



Lesson 1
Study of Genesis
Dr. Skip Moen, D.Phil.
Disc 1

GRAFTED IN FELLOWSHIP
KING GEORGE

13-9-5774 / 16 Nov 2013

My Notes:

Your Notes:

Structure of Hebrew Language

- Word placement denotes importance or relationship

Nahum Sarna

- arom (last verse of chapter 2) – nakedness
- arum (first verse of chapter 3) – cunning

[2:24 - 6174 עָרוֹם [‘arowm, ‘arom /aw·rome/] adj. From 6191 (in its original sense); TWOT 1588c; GK 6873; 16 occurrences; AV translates as “naked” 16 times. 1 naked, bare.

3:1 - 6175 עָרוּם [‘aruwm /aw·room/] adj. Pass. part. of 6191; TWOT 1698c; GK 6874; 11 occurrences; AV translates as “prudent” eight times, “crafty” twice, and “subtil” once. 1 subtle, shrewd, crafty, sly, sensible. 1A crafty. 1B shrewd, sensible, prudent.

Reference 6191 - 6191 עָרַם [‘aram /aw·ram/] v. A primitive root; TWOT 1698; GK 6891; Five occurrences; AV translates as “subtily” once, “crafty” once, “prudent” once, “beware” once, and “very” once. 1 to be subtle, be shrewd, be crafty, beware, take crafty counsel, be prudent. 1A (Qal) to be crafty, be subtle. 1B (Hiphil) to be crafty, be or become shrewd.]

B’reisheet – In the beginning

- B’Ha’reisheet
- In “a” beginning; when it began
- “When God began...”
- “*ex nihilo*” [a Latin phrase meaning "out of nothing"]

St Thomas Aquinas – Five Arguments [The *Quinque viæ*, *Five Ways*, or *Five Proofs* are five arguments regarding the existence of God summarized by the 13th century Roman Catholic philosopher and theologian St. Thomas Aquinas in his book, *Summa Theologica*. The five ways are: the argument of the unmoved mover, the argument of the first cause, the argument from contingency, the argument from degree, and the teleological argument.] Wikipedia

- Cosmological Argument

Marduke and Tiamat [In Mesopotamian Religion (Sumerian, Assyrian, Akkadian and Babylonian), Tiamat is a chaos monster, a primordial goddess of the ocean, mating with Abzû (the god of fresh water) to produce younger gods. It is suggested that there are two parts to the Tiamat myths, the first in which Tiamat is 'creatix', through a "Sacred marriage" between salt and fresh water, peacefully creating the cosmos through successive generations. In the second "Chaoskampf" Tiamat is considered the monstrous embodiment of primordial chaos.^[1] Although there are no early precedents

for it, some sources identify her with images of a sea serpent or dragon.^[2] In the [Enûma Elish](#), the [Babylonian epic](#) of [creation](#), she gives birth to the first generation of deities; she later makes war upon them and is killed by the storm-god [Marduk](#). The heavens and the earth are formed from her divided body.] Wikipedia

Exegesis: what is the question?

Genesis account: it came from God! God begins everything!

Isaiah: God is the author of evil <<See Skip's commentary at end of notes regarding this verse.>>

[Is 45:7 - "I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe—I the Lord do all these things." (JPS)

Is 45:7 - forming light, and creating darkness; making peace, and creating evil. I, YAHWEH, do all these things². <<2 Darkness is simply the absence of light, so by creating light, you give the possibility for darkness. In the same way evil is simply the absence of peace, so by creating peace you give the ability for evil in its absence, but YHWH does not make the evil itself, it is simply a by product from the rejection of Him and His Torah.>> (HRB)]

Preposition – “Bey”; adverb – “reisheet” – araheet? (time);
raheet: time in the future, time in the past

[I can't find support for this statement.]

Competing Cosmologies

- Differences between Genesis and Babylonian accounts, VERSUS
- Scientific account and mythological account
- Historical cultural background: Babylonian, Assyrian, Canaanite, Egyptian mythologies/cosmologies; NOT
- Newton, Pascal, Bacon

Hebrew vs Greek view of “time”

- Greek:
 - +chronos (atomization of time)
 - +aeon (age)
 - +kairos (pregnant moment; exactly right time)
- Hebrew:
 - +not chronological
 - +what is most important comes first!

Chronology of the Bible

- New Testament
- Old Testament

Genealogies

- Matthew's Genealogy: 14! David = 14 (דוד)
- Not about exactness, but the need for the message

Elohim

- General reference to a deity; plural
- Singular is El
- Plural noun connected to a singular verb (bara)
- Trinity?
- Plural of majesty; the royal “we”
- Name of Canaanite god, Baal

Cultural context / first audience

- Israel children at Sinai

“et”

- ”alef” “tav” - אַתְּ
- no translation
- is a pointer to the next word as the direct object of the sentence
- “I am the ‘connector’ throughout the Tanakh”

Verse 2: “to-hoo va-vo-hoo”

8414 תְּהוֹ [*tohuw /to·hoo/*] n m. From an unused root meaning to lie waste; TWOT 2494a; GK 9332; 20 occurrences; AV translates as “vain” four times, “vanity” four times, “confusion” three times, “without form” twice, “wilderness” twice, “nought” twice, “nothing” once, “empty place” once, and “waste” once. **1** formlessness, confusion, unreality, emptiness. 1A formlessness (of primeval earth). 1A1 nothingness, empty space. 1B that which is empty or unreal (of idols) (fig). 1C wasteland, wilderness (of solitary places). 1D place of chaos. 1E vanity.

922 בְּהוּ [*bohuw /bo·hoo/*] n m. From an unused root (meaning to be empty); TWOT 205a; GK 983; Three occurrences; AV translates as “void” twice, and “emptiness” once. **1** emptiness, void, waste.]

-also in Jeremiah [Jer 4:23 –

23. Ra•ee•ti et•ha•a•retz ve•hi•ne•to•hoo va•vo•hoo ve•el•ha•sha•ma•yim ve•eyn o•ram.

23. I looked on the earth, and, behold, it was waste, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light.]

-Ecclesiastes (vanity) – vaporous

[Ecc 1:1; 1:14; 2:1; 2:15; 3:19; 4:4; 4:16; 8 more times -- The word used for vanity is Strong's 1892:

1892 הֶבֶל [*hebel, or (rarely, abs.), habel /heh·bel/*] n m. From 1891; TWOT 463a; GK 2039; 73 occurrences; AV translates as “vanity” 61 times, “vain” 11 times, and “altogether” once. ****1 vapour, breath. 1A breath, vapour.**** 1B vanity (fig.) adv. **2** vainly. ****Emphasis mine.****]

The order of the physical world is a reflection of God's order in the moral world

- Just as I am subject to the physical world, so am I subject to God's moral universe
- If I am disobedient to Him, the natural consequence of my disobedience will take over (just as in the physical world)

God brings order to the universe!

The Hebrew concept of sin is not separated from its consequence; a sin entails its consequence!

- Flip side: I cannot separate the acts of righteousness from righteousness
- Cannot have grace without works: grace IS works demonstrated

Ruach = wind, breath, spirit

Church order Corinthians [1 Cor 14:26-40]

<<Skip's commentary regarding Isaiah 45:7>>

See No Evil

Thursday, August 04th, 2011 | Author: [Skip Moen](#)

*The One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating **calamity**; I am the LORD who does all these.* Isaiah 45:7 NASB

Calamity – If God is sovereign, then why is there evil? How can a good God allow evil in the world?

If you've never struggled with these questions, perhaps you haven't read Job. The existence of evil is one of the fundamental conundrums of theological thought. Lots and lots of material has been written about this problem. Many people have struggled with this reality in their lives. It just doesn't seem to make any sense. If God really is all-powerful and all good, why is there evil?

Typical theological answers focus attention on the Fall, suggesting that human disobedience is the cause of all this (it's kind of like global warming – it's all our fault). But a careful reading of Genesis indicates that the *yetzer ha-ra* was designed *into* the human fabric. It was there *before* the Fall. And who created that? The answer has to be "God." So the Fall doesn't really solve the problem, does it? It only pushed the problem deeper into the unknown.

Maybe the real issue is a category mistake. Maybe we are reading the Scriptures as if they were written for Western minds. Maybe that's the reason that the NASB, NIV, ESV, NKJV and RSV all use circumlocutions for the Hebrew word *ra*, usually translated "evil." Our *theology* prevents us from using this usual translation. Instead, we alter the

verse so that God creates “calamity,” or “woe,” or “disaster,” or some other less reprehensible occurrence. All of this linguistic effort is motivated by our unwillingness to attribute “evil” to God. (You can see how much twisting is involved by [following this on-line discussion](#)). This is a result of seeing evil as an attribute with independent identification and definition. In other words, we think of evil as some thing (or some deprivation, if you’re following Aquinas) that is *applied* to the character of God. It’s as if we have a concept of what is evil (like a list of evil actions and events) and then we are forced to attach those to God, describing God’s character as evil. We can’t have that, so we alter the verse to fit our theology. But this kind of metaphysics is totally foreign to the ancient world of Israel.

The ancient Semitic view does not ascribe “good” to God. “Good” is not a separate category of qualities that are attached to the character of God. In ancient Hebraic thought, whatever God does is good because *good is defined by what God does*. God does not have moral qualities called “good.” God *is* good since God Himself is the standard that determines goodness. There is no outside code of conduct applied to God to see if He measures up. Good is defined by what God does. Therefore, when Isaiah speaks God’s words and says, “creating *ra*,” this also is part of the standard of God’s goodness. God cannot do what is morally reprehensible because what God does is, by definition, good – no matter what it appears to be from a human perspective.

The next time you experience disaster, calamity, woe or catastrophe, ask yourself if your *evaluation* of the experience is based on a biblical standard or on a theological concept. You just might be surprised how Greek your thinking really is. If *all* that God does is good, then who are we to decide what fits and what doesn’t fit? Who are we to question God’s goodness because it doesn’t seem right *to us*?