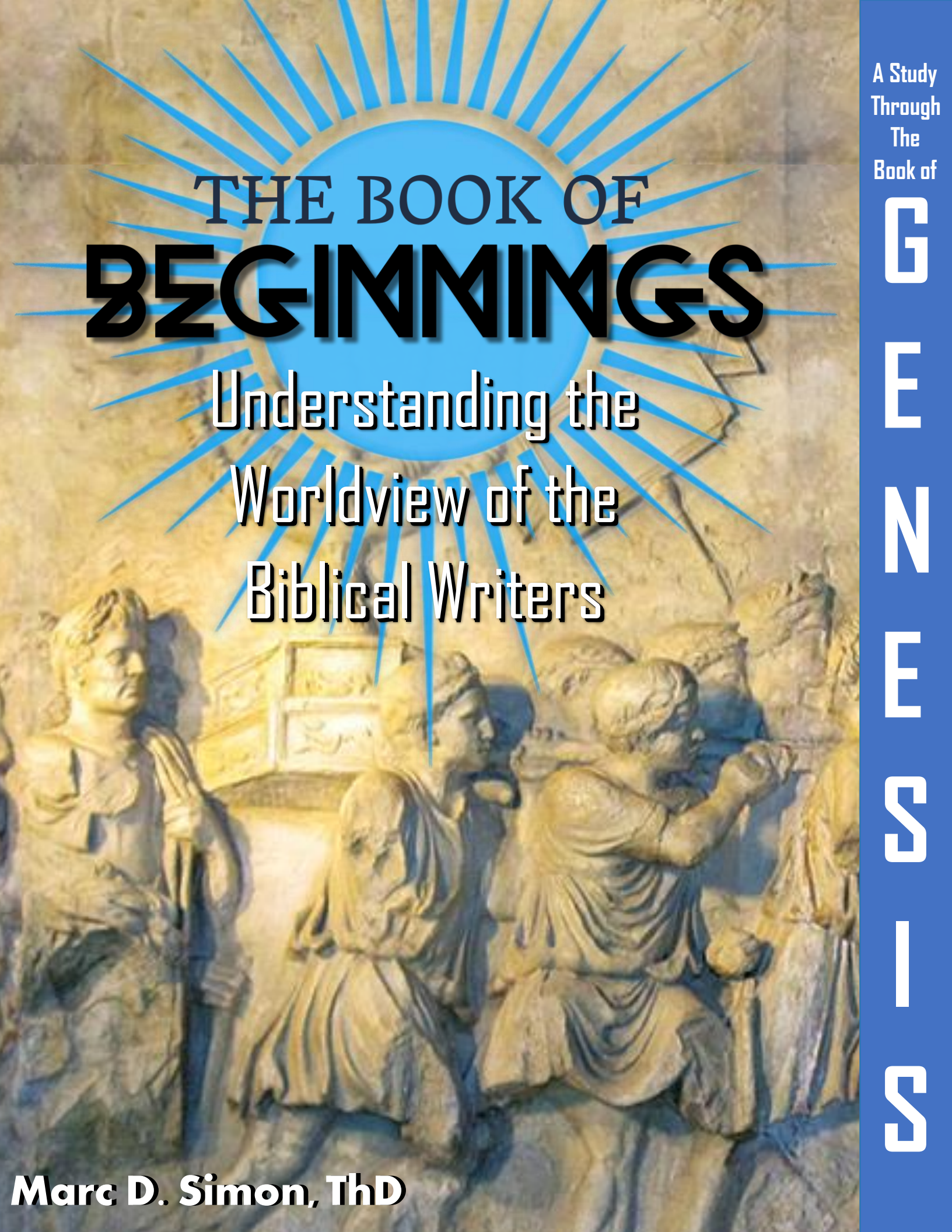




THE BOOK OF **BEGINNINGS**

Understanding the
Worldview of the
Biblical Writers

A Study
Through
The
Book of

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Marc D. Simon, ThD

Understanding the Worldview of the Biblical Writers

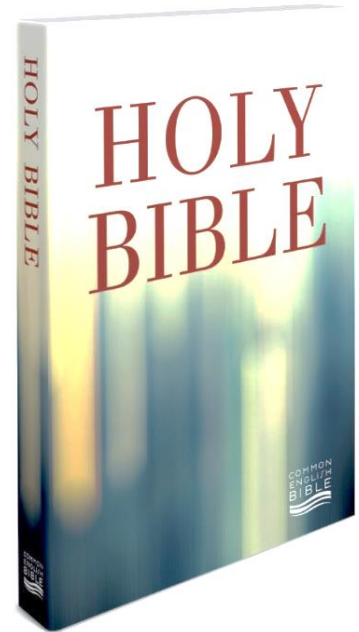
As most of us become familiar with our English Bible we tend to forget that we're reading ancient Jewish literature, written by Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek writers, whose views and assumptions about the world were very different from our own.

But weren't these writers inspired by God?

Yes, they were! But as we read the Bible, we're going to find that as God revealed Himself to the ancient writers throughout history, He almost never paused to give them a science lesson, or to explain things like the existence of dinosaurs, the particles of an atom, or the shape of our actual planet.

But why not???

Because that IS NOT the purpose of the Bible, or the reason that God chose to speak to the Biblical writers in the first place! He was after man's heart, not simply his head, and aimed directly at the former through revelation.



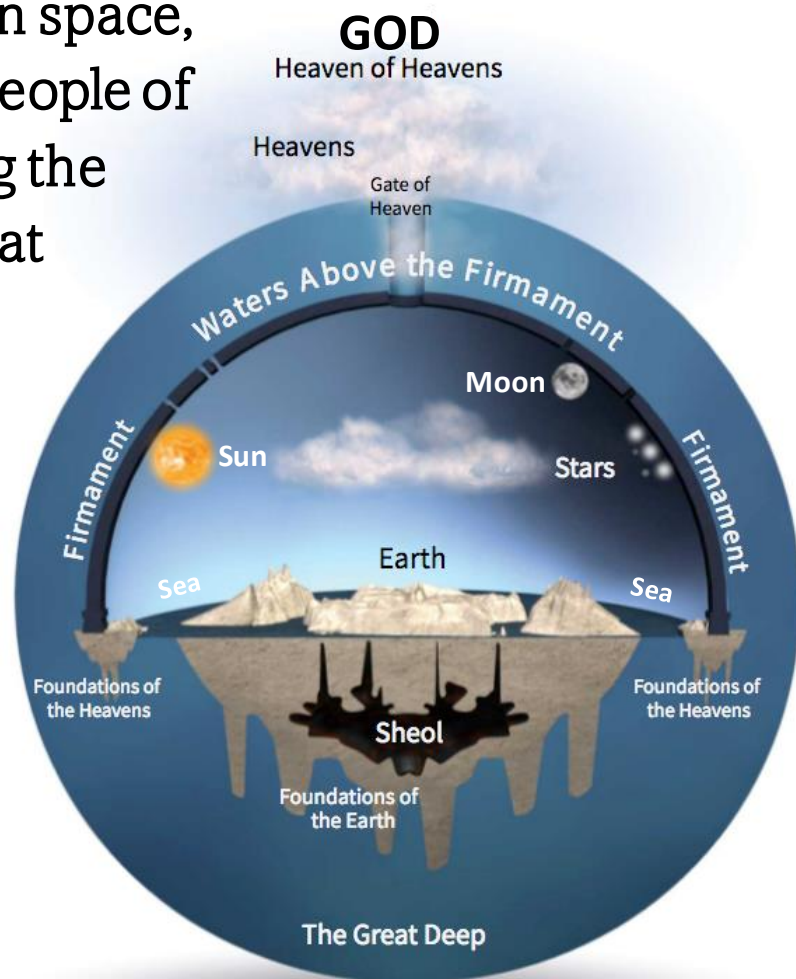
Does God's revelation change our culture?

Well, what we actually find in the Hebrew scriptures is God revealing Himself to the ancient writers and inviting them to ponder His self-revelation through the lens of their own cultural understanding of the world.

A powerful example of this can be seen in the way the Biblical writers described the universe itself...

Sky, Water, and Land

Modern people tend to think of the earth as a round globe spinning around in space, but the common view held by people of the Ancient Near East (including the inspired Biblical writers), was that the world consisted of three distinct realms: [1] the skies, or "*heavens*," above, [2] the earth, or physical land (including *Sheol*, the place of the dead) beneath us, and [3] the watery "abyss" below the physical earth and the surrounding seas.



To sum this all up: To the ancient mind, the earth was a physical mass surrounded and upheld by deep cosmic waters.

*And the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God hovered over the waters.
(Gen. 1:2)*

The earth, surrounded by the waters, is where humans and land creatures lived, and the waters around the physical land was where the sea creatures lived.

The “heavens” above them both, was an airy realm with more waters above it, with God Himself enthroned in “the heaven of heavens,” i.e., “*the sky above the skies.*”

While the world of the Biblical writers functioned in the same way as our world functions today, the way they understood those functions differed dramatically from the way we ourselves understand them.

As we dive into Genesis 1:1, remember that the writer isn't trying to give us a scientific description of the world. Rather, he is trying to reshape the way we think about God Himself, about the world, and our relation to it all.

Grace and blessings!

– Pastor Marc

