

Beginnings are important

Our main series on Sunday mornings this term will be on Genesis 1-3. 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' (Genesis 1.1) Beginnings are important. Intuitively, we know that. There is nothing more frustrating than turning on the TV or computer to watch your favourite drama series and finding you have missed the first fifteen minutes. If you are pretty sharp, you may begin to pick-up the gist of the plot line, but you can never be absolutely sure that your understanding is correct, because you've missed the beginning. Or think of a conversation. Drop in on a conversation half way through and there is a danger that you miss the point of what's being said, because you don't know how the conversation begun. Beginnings are important. Many of the idioms or expressions we use in everyday conversation reflect the importance of beginnings: 'Getting off to a good start', 'Beginning well' and so on. Beginnings are important. When it comes to the beginning of the world, and the beginning of humanity, it really does matter. In his book entitled *In the Beginning* Henri Blocher writes: 'Curiosity about our beginnings continues to haunt the human race...there is an insatiable curiosity about beginnings...The human race quite rightly feels that it cannot find its bearings for life today without having light shed on its origins.' (p.15)

Beginnings give us bearings

Beginnings are important because they give us bearings.

Bearings for understanding God and the Bible. Genesis 1-3 give us bearings for understanding God and the Bible. For example, we will see that the God who created all things is a speaking God. Who God is and what He says are inextricably linked. Martin Luther described the opening of Genesis as 'certainly the foundation of the whole of Scripture.' Without understanding God's revelation in these opening chapters of his Word, we cannot understand his revelation in his Word as a whole. The sixty-six books of the Bible make sense only in light of these opening chapters.

Bearings for understanding the world and humanity

These chapters are foundational in understanding the Bible, and therefore, they are fundamental, foundational in making sense of the world in which we live, who we are and why we are here as human beings. We can say they give us a Christian 'world-view'.

Bearings for responding to doubts and questions

For Christians, these early chapters in Genesis will not only confirm and flesh out our Christian worldview, but also help us respond to doubts and questions that are raised in objection to the Christian faith. For example, in our study of Genesis 1 by looking at what Genesis 1 teaches us about God – that He alone is eternal, that He alone is Creator and that He alone is Sovereign – by understanding that, we will understand and respond to other world-views (what we might term 'secular' world-views).