

Home group notes for 17th September 2017

'Beginnings' Genesis 1: 1-2:3

Genesis 1 is the majestic overture of both the Hebrew and Christian Bible. It has to be treated on its own terms as an ancient theological text of immense narrative beauty and complexity but which communicates with great simplicity. There is no reason to find conflict between the theology of this chapter and the important task of scientific research. Read **Genesis 1:1-2:3**

1. As you look at the *overall shape and content* of this passage what do you see as its most striking features? List them and what do they say about the purpose of this opening chapter?

2. Genesis 1:1-2:3 is both accessible to the simplest mind and captivates the deepest thinkers. What, for you, is the real *power* of these verses?

3. 'In the Beginning God created....' It is no accident that God is the subject of the first sentence of the Bible. 'God created', 'God said', the 'Spirit of God hovered', 'God made'... What do these verses tell us about the Creator God?

4. There is an obvious *progression* to the way God created, starting with the creation of a 'formless and empty earth' (v.2) which is then, over six days, formed and filled, reaching its climax in v.26 with the creation of humanity. What do you think is the significance of telling the story in this *progressive* way?

5. What do you see as the significance of God 'resting' on the seventh day? (2:2)

6. After each day are the words 'And God saw that it was good ('very good' v.31). Though our world is now 'fallen' and spoilt in so many ways, what is the importance of holding on to the truth that our world was 'originally good'?

7. This chapter eloquently communicates that our world is designed by a divine mind of order, rationality and structure - and it was this assumption that allowed modern empirical science to flourish. How come, then, that science and faith are now often pitted against one another?

8. This chapter was Israel's protest against all the polytheism and fears of the ancient world. What are some of the really important *pastoral* things this chapter says to our C21st Western world?

Use this chapter **to pray** for those you know who have no sense of meaning or purpose to their lives.

