

Genesis 1:1–5 Sermon “Where Did the World Come From?”

Kevin McClure 2020–07–26 GCC

Where did the world come from? Where do we come from? What is Our Purpose? What’s the difference between men and women? What’s wrong with our world? What’s wrong with *us*? What hope do I have in my pain? Will the world ever end? Where is God?

These are some of the most important questions in the universe, and they are all answered in the beginning of Genesis. This week begins a 12-week sermon series on the major questions of life. I’m excited to walk through **Genesis 1–3** as a church as we learn about who we are, what we are here on earth for, and most importantly, who is God. The main point of **Genesis 1:1–5** is this: *Worship the Triune God as the omnipotent Creator of all things, including light and salvation.*

I Invite you to turn with me in your Bibles to page number 1 as we read Moses words from **Genesis 1:1–5**.

“1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.” Lets pray.

We have four main points today:

1. God is Creator; 2. God is Triune; 3. God is Redeemer; 4. God is Light-Maker

1. God is creator

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” What a God! Everything that we will ever see with our eyes came from one source: every star that a telescope finds wandering in far off distant galaxies, every molecule that squirms under every microscope, every person you see, every plant and animal, every mountain and rock and waterfall and sunset: all of these burst forth from God’s creative power.

And I’ve only described things that we can see with our *eyes*! Consider that there are entire rogue galaxies that are out of reach of our telescopes—and those sub-atomic quarks? They are made of something even smaller—and God knows, because God created them. Deep-water mysteries and the elements in the periodic table that we have not yet discovered: all of these are the work of God’s fingers. Calvin was right when he said that all creation is a dazzling theater for God’s glory to be revealed.

The phrase “**heavens and earth**” is like saying “top to bottom, and everything in between”; it describe everything: this is a summary for the six days of creation. Notice how God creates everything, and there is no hint or opposition. When you look at the creation stories of the Ancient Near East, creation is enacted after a cosmic conflict or a heavenly war or the death of a divine being.¹ But in Genesis, we see no opposition to God’s creative power. Friends, we do not live in a cyclical system with infinite re-incarnations with no beginning and no end. We live in a universe that had a start, and that will one day have a glorious finish.

¹ Vern S. Poythress, *Redeeming Science: A God-Centered Approach* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006), 70–71.

Modern science does not have a valid explanation for the cause of the universe. One of the better arguments of science is to claim that there is an infinite regress of causes or to say that matter is eternal. The problem with this claim is that it's very unscientific, because "science knows of no chain of events without a beginning,"²Tim Keller, in his book *Reason for God* explains how explaining creation requires great faith for those who reject the biblical account. He writes,

"If there is no God, then either original matter sprang from nothing, or original matter has always existed without a cause, or there is an infinite regress of causes without a beginning. Ironically, then, there is an agreement that modern science is completely insufficient to explain the existence of the world. Whatever brought it about must have been something extranatural or supernatural. So even those who think they are denying this argument for a supernatural divinity are still supporting it. This material world cannot be all there is to the universe."³

There had to have been an un-caused Causer who created matter, and this is the Tri-une God. God created everything, and what's more is that he created all things out of no things. The Hebrew word for "create", Ba-RA, is only ever used of God in the bible, showing his uniqueness in this regard.⁴ What a great chasm separates us from our Creator! All of the so-called "creating" we do is merely re-fashioning existing materials into meal, or a project, or a painting. But God creates in the truest and realest sense: out of nothing, or ex-nihilo. One moment: nothingness. The next: *Something-ness* that never before had any trace of existence!

Who has ever done such a thing? Do you see why we are called to worship this God? If a human being caused just one little fingernail of matter to spring into existence from nothing, we would be drawn to worship him. But for a God to create entire sweeping galaxies and complex creatures and intricate ecosystems all from nothing? Truly, he is a God worthy of our worship!

And we see here the futility of worshipping anything in His place. As you stare up into the cosmos as your Maker, how can God be a mere detail or add-on to your life? As you breathe the breaths that He gives you (Acts 17:25), How can you think of yourself, or someone else, or some *thing* else as more valuable than Him? To put any created thing above the Creator, Rom 1:25 says, is to live a lie: believing that there is anything more glorious and satisfying than the Creator God. God alone is worthy of our worship, because...

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." In verse 2, we see that the earth was "without form and void," which is another way to describe an empty wasteland in Jeremiah 4:23. Now there is a theory known as the gap theory that was popularized by the Scofield Reference Bible. The gap theory believes, with some variations, that:

'In the far distant dateless past God created a perfect heaven and perfect earth. Satan was ruler of the earth which was peopled by a race of 'men' without any souls. Eventually, Satan, who dwelled in a garden of Eden composed of minerals (Ezekiel 28), rebelled by desiring to become

² Timothy Keller, *Making Sense of God: Finding God in the Modern World* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2018), 218.

³ Ibid, 218.

⁴ See the 48 instances of the word ברא (bārā') in Gen. 1:1, 21, 27; 2:3-4; 5:1-2; 6:7; Ex. 34:10; Num. 16:30; Deut. 4:32; Is. 4:5; 40:26, 28; 41:20; 42:5; 43:1, 7, 15; 45:7-8, 12, 18; 48:7; 54:16; 57:19; 65:17-18; Jer. 31:22; Ezek. 21:30; 28:13, 15; Amos 4:13; Mal. 2:10; Psa. 51:10; 89:12, 47; 102:18; 104:30; 148:5; Eccl. 12:1.

like God ([Isaiah 14](#)). Because of Satan's fall, sin entered the universe and brought on the earth God's judgment in the form of a flood (indicated by the water of 1:2), and then a global Ice Age when the light and heat from the sun were somehow removed. All the plant, animal, and human fossils upon the earth today date from this 'Lucifer's flood' and do not bear any genetic relationship with the plants, animals and fossils living upon the earth today...⁵

You can't make this stuff up, friends. This is a strange theory that maintains that there are two accounts of creation: the first in [1:1](#) and the second in [1:2](#) to the end of the chapter. The problem is that while trying to account for the fossil record, the gap theory does what is called eisegesis: reading into the text something that is not there. It may be that the earth is older than a few thousand years, but this route is not the more biblical way to get there.

So how do we understand [verse 2](#)? The earth was uninhabited and unformed. There was no land, and it was all salty ocean—this is what "the deep" refers to in other contexts.⁶ There was no life. But "the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." Some people translate this sentence as a great wind was blowing over the face of the waters, but the one other time this word "hovering" is used in the Bible in this stem⁷ is in [Deut 32:11](#), where an eagle is fluttering over its young for protection or care. This gives the word a personal aspect, and it creates an expectation in us: what is about to happen when the Spirit of God moves over this lifeless void at the beginning of God's creation?

But before we examine that, we need to go further back in time, because there was a time before the beginning, and this brings us to our second point.

2. God is Triune

We see whispers of God's Trinitarian nature in our text, and the rest of scripture testifies to this. In [verse 1](#), the Hebrew Word for "God" is plural, but the verb for "created" is singular. At the end of [verse 2](#) we already saw "the Spirit of God". And then in [verse 3](#), God's Word speaks, and things spring into being. You may remember reading in [John 1:1-3](#). "1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." God the Father's Word is his ultimate self-expression, and in fact, it is a person: the second member of the trinity, God the Son. [Colossians 1:16](#) tells us that, "by him [=Christ] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him." We see Father, Son, and Spirit all active in creation here, the Father creating the heavens and earth by the Son through the Spirit.⁸

The Trinity is very good news for us Christians, because it means that God has been in loving relationship from before time began because it's part of His nature. God didn't need relationships with human beings, and he didn't change when he began to love creatures, because he has been in a

⁵ Weston W. Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled: A Critique of the Gap Theory* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2005), 7.

⁶ See [Gen. 1:2](#); [7:11](#); [8:2](#); [49:25](#); [Ex. 15:5](#), [8](#); [Deut. 8:7](#); [33:13](#); [Job 28:14](#); [38:16](#), [30](#); [41:32](#); [Psa. 33:7](#); [36:6](#); [42:7](#); [71:20](#); [77:16](#); [78:15](#); [104:6](#); [106:9](#); [107:26](#); [135:6](#); [148:7](#); [Prov. 3:20](#); [8:24](#), [27-28](#); [Is. 51:10](#); [63:13](#); [Ezek. 26:19](#); [31:4](#), [15](#); [Amos 7:4](#); [Jonah 2:5](#); [Hab. 3:10](#). Note that some of these references refer to fresh-water springs.

⁷ That is, the Piel stem.

⁸ For the Spirit's role in Creation, see [Job 33:4](#); [Ps 104:30](#); and [Isa 40:12-13](#).

Trinitarian communion of love from before time. For Non-Christian monotheists, love is not an eternal attribute for their deity. Loving is not something that is essential to the character of the Muslim god Allah. But the true God has been loving from before time.

We see these awe-inspiring glimpses in scripture of that time before time, when only the Father, Son, and Spirit were there. What was the Godhead doing? Jesus tells us in John 17:5 and 24 tell us that The Father was loving and glorifying the Son in the Trinity. But even beyond the Trinity, God was showing love for His elect people. Eph. 1:4 tells Christians that God the Father “[...] chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him in love...” Revelation 13:8 tells us that the names (of those who would conquer and persevere to the end) were being written in the book of the life “before the foundation of the world.” These are the names of God’s elect. Before Creation, God the Father, Son, and Spirit were planning the redemption of guilty sinners, even before the Fall had occurred! Meditate on the implications of this sometime!

And beyond that, let's consider this question for a moment. If God existed in perfect harmony in the Trinity of father, Son, and Holy Spirit, then why did He create anything in the first place if He didn't need anyone? Jonathan Edwards, a brilliant 18th century pastor, sought to answer this question with a treatise called the *End [or Goal] of Creation*.⁹ No book outside the bible has had a more shaping influence on my life. In it, Edwards looked at a number of biblical texts to show that the ultimate motivation behind anything that God does is for his own glory. to be known, loved, and delighted in by His Creatures. Is. 43:7 tells us, “everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made. It's like God is an evening sun, and the sun is so good that it inclined to create beings to enjoy its warmth. It's like God is musician who is so talented, that he creates an audience to be mesmerized by his sound.¹⁰

Here's what Edwards says about why God would create the world in the first place. Pay close attention:

“Thus it is fit, since there is an infinite fountain of light and knowledge, that this light should shine forth in beams of communicated knowledge and understanding; and, as there is an infinite fountain of holiness, moral excellence, and beauty, that so it should flow out in communicated holiness. [...] Thus it appears reasonable to suppose, that it was God's last end, that there might be a glorious and abundant emanation of his infinite fulness of good ... [outside] himself; and that the disposition to communicate himself, or diffuse his own fulness, was what moved him to create the world.”¹¹

To summarize this, God's ultimate aim in creating the heavens and the earth was that He might share with you the most valuable gift in all of the universe: Himself. And in sharing Himself with you through His son, He is glorified. Listen closely as pastor Sam Storms explains this:

⁹ This work is contained in full and has a helpful introduction in John Piper and Jonathan Edwards, *God's Passion for His Glory: Living the Vision of Jonathan Edwards* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006).

¹⁰ Joe Rigney puts it in the book *The Things of Earth*, “The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are like a rock band that loves their music so much that they decide to take the show on the road. Only this Band creates an audience from nothing (Joe Rigney, *The Things of Earth: Treasuring God by Enjoying His Gifts* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015], 45).

¹¹ Jonathan Edwards, “The End for Which God Created the World,” in *God's Passion for His Glory: Living the Vision of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. John Piper [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006], 150–51.

“God desires our greatest good. But what greater good is there in the universe than God himself? So, if God is truly to love us, he must give us himself. But merely giving us of himself is only the first step in the expression of his affection for sinners. He must work to elicit from our hearts rapturous praise and superlative delight because, as [C.S.] Lewis said, “*all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise.*” That’s the way God made us. We can’t help but praise and rejoice in what we most enjoy. [...] If God is to love you optimally, he must bestow or impart the best gift he has, the greatest prize, the most precious treasure, the most exalted and worthy thing within his power to give. That gift, of course, is himself. Nothing in the universe is as beautiful and captivating and satisfying as God! So, if God loves you he will give himself to you and then work in your soul to awaken you to his beauty and all-sufficiency. In other words, he will strive by all manner and means to intensify and expand and enlarge your joy in him.”¹²

Do you see now why the main point of our text is to *worship the Triune God*? We were created to delight in His beauty, to walk in the air of glad thanksgiving, to swim in the abundance of the enjoyments He so richly lavishes upon us, even as we look forward to a world where we will experience those joys in their fullness. And our joy is made more full when we consider how God, in the wisdom of knowing the end from the beginning, created in such a way so as to teach us about how he saves. Here we move to our third point.

3. God is Redeemer

In **verse 2** we remember The Spirit of God was hovering over the lifeless and formless and empty void. And in **verse 3**, God speaks, “let there be light.” And *immediately* the created order was flooded with a luminance emanating from the Triune God Himself, like at the end of Revelation.

Could you imagine this? In a moment, light springs from non-existence into existence. In a moment, the mind-breaking complexity of photons and refraction and reflection and the color spectrum breaks into the material realm, perfectly formed. It would have been a wonder if God’s word had caused just one pebble to spring forth out of nothingness. But for God’s word to call forth a universal entity like light that has trillions of complexities that we are still discovering? Friends, what great power this Word has!

Look at how there is no hint of strain in **verse 3**. He didn’t shout. He didn’t power up or wave a wand. It’s all so effortless!

And now we ask the question: why did God create light in this way? Of all the ways he could have done it, why this way? The answer: God was teaching us *how we are saved*. Are you a Christian? Remember the time when you were not. This is what the apostle Paul says about you at that time in 2 Cor 4:4: “the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ,” Paul’s mixing metaphors here: minds cannot be blinded! *Eyes* are blinded. But Paul is talking about spiritual eyes here through mental understanding. It’s as if you have the most beautiful and majestic and epic painting in the entire world, but blind people are walking right past it. Or it’s like when you recommend your favorite, most epic movie to a friend, and he’s just not impressed. “What do you mean you *didn’t* like it? How could you not like it?”

¹² C. Samuel Storms and Justin Taylor, eds., *For the Fame of God’s Name: Essays in Honor of John Piper* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 63–64.

In essence the apostle Paul saying: The gospel of the glory of Christ is the most beautiful thing that one can understand and believe in. But every non-Christian looks at this gospel of Jesus and does not see how gloriously beautiful and stunning it is. And the reason is because Satan has blinded their minds from seeing the beauty of Christ. When they think of Jesus, they are slightly uncomfortable or apathetic or repulsed. Jesus is uninteresting, or token, or odious.

But then the Spirit moves, and God's Word speaks, and in 2Cor. 4:6 we read, "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Christian, why are you saved? It's because God graciously spoke light into the darkness of your heart, and you looked up and saw Jesus, and you could not help but to say: Yes! I want this! I will give up all that I have if I can just have Him!

Your eyes can see! God awakens you to your great sinfulness and unworthiness before him, he awakens you to the great love He exercised in sending Christ to die in your place on the cross, He awakens you to see Christ's resurrection power on the third day, and he awakens you to follow Jesus as a new creation yourself.

We see this concept in Charles Wesley' great hymn, "And Can it Be": "Long my imprisoned spirit lay / Fast bound in sin and nature's night; / Thine eye diffused a quickening ray, / I woke, the dungeon flamed with light; / My chains fell off, my heart was free, / I rose, went forth, and followed Thee." Amen!

Friend, is Jesus uninteresting to you? Are you uncomfortable around him because your mom, or your spouse, or your friend want you to love him—but you really don't? See how beautiful He is. See how God the Son condescended to take on human flesh, how he came into the world as light. See how he lived a perfect life, how he healed with a word, and how we took a special interest in the unworthy, the downcast, the sinner. See how he died on the cross bearing the wrath of God for sin, so that you would might be forgiven of every evil thought and every secret sin and every bit of pride and unbelief. See how Jesus invites you, His enemy, to find the greatest joy you can find in this life in Him. And then heed his voice, and follow Him.

Friend, you were created so that you might know your Creator, and so that you might be saved by Him. And the marvelous thing is that when you come to love Him, you realize that it's because He loved you first [1 John 4:19]. In the house of salvation: the narrow front door has a sign over it that says "whosoever comes may enter." All are welcome. And if you walk through that door you look behind you, you read another sign that says, "predestined from the foundation of the world."¹³

The God who declares the end from the beginning created light in such a way as to illustrate the way that salvation in Christ works.¹⁴ He does them both in the same way: The Spirit moves over a lifeless entity, God's Word speaks, and new creation breaks forth. What a God! But his excellencies don't end there. We now turn to our final point.

4. God is Light maker

¹³ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 2003), 14n9.

¹⁴ Warren Austin Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 78.

In verse 3 God created light, and in verse 4 we read, “And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.” We learn a many things from this verse.

First, we see that the light that God created was good. This is the running refrain throughout Genesis 1: The goodness of God’s creation. Lord willing, we’ll look more at this theme and its implications next week. Notice though how God does not call the night good. So you have something that is called good existing with something that is not called good. It seems here that this is another evidence that God created from the beginning knowing that redemptive history would progress all the way up till the end of Revelation in 22:5, where we read that “night will be no more.” Darkness is a temporary reality from Creation up until the beginning of the consummation.

Second, very briefly, we see God giving names to the light and the darkness, and in doing this God is exercising his authority. You name something if you have authority over it. This fact takes on greater significance with the first man in Genesis 2.

Third, We see that the time period in which God created is described as a day. Now, Christians can be within the realm of orthodoxy and believe in a young earth that is a few thousand years old, or an old earth that is millions or even billions of years old. But outside of realm of orthodoxy is the belief in macroevolution, which we’ll address in future weeks. I’ll just address briefly here the reason why I believe that the earth was created in six actual days. Turn to Exodus 20 verse 8: Ex. 20:8 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. [...] Ex. 20:11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

We see here that an actual Sabbath day that the Israelites were called to observe was based on the six days of work and one day of rest. It would seem strange to call them days in Exodus 20 if they were eons. But there are people who deeply love Jesus and who deeply love His word who would say otherwise. I want to emphasize that a non-evolutionist young earth and old earth Christian is within the realm of orthodoxy.

Finally, we see that the first day doesn’t end at midnight, like how we reckon days. Rather, the day ends after the morning. I don’t want to get speculative here, but I find it interesting that God is creating from the beginning a daily pattern here of darkness before light, of night before morning. In a time before sin, here we have something that is not called good “darkness” “and “night” preceding something that is good “light” and “morning”. But later on in the Bible, darkness later on in the bible is associated with God’s curse and judgment and even death, like when the plague of darkness falls on Egypt. But light is associated with light and life and joy.

Could it be the God who set a pattern for salvation in his creation of the light is also setting a pattern of sorrow in the night, and deliverance in the morning (see Ps 30:5)? When you We see God’s deliverance of His people in the Passover and the exodus in the morning (Ex. 14:21–27), we see God’s provision of manna in the wilderness coming in the morning (Ex. 16:12–15). We see the false god Dagon found prostrate before the ark of the Lord in the morning (1 Sam. 5:4), the 185,000 in the Assyrian army was found vanquished in the morning (2 Kings 19:35), and on and on and on until we come to that Garden tomb (Luke 24:22–23). The Author of life was dead in the night, and in the morning, the tomb was empty because the bright morning star (Rev. 22:16) had risen from the dead!

Brothers and sisters, you may be weary in the night of this age. But sometime soon the dawn of a new age will come.

God created the heavens and the earth in Genesis, and in Isaiah 65:17 he looks forward to this new dawn when God says, “Is. 65:17 ¶ “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. Is. 65:18 But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness.”

One day, all those who have had the light of salvation shine in their hearts will be received into the new creation, where the triune God will shine, where night will be no more, and where only good things will be present. Oh how glorious that will be. Where did the world come from? The Triune God created it. And He redeemed it. And He will one day renew and recreate it for those who follow Him. And the right response to this is to Worship Him as He created you to do. Lets pray.