

# OpenTheo

## 8th Commandment (Part 2)



### Ten Commandments - Steve Gregg

In this thought-provoking discussion, Steve Gregg delves into the concept of debt and stealing in the context of the 8th commandment. He emphasizes the importance of paying back debts and cautions against the sin of greed and covetousness. Gregg also explores the origins of the Pentateuch, arguing for its Mosaic authorship and highlighting the significance of its creation story in the context of differing opinions on evolution. He ultimately calls for a contentment with simple living and a trust in God's provision.

### Transcript

Another way to steal is to not pay back debts. That is, to borrow and not to pay back. Also in Romans 13, where we were reading a moment ago, Romans 13 in verse 8 says, Oh no man anything but to love one another, for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

Now there's some question as to whether this verse forbids all borrowing. Oh no man anything seems to mean don't go into debt. If it does mean that, then that implicates a lot of us, because a lot of our lifestyles are in the red.

And most Americans have learned to live beyond their means because of debt, because of credit, and have been able to owe a great deal. In fact, many Christians are buying things which they never really intend to be able to pay off. The payments they're making are only paying off the interest on the loan.

It'll be probably beyond their lifetime before they even start paying back the principal. And living in debt is the American way of life. But Paul says, Oh no man anything.

Now, while this might be forbidding all debt, it might not be. And what I mean by that is, it could be argued correctly that you don't owe anything until payment is due. And I think that that is certainly what Paul has in his mind primarily, is when something is due, pay it.

Now for instance, if you buy a house and your payments are, I don't know what they are, in this case, if you got a good deal, my father bought a house 10 years ago which was

worth a lot of money, but wasn't worth much then. And he got a VA loan, and his payments I think are \$150 a month, and the house is worth about \$200,000 now. But he's paying \$150 a month.

But he's in debt, of course, in the sense that he owes money on the house, but in another sense he only owes \$150 a month. At the end of each month, if he hasn't paid that, then he's in debt. But he doesn't owe any more than that, because when your payment comes up due, that's when you have to pay it.

If you don't pay it when it's due, then you're in debt. Now I personally advise, and I always advise Christians to live without debt at all. But I'm not saying that this scripture necessarily commands it.

It may, or it may simply say, pay things when they're due. But it's always wise to live without debt, because when you go into debt, you're boasting about tomorrow. You're assuming that you'll be able to pay.

If you don't pay back, then you're stealing. Therefore, you're boasting about tomorrow. Now what I'm referring to is James chapter 4, where James says, That's verse 13 of James 4. And the next verse says, But now you rejoice in your boastings.

All such rejoicing is evil. Now what he's saying is, if you're boasting in the confident hope that by this time next year, you will have earned X amount of dollars. Therefore, you're going into debt against those future assets.

And you're saying, well, it's okay for me to buy this car, even though I have to go into debt \$15,000 to get it. Because I know that I'll be able to pay that off in the next three years. Because of my pay and the cost of living increases and my benefits that I have a job.

Hey, you don't even know if you're going to live tomorrow. What is your life? It's but a vapor. You should say, if the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.

You don't say, I'm going to go into such a city, continue there a year, buy and sell, get gain. You don't know what's going to happen tomorrow. And when you go into debt, you always take the chance that you may die with that debt unpaid.

In other words, you will die a thief. Now, you might say, well, God certainly won't hold me accountable for not being able to pay a debt because I died. I didn't plan to die, did I? No, you didn't plan to die.

But it was your own volition that got you into debt, even though you knew there was a possibility you could die. And if you die, of course, your debt would be unpaid. Therefore, you would die a thief.

You would die owing money to someone that you were unable to pay. The Bible says, the wicked man borroweth and does not repay. That's in Psalm 37:21.

The wicked man borroweth and does not repay. If you go into debt, you're gambling on the possibility of dying as a thief. I'm not saying you go to hell if you die as a thief, though it certainly isn't a very comfortable way to stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Say, when you died, you had unrepentant of thefts, namely, borrowing things that you hadn't paid back. I always advise Christians not to go into debt at all. There's never any reason to be in debt, only greed, really, because God will provide for you.

Now, if that sounds simplistic, then it's only because you haven't had a chance to live by faith yet, or you haven't taken that opportunity. I've been living by faith for a number of years, for the most part. Occasionally, I'll take a job and have a regular income, but a lot of times I just live by faith.

But the point is, I don't have to go into debt. The reason is, if God doesn't provide money for me to live in a house, I can live in a trailer. If he doesn't provide money for me to live in a trailer, I can live in my car.

If he doesn't provide money for me to live in a car, I can live under a bush. But I never have to go into debt. And the fact is, God has always provided for me enough to live much more comfortably than I would have even required or demanded.

I've always been living in more luxury than I even would have chosen, because the Lord's always been that gracious. I eat better than I need to, and I have more things than I need, and God is always providing, and anyone who trusts in God will find him to be so. But only greed would make you move into debt to possess something that you can't afford.

Now, it's a different story if you've come to Christ and you have a lot of outstanding debts, and you can't get them paid off all at once, and the payments are ridiculous, and if you go out and get a bank loan to consolidate all your debts into one payment, I wouldn't call that a violation of this principle, because you're already in debt. You're just trying to find some responsible way to pay off your debts according to the means that you have. But the point is, if you have a choice of going into debt or not, I'd advise against it, because if you do go into debt, and if you don't pay it, suppose you lose your job, suppose the economy collapses, suppose you die, and your family's unable to pay off your debt for you, then you become what the Bible calls a wicked person who borrows and doesn't repay.

Better not to borrow than to borrow and not repay. Now, I realize that a lot of people run businesses. A lot of you either have in the past or do now run businesses, and it's almost

impossible to run a business without going into debt.

And I don't have any worry of condemnation. As I said, I don't say that Christians should never, ever go into debt. I just always advise against it.

I'm not saying the Bible says it's a sin, but it is a sin to not pay back your debts. That's stealing. And so make sure that you're very careful.

If you're in a calling that requires that you live in a certain realm of credit with a certain margin of debt at all times, you know, if that's the calling you know God wants you in, then just be very scrupulous and very meticulous and make provision. Of course, a Christian should never borrow money that he doesn't have collateral for. That is, you should never go into debt beyond what your present assets could pay off if necessary.

For instance, if you own a house, you should not go into debt above the value of that house. If you're in debt below the value of that house and you die, actually the house could be sold and your debt could be paid. But if a lot of people go into debt sky high and, you know, extend their credit so far that if some disaster would happen, there'd be no way they could pay it off.

And then, of course, they declare bankruptcy. But to declare bankruptcy is theft also. If bankruptcy is being used to avoid paying off debts, my father-in-law has been bankrupt more than once.

He started many companies. He's done very well sometimes, but he's also had some companies that didn't do well. And he's actually gone bankrupt in the sense that his companies have failed, but he has always refused to file bankruptcy or at least to use that as a means of getting out of debts.

There's one occasion, I don't remember the figures, but one of his endeavors failed and left him with a lot of debts. I forget how many thousands of dollars it was, but it was a lot. And he spent years paying off those debts rather than declaring bankruptcy to avoid doing so because he's a Christian.

And I heard a story recently about a man who lived on beams for 20 years so that he could pay off debts from a business failure before because he didn't want to declare bankruptcy. I mean, it's just an amazing thing that people can go that much in debt, but once they do, they'd better pay them. And declaring bankruptcy is no honest thing, no honest way to get out from under debts.

If you're a Christian business person and if your business goes under, you have to pay your debts anyway. Maybe the court will release you, but God won't because you have taken someone else's goods, which you are responsible for God to give back. One of the dishonest things that are sometimes done in our society is when a person realizes they're going bankrupt, to transfer their property over to their wife or something like that

and then declare bankruptcy so that all their possessions still stay in the family, but they can't be taken by the court.

Again, of course, that's just another form of stealing, another way of defrauding people. So withholding from someone what is their due, as in the nonpayment of debts, that is stealing also. Another way that you steal and that you withhold what is due is by damaging someone's property that you borrowed or that you're renting.

If you're a tenant in a rented house or you're borrowing someone's car or somebody's property of some kind, they deserve to have it given back to them in the condition that they gave it to you in. That's their due. If you give it back to them in any condition less than that, you're withholding what is their due and you're stealing.

If you damage property that you're renting, then you'd better repair it because, as a Christian, we need to avoid all forms of stealing and defrauding. And to abuse that which is borrowed or rented from another person is stealing. Another way that people steal, and this is an interesting one, you wouldn't really relate it to stealing mostly, but the Bible does, is in defrauding one another in terms of marital privileges.

And by that, the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7 is actually talking about sexual privileges, between husband and wife. And again, this has to do with giving what is someone's due. It says in 1 Corinthians 7, verse 2 through 4 or through 5, he says, Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence. Modern translations would say something like that, like give her her marital privileges or her marital rights. And likewise, also the wife to her husband.

The wife has not power over her own body, but her husband does. And likewise, also the husband has not power over his own body, but the wife does. Do not defraud one another.

Except it be by consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves unto fasting and prayer. Then come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. Now, what he's saying here is that married couples owe each other their bodies, really.

Seems like a strange thing for an apostle, a spiritual man to be talking about, but obviously Christianity is very practical. He said that the man's body belongs to his wife. The woman's body belongs to her husband.

And therefore, they should not deprive each other sexually. And he says, if you do deprive your partner sexually, you are defrauding them, or stealing, withholding what is due. And so you can steal things that are not material.

You can steal things besides possessions. You can steal rights from people. You can deprive a person of their rights, and that is defrauding, and therefore it is theft.

If there's any question about any of our activities, maybe some of the things I've mentioned have made you think, uh-oh, you know, maybe something I'm doing is wrong, or maybe it's made you even defensive. I would just like to give a piece of advice that will hold you in good standing with any decision you have to make, and that is do not engage in any activity that you can't with clear conscience ask God's blessing on. There are many business deals that we have opportunity to enter into, the ethicalness of which is sometimes questionable.

But we should always consult our conscience before God, and ask ourselves, if we become engaged in this practice, is it something that we can ask God's blessing on with clean conscience? If so, then it's a good sign. If we can't, then we should shun it, no matter how appealing and tempting the offer may be, because it might get us involved in compromising the area of theft. We should not seek to gain the whole world if it costs us our soul.

And by theft, a person, of course, seeks to gain worldly things, but it is at the cost of his soul, and that's a very grave and serious cost. Now, besides robbing man, it's possible to rob God, and I'd like to very quickly talk to you about what that is. We're told in Malachi chapter 3, in verse 8, that that's what the Jews were doing of Malachi's time.

In Malachi chapter 3, in verse 8, God said, Will a man rob God, yet you have robbed me? Now, how do people rob God? Well, the same way they rob human beings, by taking what belongs to him for themselves. By taking what belongs to him for themselves. In this case, it was in tithes and offerings.

They said, But we say, Wherein have we robbed thee? And he said, In tithes and offerings. That is, under the law, the Jews were expected to pay 10% of their income to God, to give it to the priests in the temple for the service of their religious functions. And if they didn't pay their tithes, they were robbing God because that belonged to God, that 10%.

Now, in our day and age, I'm not sure whether tithing is still binding or not. It's a highly debatable point among Christians. And I don't even care to take a side because I'm on the safe side of tithing.

So, I don't have to worry about whether it's required or not. But the point is, there are some things that belong to God. And there is a tendency among Christians sometimes to deprive God of those things that belong to him.

And therefore, they rob God just as surely as the Jews robbed God when they withheld tithes. And let's talk just a moment about some of the things that are God's that we'd

better not deprive him of. One of those things would be our money.

Tithing is the example given in Malachi. Jesus told a parable in Luke chapter 16 and verse 1. And he said, there was a certain king, let me read this, said also to his disciples, there was a certain rich man which had a steward. And the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

Now, as you read the parable, you find that the rich man represents God. And the steward represents the person under God. A steward was one who was entrusted with the care and management of possessions of his master.

Usually, a steward was a slave in the household or a servant. And he was given the entrusting, he was entrusted with the management of certain property of the master, usually to make profit for his master. There would be a steward who was over the kitchen.

And he might have responsibility over all the kitchen matters. He'd have to order the food and see that it was cooked right and all. And that was his stewardship.

There would be another one over the accounts, and another one over the other servants, and another one over the livestock. There would be different stewards. And each of them had certain responsibility to use things that belonged to their master for their master's interest.

Now, Jesus describes us as stewards of God. And he mentions here there was a steward, a rich man who had a steward, that had been wasting his master's goods. And in this parable, it's a picture of people who've been bad stewards with the responsibility that God's given them.

All of that which we have belongs to God. Did you know that? In 1 Corinthians chapter 6, it says, You have been bought with a price, and you are not your own. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

The blood of Jesus Christ is the price that God paid for us, and he bought us. We've been bought with a price. You are not your own.

Therefore, you don't have the decisions about how you use your time or your money or your life. God owns those things, and if you take from him his right to control those things, you are stealing. You're robbing God.

When we think of money, again, the Jews were robbing God when they didn't pay their tithes. Jesus said, Whosoever he be among you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. To be a Christian does not necessarily, in my opinion, obligate us to pay 10%.

It obligates us to give God 100%. Jesus said, If you don't forsake all that you have, you can't be a disciple. Now, that doesn't mean that you have to give away all your possessions necessarily, or that you can't own anything, or you can't have anything.

What it means is whatever you do have is not yours. It's God's. You have forsaken it.

It belongs to him. You are only now a steward of property that is not yours. It belongs to God.

And any waste of that is something for which you will have to give an account. A steward who wasted his master's goods was a thief, because he was taking what was his master's and depriving his master of the rightful benefit of it. And using it for himself, it was injustice.

And God owns you. He owns your body. He owns your soul.

He owns all your money. And he owns all your time. All these things are a stewardship that has been granted to you.

If you're a Christian, they belong to God. But you use them. But you're supposed to be using them for him.

If you use your time in wasteful ways, you're wasting your master's goods. If you could be doing something constructive that's along the lines of what God has told you to do with your time, like, for instance, pray without ceasing, or how about preach the gospel to every creature? There's still a few who haven't heard that. Or in any other thing, if you know that there are things that God would have you do that are not finished being done, and yet you are wasting your time doing something else that God would not necessarily have you do, you're wasting your master's goods.

You're being a poor steward. You're being an unjust steward. You're being a wasteful steward, or in a word, you're a thief.

You're taking time that isn't yours, but is God's. And you're using it for your purposes instead of his. The same is true of your money.

Your money does not belong to you. If you're a Christian. But God doesn't lay any claim on the money that non-Christians have.

He only lays claim on the money that Christians have. All your possessions are supposed to be his. That's why he has the right to tell you if he wants to, to sell all that you have and give to the poor.

That's what he told the rich young ruler to do. That's what he told his disciples to do. He doesn't tell everyone to do that, but he has the right to because all your things are his.



And he can tell you, here's what I want you to do with them. Sell them all. Or he can say, keep them, but use them for me.

At any rate, they're his. And if you treat them like they're yours and use them for ways that do not advance God's interest, but only advance your own, that is theft. There's not a prettier name for it.

It's theft. It's robbing God, and there's not any nicer way to put it. The same is true of abusing your body, which is God's.

He purchased it. If you use your body with pleasures in ways that damage it and make it less productive for God, that's theft also. You're robbing God.

He deserves your best energy. He deserves your best use of your body, of your time, and of your money. And if you use them in ways that are not profitable to him, that is theft.

You also owe God obedience. When we disobey God, we're robbing him of what's rightfully his. That is our obedience.

We owe it to him to do what he said. When we knowingly violate his commands, we're actually robbing him of his due because he has the right to command obedience from us and to expect it. It's also possible to rob God of his glory.

In Isaiah chapter 42 and verse 8, God says, I will not give my glory to another. God won't share his glory with others. He alone gets all the glory.

There are times when God's ministers and God's people seek to take some of the glory for themselves. This is especially true of ministers, but it can be done by Christians who are not ministers also, somehow taking the credit for things that are done by God. There's a case in Jeremiah where God talks about how he's bringing the Babylonian armies in against Judah.

And he says that they think they're doing it in their own power, and they're boasting about their victories, but they don't realize that God is the one who's giving them the victory. He says it's like an axe boasting against the one who's using it, or a saw boasting about how it's cutting wood, when really it's the arm of the man using the saw that gets the glory. And many times we as Christians will take the glory or the credit for things that really God deserves the glory for.

And we can be thefts of his glory also. Thieves, I should say. And there's one other sense that I know of in the Bible that speaks of God being robbed.

That's found in John chapter 10. In the words of Jesus, Jesus said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climeth up some other way, the same as a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of

the sheep.

To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name, and he leadeth them out. Now what's being discussed here is that in Palestine, the sheepfolds would have the sheep of several different shepherds. And they would all put their sheep in there at night, then they'd come and get their sheep out in the daytime.

If a person was a valid shepherd, and he owned some of those sheep, he could come right to the door of the sheepfold and call his sheep, and his sheep would come out. But if a guy was climbing over the wall, it was evident that he didn't own any of those sheep. If he owned the sheep, he could get them in the valid, honest, normal, legal way.

But the fact that he was climbing over the wall meant he was planning to steal someone's sheep. Now in the body of Christ, the Bible says there are shepherds, pastors, teachers, elders, spiritual leaders of various kinds. And they are supposed to be shepherding God's flock.

But there are those who often seek to steal God's sheep. There are pastors who want to make disciples after themselves. The Apostle Paul said to the elders of the church in Ephesus in Acts chapter 20, he said, there's going to be grievous wolves that will come among you in sheep's clothing.

He says, even among yourselves shall men arise, drawing disciples after themselves. When a minister draws disciples after himself instead of after Jesus, that man is a thief and a robber. He's climbing over the wall.

He's not coming through the shepherd. Jesus is the door. A person has to come through the door.

But a person who seeks to make the sheep his own instead of Jesus' sheep is a thief and a robber and is robbing God. Now, there's several things the Bible says you have to do if you're a thief to get it right. First of all, you have to repent, just like any old sin.

Any sin has to be repented of before it'll be cleared. If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1.9 But besides repentance, there are some sins for which restitution has to be made.

By that, I mean making it right. Now, some sins, restitution can't be made. For instance, if you murder someone, there's nothing you can do to right that.

You can repent, but there's nothing you can do to change the fact that you've murdered someone. You can't bring them back to life. If you commit adultery, you can repent, but you can't undefile that woman.

You've done it, and there's no way you can change it. But there are certain sins that can be changed, like theft. And we saw in the Old Testament, if a man stole, he not only had to restore the principle of the thing, he had to restore 20% if he were to voluntarily bring it back, or if he was caught, maybe 400 or 500%.

That was restitution, making it right. We know that this carries into the New Testament, because in Luke 19, Jesus visited the house of Zacchaeus. And Zacchaeus, after visiting with Jesus, said, I'm going to bestow half of my property on the poor.

And he said, and if I've wronged any man, I'm going to repay him fourfold. Meaning, he was thinking of the law of Moses, about how a robber has to repay fourfold. And Jesus said, today salvation has come to this house.

Because this man had true repentance, which was evidenced by the fact that he was willing to make restitution. If you've stolen something, and you say, well, I repent. But you still keep the thing you stole.

You haven't repented. Because repentance requires restitution. I have a friend who was a professional burglar before he was a Christian.

He was a busy burglar, too. He robbed a lot of houses. He used to tell me the things he did.

It was abhorrent to hear the wasteful ways that he went into people's houses and destroyed their goods. And he took some priceless heirlooms from people. And some of them were worthless to him, so he threw them in a lake and stuff.

It just was an awful lifestyle he lived. Very dishonest. He was a thief.

After he got saved, he repented of his sins, and he realized that he had to make restitution. So he got a job working at a gas station. He lived with his mother for a full year, and he gave all the money he earned to the people that he had robbed.

He tried to draw up an account, as responsibly as he could, of the things that he had robbed. And he went back to every person that he'd robbed, told them that he'd robbed them, told them how much he had taken, and repaid them all, every penny. Now, that's repentance.

That's what thieves have to do. On our radio program recently, we were talking about repentance, and I mentioned restitution there. And a man called me at home, who had heard the radio program.

And he said, you know, several years ago, I embezzled, I forget how much money he said. I think it was something like \$10,000. What was it? \$7,000? \$7,000 from his employer.

And it had never been discovered. And he said, I was listening to your message about repentance, and you talked about restitution. He said, do I have to give that back? I said, you sure do.

I said, do you have the money? He says, yes, I have it. I said, well, you've got to send it back. So he said, well, that's all I wanted to know.

And he did. Praise God for that. But that's what's required.

Some sins cannot be made right again after they've been done. But theft is one thing that can be. And therefore, it is required that it be.

If you've stolen, you not only have to repent, you have to make restitution. All right? Then another thing the Bible says you have to do is to engage in honest labor. Usually people steal because they don't want to work.

And one of the antidotes to a thieving habit is to get a good job or an honest job. I don't mean a good paying job necessarily, an honest job. If you're washing dishes at a restaurant, making minimum wage, it's honest work.

And if you're doing that to pay off your responsibilities, then that's good. That's honest employment. That's what you should do.

In 2 Thessalonians 3.12, 2 Thessalonians 3.12, it says, Now them that are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ that with quietness they work and eat their own bread. He's talking about people who weren't working. He says, I command that they should work and eat their own bread.

It's in the same chapter. He said that if any man will not work, neither should he eat. In verse 10.

OK, in Ephesians chapter 4. There's instruction to thieves. Or former thieves. Ephesians 4.28 says, Now, if you used to be a thief.

Or if you still are a thief. And you want to please God with your life. I can tell you what he wants you to do.

First of all, steal no more. Go and sin no more. That's the first step.

Secondly, labor. Working with your hands. So that you might have to give to others who are in need.

Because God wants nothing less than a total transformation of your character. He doesn't only want to get you to stop thieving, even though you're still a thief in your heart. He doesn't want you to just restrain your hands from taking what isn't yours.

Even though you still lust after all those things. What he wants you to do is become a different kind of person. If you are a thief, you're the kind of person who is always on the take.

Always on the receiving end. He says, I want you to turn around completely. Become a hard worker.

Labor with your hands. So that you'll have to give to those who are in need. In other words, your life has been a parasitic kind of life before.

I want you to become a host to other parasites. I want you to become the one who gives to those who have need. That is therapeutic.

That is the way a thief puts on the new man. And becomes a transformed character. It's not enough just to stop stealing.

But now you need to work. You need to work hard. And you need to not only pay off your debts and make restitution.

You need to give to those who have need. This will be an antidote to covetousness. And it will be the cure for thievery.

And it will be a transformed personality. Christians are not supposed to be on the taking side. They're supposed to be on the giving side.

Just like Jesus was. So we need to give. In 1 Timothy 6, verses 17 and 18.

1 Timothy 6, 17 and 18. Paul says, charge those who are rich in this world to be not high-minded. Neither trust in uncertain riches.

But, he says, trusting in the living God. And he says that they should be willing to distribute. Rich in good works.

Freely communicating or sharing with others. He said, those who have riches need to fight against covetousness. Thieves need to fight against covetousness too.

And that's done by giving. Give to those who have need. That changes your character.

It releases your heart from the grasping covetousness that holds you. And it's that that leads to theft of any kind. Another thing that the Bible tells us to do.

Which is a good guard against theft. And a good against covetousness. Is in 1 Timothy chapter 6. And that is, be temperate in your lifestyle.

That means self-controlled and have a simpler lifestyle. The more complex your lifestyle. The more you extend your credit.

The more you extend your lifestyle beyond your means. The more you'll be covetous. The more you'll be a slave to your financial situation.

The more you'll be like agar. Thinking about stealing. And therefore keep a moderate lifestyle.

It says in 1 Timothy 6 verses 8 and 9. And having food and clothing let us therewith be content. Now that's a simple lifestyle. He said if we have only food and clothing.

With that much we should be content to have no more. Now I can't think of a simpler lifestyle than that. Now that doesn't mean you shouldn't have anything more than food and clothing.

But he's saying that if that's all you have. You should be content with it. Because he says those that want to be rich.

Verse 9. Fall into temptation and a snare. And into many hurtful and foolish lusts. Which drown men in destruction and perdition.

If you desire to be rich. Which is what most Americans are inclined to do. They want to be richer.

They want to increase themselves socially and economically. You want that? You're courting temptation. And it's the kind of temptation that drowns men's souls.

In perdition and destruction and damnation. If you want that. Then escalate your lifestyle.

If you don't want that. Then simplify your lifestyle. You can trim off the fat.

Your neighbors won't respect you as much perhaps. Because you won't have as new a car as they have. You won't be able to buy a new car every year.

If you're going to use your money in a way that glorifies God. But you'll be. But you'll have all you need.

God will see to that. And when you become content with. To the point where you're content with nothing more than food and clothing.

Which is what the Bible commands us to be. Content with such things. Then you are content.

You're not ever going to become a thief. That's for sure. Because you'll always have more than those things which you even require.

I'm content having only food and clothing. That's why I never have to worry about being a thief. Because I'll always have at least food and clothing.

Because those are necessities. And Jesus said that God clothes the flowers of the field. And he'll more clothe you.

He feeds the birds of the air. And how much more will he feed you? I'll never lack food and clothing. Because God always provides at least that.

And I have found historically. He's always provided more than that. So not only will I not be discontent.

I'll always feel like I'm blessed more than I deserve. And that's a pretty safe way to be. As long as you feel that way, you'll never be inclined to steal.

But as long as you feel like you need to have more than you're caught. And you need to break loose. And you do that partly by becoming industrious.

Laboring with your hands. Giving to those who have need. And simplifying your own lifestyle.

Being more temperate in your own life. Eating less luxuriously. Living less luxuriously.

The final thing to do about theft and about covetousness in your life is to remember Christ. Remember Jesus. His lifestyle.

Because that's what we're supposed to imitate. In 1 John 2.6 it says, He that saith he abideth in him, let him walk even as he also walk. 1 John 2.6. We need to walk the way Jesus walked.

It says in 2 Corinthians 8.9. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he were rich. Meaning when he was in heaven he was rich.

Yet for your sakes he became poor. That ye through his poverty might be made rich. Meaning spiritually rich.

So you can see that to meditate on the lifestyle of Jesus. And to say well that's what I'm supposed to be like. It will really help you to break free from the upward spiral of complexity.

That the spirit of our age seems to be driving us to complexify our lives. To extend our credit. To escalate our lifestyle.

Those things are not biblical patterns. Jesus never did any of those things. Nor would he if he lived today.

He lived a very simple lifestyle. Trusting God like the birds of the air. It's not that he didn't work.

He worked as a carpenter for 30 years. Or close to it. The rest of the time he worked as a

preacher.

It's not that he didn't work. But it's that he didn't worry. And he didn't covet.

And he lived a very simple lifestyle. He said on one occasion birds of the air have nests and foxes of the earth have holes. But the son of man has nowhere to lay his head.

But he wasn't complaining. He was just stating the facts. And so we need to meditate on the lifestyle of Jesus.

If you want to be free from temptation. Or I should say from the power of covetousness. Or from the power of righteousness.

And from the theft that results from it. If you want to be clean in the matter of this commandment. Thou shalt not steal.

All the little infractions of this commandment are equally bad in God's eyes. Because they are breaking of his holy law. And if you offend in one point you offend in all the Bible says.

Well then you need to be engaged in honest work. Giving to the needs of those who are poor. Being more temperate in your own lifestyle.

And meditating frequently on the lifestyle of Jesus. Because he's the model. The pattern after which we're supposed to be modeled.

All right. So much for that commandment. We have only two left to cover.

In the next two weeks I expect we'll be able to do so. It's not early. So I'm going to.

What I'm going to do as we've done the last few weeks. Is dismiss the meeting officially. But we're going to stay and worship those who want to.

If you're not in a big rush to get home. There's still a blessing to be had. In the presence of God tonight.

If you are in a rush to go home don't feel bad about it. We realize it's not early and some of you have a long way to go. So feel free if you will to leave.

But feel free also to stay. Because we like to worship the Lord a little while more. Usually.

Well we don't usually go all that late. Begins by describing the birth of Moses. And his activity in bringing the people out of Egypt.

And in receiving the law. Leviticus has more to do with his giving of the law. Numbers is the story of how he led the people through the wilderness for 40 years.



And Deuteronomy is the record of his last discourses that he made to the people before he died. And it ends with his death. So the lifetime of Moses is the main theme of the Pentateuch.

And as far as the book of Genesis which all takes place before his birth. We don't know how Moses wrote that. That is we don't know how he knew about the creation and Adam and Eve and all that.

But there's good reason to believe. Well he could have either just received it by divine inspiration. That's certainly a possibility.

But there's also the possibility that he had access to records that were given to him by Abraham and others. Now if you say well that sounds like you're not saying it's inspired. The fact that a man had other records to use doesn't mean he wasn't writing inspired truth.

As you read Matthew chapter 1. Where you get the genealogy of Jesus. We certainly know Matthew got the genealogy out of the records somewhere in Jerusalem. And the fact that he had previous records about that doesn't mean he wasn't writing an inspired gospel.

He simply is making use of the information that he knows to be true that's available. And it's very possible that Adam told the story of everything from Genesis 2 on. To his son Seth.

Now because these people lived hundreds and hundreds of years in these days. Seth happened to still be alive in the days of Methuselah. Which was seven generations later.

Now Seth lived 900 and some odd years. And Methuselah lived 900 and 69. So Methuselah could have gotten the straight story.

Actually he could have gotten it from Adam because Adam was still alive during the days of Methuselah too. They lived that long. So Adam could have told the story to Methuselah.

Methuselah was still alive in the days of Noah and his sons. He could have told the story to Shem. I'm sure he did.

I'm sure the family passed the story on down all the time. And then Shem was still alive in the days of Abraham. And at least by the days of Abraham we know there was writing.

And Abraham was able to write it down. So that the story was not passed down hundreds of times necessarily. We could have gotten it right from the horse's mouth up to this point.

And then it would be passed down one more time to this point to Shem. And then one

more time to here when it came to be written down. Then when Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees.

Probably he would have brought the family records with him and all this information. It would have gone with his family. And when they went into Egypt it would go with them there.

And when Moses sat down to compose the writings that cover that period. He would have the family records there in front of him and he'd write it out. Now when we say that Moses wrote the Pentateuch.

We don't necessarily mean that he sat down and wrote it out word by word. In fact his name is used in the third person there. It says Moses did this or that and the other thing.

And it's not necessary for us to assume that he sat down at the table with the parchment and wrote it out. But what it means is that he is the substantial author behind the thing. There might have been people who wrote for him.

Just like Jesus is the author of the Sermon on the Mount. But he didn't write it down. Someone else did.

Matthew did and Luke did. And that doesn't mean Jesus isn't the author. Jesus is responsible for the material but someone else wrote it down.

The laws of Hammurabi were certainly of his authorship. But he didn't write them down. He probably had a scribe write them down.

The point is that there will be things in the Pentateuch. That maybe they're not the exact words Moses wrote down. Maybe he didn't write them down at all.

Maybe he had someone else write them for him. Maybe he dictated or maybe someone was just taking, like Joshua could have been taking notes on the history of the period. And while Moses is the main subject of the whole Pentateuch, we therefore can rightly call them the books of Moses.

The words that Moses spoke to the people and everything like that are the main body of the Pentateuch. Now Jesus spoke of the Pentateuch as something that Moses had written. Of course that doesn't mean he had to have written it down.

We know that we say that Paul wrote the book of Romans or whatever. That doesn't mean that he never used someone as a scribe. In fact, Peter specifically tells us in 1 Peter that he used another man, Silas or Silvanus, to write down his letter for him.

And yet we know it's the epistle of Peter. So to suggest that someone else did the actual writing doesn't mean that we can't say that it was written by the author. Jesus on several occasions spoke of things that were in the Pentateuch and he attributed it to Moses.

So no matter what the modern critics say, we can accept the fact that Moses wrote it. For example, in Matthew chapter 8, if you'd like to turn there, Matthew 8 and verse 4. Jesus saith unto him, Now he's referring to something that was commanded in the Pentateuch and he says this is what Moses commanded. So he recognized that it was of Mosaic origin, that Moses was the author of those commands.

In Mark chapter 7 and verse 10, Jesus says, He quotes one of the Ten Commandments. And he says Moses said that. So again, the authorship of the Pentateuch points to Moses.

Now the reason we emphasize this is because the critics are saying, The Pentateuch was not written in Moses' time, it was written way up in this time here. In these days. Or even up here, after the return from Babylon.

And that for all this period, there was no written record. There were just traditions, various traditions. And some believe there were four main traditions that were circulating here.

And sometime in this period, some editor got a hold of all of them and wrote them down. They were oral traditions and just wrote them down. And that's where the Pentateuch came from.

Now if that's true, of course, then there's not very much historically accurate information in there. Probably. It's mainly legends and so forth.

But if Moses wrote it, So we want to believe that Moses wrote it, and we do believe it, and Jesus believed it. And Jesus ought to know, because he was there, though he wasn't born on earth yet, he was certainly alive. Look at Mark chapter 10, verses 4 and 5. So again, Jesus acknowledges that the Pentateuch was written by Moses.

There was no dispute among the Jews about that, and Jesus seemed to agree with him. Look at John chapter 5, verse 45. To the end of the chapter.

Jesus said, That's an awesome statement. If you don't believe what Moses wrote, how will you believe Jesus? Because he wrote about Jesus. One other passage in John I want to look at.

Chapter 7. John 7, 19. Yet none of you keep the law. Why go ye about to kill me? But he says, In other words, he's saying Moses did give you the law.

So we can see that Jesus believed in the Mosaic authorship. It's very fashionable. There's what's called the documentary hypothesis these days.

And that's the theory, that these four traditions were just floating around in oral form for centuries, and finally were written down in the days of the post-exilic period, as they call it. And that's where the Pentateuch came from. But the Bible says, and Jesus confirms,

that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch.

Now, it doesn't come right out and say that he wrote all of it. But there's every reason to believe that he wrote all of it. He certainly was qualified to.

The Bible says he was trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, which would include reading and writing. And we know of at least one case in Deuteronomy, in chapter 20, or I forget what chapter, 31 I think it is, where Moses wrote a song, wrote out a song. So we know that he wrote history, he wrote law, he wrote songs, poetry.

He was a very versatile writer. And there's no reason to believe that there's any part of the Pentateuch that he didn't write. We have specific portions of it that Jesus said Moses wrote.

We have other portions of it that Exodus and Deuteronomy say that Moses wrote. So we don't have any good reason to exclude the idea that Moses wrote the whole thing, even as the Jews and Christians have always believed throughout history. All right? Now let's talk about the book of Genesis in particular, okay? Okay, if I take this down.

Okay. The book of Genesis, I think, is the most fascinating book in the Old Testament. Though the rest has a lot to commend it.

I really like the Old Testament. And Genesis is very fascinating. Genesis is valuable to us for many reasons.

One of the main reasons is because it's the book of beginnings, which is what its name means. The name Genesis means beginnings. And the Hebrew name of the book... See, Genesis is from the Greek word for beginnings, but the Hebrew name of the book actually is the first three words, in the beginning.

And so the first book of the Pentateuch is about beginnings. And we find a lot of things begun there. The beginning of the universe.

The beginning of mankind. The beginning of evil. You have the beginning of the Jewish race.

And you have many other beginnings that we'll mention. If we didn't have the book of Genesis, but we only had the book of Exodus and the books that follow, we would be left in perplexity about many things in history. We wouldn't know where we came from.

We certainly wouldn't know where the Jews came from. We would start with Exodus chapter 1, and we'd find thousands and thousands of Jewish people living as slaves in Egypt. But we wouldn't know where they came from.

We wouldn't know how they got there. We would have no idea who this God was, who seemed to be on their side, and we wouldn't know why He was on their side. We

wouldn't know any of those things.

It would be like we're walking into a movie, in the middle of a movie, when it's got a very complex plot, and you just can't pick up the rest of it, just from picking up there. The book of Genesis is very essential. In fact, it may be the most essential book in the Old Testament.

It is really woven into the fabric of the New Testament. The New Testament quotes the book of Genesis over 60 times, in 17 of the 27 books. That is, 17 of the 27 New Testament books quote from Genesis, and a total number of 60 quotations or more.

So, you can see that the whole ideas of Genesis are interwoven with the ideas of the New Testament, because the quotations from Genesis are used to confirm New Testament thoughts. Furthermore, Jesus Himself confirmed many of the stories of Genesis. He confirmed the fact that there was an Adam and Eve.

In Matthew 19, when they asked Him about divorce, He said, didn't you hear that in the beginning, God made them male and female, and for this reason shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. That's a quotation from Genesis 2.24, talking about Adam and Eve. Jesus said Adam and Eve existed, essentially.

We also have Jesus making reference to Noah. He said, as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man. In Matthew 24 and Luke 17, He made those statements.

He made reference to Abraham. He said, Abraham, your father rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it. And He made a frequent reference to Abraham, especially in John chapter 8. John chapter 8 has many references that Jesus made to Abraham.

That's one of the Genesis characters. He also made reference to Lot, who was Abraham's nephew. And the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, which Lot figures in prominently.

Jesus said, as it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man. That again is in Matthew 24 and Luke 17. Jesus also made reference to... Let's see, what else is in Genesis? He made reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Jesus said in Matthew 21, no, Matthew 22, when He's talking to the Sadducees, He says, didn't God say, I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? And so Jesus was confirming the fact that God was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That those were three men who really lived. In other words, the historicity of the book of Genesis is confirmed point by point by the Lord Jesus Himself.

Now, it's fascinating to find that many Christians, and I mean real Christians, not phony ones, have come to be under the sway of modern criticism and to feel that the first 11

chapters of Genesis especially are fictitious. That they are not intended as history. Now, of course, the first 11 chapters of Genesis covers the creation and the flood and the Tower of Babel.

Then in chapter 12 you have the story of Abraham. And most Christians are willing to believe that Abraham really lived and those things happened. But many have their doubts about those first 11 chapters.

Why do they have those doubts? Well, it just seems amazing. The creation story doesn't seem to fit the evolutionary theory. The idea of a flood covering the whole world is pretty astounding.

It just doesn't... Many people want to see it as myth. And if you go to Germany, for instance, where I've been several times and I have Christian friends there who are otherwise good conservative Christian people, they don't believe in Adam and Eve. Now, I'm not saying you'll never find a German Christian who does, but in general, even the charismatic fundamentalist type Christians, many of them don't believe that Adam and Eve ever lived.

They don't believe in those stories of the first 11 chapters. They believe those were not written to be history. Those were written instead just to tell us lessons and things like that.

But it's interesting that they're willing to say that when it's written as history. If you look at chapter 5 and chapter 10, which are both in that section, they are just genealogies. Chapter 5 is a very technical genealogy showing how history developed from Adam to Noah.

The 10 generations from Adam to Noah. It documents, it doesn't only give a list of names, it tells the period of time that they lived, how old they were when their children were born, how long they lived after that point. It's treated like history.

It's not treated like a myth. Chapter 10 is the same way. Documents the 10 generations from Noah to Abraham.

It does the same thing with all that detail. Certainly it's not written as though it's supposed to be a myth. And if we reject the first 11 chapters of Genesis, which Jesus recognized as mosaic.

I mean, Jesus recognized that there was an Adam and Eve. He recognized that there was a flood. So those are the two major events of that section.

And Jesus recognized them both as historical. He also recognized that Moses wrote both those sections. And he said, if you don't believe Moses' words, how will you believe my words? So if a person doesn't believe the first 11 chapters of Genesis, how are they

going to believe any other thing that the Bible purports? Especially when Jesus confirmed it.

If you can't receive his testimony, whose can you receive? Now, if we didn't have those first 11 chapters of Genesis, there'd be some unanswered questions for us. Quite a few, in fact. One of them would be, why do we die? Where did we come from? Of course, creation is described there.

The reason there's death in the world is described there. The reason there's evil in the world. Why is there evil in the world? The only reason we know the answer to that is because we have the first 11 chapters of Genesis.

Without them, we'd have no idea. Why do we wear clothes? Well, why do we? Now, it's cold enough here that we'd probably wear clothes, whether we had to or not, but... What right do we have to tell people that they shouldn't be nudists? Or there's something wrong with that? There's something immodest about that? Is that just something that our culture has taught us? And if so, where did it derive it? Or is there something more universal about that? Is there something real about that? Well, the first 11 chapters of Genesis tell us about that. Why we wear clothes.

Why are there four seasons? We get that information in the book of Genesis also, in chapter 9. We have a lot of beginnings in Genesis. And without those beginnings, as I said, we'd feel pretty disoriented about a lot of the things in our understanding about the ways of God and just about our own origins. After all, if we didn't have that book, how would we guess that evil came into the world? Most of us like goodness instead of evil.

So why is it that man isn't just good? Well, the Bible tells us, but no one else does. And so we can't dispose with the book of Genesis. And we can't dispose with those first 11 chapters.

They are historical. They have the authority of Moses behind them. They have the confirmation and seal of approval of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And they are fascinating besides. And so I'd like for us, if we have the time now, to get actually into the creation accounts. We have, I'd say we have enough time to do that.

And we're going to spend this session and tomorrow morning, our first session on the creation accounts. I don't know if you noticed I said accounts, plural. The first two chapters of Genesis have two different accounts of the creation, but they are not in conflict.

They are supplementary. People who like to say that the Bible is full of contradictions usually start right there. They say, look at this.

You've got one account of creation in chapter one. You've got a different kind of an

account of creation in chapter two. In chapter one, it seems like man was made last, but in chapter two, it seems like he was made first and everything else was made around him.

And we're going to read both those chapters. We'll make some comments, but we especially want to read those chapters so that you'll get a grasp of what those chapters are saying. I just want to give you this information in advance.

The purpose of Genesis chapter one is to give you a broad overview of what God did in seven successive days, starting from the creation of the universe down to the creation of the earth and then of life on the earth and finally with man. In Genesis chapter one, we have the chronological order of those seven days of what God did. The second chapter of Genesis tells the creation story with less detail and with less of a panorama of the whole week.

It focuses on the sixth day of that week and it talks about God creating man and it talks about how man was really what God had in mind in creation. That's what he wanted. He was working toward that goal to have a man and that everything else in creation centers around man, though it nowhere says they were created after man was created, yet the wording makes it very clear that man is the focus.

So what we have is a broad panorama in Genesis chapter one of the whole creative week and in chapter two, we have a zoom-up, close-up of the sixth day where we see man's creation again and that's where we get the details about the creation of woman. Actually, Genesis chapter one just tells us that God made male and female on the sixth day. Genesis two actually goes into detail about how he made the man then made the woman and gives the detail about that.

So let's look together right now at Genesis chapter one. Today, I want to just go through these, make a few significant points about these chapters and then I'm going to go deeper into them tomorrow. All right.

In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth and the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters and God said, let there be light and there was light and God saw the light, that it was good and God divided the light from the darkness and God called the light day and the darkness he called night and the evening and the morning were the first day. Now, we have the end of the first day here. At some point in time, God created the heavens and the earth, meaning by the heavens, he means the universe and the earth also as part of the universe.

It was the first day that he created light. Now, this light was not from the solar system yet. It wasn't from the stars or from the sun because they weren't yet brought into being.



This light was the glory of God himself. The sun and the moon and the stars appear on the fourth day but for three days, God's been active before he even made those things which topples our whole idea that all life is dependent on the sun. Life is not dependent on the sun.

Life is dependent on God. In the new heavens and the new earth, the book of Revelation tells us there will be no sun there and no moon and no stars but the glory of God will be the light of that place. And so it was in the creation, before the creation of the sun, moon and stars, God's light itself was sufficient to keep the planet alive.

And so he made light first. Then he separated the light from darkness. We'll talk about the spiritual significance of that tomorrow.

And then he gave special names to the period of light and period of darkness. The period of light was day. The period of darkness was night.

Now the word day in the scripture is used three different ways. It's the Hebrew word yom, Y-O-M. You might have heard of Yom Kippur, a Jewish festival.

It's the day of atonement. Yom means day. And yom can be used in various ways.

One way is as a 24-hour day. That's the way we commonly use it. But it can also mean the period of daylight of a day.

In other words, about 12 hours. Jesus said in one place, are there not 12 hours in a day? Meaning the period of daylight. And in this place we see that it means the period of daylight.

The light he called day, the darkness he called night. Now some people have asked, aren't there other ways the word day can mean? After all, we have six days of creation here. Couldn't that be six billion years or six million years? Doesn't the Bible say a day to the Lord is as a thousand years? Maybe these weren't actual 24-hour days.

Maybe they were ages long. And usually people say that because they're trying to accommodate the scientists who have said that the earth is very old and that evolution took place. And so if you've got ages long for each day, you maybe have enough time for evolution to happen.

But if you've just got 24-hour days, there's no hope. No hope for evolutionists. Well, it is true that the word day in Hebrew can refer to a period longer than a 24-hour day.

In the prophets, sometimes we have them saying, in that day the Lord will do this or that or the other thing. And what he's talking about doing is what God's doing through the whole New Testament period. He calls it that day.

And certainly there are times when the word day can mean a longer period of time. But

the question we have to ask, what does the word day mean here when it says the first day? Here we've already had the word day appear twice. And it has two different meanings already.

First it says the daylight time, the light time he called day. So we know that he's talking about the light period of the solar day is called day. But then he says the evening and morning were the first day.

Apparently speaking of a period of 24 hours where there was a time of light and a time of dark. Now if the earth was spinning at the same speed that it's spinning right now, which we don't have any reason to believe it wasn't, maybe it wasn't, but we don't know. Let's assume that it was.

Then that period of evening and morning would take about the same period of time that it does now. Therefore we would see this day as a 24 hour day. And there's not any reason to make it longer.

Especially since the word is used in the plural in Exodus chapter 20 and verse 11. Where it says in six days the Lord God made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them. The word yamim, the plural of yom, is used there.

Now in Hebrew, I'm sorry, in Hebrew language, the word yamim, which is the plural, is never used of anything other than a 24 hour day. In other words, when you talk about day, singular, you could mean daylight, or you could mean 24 hours, or you could mean an extended period of time, which is called the day of God's vengeance or the day of His wrath or something like that. Could be years long.

But when you use the word day as plural in Hebrew, you're talking about 24 hour days every time. And in Exodus chapter 20 it says in six days, plural, God made the heavens and the earth. This pretty much excludes what is called the day-age theory, which tries to make Genesis chapter 1 take millions of years by having each day a long period of time.

We have no need for it. If we believed in evolution, we would need long times. But we don't believe evolution is confirmable.

We don't believe there's any reason to believe in an earth that's old as the evolutionists say it is. And I'm not saying that naively. I've done quite a bit of study on it.

I'm certainly not an expert, but we don't need any help from the evolutionists to interpret our Old Testament. There's every reason to believe that this creative activity was done in six 24 hour days. God can do it in that period of time.

He'd have no reason to stretch it out over billions of years when it's obvious that His desire was to get man on the stage as soon as possible. And He just set the stage in a

few days, adding new things so that the earth would be ready for man. But if God took billions of years, during which time certain species were evolving and dying off, and some were evolving in that direction, some in another direction, some of them hit dead ends and died off, others went on and reproduced, and it's just a whole bunch of mess going on for billions of years, and finally man sneaks onto the stage through a back door.

It sort of covers up the whole purpose of the creation. The purpose of the creation was to get something in God's image, to make a man in His image. And everything He did for those five days before that was simply to set the stage for man, to make sure that man would have food when he got here, that there'd be warmth when he got here, that there'd be an atmosphere he could live in.

Those are the things that are done on the first five days. All right, now let's go on here to the second day. And God said, let there be a firmament, or that means an expanse or a vault, in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so, and God called the firmament heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

Now, the firmament simply refers to the atmosphere of the earth. And apparently when God made the heavens and the earth, all the water and all the moisture that was associated with the earth was on the earth. But now He made an atmosphere where there'd be moisture suspended in the air, as it is now.

We know there's a lot of moisture in this room. If we had a dehumidifier, we could probably get a glass of water out of the air here in a few hours' time. And they say that trees, a big tree will put water back into the atmosphere at the rate of several gallons a day.

And so there's a lot of water in the atmosphere. To say nothing of the clouds which are suspended above it. Now, this water above the firmament, there's a separation made between the waters below and the waters above.

The firmament is our atmosphere. The waters below the firmament is easy to interpret. The oceans, the lakes, and so forth.

Of course, dry land hadn't appeared yet, so it's just the oceans. But the water above the firmament, we're not sure what's referred to here. It may be that it's referring to the clouds, as we have now.

Or, I think what's more likely, is this is making reference to a canopy of water that surrounded the atmosphere. And this canopy, as it is theorized, would have been not necessarily very thick. Some scientists say it could have been as thin as 10 feet thick, all the way around the earth.

And it would shield the earth from the harmful radiating effects of the sun, which cause us to age these days. Now, every seven years, your body replaces all its cells. So, it seems like every seven years, you should be new and young again.

But instead, after the first three periods of seven years, you start getting old. And you wonder why. You know, if I've got all new cells since seven years ago, why am I aging now? Why am I decaying? The reason is partly, of course, part of it may be nutrition and other things, but part of it is also the fact that there is harmful radiation bombarding this planet from the sun and from other sources in space constantly.

It goes through the buildings. We're not talking about infrared right now. Well, we might be even.

But the point is, there's all kinds of radiation that goes through, and it decays our bodies. And it is suggested that if this water above the firmament was a canopy of water around the earth, it would shield the earth from a certain percentage of these radiating and aging factors, which would make people live longer. It explains a few interesting things because before the flood, the Bible says that people lived about 900 and some odd years generally.

After the flood, the lifespan went down to under 500 years usually. And shortly thereafter, it was down to 70, which it is today for the most part. So, the flood seems to be a turning point in the lifespans of people.

Now, the Bible says at the time of the flood that the windows of heaven were opened and the fountains of the great deep were broken up. And many have believed that there was this canopy of water over the earth that broke at that time. God caused it to collapse in on the earth at the time of the flood.

And that's where the extra water came from that was needed to cover the mountains and all that. Now, that explains some other interesting things. The rainbow appeared for the first time after the flood.

Now, the rainbow is just the natural, is caused by water vapor in the air, and especially in clouds. But if there was no rainbow before the flood, that might indicate there were no clouds and no water vapor in the air before the flood. At least not much.

And it says in Genesis chapter 2 that at a certain time before the flood, we don't know for how long this prevailed, it says it had not rained on the earth, but a mist came up from the ground and watered the earth. So, that seems to speak of a period of time when there wasn't the regular processes of precipitation we have now. There wasn't the rainy, there weren't clouds and rain and that kind of thing.

Instead, people have said, the scientists have said, that if there was such a canopy around the earth, it would distribute the sun's heat equally around the earth and

produce what they call sort of a greenhouse effect. So, the whole earth would be like a tropical garden. And so, that's some of the theories about it.

And it would also have something interesting to say about the dinosaurs. People often wonder, what do Christians say about the dinosaurs? Well, we say they were created by God in the first week of creation. We're not sure where they went, but there's a lot of different animals besides dinosaurs that have become extinct even in modern history, and we know the dinosaurs are at least among them.

But one thing we do suspect about dinosaurs is they were almost certainly reptiles that has been challenged in modern times by some scientists, but it's almost always been believed they were giant reptiles. And reptiles, unlike birds and mammals, grow for as long as they live. A mammal, which scientists tell us we're mammals, but we're not, we're people.

We were separately created from the mammals, but we have some of the same characteristics as mammals. We have hair and warm blood and things like that. But the mammals and the birds and human beings reach a certain adult size and they grow no more, so that if they live 900 years, they'll still be the same size they were when they were 25 years old.

But a reptile grows for as long as it lives. Now, we might be happy that animals like crocodiles and snakes, which are reptiles, don't live forever because they grow very large because they keep growing. And they never reach a final size until they die.

Now, if the conditions on the earth, perhaps because of the waters above the firmament, shielded the earth from a certain amount of the decay and influences of the sun and other things, so that human beings lived 13 times as long then as they do now, then it would follow, if that were the case, that all other animals would live about 13 times as long for the same reasons. And if that's true, then all the animals except the reptiles would reach about the same size they do now, but the reptiles of that period would be gigantic. And that could possibly explain why there were dinosaurs.

Now, dinosaurs are mentioned in the Bible, apparently, in the book of Job. Job, chapter 40, I believe, is where you'll find reference to Behemoth and Leviathan. And if you read the descriptions of those animals, it seems like Job, who was the earliest writer of the Bible, he lived before the time of Moses and possibly right after the flood.

Job lived in a time where dinosaurs were still known, still remembered at least. Maybe they were still alive. They could have died in the flood.

Of course, Noah would have taken some of them on the ark, but maybe not enough to keep the population thriving. I'm sure he'd take young ones. And shortly after the flood, they'd be a pest to farmers and such, coming and eating all the cattle and all that.

And one brontosaurus coming in and eating the whole field. So I'm sure they would kill them off as fast as they could, as they were pesty beasts after the flood, and that could explain their extinction. But we don't know.

These are theories, but the point is, the Bible does say that God had waters above the firmament. The clouds that we have today are not exactly above the firmament. They're suspended in the firmament.

So this may be a reference to a canopy of water. If you have questions, please hold them till afterwards so that we don't have to interrupt the tape if that's all right. Okay, let's go on to the third day.

Verse 9, And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear. And it was so. Interesting, the waters were called together into one place, as though there was only one huge ocean and one body of land.

This could possibly shed light on the continental drift concept, that the continents were at one time possibly all one continent, and that over the centuries they've drifted apart, and possibly the flood also would have sped that process up as great movements of land and the continents of the great deep being broken up and volcanic activity and other things might have caused tremendous changes in the geography of the earth. But at least there's reference to the waters being gathered together into one place, and dry land appearing. And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering together of the waters called he seas.

And God saw that it was good, and God said, Let the earth bring forth grass and herb yielding seed, and fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth. And it was so. And the earth brought forth grass and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself after his kind.

And God saw that it was good. Now, in the evening and morning were the third day. So the third day dry land appears and vegetation.

The fourth day we go back out into the solar system, and God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years. And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth.

And it was so. And God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, being the sun, the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also.

And God set them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

This is in conflict with the theories of modern science, in that the sun and the moon and the stars are said to have appeared after the creation of the earth. When I was in the second grade, I was already quite familiar with this account. And we had a film strip describing the alleged beginning of the universe through evolutionary theories.

And in the film strip, they said that the earth started this way, that the sun was as it is now, a big ball of burning gases. And then it began to throw off some of its mass and swirling, flaming balls of gases went out around it and began to circle around the sun because the gravitational pull of the sun would just keep them in an orbit. And as they began to cool down, the gases turned into liquid.

And as they cooled down even further, they turned into solids. And they became the planets. And one of these planets was earth.

And as I saw that film strip, I puzzled over it. I went back and I told my teacher after recess, I said, those people who made that film strip must not have remembered. The Bible says, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

And then later he created the sun and the moon and the stars. I was so puzzled because I thought everyone was Christians. My parents and grandparents were all Christians.

I thought the adults were all Christians. And so I didn't realize there were adults who were stupid enough not to believe in the Bible. So I assume they had just forgotten what the Bible said.

I was so puzzled by that. And you can see that science wouldn't agree about this. In fact, it says that the sun, the moon and the stars were made to give light on the earth.

Now, people would say, well, that sounds so geocentric and anthropocentric. That sounds very proud, like as though we're the center of the universe. The Bible doesn't say we're the center of the universe in the sense that everything goes around the earth.

The Bible doesn't say anything like that. But it does say that spiritually speaking, as far as God's activity is concerned, the earth is definitely the stage upon which he wanted the redemptive story to be played. The creation of man was a unique event in the universe.

Someone says, well, how can you believe we're the only life on any planet? Aren't there billions of planets out there that probably have life? Why did God make those billions of planets? Let me tell you something. We have no reason to believe that he made billions of planets. We know of billions of stars, and we know why he made those, to give light on the earth.

But we have never spotted a planet near any of them. Of course, we don't have telescopes strong enough to. The nearest star is, whatever, 5 billion light years away or

something like that.

I mean, it's quite a distance. And we have not, there has never been spotted, nor is there any proof that any of the other stars have planets. I know your studies in science have always said, oh, every star is a sun and has its own solar system.

Well, we don't know that. That's a guess that scientists make. They assume it because they assume that this solar system started in the way that I described a minute ago.

And that if this sun did that, probably the other suns did that. That's how they work it out. The scientists are only aware, for sure, of nine planets.

And that's the nine planets of our solar system. Now, we know that none of them are habitable, with the possible exception of a couple that could be habitable by strange forms of life. But for the most part, we are not talking about a universe full of billions of planets, but only one of them having life.

We're talking about a universe having maybe nine or ten planets. And the reasons for the others, we're not quite sure. Maybe they were partly for some of the same reasons the stars were, to help give life.

That's what the moon does. But, or it reflects light. So, at any rate, we know that the stars were made for the earth.

It says he made them to give light on the earth. Now, some people have said, well, the earth is certainly at least five billion years old, because the light of the stars, that are five billion light years away, already reaches us. And if God made the stars, and they're five billion light years away, that means it would take five billion years for the light to get here.

And if we can see it, that means the light already got here. So, the earth must have been here, or the stars at least, must have been here for the five billion years. Well, if you don't believe in the creation account, I guess you can go for that kind of argument.

But if you believe the first verse of the Bible, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, that's a pretty radical statement. And if you can believe that, you can believe anything else the Bible says, including the fact that God made the stars to give light on the earth. And such a God as who could do that, could easily make the stars, with their train of light already reaching the earth, even if they are five billion light years away.

It wouldn't necessarily take five billion years for that light to get here. And besides that, there's an Australian scientist, whose works I became familiar with last time I was there, no, the first time I was there. And he has been doing research on the speed of light, or on the degeneration of the speed of light.



And he says that light is traveling slower than it used to. And he says he can prove it. And he's got documents from several centuries where people measure the speed of light and such.

And it's not as though it's erratic, but he sees an actual curve, how the speed of light has been slowing down on a consistent basis over the past several centuries. It now travels at 186,000 miles per second, but before our time, it's apparently traveled much faster. And if that's the case, who knows how much faster.

But if it was, if it traveled much faster, of course, then the light from the stars wouldn't take anywhere near as long as they take now to get here. But even if they did, even if it still took five billion years, God could have easily made that light already reaching the earth, since his intention in making them was to give light on the earth. To suggest that he was so stupid as to make stars to give light on the earth, but he forgot that the light's not going to get there for five billion years, is to have a different God than the God described in the Bible.

He's not stupid. All right, let's go a little further here. Verse 20, And God said, let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life and the fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

And God created great whales and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind. And every winged fowl after his kind, and God saw that it was good and God blessed them, saying, be fruitful and multiply, fill the waters in the seas and let the fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

Now we'll read the first part of the sixth day before we comment. And God said, let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping things and the beast of the earth after his kind. And it was so.

And God made the beast of the earth after his kind and cattle after their kind and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind. And God saw that it was good. And God said, oh, that's before we get into that.

Let's talk about the fifth day and the first part of the sixth day. The fifth day he made sea creatures and birds. The sixth day he made the land animals.

Now, this is not in the same order that evolution says things happened. Of course, evolutionists would agree that life appeared in the sea first, but they would not agree that birds were here before the land animals. In fact, evolution teaches that out of the fish came amphibians and then came reptiles.

And from the reptiles came birds and mammals. And so the birds would not appear until after the land animals had. But here we have the birds and the fish appearing first and

then the land animals.

Now, I won't talk about at this point why I think it happened in that order. But it's simply I'm simply saying that you cannot coincide Genesis one with evolution, as many Christians have sought to do. All right.

Let's go on. And God said, let us make man in our image and after our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over the cattle and over all the earth, over all the creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them.

The details of that are given in the next chapter. And God blessed them and God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air and over every living creature, every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, behold, I have given you every herb, berry and seed, which is upon the face of all the earth and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed to you.

It may be it shall be for meat and every beast of the earth and every fowl of the air and to everything that the creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life. I have given every green herb for me. And it was so.

And God saw everything that he had made and behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Now he made man.

He said, let's make man in our image. And the purpose of making man was to give man dominion. Now we'll talk more about this as we continue through the Bible about what this dominion was all about.

The idea is that God wanted to extend his dominion to new realms. And he wanted to rule through an obedient humanity. That was God's purpose.

He made man so that man could rule under God. And Adam is actually called the son of God in in Luke, chapter three. If you look at the genealogy of Jesus, there is a trace of his genealogy back through.

It says, as you go back toward the near the very end of Luke, chapter three, it says, who is the son of Seth, who is the son of Adam, who is the son of God. And God made Adam to be a son. That's why Jesus is the second Adam, because Adam was supposed to do what Jesus ultimately did, not in the sense of die on a cross, but to live a perfect life, to glorify God.

And he failed to do it. Therefore, God had to have another son. But he had this son a different way because, of course, he created Adam.

But Jesus was God's own self being put into human form. We'll talk about that in our life of Christ studies. But the point is, both Adam and Jesus are called the son of God in the Scripture and both were given dominion.

Jesus at his resurrection said, all authority in heaven and earth is given to me. Now, what had happened was that man had been given dominion and had lost it and had suffered under the dominion of the devil ever since. And Jesus came back as a man and took the dominion back.

So that God's original plan could be fulfilled, that there be obedient humanity to whom he could give dominion over the earth. And the Bible says the saints shall judge the world. It says we will reign with him on the earth in Revelation 5.10. So it's very clear that God intends for us to reign with him.

He made man to rule. And I mean man and woman. He made humanity to rule the planet.

And he gave them dominion. And we'll talk more about this in other points of our study. Now, the reference to giving him the herbs and the plants for meat, many times vegetarians use that to suggest that we're not supposed to eat meat, animal meat.

But don't get confused. The word meat simply means food. And he says, I've given you the herbs and the plants for food.

And, of course, man was vegetarian at first. After the flood in Genesis chapter 9, God said that they should eat every animal as well as the plants. So, let's see, that's our time out.

And so they began eating animals. There's reasons why that changed, perhaps. We're not quite sure what they were.

One of the reasons might have been nutritional reasons. Because we know that when plants are grown in soil that doesn't have trace minerals added to it, very often it's inferior food. And before the flood, probably the soil was a lot more rich with trace minerals and such that make the plants grow healthy and nutritious.

After the flood, probably a great deal of those were washed into the sea, which is why the sea is so salty, perhaps. But the point is that the plant life was probably somewhat inferior after the flood because of the inferiority of the soil. And before the flood, man was able to live simply on the plants themselves.

And I suppose people can do it today, some do. Of course, some live on air alone, I guess, from what I'm told. But it's obvious that God's plan is for man to eat all that he's given.

In fact, it says in Paul's writing to Timothy, he said that it's a doctrine of demons to command people to abstain from eating meat which God has prepared for us to eat. So, we're not vegetarians, though Adam and Eve were, but Noah wasn't. And people since Noah apparently have not been including God, because Jesus ate fish and lamb at the Passover.