

Genesis 1

Recent Barna Study: Christians today are losing their Christian Worldview

66% of our American Culture identifies as Christian today (down from 72% in 2020 – loss of about 15 million adults). Meanwhile, a number of non-Christian faiths in the United States have experienced significant growth in numbers of adherents. Buddhism has grown by 56%; Judaism by 21%; and Islam by 12%. All non-Christian faiths combined have increased by 39% since the start of the decade.

However, there has been a 12% increase since 2021. Commitment to Jesus was lowest in 2021-2022 when it bottomed out at 54%. Gen Z and Millennials are spiking this return (especially seen amongst the men 15% GenZ, and 19% increase among Millennials).

66% of American adults reject the existence of absolute moral truth, most americans determine right and wrong based on personal feelings, circumstances, or public opinion. Even among protestants and Catholics, rejection of absolute truth stands at 61% and 69%, respectively.

67% of adults believe truth is conditional, and more that 80% are comfortable drawing from multiple sources of bases of truth.

43% of church goers now identify as pro-life, down from 63% in 2023.

46% of churchgoers embrace a biblical definition of family – one man and one woman married with children.

Among Gen Z churchgoers, that number drops to 34% and less than half (49%) affirm marriage as only between a man and woman.

Confidence in Scripture is slipping – only 51% now believe the Bible is unambiguous teaching on abortion, down from 65% two years ago.

73% of churchgoers hold contradictory views on abortion, reflecting widespread moral confusion.

80% affirm that every person is made in God's image.

All that to say... we no longer live in a Christian Culture, but now a very secular one.

Secularism: which means “living within the bounds of this age” (from the latin saeculum). It is to live with our outlook confined to this period alone – without past, without a future, above all without God, who is in both the past and the future and controls them. **And thus, it is a time where we don't learn from our past, nor fear the consequences created for the future.** For secularism to truly thrive then, there must be a dumbing down of the people so that feelings are more powerful than reason, current trends more important than past mistakes, and the belief that our actions today will have no true consequences for the future...

Summary: While certainly affected to one degree or another by our increasingly secular culture... God has called us to be different. To be lights in an ever-darkening world. To hold steadfastly to His Gospel and Truth. The problem is that for a while now, perhaps especially over the last 10 years, there has been a ramped up attack against God's truth via culture and most recently even politics that have led to an erosion of trust in God and in His truth... the Bible. Couple this with an increasing biblical illiteracy in the church... and you have the reason for so much of the moral uncertainty and degradation in our culture today.

Enter in the reason we are doing this series...

The Creation of the World

1 In the **beginning**, God created the heavens and the earth.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:1-5

Thus we are a **Bible teaching Church**, and because of that we hold to the truths of scripture unapologetically, because the Bible shares God's Word, shares Jesus with us in Truth. Thus the Bible is...

1) Is **From God to Us** (It's not about us, it's about God... but it is for us).

2) Is **Without Error** (Inerrant)... and thus always the Truth.

Forever, O Lord, your Word is firmly fixed in the heavens. Ps 119:89

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Jn 8:31

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Num 23:19

3) Is a **Living Word** (thus still working, still active, still utilizing God's power)

For the Word of God is living an active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

Plane Story...

4) Is **Authoritative** (which means it's always right and we need to follow it).

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. 1 Timothy 3:16

He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. Titus 1:9

Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law of liberty and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. James 1:22-25

If you are not careful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, the Lord your God, then the Lord will bring on you

and your offspring extraordinary afflictions, afflictions severe and lasting, and sickness grievous and lasting. Deut 28:58-59

Obey and be blessed. Disobey and experience the negative consequence. Believe and go to heaven. Don't believe and go to hell.

When you disagree with something in the bible... you're the one that has to humble themselves to hear the truth... not God. Church is great for the humble...

- 5) Is **Transformative** (When we trust God's Word/Jesus and follow Him... He heals, He forgives, He renews, He strengthens, He supports, He convicts, He protects, He blesses all so that we might be saved, experience peace, and always have Hope). Or... to state it more simply... through faith (through trusting Him and His promises and acting more in more in that trust)... He transforms us , He changes our lives (now and in eternity).

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life. Jn 5:24

In other words, if you trust God's word... it will change your life.

1 In the beginning, **God... created the heavens and the earth.**

Mark 13:19: Jesus spoke of "the beginning, when God created the world".

The scientific law of conservation of mass energy states that there is a finite amount of matter. And that while matter can be reconfigured, no new matter can be created. Thus, all creation known to man is through the reconfiguration of matter. Except with God... at the beginning. Since, according to this scientific law, something can not be created from nothing.

God or Nothing: So at the beginning, we are confronted with a question. Did nothing create something or... did something create something. According to this law of the conservation of mass energy... it had to be something...

Quote from Robert Jastrow, Director of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Goddard Institute: There is kind of a religion in science; it is the religion of a person who believes there is order and harmony in the Universe. Every event can be explained in a rational way as the product of some previous event... But this religious faith of the scientist is violated by the discovery that the world had a beginning under conditions in which the known laws of physics are not valid, and as a product of forces or circumstances we cannot discover...

And this something, for all the scientific evidence now provided was done by an...

Intelligent Designer:

In our biology, in space, in our ecosystem, all around us things have been created in such a way that they work in a comprehensive and sustaining effort to provide for and continue life on this earth.

Moral Entity:

As we experience a conscience that shares a sense of right and wrong, good and evil. For sure it can be perverted... but the fact that we have this sense... further contributes to the fact that it was by design as well.

God of Community:

Our emotions, sense of spirit, ability to love and communicate with each other lend to further design and intentionality as well... lending to the fact, it seems, that we were created to be relational beings with a sense of the eternal (that there is more than just this world).

And while Evolution and the MultiVerse struggle to explain these variables to their respective theories... Genesis, on the other hand, seeks to introduce us to this Intelligent Designer who created us and everything else... because He chose to, because He loves us... because He was able.

So, **Genesis is important** because it gives us our origins of matter, life, values, evil, grace, the family, nations and other things that give life meaning – in a way that unites us all.

Think about it this way: If God did not create the earth, than this whole existence is without meaning or purpose. It came together accidentally with no forethought, intelligent designer, or purpose... but simply by chance. It means too there is no purpose to life, no such thing as sin or evil, no reason to be judged for what we do. No Ultimate truth at all. (Wow, I'm describing our culture).

Now... It's for sure difficult to explain the happenstance of intelligent design, rational thought, feelings, emotions, conscience, language, and the rest of the natural revelation of God... but once placing our faith that all is happenstance... despite all the evidence to the contrary... you do so ultimately... because you don't want to admit the obvious... that there is and always has been... God.

For you see, if God did create the earth than there is purpose and care and love for its inhabitation. There is a care about what happens. That his creation designed to regenerate over and over... is provided for, and that its continued existence accomplishes the purposes for which it was created. And that there was a reason for which it was created... For If God did create the heavens and the earth than good and evil are real, fidelity to God necessary and life giving, the purpose of life clear, our enemy plain to see, and our faith in Jesus the key to heaven, and consequently, the only thing keeping us from damnation and hell. In other words, if God created the universe... than everything else He said... it seems... matters too.

1 In the beginning, **God...** created the heavens and the earth.

Things we can ascertain about God from verse 1.

Denial of Atheism: If God was in the beginning, then there was and is a God.

Denial of Materialism: When the text says that God was in the beginning, before creation, it sets Him apart from creation and therefore apart from the matter of which all else is made.

Denial of Pantheism: Pantheism is the philosophy that God is in matter or is matter. It underlies most pagan or animistic religions. But if God created matter, then He is separate from it and is superior to it. Thus any religion who worships matter is idolatrous.

Attributes:

Limitless Power: Now we start learning something about God's Power. Speak things into existence. A lot of people throughout history and today can make things out of matter. But none can speak or create matter into being. God is just different, has a different kind of power than anyone else in existence.

God is self-existent: This is not true of anything else. Everything else depends on some other thing or person and ultimately on God. Without these prior causes, the thing would not exist. We recognize this truth when we speak of the laws of cause and effect. Every effect must have an adequate cause. But God is the ultimate cause and is Himself uncaused.

God is unknowable: and thus must be revealed

God is not answerable to us: and we don't like that.

God is self-sufficient: Self-sufficiency means that God has no needs and therefore depends on no one. That's not true of us. We depend on countless other things... oxygen, water, food, for example.

Example: So while He created us to love us... He does not in Himself need our love, nor our worship, to survive. So while God chooses us... He does not need us. God was under no constraint, no obligation, no necessity to create. That he chose to do so was purely a sovereign act on His part, caused by nothing outside of Himself, determined by nothing but own mere good pleasure; for he worketh all things after the counsel of his own good will. (Eph 1:11).

God is eternal: He was in the beginning. This means

- 1) **He is Unchangeable:** He can be trusted to remain as He has revealed Himself to be. God is unchangeable in His attributes. So we need not fear, for example, that although He has shown His love toward us once in Christ He may nevertheless somehow change His mind and cease to love us in the future. God is always love. Consequently, His purposes remain fixed from generation to generation.
- 2) **He is unescapable.** God does not change His mind. He does not move away. He will not die. Consequently, we cannot escape Him. If we ignore Him now, we must reckon with Him in the life to come. If we reject Him now, we must eventually face the One we have rejected and come to know His own eternal rejection of us.