

# Genesis: The Beginning of the Story

Written on: October 1, 2021

**Article by: Jim Holston**

Genesis is the beginning of the Biblical story that starts with the creation of the heavens and the earth and ends with the vision of a new heaven and earth. Genesis introduces the main characters and main themes of the Biblical drama.

We need Genesis. It sets the stage and provides the fundamental principles for understanding the spiritual history of the universe and our place in it as the people of God. Genesis tells us how the world began, what went wrong, and how God set about making things right again. Genesis gives us the basic themes that define our world and ourselves: God, creation, human beings made in the image of God, male and female, marriage, sin, hope, and covenant.

## How the World Began (Genesis 1–2)

Genesis 1 provides the broad sweep of creation, Genesis 2 the narrow focus on humans and their place in the created order. It all begins with God the all-powerful creator, wise, winsome, caring. God effortlessly speaks the worlds into existence. He is the main character, the chief actor of the entire Biblical narrative.

Genesis 1 is majestic, stylized, almost poetic in its language. On the first three days God forms the light, water, skies, dry land, and vegetation. On the next three days He fills what he has formed with sun, moon, stars, birds, fish, land animals, and humans. There are parallels and symmetry between what is formed and what fills it.

Human beings stand as the pinnacle of creation (1:26–27). They alone are said to be made in the image of God, a fact



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profound in its implications about the nature and significance of humans. Human beings as God's image-bearers are his under-rulers, stewards of creation. They are precious. They stand in contrast to humans in pagan mythology who were created in order to provide food through their sacrifices to the gods.

On the seventh day God rests, he ceases from his work, setting a pattern for humans to work six days and rest on one.

Throughout Genesis 1 we are told that as God went about his creative work, he saw that what he made was "good." When He finished creation he saw that it all was "very good."

Genesis 2 focuses on the creation of men and women. Man was created first and immediately put to work tending the Garden of Eden. Work is seen as a blessing, not a curse. The repeated refrain that what God had created was good is now broken. God sees that it is "not good" for the man to be alone (2:18). God sets about to rectify the situation. He brings the animals to the man to see what he will name them (2:19). Man gives names to all the animals, but none is found who is a suitable helper for the man—his equal (2:20). So God takes a rib from the man and fashions the first woman to be the man's complement. As Susan Foh says, animals are the helpers inferior to man; God is the helper superior to man; woman is the helper equal to man (cf. 2:18-20;

Exodus 18:4; Psalm 10:14; Psalm 118:7). Man was created first and given charge of the garden before the creation of woman. Man's priority in creation indicates his spiritual leadership but not his superiority.

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## How the World Went Wrong (Genesis 3–4)

When Satan, in the guise of a serpent, tempts the humans he comes to the woman first. Satan tempts Eve, and Adam, the spiritual leader, does nothing.

Satan offers the universal and greatest temptation of all—to be one's own god. Eve falls; Adam falls; creation falls. God confronts the couple, coming first to Adam, the failed spiritual leader, and then to Eve. Sin has entered the world and the world is no longer what it was meant to be.

However, in the first dim hope God promises one will come who will crush the serpent's head.

Everything unravels in the world and for the next eight chapters of Genesis we see failure after failure of human beings to get their lives right before God. The sin of Adam and Eve is repeated with increasing velocity. Adam and Eve have two sons—Cain and Abel. Both make an offering to God. Abel in faith gives his best; Cain gives less than his best (4:3–5). God accepts Abel's offering but not Cain's. Cain is angry and kills his brother.

The line of Cain produces Lamech, a violent man. He marries two women, the first example of polygamy in the Bible, a violation of the one-man-one-woman relationship envisioned at creation. Lamech brags to his wives about how tough he is.

Adam and Eve have another son Seth who forms a righteous line, in contrast to the evil line of Cain (4:25-26). At that time people begin to call on the name of the Lord. This gives two hopeful notes in an evil time.

Human society continues to degenerate until God decides to wipe them out and start over. He will start over with Noah, the one righteous man he found, and Noah's family. Noah is faithful and obedient. The world is destroyed in a flood, but Noah and his family are saved in a boat designed by God. After the flood Noah leaves the boat and plants a vineyard, makes wine, gets drunk, and passes out. Noah's son Ham dishonours his drunken father and Noah curses his line. The cycle of evil begins to repeat itself. This section of Genesis ends with the account of the tower of Babel, in which human pride is pitted against God. God wins.

### **How God Sets About Making Things Right Again (Genesis 12–50)**

Now God steps in to make things right. He chooses the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to begin the line through whom Jesus the Messiah will come.



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God calls Abram (later renamed Abraham by God) (12:1–3) to leave his land, people, and extended family. God promises Abraham among other things that all people on earth will be blessed through him.

God's call to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was not based on their goodness, but on God's grace. All three men were deeply flawed. Abraham put his wife into compromising situations in order to save himself and had a son by his wife's maid servant. And yet he was a man of faith to whom God reckoned righteousness before the Law because of his belief (15:6). He grew over time to be courageous, unselfish, and a powerful intercessor. In his final and greatest test, Abraham showed himself willing to surrender his greatest treasure in obedience to God (22:1–18).

Isaac was also flawed, lying to protect himself, showing favouritism to one son over another, and being petty. And yet God's plan moved forward in spite of the failing of his chosen people.

Jacob was perhaps the most flawed of all. He was a conniver and trickster. He took advantage of his brother and deceived his father in order to get ahead. But Jacob grew over time as he struggled with God both figuratively and literally (cf. 32:22–32). Jacob's name was changed by God to Israel and he had twelve sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel, thus setting the stage for the rest of the story of redemption.

## **Conclusion**

The New Testament continually goes back to Genesis for God's original intent. For example, Jesus goes to Genesis 2 for God's original intent for marriage (2:15–25; Matthew 19:4–6). The apostle Paul cites Genesis 2–3 for male spiritual leadership in the church (I Timothy 2:11–15) and in the home (Ephesians 5:28–33).

Most importantly the New Testament writers go back to Genesis for Jesus. We are made in the

image of God and in Christ that image is restored (Genesis 1:27; Colossians 3:9–10). God told Abraham that all nations would be blessed through him (Genesis 12:3). Jesus was the son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1) through whom all nations are blessed (Matthew 28:19–20; Acts 3:25; Galatians 3:6–9). Faith in Christ makes us children of Abraham (Romans 4:1–25; Galatians 3:29)

Houston TX

# Jacob's Journeys: Seeking a Wife and Family, Finding God

Written on: October 1, 2021

**Article by: Paul Birston**

Jacob's grandfather Abraham was concerned about the potential pitfalls of his son Isaac going on the 1,000 km +/- journey to his ancestors' homeland in Paddan-aram to seek a wife. So Abraham sent a servant instead.

When the time came for Isaac's son to seek a wife, Isaac took a totally different approach. He sent Jacob on a solitary journey to Haran, Paddan-aram, to find a wife (Genesis 28:1-7). He sent him with affirmation of God's promises to his grandfather to make him a great nation and with his blessing which Jacob had stolen from his brother Esau.

Jacob's mother's motive for sending him on this journey was quite different. Rebekah told him to flee and seek refuge from Esau's plot to kill him for stealing his birthright and blessing (Genesis 27:41-45). As part of his deception of his father Isaac, Rebekah put Esau's best garments on Jacob (Genesis 27:15). Another garment will come to have a profound impact on Jacob's life later on.

Jacob set out on the first long-distance journey of his life from the family home in Beersheba where his grandfather and grandmother had also lived. Beersheba is at the southern end of the central highlands on the edge of the barren Negev, the south country.

Jacob travelled north uphill along the central highlands, a rugged route. The Mediterranean plains along the ancient well-worn international trade route or the eastern trade route beyond the Jordan Valley could have been easier. This rugged way through Canaan came to be known as the way of the patriarchs, the highlands ridge road, the watershed route.

Something surprising happened along the way that was not on Jacob's initial dual-purpose agenda of fleeing from his brother and finding a wife. At one of his first overnight stops, he lay down on a stone pillow and dreamt of

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the Lord Yahweh standing at the top of a ladder upon which His angels were ascending and descending (Genesis 28:10–22). God identified Himself, “I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give to you and to your descendants.” In addition to the land, God passed on His other promises to Abraham to Jacob:

\* “‘descendants like the dust of the earth’”

\* ‘in your descendants shall all of the families of the earth be blessed’”

\* “‘I am with you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land.’”

Waking up, Jacob

\* took his stone pillow and “set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on its top,”

\* “called the name of that place Bethel’ (house of God),”

\* “made a vow saying, ‘If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey...

and I return to my father’s house in safety, then:

\* the LORD will be my God,

\* this stone.... will be God’s house

\* I will surely give a tenth.’”

So Jacob unexpectedly met God who was waiting for Him. The LORD proactively surprised Jacob by granting him the same promises and covenant of faith He gave his grandfather and father.

Jacob continued. His two initial objectives were met beyond his expectations. He finds refuge with uncle Laban in Haran. Jacob finds two wives. He has 12 sons and a daughter by Rachel and Leah and their maids. He accumulates wealth in patriarchal terms, large flocks and household. God was behind it all. Jacob arrived alone but has become father of a great family. Again, God has been proactive in meeting and surpassing Jacob’s needs through several surprises along the way over the two decades he was in Haran.

Jacob begins his second major journey precisely for one of his first two motives. He must take flight again. This time for fear of his uncle Laban for “Jacob saw the face of Laban, and behold, it was not *friendly* toward him as formerly” (31:2). Following a harrowing encounter with his uncle, they make peace. Jacob sets up another pillar, *Mizpah*, the watchtower, “May the LORD watch between you and me when we are hidden (away) from one another” (31:49).

As “Jacob went on his way, the angel of the LORD met him” (32:1). Jacob has another surprise meeting with one of God’s divine messengers. As he named Bethel, he named this place *Mahanaim*, two companies (32:2), reflecting God’s providential blessing and fulfilment of His promise to multiply Jacob to bless the nations.

Jacob braces himself and prepares to meet Esau by sending his family and gifts ahead of him as peace offerings. They cross the Jabbok gorge, one of four major routes down to the Jordan rift valley and then up to the way of the patriarchs back home.

Alone again for a while as at first, God proactively surprises Jacob again: “A man wrestled with him until daybreak” (32:24). Several important things happen. Jacob perseveres and prevails but the man “touched the socket of his thigh, so the socket of his thigh was dislocated” (32:25). Jacob asked the man for a blessing and got one. He changed Jacob’s name which meant, “one who grabs the heel,” “supplanter,” to Israel, “he who strives with God” (32:28). For the third time, Jacob names the place where he meets God and his messengers, this time, Peniel (face of God; 32:30). “Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Peniel (face of God), and he was limping as he went” (32:31). Jacob was injured, handicapped physically, but transformed spiritually into a strong man of God. His LORD has been faithful. He brought him back to the Promised Land a great company to become a great nation of twelve tribes and He restored his relationship with his brother for the moment.

Two major journeys, one solo, one as a great wealthy company. Three encounters with God. Three new place names. A limping but spiritually transformed man. Seeking a wife and a family and finding God along the way.

Jacob had one more major journey to make that would transform his relationship with God even further. It involved two surprises that would shake Jacob to the depth of his soul.

Jacob favoured Joseph his firstborn of Rachel, the love of his life. The jealousy of Joseph’s brothers over his favoured status and prophetic dreams of his future superiority lead them to throw him into a pit (Genesis 37). When Midianite traders pulled Joseph out of the pit and sold him to Ishmaelites bound for Egypt, Joseph’s brothers assumed he was dead. They devised a scheme to deceive their father using a garment. They dipped Joseph’s many-coloured coat in the blood of a goat as false evidence of Joseph’s assumed death. Providentially, and ironically, Jacob who had deceived his father with a garment, was plunged into twenty-two years of despair by his sons’ deception using Joseph’s garment.

The next major surprise for Jacob was the famine that found Israel’s sons travelling to Egypt for food, discovering Joseph was alive as second in command to Pharaoh, and returning to tell the

good news to their father. They came back to Jacob with a revelation from Joseph of why all this happened: “it was not you who sent me here but God, for God sent me before you to preserve life!” (Genesis 45:5).

As on his former journeys, God is waiting and appears to Jacob again, this time while he was heading south to Egypt at Beersheba from where he had headed north on his long journey to

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Haran: “God spoke to Israel in visions of the night.... I will make you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again” (Genesis 46:2b, 3b, 4a).

Joseph lived 17 years more to bless his sons and grandsons by Joseph. Nevertheless, when Pharaoh asked Jacob about his life, he said his years were few and unpleasant (literally bad, evil), short compared to his fathers (Genesis 47:9). God, however, was working, faithful to His promise. Israel entered Egypt as a family and left a great multitude that became a great nation.

### **Lessons from Jacob and His Journeys**

God is always out front. He’s ahead of us working on His eternal purposes through us if we are willing to engage with Him.

Jacob engaged with God tenaciously and courageously. He persevered. God used each encounter to take Jacob to a deeper level of understanding about who He is and His eternal plans.

Jacob responded. He made special ways of remembering his experiences of God and committed himself to be faithful as God constantly proves Himself faithful.

Walking with God has many surprises. If we are willing to set out with God’s promises and purposes foremost in our minds, the surprises will lead to spiritual growth and blessings for others.

God may take one of His people on a very different route than another.

We may set out with good motives or poor but God can and will correct our course.

We may perceive progress to be slow. We may be discouraged. God is always working. We must trust and wait upon Him for His time. God may surprise us by surpassing our expectations as He did for Jacob.

Jacob was a wounded leader but stronger spiritually. Life is short. Our bodies grow old. Our spirits grow stronger.

Though the coastal plains and popular routes are easier, God’s way can be rugged, like the way of the patriarchs on the ridge road, but it always leads to bigger and better things.

God transforms who we are. Jacob became Israel. Our identities are bound up in God and His people.

We are on a journey. God is out front ahead of us. He wants us engaged in His mission to save life, to bring others into a new covenant relationship with Him and to inherit the awesome promises He gave our inspiring ancestors of faith.

Golden, BC

# Genesis in the New Testament

Written on: October 1, 2021

**Article by: Roy Davison**

Genesis describes the origin of the universe and the early history of mankind. Fundamental facts in Genesis are repeated in the New Testament.

Jesus refers to “the beginning of the creation which God created” (Mark 13:19).

Paul says that God “made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them” (Acts 14:15). “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead” (Romans 1:20).

Luke traces the lineage of Christ back to “Adam, the son of God” (Luke 3:38).

Paul writes that “The first man was of the earth, made of dust” (1 Corinthians 15:47).

Jesus refers to Genesis 1:27 (“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them”) in Matthew 19:4 – “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female’?”

Paul writes: “For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression” (1 Timothy 2:13, 14). “The serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness” (2 Corinthians 11:3). Paul states that “sin entered the world” through Adam “and death through sin” (Romans 5:12, 14).



**The** newspaper dismissed them with three brief words – “The children escaped.” But the newspaper was wrong. They did not escape. Whether grown and out on their own or still young and at home, they all suffered. Not even the four year old grandchild was able to escape the aftermath which drifted across four generations.

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Virginia Morgan Hipwell was born and raised in Scioto County, Ohio. After high school, when a Canadian captured her heart, she moved to southern Ontario. She and husband Don share the family farm with their daughter and her family. Two of their three sons live in Ohio while the middle one resides in Saskatchewan. They have grandchildren in all three locations and great-grandchildren in Ohio. For several years, Virginia served as an associate editor for *Gospel Herald* writing a monthly column titled “Through a Woman’s Eyes”. She has also written numerous poems, a few short stories and lyrics for some Sunday school songs.



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Jesus calls the devil “a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44).

John admonishes Christians to love one another, “not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous” (1 John 3:12).

“By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous” (Hebrews 11:4).

Enoch was “the seventh from Adam” (Jude 14). “By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death” (Hebrews 11:5).

“By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household” (Hebrews 11:7).

“They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:27).

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised” (Hebrews 11:8–11).

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son” (Hebrews 11:17). “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?” (James 2:21).

“Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot the twelve patriarchs” (Acts 7:8).

“And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favour and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house” (Acts 7:9–10).

“Now a famine and great trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. And the second time Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph’s family became known to the Pharaoh. Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to him, seventy-five people. So Jacob went down to Egypt; and he died, he and our fathers. And they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem” (Acts 7:11–16).

“By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones” (Hebrews 11:21, 22).

What Genesis says about the origin of the universe and the early history of mankind is repeated in the New Testament.

Herselt, Belgium

# God Created and All Was Good

Written on: October 1, 2021

**Article by: Thayer Salisbury**

## **Genesis 1:1–2:3**

### **Part 1**

We come to the first chapter of Genesis with our own questions and concerns. This is the wrong. To understand the Bible, we must listen to what God is saying. We should not speculate about what he might say in answer to questions that he never chose to answer.

### **What difference does it make?**

We know that “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” We know that; but perhaps we have not considered the difference it should make in our lives.

There are, of course, other explanations of our existence. We can choose to believe that we emerged from meaningless slime. Some people desire this as it seems to grant freedom. Atheists do not have to concern themselves with answering to God. They can do as they please. They do not fear eternal punishment for their wrongdoings. But they pay for their freedom with pointlessness, purposeless lives.

We should not refuse to uphold the implications of the position we choose to affirm.

If a person chooses to uphold the atheistic position, he has no claim on morality, purpose, or future. If we exist because of random chance, then we are nothing. Nothing done to us can be good or evil, right or wrong. We can claim no rights for ourselves or anyone else. If we exist by chance, we are insignificant; and what happens to us is insignificant. Atheists do not like to admit this.

On the other hand, if we choose to claim the biblical theistic position, then we are not our own. We belong to the God who created us. Nothing we do can be done without reference to him. Every choice we make must be made according to his will. Sadly, many Christians do not like to admit this. Many who claim to believe that God has created them never bother to ask what purpose he had in creating. Many who claim to believe the Genesis account of creation, live as if they created themselves. They live as if they are free to choose without reference to God’s will or purpose for their lives.

### **A way of life**

Christianity should be a way of life. Instead, many have made their faith merely a small part of their life. Such a religion is not Christianity at all. A biblical view of creation demands that all of life be lived in submission to God. Since he is creator of all, the earth belongs to God (Psalm 24). We may hold a title on a portion of it according to the earthly government. But ultimately, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.” Therefore, how we use the earth indicates what we really think of God. Those who misuse the earth show that they do not really love and respect the Lord as creator of the earth.



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The New Testament confirms the view that all of life must be lived with the intention of honouring the Lord. Colossians 3:17 tells us, "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." A little later the apostle adds, "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, <sup>24</sup> knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ" (Col 3:23-24). Again, we are being told that everything we do is to be done in a way that honours God.

### All was good

Not only does Genesis one make our complete dependence on God clear, but it also indicates and emphasises that everything he created was good. He created with purpose. He also created according to a plan.

- According to a plan  
God could have spoken it all into being in a millisecond if he had chosen to do so. But the description

given here is indicating something about how God works and how he wants us to work. The Lord spends three days preparing the habitats, and then three days creating the creatures for each habitat in order.

Certain aspects of the created order were delegated to be governed. The days and seasons are to be "ruled" by the Sun and Moon (15). The earth itself is to be governed by humanity (28).

What implication does this have for us?

We, if we are to be the image of God, ought to function according to plan. When those who claim to believe in the God of the Bible live chaotic, confused lives, they deny by their actions what they claim with their mouths. We are not all going to be equally organised; but Christians ought to be more orderly than non-Christians. Sadly, that is not always the case.

- God's creation was good

That God's creation was good is stated repeatedly (10, 12, 18, 25, 31). It is one of two items clearly emphasised in the chapter. This is not an aesthetic judgement. It is a statement of fitness for its purpose, of proper functionality. Creation originally functioned properly with each part fulfilling its purpose perfectly. Yet, this is not what we experience in life. This perfection was not what the first readers of Genesis would have experienced. They also lived in a broken world, a world where nature was sometimes extremely threatening.

The biblical account of creation is, I think, unique in picturing the world as having an original perfection which is then lost. The implication of this teaching is a matter that the Bible will be unfolding from Genesis three all the way to Revelation 22. This is a major theme of the Bible. Our failure to give it adequate consideration has led to confusion and often to a loss of faith.

When we experience a beautiful day, people credit it to “mother nature.” But if a storm destroys homes the same people call that “an act of God.” Thus, the good in our world is credited to a pagan concept (“mother nature”) while the bad is blamed on God.

The biblical account would lead us to credit God with the good. The source of the evil in our world, the cause of the flaws in nature, is not mentioned here in chapter one. That will come later.

- **Humanity set apart**

According to verses 26-29, God set humanity apart from the rest of creation. All of creation is good, but only humans (male and female) are the image of God.

Many aspects of the image of God have been debated. A couple of things seem clear.

First, we note that God is creative and that humans are also creative. Animals live primarily by instinct. Even the most intelligent of animals are very limited in their ability to work out problems and construct tools for overcoming obstacles. But humans are amazingly creative. From childhood we create. Sadly, even in our evil we are creative.

Second, we note that humans are the only earthly creatures given responsibilities according to this passage. We are to care for the earth as well as use it. Neglect of this responsibility is one of the great failings of humans. Instead of seeing ourselves as stewards of God’s creation, we have called ourselves “consumers.” And, we have seemingly set out to consume what God has created, instead of caring for it, as this passage indicates we should.

### **The blessing of rest**

Certainly, we are not under the Mosaic Law. Galatians, Romans, and Hebrews all make that clear. But we are not really looking at the Mosaic Law in Genesis 2:1-3. We are looking at the creation account. What is described here took place long before Moses. What we learn here about God, and the image of God, is still valid — not in a legalistic sense, but in a very practical way.

It is interesting to see how different people view the idea of a day of rest. In most parts of the Western world, it was once illegal for businesses to be open seven days per week. But that came to be viewed as a restriction on our freedoms, a needless and annoying restriction, a case of religious people interfering in the lives of the irreligious.

Interestingly, when Canada did away with its enforced day of rest it was viewed in the opposite way by at least one editorial writer. An editorial in the London, Ontario, newspaper stated that the law forbidding businesses from opening on Sunday was clearly an issue that involved the separation of church and state. According to the writer, the worship of money had become the national religion; and people were tired of the government interfering in their desire to practice their materialistic religion seven days per week.

It is true that we are not under a restrictive Sabbath law, but we should stop to consider the blessing of rest. Times of rest are beneficial to us.

- A day of rest points to God

By taking appropriate rest we point others to God. He did not need time to recover from his exertions, but he chose to take time to rejoice in what he had made. We too need to pause to rejoice, to savour, to enjoy. We need a sense of accomplishment. We need to rejoice in what God has made, to remind ourselves of whose we are.

- A day of rest blesses others

By appropriate rest we not only honour God, we also bless others. According to the Ten Commandments as given in Deuteronomy consideration for others was a main reason for the Sabbath command (Dt 5:14). Those who work too much are hard on everyone around them, not just on themselves. They tend to overwork their employees, their family, and even their animals.

Of course, Sabbatarians can be hard on everyone around them too. They work too hard at not working. Such was the case with the Pharisees as is recorded in Luke 6:1-2. No normal person would describe plucking a head of grain and putting the grain in your mouth as “work.” But Pharisees were not normal people. They were more interested in the letter of the law than its intent. God intended the Sabbath law as a blessing to humans, but the Pharisees had turned the blessing into a burden.

- A day of rest points to heaven

By taking appropriate rest we point ourselves and others to heaven. Hebrews 4:9-10 tells us, “So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, <sup>10</sup> for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.” This passage is encouraging us to look forward to eternity as a time of continued Sabbath rest. But how can we do that if we have never allowed ourselves times of rest, reflection, and worship here on earth? How, if we feel that we must always be busy, are we resting in God?

Many people today need to be warned that “If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat” (2 Thess 3:10). Yes, many need that warning. But some have gone to the other extreme. Some are constantly working, and constantly demanding that others work. God rested; so should we. God rested; so should his image.

Work hard; but take time to rest and to rejoice in what you have done. Even more, take time to rest, reflect and rejoice in what God has done for you.

Matsapha, Eswatini

(To be continued...)

# Ella Leota Jones (nee Etherington)

Written on: October 12, 2021

**Article by: Gail Baddeley**



Ella was born in Hamilton, Ontario on November 12, 1915 and died in Toronto on January 5, 2021 in her 106<sup>th</sup> year. She will be greatly missed by her son, Don, her four grandchildren (Steven Bout, David Bout, Michelle Frazer and Jennifer Colangelo) and her eight great-grandchildren (Owen, Cabot, Francis, MacKenzie, Cate, Harrison, Giuliana and Luca). She will also be sorely missed by her church family at Bayview Avenue Church of Christ, where Ella was a member for seventy-seven years.

Ella was predeceased by her husband, Jim, who died on June 4, 1988, by her parents, John and Leora Etherington, and by her brother, Reginald Norman Etherington, who died while serving his country, when the Liberator bomber he was in exploded over the Bay of Bengal on December 5, 1944.

Ella and Jim met in 1936 when they both worked at Bell in Hamilton. Six years later they married on December 28, 1942. Ella chose to marry into what was obviously a devoted and

extended Christian family, which put a very high value on Christian education. That spoke volumes about her character and her personal faith. Jim was the son of S.M. Jones, who attended the Nashville Bible School for five years and who subsequently came to Canada in 1897. He was a gospel preacher, starting a Bible School in the Meaford area and also the Beamsville Bible School in 1902, where he served as President and teacher until 1916. Jim's brother, Albert, was one of the founders of Great Lakes Christian College, being part of the Five Member Corporation in 1952 that created the school as a legal entity. He was a member of the initial Board of Directors from 1952 until his death in 1964 and also served as an elder at Fennell Avenue Church of Christ in Hamilton. Jim and Albert's sister, Rosaline, was the Recording Secretary for the Board of Directors of Great Lakes for the first twenty-five years.

After their marriage in 1942 and Jim's transfer by Bell, Ella and Jim frequently travelled from Toronto to visit Ella's widowed mother in Hamilton, attending church with her at Fennell Avenue Church of Christ. Soon after Bayview opened on June 20, 1943, Jim and Ella worshiped there. They were very involved in the life of the church, with Jim serving as a deacon and as treasurer and trustee for many years until his death. Ella exemplified the characteristics of a deacon's wife, cited in 1 Timothy 3:11. She was "worthy of respect, temperate and trustworthy in everything". She was also so much more. As a deacon's wife, she was hospitable, gracious and a Christian woman, who treated everyone with respect. She was also quiet and humble.

Many of Ella's brothers and sisters in Christ at Bayview highlight what a perfect example of faithfulness and steadfastness she was. We recall her unobtrusive distribution of slips of paper to the men, reminding them of their assignments for worship service the next Sunday. This was a task Ella dutifully assumed over many years. Even in her later years she never wanted to miss Bible class and worship service and

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appreciated help with transportation when she was not able to walk to public transit, which she had relied on for so many years. ( She did admit to one sister that she regretted not having her driver's licence! )

Ella was a very kind and gentle soul, who loved and cared deeply for her brothers and sisters in Christ. She looked at each of us with tenderness, always ready with a smile, so she was very approachable. Significant was her genuine interest in each person, recalling details of our lives and eager to hear more about us. Very early in any conversation with Ella, she was known to say, "Enough about me. Tell me about you." Even in her final years when she was unable to attend church services, she wanted to know who had preached the sermon, who was present on Sunday at the building and then at Zoom services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ella was also a source of motherly advice, comfort and encouragement to many. We recall with fondness Ella and Margaret Whitelaw, fussing over Mark Trusler like mother hens, when he was able to attend church services before his death.

In the early years Ella worked at Eaton's, College Street, and at the Don Mills Public Library from 1962 to 1974. She kept up with the times, was well informed ( even about football ) and enjoyed movies. She also loved to go out to lunch after service at the Swiss Chalet and to dinner on other occasions with her son, Don, and other members of the family.

As an independent person, Ella lived in her own home in Don Mills until she was 101, cooking nutritious meals for herself. Eventually she moved to a retirement home with some care available for her final years. She demonstrated her discerning fashion sense and veto power when she needed to rely on others to choose the clothes she would wear to dinner!

Distinguishing herself to us all with her remarkable memory, Ella awed us with her amazing ability to recall people, details and events and to recognize voices over the phone up until her final days.

To conclude, as Ella would have said, "Enough about me." But as a few of us have said, "When we grow up, we want to be just like Ella!" She will always be remembered for her faithfulness to the Lord, for her kindness, and for her love. Ella has a very special place in the hearts of her brothers and sisters at Bayview.

Submitted to the Gospel Herald by Gail Baddeley, October 12, 2021, with thanks to Don Jones, Mary and Brian Boden and many of the brethren at Bayview Avenue Church of Christ



# Haiti Mission Update

Written on: October 1, 2021

Article by: **Jean Volcy**

Greetings everyone,



Let me start by saying that HAITI THANKS YOU!

Haiti, as you already know, has had its share of trouble through the years, and the most recent earthquake of August 14 has made things even worse. But we thank God for friends like you who have helped make the burden a little lighter to carry.



Right after the earthquake hit Haiti's southern peninsula (mostly the departments of South, Nippes, and Grand Anse) several of you reached out enquiring whether Strathmore as usual was going to send some relief to the victims. And when I replied on August 18<sup>th</sup> to confirm that Strathmore was in fact going to send some relief, several have donated. So, on behalf of these victims we want to thank you and to let you know how your contributions have been used to help these folks.

## Relief Arrives

While Strathmore couldn't be there physically this time, there is a congregation in Port-au-Prince that we trust that was able to go onsite and oversee things on our behalf. We've known the leadership





team of the Delmas 28 Church of Christ in Port-au-Prince for decades and they have helped us with relief activities in the past with no issues. So, we wire transferred the funds to the Delmas 28 Church's account which the leaders used accordingly.

Several from the Delmas 28 congregation in Port-au-Prince made several trips to the affected areas in the south to help as

much as they could. They visited affected congregations and helped church members as well as other victims in the communities. They visited places such as: Rousseau, Citron, Lazile, Cayes, Chantales, Chambellan and Jeremie where they distributed non-perishable food like rice, spaghetti, beans, canned food, water, etc., and medical related items.



The team included 2 doctors, 4 nurses, several preachers and other workers. The medical team took care of many free of charge, consulting them, giving medications, walkers for the injured, etc.

Thank you again for caring.

In Christ,  
Jean Volcy