

## Genesis 1:1-5 "Creation" (p.1)

Ajax Alliance Church. Sunday January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**Genesis 1:1-5.** [1:1] 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. (ESV)

**Beginning** can be daunting, yet an exciting time. The beginning of a meal, date, year, job or a life in general. For the beginning of Scripture, Luther said of this book, "There is nothing more beautiful than the Book of Genesis, nothing more useful," and he regarded the opening verses as "certainly the foundation of the whole of Scripture." Needless to say, not everyone has approached the opening words of the Bible with such warm delight! Rather, the early verses of Genesis have become a veritable battleground where those who defend the faith have waged war with those who approach them with calculated skepticism or outright antagonism. Brief excerpts from *Humanist Manifesto I and II* will suffice to illustrate the point: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created ... we begin with humans not God ... we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species ... no deity will save us; we must save ourselves." (Briscoe, D. S., & Ogilvie, L. J. (1987). *Vol. 1: The Preacher's Commentary Series, Volume 1 : Genesis*. The Preacher's Commentary series (23). Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc.)

- "It's hard to imagine anything more absurd than the Naturalist's formula for the origin of the universe: nobody times nothing equals everything. There is no Creator; there is no design or purpose. Everything we see simply emerged and evolved by pure chance from a total void" (John MacArthur: *The Battle for the Beginning*. Thomas Nelson Publications, 2001. p. 31)

The Bible's first words announce how ... God can be known. He reveals himself in terms of the "when's" and "where's" of human life and history. Conceptually, this is how people orient themselves to their world. We locate ourselves in time in terms of our beginnings and endings. Our personal stories are also contoured by space. Thus, as we see and identify ourselves by our finitude, so the Infinite One condescends by announcing His presence in the same terms—time and space. God is not merely an idea. He is Eternal Being whom we can know and experience personally. At the commencement of Scripture, (and the beginning of our year) he invites us to learn of Him (and How he answers all of life's questions) (Mathews, K. A. (2001). *Vol. 1A: Genesis 1-11:26* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (126). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.)

Through Genesis 1:1-5, we see the fundamental answers to our lives on this earth. Covering 5 grand areas, we see the answers to: 1) Who Created What? (Genesis 1:1), 2) Where did God Create? (Genesis 1:2), 3) How did God Create? (Genesis 1:3), 4) Why did God Create? (Genesis 1:4), 5) When did God Create? (Genesis 1:5)

First, through God's Creation, we can understand:

1) Who Created What? (Genesis 1:1)

**Genesis 1:1** [1:1] In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (ESV)

It was the custom in ancient times to name a book by its opening word, which is what the Hebrews did in titling this initial Bible book *Bereshith*, which means "in the beginning." When the Old Testament was translated into Greek about 250 b.c. the Greek equivalent of the title was rendered *Genesis*, which both the Latin and English

**translations** have adopted letter for letter. It is an exquisitely perfect title because **this book gives us the genesis (the beginning) of the doctrine of God, which rose to tower high over the pagan notions of the day.** It is **the genesis of the doctrine of creation,** which likewise rose far above the **crude mythologies** of the surrounding nations. Genesis gives us **the doctrine of (humanity),** demonstrating that from the beginning **we are both wonderful and awful.** The **doctrine of salvation** too has its genesis in Eden and its **grand development** throughout the whole book (Hughes, R. K. (2004). *Genesis: Beginning and blessing*. Preaching the Word (15). Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books.).

**Genesis shows that God exists eternally and is self-existent.** (Ps. 90:2). **God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit** were **never** created, and at the **beginning** of creation we see that **God** was already there. **What we see here is the beginning of the universe in time and space.** In explaining Israel's identity and **purpose** to her on the plains of Moab, **God** wanted His people to know about the origin of the world in which they found themselves. The variations on this theme in Isaiah 40ff. show that the **beginning is pregnant with the end,** and **the whole process present to God who is First and Last** (e.g. Isa. 46:10; 48:12) (Kidner, D. (1967). *Vol. 1: Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (47). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.)

The Hebrew Bible has **three names for "deity" or "god/God": El, Eloah, and Elohim.** Of these, **Elohim** (used here) occurs by far the most often in the Bible (2,750x) (Mathews, K. A. (2001). *Vol. 1A: Genesis 1-11:26* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (127). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.) **Therefore, the expression "God created"** is most interesting because the Hebrew uses a **plural word for "God"** (*Elōhîm*) but a **singular word for "created."** **Later in the chapter we read "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness ...' " (v. 26).** ...**A clear statement about the Trinity** becomes apparent when the "Us" and "Our" and the plural "*Elōhîm*" are considered alongside the statement about the **"Spirit of God"** (v. 2) being active in creation and the New Testament teaching about the **pre-existence of "the Word"** and His creative activity (**John 1:1-10**) (Briscoe, D. S., & Ogilvie, L. J. (1987). *Vol. 1: The Preacher's Commentary Series, Volume 1: Genesis*. The Preacher's Commentary series (25-26). Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc.).

- **The significance of the Trinity for us** is that before there was a universe, there was a "wholeness" and a "completeness" about God in His "three person-relatedness" which made Him totally self-sufficient. **Any suggestion that God needed the universe to be fulfilled or that He was less than complete without humanity totally misses the point of the Trinity** in whom love and communication were perfected.

**Implicit in the statement that God created is the fact that the idea to create was God's and His alone.** It was **God** who repeatedly **spoke the creative word to bring material things into being** and it was He who, **communing with Himself (not with the angels as some have suggested),** brought forth humanity in His own image. **Isaiah the prophet captured the significance of this when he asked rhetorically: "Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or as His counselor has taught Him?" (Is. 40:13).** And **the answer came loud and clear from John on Patmos: "You are worthy, O Lord ... for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created" (Rev. 4:11)** (Briscoe, D. S., & Ogilvie, L. J. (1987). *Vol. 1: The Preacher's Commentary Series, Volume 1: Genesis*. The Preacher's Commentary series (25-26). Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc.). **How this process occurred in Genesis 1 is represented by the word: "created".** The word used here for "**created**" is *bārā'* which **always refers to the product created** and does **not refer to the material of which it is made.** For these reasons commentators have traditionally interpreted the verb as a technical term for **creatio ex nihilo ("creation out of nothing").** It is **God's activity with no presence of preexisting material** (Mathews, K. A. (2001). *Vol. 1A: Genesis 1-11:26* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (128). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.). **There was no**

bubble of gas, **no** cosmic dust that could have kindled the germ of life. **The earliest forms of life** did **not** originate in a blob of slime on some prehistoric pond. **The elements, the materials from which our universe is made up,** are **not** eternal. **They came into existence** only when God so ordered (Jeske, J. C. (2001). *Genesis* (2nd ed.). The People's Bible (10–11). Milwaukee, Wis.: Northwestern Pub. House.). **His sovereignty is made visible in the things that exist. God alone “creates” in the full sense of that word, molding all things to fulfill his inscrutable purposes** (Wenham, G. J. (2002). *Vol. 1: Word Biblical Commentary : Genesis 1-15*. Word Biblical Commentary (36). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.).

**All of God's creation** is incorporated into the **summary statement**: that God created **the heavens and the earth**. The **heavens and the earth** always mean the terrestrial globe with its aerial firmament. Cf. ch. 2:4; Ps. 148:13; Zech. 5:9). **The earth** here alluded to is manifestly **not** the dry land (**ver. 10**), which was **not** separated from the waters till the third day, **but the entire mass of which our planet is composed**, including the superincumbent atmosphere, which was not uplifted from the chaotic deep until the second day. **The heavens are the rest of the universe**. The Hebrews were aware of other heavens than the “firmament” or gaseous expanse which over-arches the earth. **This is clear from: Isaiah 45:18** For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): "I am the LORD, and there is no other. (*The Pulpit Commentary: Genesis*. 2004 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.) (3). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.).

**Evaluation of Genesis:** In regard to **science in general**, **science has produced inestimable benefits for (humanity)** as anyone who has flown in a jet plane, visited a doctor, or used a telephone will heartily agree. **The problem** is **not** with science as such, because **where science discovers truth**, it can only be beneficial. **The problem lies in the attitudes which exist between some scientists and some theologians. When some scientists worship their scientific approach** to an extent that **everything becomes verifiable only in terms of scientific evaluation**, or where **theologians distrust scientists** so much that they automatically **dismiss** their findings when applied to Scripture, only **conflict** can arise. ... **How should we approach the problem? One approach** is to accept science as gospel and regard the Bible as an ancient **irrelevance**. This approach is **fair neither** to the Bible's claims **nor** the well-documented limitations of science. **Another approach** is to be totally immersed in Scripture like a hippopotamus in a river, emerging only to snort at the latest discoveries of irreverent science. The **problem** with this attitude is that it **suggests** that all that humanity needs to know about life is to be found in the Bible and that **everything discovered from other sources is at best irrelevant and at worst devilish. The third approach** tries to work on the premise that “all truth is God's truth” wherever it is discovered. The obvious **problem** with this is that it is **not** always easy to determine what is true. This can be the case **both for the theologian** whose interpretation of Scripture may be **conditioned** and therefore **erroneous** and for the **scientist** who has similar problems with “total objectivity”—a **myth** if ever there was one! Without **suggesting** that there are simple solutions to this problem I have endeavored to work on the principle that **Scripture rightly understood** is the final authority and that **science properly conducted and applied** serves to amplify and elaborate on the gracious revelation God gives to humanity (Briscoe, D. S., & Ogilvie, L. J. (1987). *Vol. 1: The Preacher's Commentary Series, Volume 1 : Genesis*. The Preacher's Commentary series (23–24). Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc.).

**Through God's Creation, we can understand:**

**2) Where did God Create?** (Genesis 1:2)

**Genesis 1:2** [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. (ESV)

There are two words that describe the creative activity of God—“progression” and “power.” The Hebrew words *tōhū wābōhū*, used in the expression “without form and void,” are so striking that it was apparently used to rivet the readers’ attention on the condition of creation in its initial stages. When verse two describes the earth as “without form, and void”, this means “not finished in its shape and as yet uninhabited by creatures” (cf. Is. 45:18,19; Jer. 4:23). The phrase “without form” is *tōhū* It refers to an unproductive, uninhabited land or has the sense of futility, desert (Deut 32:10; Job 6:18; 12:24, Ps 107:40; Isa 24:10; 34:11; 45:18–19) or empty place (Job 26:7.). (Mathews, K. A. (2001). *Vol. 1A: Genesis 1-11:26* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (131). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.).

Do not take this “darkness” here as evil. It related to the “void”. The existence of the angels and the fall of Satan predated the Creation, for the angels (“sons of God”) sang at Creation (Job 38:7). Lucifer was the highest of God’s created beings in this original Creation (see Ezek. 28:11–19) and wanted to take the place of God (Isa. 14:12–17). We find Satan already on the scene in Gen. 3, so that his fall must have taken place earlier (Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the Old Testament* (Ge 1:1). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.).

The area referred here as the deep, is sometimes referred to as primordial waters, this is the term used to describe the earth’s water-covered surface before the dry land emerged (1:9,10). Jonah used this word to describe the watery abyss in which he found himself submerged (Jon. 2:5). (What we see here is a progression of development) from a state of “nothingness” through a state of “formlessness” and “emptiness” to a condition where the “formlessness” gave way to “form” and the “emptiness” surrendered to “fullness.” (Briscoe, D. S., & Ogilvie, L. J. (1987). *Vol. 1: The Preacher's Commentary Series, Volume 1 : Genesis*. The Preacher's Commentary series (27). Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc.)

Over this region the text notes that the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit participated in creation. He is said to be “hovering”. The same word “hover” (*rhḡp*) that occurs in Gen 1:2 is in the following verse of the Song (Gen. 32:11), where God is likened to an eagle that “hovers” over its young. Deut 32:10–11 is probably a deliberate echo of Gen 1:2. Moses’ Song is describing God’s care and provision for his people during their desert sojourn, where apart from God they could not have survived (32:10–14; Ps. 124). Therefore, all three persons of the Trinity, The Father, The Son (cf. John 1:1–3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2) and The Holy Spirit, referred here as the Spirit of God, were all involved. (Mathews, K. A. (2001). *Vol. 1A: Genesis 1-11:26* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (131). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.).

Internal biblical dating of Genesis points to the (book being written) during the late fifteenth century B.C. at the time of or following the exodus when Israel wandered in the wilderness. In the dynamic context of the wilderness journey, as God’s people dreamed of the promised land, they would naturally ask about Abraham and the patriarchs who had brought them down to Egypt. And beyond that they would ask about their ultimate origins. (Hughes, R. K. (2004). *Genesis: Beginning and blessing*. Preaching the Word (17). Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books.). The implications of this are great. First, it means that everything that exists must be under God’s control. The Creation must be in subjection to the Creator. Forces of nature, enemies, creatures and objects that became pagan deities—none of these would pose a threat to the servants of the living God. Second, the account also reveals the basis of the Law. If indeed God was before all things and made all things, how foolish it would be to have any other gods before Him! There were none. If indeed God made humanity in His image to represent Him, how foolish it would be to make an image of God! If indeed God set aside one day for rest from His work, should not people who are walking with God follow Him? The commandments find their rationale here. Third, and finally, the account reveals

that God is a redeeming God. It records how He brought the cosmos out of chaos, turned darkness into light...Ultimately, He who caused light to shine out of darkness made His light shine in the hearts of believers (2 Cor. 4:6) so that we become new creations (2 Cor. 5:17) (Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary: An exposition of the scriptures* (Ge 1:1). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.).

**Through God's Creation, we can understand:**

**3) How did God Create?** (Genesis 1:3)

**Genesis 1:3** [3] And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. (ESV)

**Verse 3** introduces us to the frequently used phrase of Gen. 1—*and God said* (vv. 3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24, 26). It is the Vulg translation of v. 3, *fiat lux*, "Let there be light," that has given birth to the phrase "creation by fiat." The emphasis is on creation by speech as command (Hamilton, V. P. (1990). *The Book of Genesis. Chapters 1-17.* The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (119). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.).

**Please turn to Hebrews 11 (p.947)**

The simple phrase *And God said* precludes some far-reaching errors and stores up a wealth of meaning. These eight specific commands, calling all things into being, leave no room for notions of a universe that is self-existent, or struggled for, or random... (Kidner, D. (1967). *Vol. 1: Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary.* Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (50). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.)

How do we bridge the point from what has been revealed to what we can understand: Listen closely therefore to the process of how God created the universe and how we are to come to an understanding of this:

**Hebrews 11:1-3** [11:1] Now **faith** is the assurance of things hoped for, **the conviction of things not seen.** [2] For by it the people of old received their commendation. [3] By faith we understand that **the universe was created by the word of God,** so that what is seen was **not made out of things that are visible.** (ESV)

- The very explanation of faith itself is wrapped up in this account. If you **don't believe God's explanation** of how He created things, how are you going to believe what followed? Creation occurred by divine Fiat, by the word of God. God did **not** use preexisting materials, He does **not** make things like we do, by using materials. He creates out of nothing, by His word alone.

We see back in **Genesis 1:3** that God effortlessly spoke light into existence, indicated by the phrase: "God said, "Let there be light,"" (cf. Pss. 33:6; 148:5). This dispelled the darkness of v. 2 . The greater and lesser lights (the sun and moon) were created later (**1:14-19**) on the fourth day. The source of creation's first "light" is **not** specifically stated. Since it is **not** tied to a luminating body such as the sun (vv. 15-16), the text implies that the "light" has its source in God himself (cf. 1:14). God created physical light. The Bible also says that God is light in a moral and spiritual sense (**1 John 1:5**). By God's design, the physical aspects of creation can serve as vehicles for developing themes about God and his salvation. Jesus is "the **light** of the world" (**John 8:12**) (Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (50). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.). Like the luminous cloud of God, presented Himself to Israel in the wilderness and in the tabernacle (cf. Exod 24:15-18 w/40:38), this primal light indicated the divine presence (Mathews, K. A. (2001). *Vol. 1A: Genesis 1-11:26* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (145-146). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.).

**Please turn to 2 Corinthians 4 (p.907)**

The apostle Paul developed the theological significance of the creative light in 2 Cor 4:1–6, where he alluded to Gen 1:3. The New Testament interprets this light as the gospel of Christ. Paul paralleled God’s creation of light that shines “out of darkness” (4:6) and the light that has revealed the glory of God in human hearts.

**2 Corinthians 4:1-6.** [4:1] Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. [2] But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. [3] And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. [4] In their case 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, who is the image of God. [5] For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. [6] 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. (ESV)

- This glory is in the “face of Christ,” an expression that draws on the prototype of Moses (2 Cor 3:7–18). It also may allude to Paul’s own Damascus experience (Acts 9:3) and perhaps the incident at the mount of transfiguration, where Jesus’ face and clothing shone (Matt 17:2). God was the provider of light (2 Cor. 4:6) and will in eternity future be the source of light (cf. Rev. 21:23).

**Illustration:** 6947 Lindbergh On Truth

Charles Lindbergh, who made the first solo transatlantic flight, in 1927, said: “In my youth, science was more important to me than either man or God. I worshipped science. Its advance had surpassed man’s wildest dreams. It took many years for me to discover that science, with all its brilliance, lights only a middle chapter of creation. I saw the aircraft I love destroying the civilization I expected it to save. Now I understand that spiritual truth is more essential to a nation than the mortar in its cities’ walls. For when the actions of a people are undergirded by spiritual truths, there is safety. When spiritual truths are rejected, it is only a matter of time before civilization will collapse. We must understand spiritual truths and apply them to our modern life. We must draw strength from the almost forgotten virtues of simplicity, humility, contemplation and prayer. It requires a dedication beyond science, beyond self, but the rewards are great and it is our only hope.” (Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (p. 1529). Bible Communications, Inc.)

**Through God’s Creation, we can understand:**

**4) Why did God Create?** (Genesis 1:4)

**Genesis 1:4** [4] And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. (ESV)

It will perhaps strike the reader of this story as unusual that its author affirms the existence of light (and a day for that matter) without the existence of the sun, which is still three “days” away. The creation of light anticipates the creation of sunlight. ...It is unnecessary to explain such a claim as reflecting scientific ignorance. What the author states is that God caused the light to shine from a source other than the sun for the first three “days.” The Bible begins and ends by describing an untarnished world that is filled with light, but no sun (cf. Rev. 22:5). (Hamilton, V. P. (1990). *The Book of Genesis. Chapters 1-17*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (121). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.)

**The light was good** for **the purposes it was intended** to serve (cf. 1:31). "Good" is very common Hebrew adjective **has a broad range of meaning**, as does the English term. Primarily, **it draws attention to an object's quality and fitness for its purpose**. "Good" here probably means "fits its purpose" (cf. Isa. 41:7) or "intrinsically **without flaw**" (BDB 373) (Uteley, R. J. D. (2001). *Vol. Vol. 1A: How it All Began: Genesis 1-11*. Study Guide Commentary Series (23). Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International.). We can understand this because of **the declared source of the light. God is preeminently the one who is good**, and **His goodness is reflected in His works** (Ps 100:5) (Wenham, G. J. (2002). *Vol. 1: Word Biblical Commentary : Genesis 1-15*. Word Biblical Commentary (18). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.)

**Please turn to Psalm 33 (p.433)**

There are **many things determined from creation**. Ultimately **Revelation 4:11** shows that **the Father created as a love offering to His Son** through the work of all three members of the Trinity. **Psalm 33** highlights this with a response in praise and thanksgiving:

**Psalm 33:1-9**. [33:1] **Shout for joy** in the LORD, O you **righteous! Praise** befits the upright. [2] **Give thanks** to the LORD with the lyre; make **melody** to him with the harp of ten strings! [3] Sing to him a **new song**; **play skillfully** on the strings, with loud shouts. [4] For **the word of the LORD is upright**, and **all his work is done in faithfulness**. [5] He loves **righteousness** and **justice**; the earth is full of the **steadfast love** of the LORD. [6] **By the word of the LORD the heavens were made**, and by the **breath of his mouth** all their host. [7] He gathers **the waters of the sea** as a heap; he puts the deeps in storehouses. [8] **Let all the earth fear the LORD**; let all the inhabitants of the world **stand in awe** of him! [9] For he **spoke**, and **it came to be**; he **commanded**, and **it stood firm**.

- **Christ** is the bridegroom of the Church. As **the Holy Spirit** enables righteousness in us, **we are a praise offering of thanksgiving** to Christ, that glorifies **the Father**.

**Back in Genesis 1:4**, when we see that **God separated the light from the darkness**, we understand that **in the work of creation, Genesis 1:4 logically follows v. 3**, for  $x$  can be **separated** from  $y$  only on the assumption that both  $x$  and  $y$  are already in existence. **Separated** means here **not** to pull apart, but **to assign each part to its respective sphere and slot...In creation** there is **separation toward order**: light from **darkness**, waters above from waters below, day from **night**, woman from man. **In sin and trespass** there is a **separation toward disorder**: man and woman from God; man from woman; **man** from the soil; **man** from a garden. (Hamilton, V. P. (1990). *The Book of Genesis. Chapters 1-17*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (119). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.).

- **The reason for creation** is so clear that **we might unashamedly separate ourselves from every imaged theory** that seeks to supplant the notion that God sovereignly brought creation into existence. The other theories are attempts to excuse rebellion against God.

**Illustration:** God's Work

The story has been told of **a museum guide** who would take his tour group to a darkened room, **shine a light** on a mass of string, color, and apparent **chaos** and **ask the group**, "What do you think this is." "I **don't** know," was the inevitable reply. **He would then say**, "Stand over there and watch." **As the group moved** over to the other side of the room, he would **turn on a spotlight**. It was **instantly apparent** that the mass of jumbled colored string seen just a moment earlier was **in fact an enormous tapestry** from the back side. **The real work had to be seen** from a different perspective to

understand what the artist was creating. **So, it is with God and his ways.** We often look at them and ask questions such as “Why?” and “How?” **not** because there is **no** purpose in what God is doing, but **because we are on the wrong side of eternity** to be able to have the perspective that would enable us to see the order and pattern to **God’s work** (Green, M. P., ed. (1989). *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching: Over 1500 sermon illustrations arranged by topic and indexed exhaustively* (Revised edition of: The expositor’s illustration file). Baker Book House.).

**Finally, through God’s Creation, we can understand:**

**5) When did God Create?** (Genesis 1:3)

**Genesis 1:5** [5] God called the **light Day**, and the **darkness he called Night**. And there was **evening** and there was **morning, the first day**. (ESV)

After the initial creation, **God continued to complete His universe**. Once God separated certain things, **He then named them**. **God showed his superiority** over both the **light** and the **darkness by naming them “day” and “night.”** The act of **naming** is an important feature in the creation account, indicating the existence (“being”) of the element named and also **God’s authority over his creation**. This divine prerogative of “naming” is **extended to the first man**, who **names the animals and his companion “woman”** (2:19, 23; 3:20) (Mathews, K. A. (2001). *Vol. 1A: Genesis 1-11:26* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (147). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.).

**Please turn to Exodus 20 (p.57)**

**Generally, in scripture “Day” can refer to: 1) the light portion of a 24 hour period (1:5,14); 2) an extended period of time (2:4); or 3) the 24 hour period which basically refers to a full rotation of the earth on its axis, called evening and morning. This cannot mean an age, but only a day, reckoned by the Jews from sunset to sunset (vv. 8, 13, 19, 23, 31).** “There can be little doubt that **here “day” has its basic sense of a 24-hour period**. The mention of **morning and evening**, the enumeration of the days, and the divine rest on the seventh show that **a week of divine activity is being described here** (Wenham, G. J. (2002). *Vol. 1: Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1-15*. Word Biblical Commentary (19). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.).

**“Day” with numerical adjectives in Hebrew always refers to a 24 hour period. Comparing the order of the week in Ex. 20:8–11 with the creation week confirms this understanding of the time element. Exodus 20 specifies:**  
**Exodus 20:8-11.** [8]“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. [9] Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, [10] but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall **not do any work**, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. [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**. (ESV)

**The whole account of Genesis is written in the normal Hebrew narrative tense.** There is no question that the Genesis account is written as **history**. **“Moses presents the creation story as what actually happened in the time space world we experience.”** (Joseph Pipa, Jr. and David Hall, eds., *Did God Create in Six Days?*, chapter 6, C. John Collins, “Reading Genesis 1:1–2:3 as an Act of Communication: Discourse Analysis and Literal Interpretation” (Taylors, SC: Southern Presbyterian Press/Oak Ridge, TN: Covenant Foundation, 1999), pp. 131, 132, 139.) **Every Biblical author, including Christ**, who looks back to Genesis **treats it as history** (cf. Exodus 20:11; Isaiah 40:26; Jonah 1:9; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11) (Hughes, R. K. (2004). *Genesis : Beginning and blessing*. Preaching the Word (25). Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books.). **Reading of Genesis as historical narrative, the common usage of “Day” as regular solar-lunar cycles, and a straightforward consideration of the genealogies listed, would lend one to agree with Archbishop Ussher of Armagh’s classic calculation**



of **4004 B.C. as the date of creation** (Briscoe, D. S., & Ogilvie, L. J. (1987). *Vol. 1: The Preacher's Commentary Series, Volume 1: Genesis*. The Preacher's Commentary series (27). Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc.)

- Genesis records that **God created things as fully grown**, that is **why when people look back and examine geological, or cosmological phenomena**, they appear much older **than** when they were created. It is very difficult **to account for generations or actions** that are **not** listed or with specific evidences of their origin. It would be an **argument from silence**. **God is not** silent. He has spoken and **He calls all of creation**, including you and me, **to glorify Him**.

**If your life is dark and desolate**, if your life is **out of control**, if there is **no** light in your life, but only darkness, and there seems to be **no** hope—there is! **The very same power** that flung the stars out into the unfathomable, expanding universe while orchestrating life in the irreducible complexity of the cells of your body **will act on your behalf if you come to him**. **He will turn your night into day with a word**. He will **reorder** your **broken** life with a word. He will bring form out of **chaos** with a word. It is his specialty. **Christ is** not only the light, the Creator, and the Son of God—He is the Savior that has come to this world. This very one who **created** the fleeing constellations, who orders the cell, who sustains every atom, came and died on the cross for sins. This one **will save you**. **He can bring a genesis to your life**. That is what he came to do! If you have **never** understood this before, **realize that there is hope** for you. **There is creation power** that can **re-create your life**. There is **eternal life** that will turn the **midnight** of your life into dawn and daylight and life and spring. **This is our God. He gives form. He reorders life. He will do it for you if you call on Him** (Hughes, R. K. (2004). *Genesis: Beginning and blessing*. Preaching the Word (30). Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books.).

(Format Note: Some base commentary from MacArthur, J. J. (1997). *The MacArthur Study Bible* (electronic ed.) (Ge 1:1–5). Nashville: Word Pub.)

**Closing Hymn:**

**Prayer Room Invitation:**

**077 Benediction**

**May the Lord your God**, our help in ages past, And **our hope** for years to come, **Be your guard** while **troubles** last, **And lead you** to His eternal throne. **In Christ we Pray. AMEN.** (*Our God Our Help in Ages Past*, Isaac Watts (1674–1748); TH p. 30)