

BEGINNING WITH LOVE

Genesis 1:1-28

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In the beginning... Riches of Glory

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. ³Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day. (Gen.1:1-5)



In the beginning... Riches of Glory

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate 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 expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so.¹⁶ God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also.¹⁷ God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth. (Gen.1:14-17)

Light

Warmth

Beauty

Energy



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- 24.5M° F
 - 1 million earths could fit inside
 - Unfathomable energy...
 - 1 second of sun's energy powers the US for 9 million years

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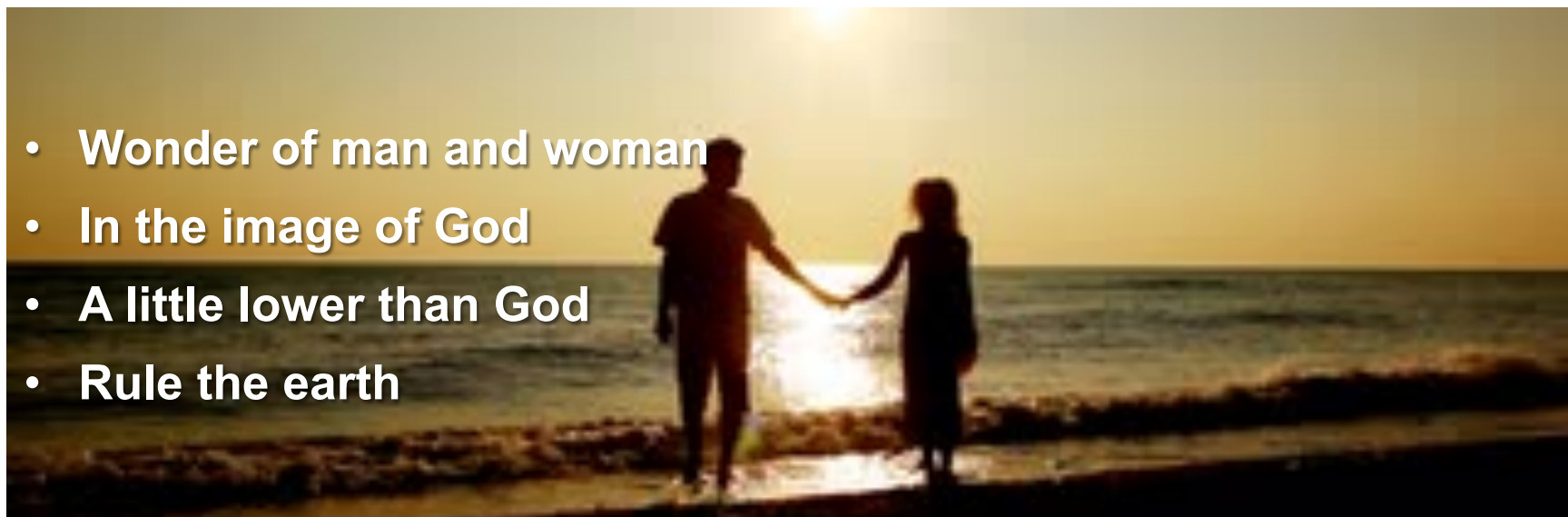
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- Sun is an average star
- 10 trillion galaxies of stars
- 100 octillion stars (100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000)
- Nearest star is Proxima Centauri (4.22 light-years from earth)
- One light-year is 5.9 trillion miles
- Farthest star is about 13.7 billion light-years

In the beginning... Riches of Glory

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over...(everything on earth) ²⁷God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Gen.1:26-28)

- Wonder of man and woman
- In the image of God
- A little lower than God
- Rule the earth



In the beginning... Riches of Glory

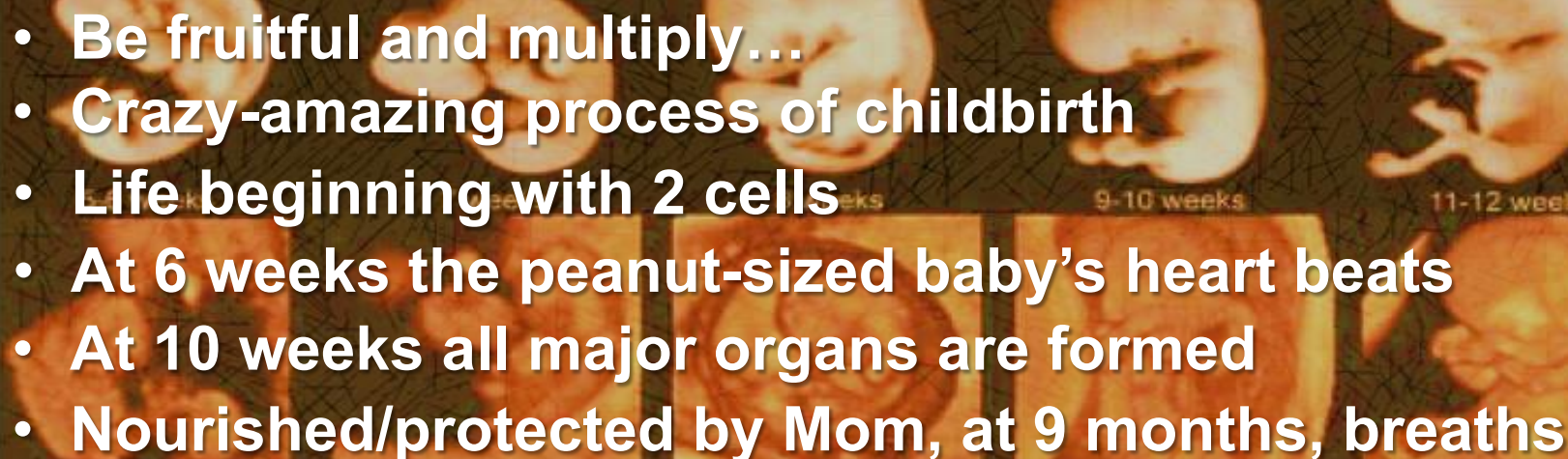
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- 37.2 trillion cells
- 7 octillion atoms
- Brain performs 38 thousand-trillion operations per second
- 60,000 miles of blood vessels
- Blood travels 12,000 miles each day



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- Be fruitful and multiply...
 - Crazy-amazing process of childbirth
 - Life beginning with 2 cells
 - At 6 weeks the peanut-sized baby's heart beats
 - At 10 weeks all major organs are formed
 - Nourished/protected by Mom, at 9 months, breaths
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- In the image of God
- Eternal soul
- Resembling parents
- Part of parents
- Intimate family
- Celebrating the wonder and the blessing



In the beginning... Christ the Creator

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being... ¹⁴And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-3, 14)



...and the Word (the Creator) became flesh and dwelt among us

**By this the love of God
was manifested in us, that
God has sent His only
begotten Son into the
world**

**the love of God
manifested
measured
demonstrated
displayed
proven**

1 John 4:9

Christ the Creator... Love Displayed

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being... ¹⁴And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-3, 14)

- God's initiative was to love
- How big was this act of unconditional love?
- The character of His love for you hasn't changed

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom.5:8)

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- The glory and power of the Creator
- Emptied Himself
- To display the glory of His love for you



Christ the Creator... Love Displayed

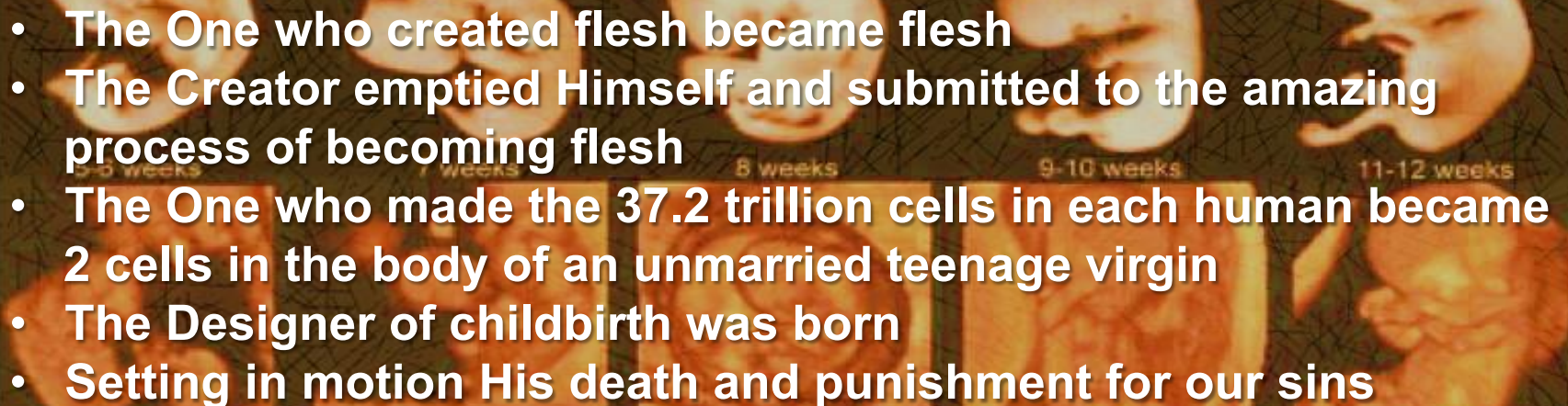
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- The scale of His demonstrated love is more mind-boggling than the enormous scale of the universe He made
- The Creator of the height of the stars and the heavens came to earth to prove the glory and the “height” of His love for you

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. (Ps.103:11)

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- The One who created flesh became flesh
 - The Creator emptied Himself and submitted to the amazing process of becoming flesh
 - The One who made the 37.2 trillion cells in each human became 2 cells in the body of an unmarried teenage virgin
 - The Designer of childbirth was born
 - Setting in motion His death and punishment for our sins

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- He loved us so much, He became fully like us; fully experienced
- The Creator's display of His love for us was intimate/personal
- Mary represents all of us
- Take a moment to fully identify with Mary... the love she felt... the love she experienced
- Get emotionally in touch with what Christ did – for us – with us
- As sure as Christ lived within Mary, His Spirit lives within you

**By this the love of God
was manifested in us, that
God has sent His only
begotten Son into the
world**

**the love of God
manifested
measured
demonstrated
displayed
proven**

**God could have just said,
“I love you.”**

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Love Experience

God could have said, “Consider it done, we’re good.”

- God’s love is not some creed or some concept of love
- God didn’t just say “I love you” and then tell us to understand that love
- He experienced His love for us
 - He really experienced birth, humanity, death, punishment
 - His love is proven in a way that we can understand
 - He physically showed us the glory of His love for us

His love for us is real, powerful, enormous, unconditional, eternal, personal, and proven by the Creator’s experience

- He wants us to experience it every moment of every day

Inspired Prayer to Grasp His Love

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, ¹⁶that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. (Eph.3:14-19)

God wants to answer this inspired prayer!

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- Comprehending the love of Christ is the centerpiece of this intercession

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Our Christmas Prayer

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, ¹⁶that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. (Eph.3:14-19)

- You, “being rooted and grounded” in His proven love for you
 - Settled and established
 - The Creator came so you could be settled in His love at your core
 - This physically happened so you could understand the concrete certainty of His love for you
 - We set our calendars by the certainty of the incarnation of His love so that love can be rooted and grounded in reality for you

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- How do you know something that is “beyond knowledge?”
- As you look at creation, you get an amazing display of the way you’re loved by the Creator who became flesh
 - Breadth: initiative to unconditionally love the helplessly lost
 - Length: from everlasting to everlasting
 - Height: consider the height of the universe as a measure of the size of His love
 - Depth: to the lowest depths of sin, the smallest cell in your flesh, and a hug!

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- Real faith in the love of Christ is core to spiritual/emotional stability
 - Being rooted and grounded in all the dimensions of this love = Real Stability
- All good behaviors follow
 - Responding to the command to love God with all your heart
 - Loving others as we're loved by God (1Cor13-Love)
- The most important issue to have settled for children
 - Pray this prayer for your children... Model real faith in this love this Christmas

God wants to answer this inspired prayer!

Our Christmas Prayer

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever.
Amen. (Eph.3:20-21)

Our God of creation can touch our hearts to know His love



...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us

God can abundantly answer our Christmas prayer!