14*

*g, not steal – Ex 20:15*

*h. not bear false witness – Ex 20:16; Col 3:9*

*i. not covet – Ex 20:17; Rom 7:7; 13:9 – includes some of the others!*

- e) but the sabbath is definitely not for today – as stated in Colossians 2

a. The keeping of the sabbath is done by the seventh day adventists and this is a mark of a cult.

### C. THIRD HEAVENS – not found in the OT only here – The throne room of God

2Co 12:1 I must needs glory, though it is not expedient; but I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.  
 2Co 12:2 I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up even to the third heaven.  
 2Co 12:3 And I know such a man (whether in the body, or apart from the body, I know not; God knoweth),  
 2Co 12:4 how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.  
 2Co 12:5 On behalf of such a one will I glory: but on mine own behalf I will not glory, save in my weaknesses.  
 2Co 12:6 For if I should desire to glory, I shall not be foolish; for I shall speak the truth: but I forbear, lest any man should account of me above that which he seeth me to be, or heareth from me.  
 2Co 12:7 And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch.  
 2Co 12:8 Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

