

THE BEGINNING OF CREATION | GENESIS 1:1-2 | Pastor Mark Bofill | 3/12/2023

I. Who Began Existence? II. What Did God Do? III. How Did God Create? IV. How Long Was the Creation Process? V. When Did God Create? VI. What Was God's Starting Point?

INTRO: As we begin our study in Genesis, I want to clarify that our principles of interpretation will **NOT** be based on **allegory** or **typology**; neither will we try to accommodate the text to any **scientific hypothesis**. We will interpret the text literally and naturally using the following methods: **Historical, Grammatical, Literal.** / **Man has created some incredible things!** – e.g., Golden Gate Bridge, Empire State Building, Panama Canal, Hoover Dam, Historic Buildings, Pyramids and the Great Wall of China – **But nothing can compare with the work of God in creation!** In just one ordinary week, God created everything that exists! And in the very first chapter of Genesis, the Bible tells us about it.

I. WHO BEGAN EXISTENCE? (1b): GOD! – “*In the beginning, God...*” – The Hebrew word for God is {**Heb. “Elohim”**}, a general term used for angels, men, pagan gods and judges. In context it speaks of deity, the **Almighty God** who possesses divine attributes. **To name a few:**

- God is eternally **UNCAUSED** – (Ex 3:14) *God is NOT created! He has always existed.*
- God is **INDEPENDENT** – (Acts 17:24-25) *He is dependent upon no one or no thing!*
- God is **POWERFUL** – *God made everything from nothing and upholds it all.*
- God is **SOVEREIGN** – *All creation comes from God, is ruled by God, and belongs to God and will ultimately give an account before God.*
- God is **TRANSCENDENT** and **IMMANENT** – *He is superior to everything, yet actively at work in His creation, sustaining it and ruling over it.*
- God is **HOLY** – God is without evil/wickedness. (Hab 1:13) *You are of purer eyes than to behold evil and cannot look on wickedness.*
- God is **GRACIOUS** – (Gen 6:8) *From the opening of scripture to the end.*

Grammatically speaking, “Elohim” is a plural noun, which describes two or more... thus indicating that God is also **TRINITARIAN** – (Gen 1:26) *speaks of the Godhead creating.*

A. In both the Old and New Testaments there are many references which credit the eternal Godhead to the work of creation. A few examples are:

- (Psalm 102:25), *Of old You [God] laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands.*
- (John 1:1-3), *In the beginning was the Word [Jesus], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*
- (Psalm 104:30) *You send forth Your [Spirit], they are created; and You renew the face of the earth. (The Holy Spirit is also the Creator of the world, along with the Father and the Son).*

CLOSING THOUGHT: My final thought on this section is a confession of inadequacy on my part! In fact, any attempt of mankind to describe the eternal Godhead, can never do justice to who God actually is. I only word is that **He is Awesome**, but He prefers to go by **the Great I AM**.

II. WHAT DID GOD DO? (1c): CREATE! – “...*God Created...*” The word used is {**Heb. “Bara”**}, One of three terms employed in this section and in scripture generally to describe the divine creative activity. “**Bara**” emphasizes the initiation of the object, not manipulation of it. “**Bara**” possesses the meaning “bringing into existence.” – **Two similar words are: {Heb. “Yatzar”} formed**, and {**Heb. “Asah”} made**. Both words signify construction out of pre-existing materials. (**Yatzar/2:7; 8:19, Ps 33:15 Asah/8:6, Ex 5:16**)

- The fascinating fact about this word, is that **the universe** was not created by God out of pre-existing components. **He began from nothing!** (*He started from scratch*)
- The *Latin* term for “*from nothing*” is {**Lat. “Ex Nihilo”**}.
- The Bible never “expressly states” that God made everything from nothing, but it is implied. In (**Heb 11:3**) we read, “*By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.*”

CLOSING THOUGHT: Humans are incredibly creative, yet we are not “**Ex Nihilo**” creators. So, it is not natural to us for us to believe that God created everything from nothing. It's not even remotely natural; **it's supernatural!** But we understand it by Faith. (**Heb 11:1 NLT**) *Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.*

III. HOW DID GOD CREATE? (3a): WITH A WORD! – “*Then God said...*” God effortlessly spoke everything into existence¹ Notice the repeated phrase in (**vv.3, 6, 9, 14, 24, 26, 29**).

- (**Ps. 33:6-9**) tells us that it was: *By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. ⁷ He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep 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 was done; He commanded, and it stood fast!* (**Ps. 33:6-9**)
- **God’s Word in (v.3)** was so commanding that it **dispelled the darkness** mentioned in (v.2) when God said, “*Let there be light...and there was light.*”

CLOSING THOUGHT: There are many other instances in scripture which demonstrate the **Power and Authority of God’s Spoken Word** (*i.e., Bible Study in itself*), but **our response to such Omnipotence** should be the same the rest of Creation: (**Ps. 148:1-5**) *Praise the Lord... ² Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! ³ Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light! ⁴ Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, and you waters above the heavens! ⁵ Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded, and they were created.*

IV. HOW LONG WAS THE CREATION PROCESS? (2:2): ONE WEEK! – “*And on the seventh day God ended His work...*” After much controversy among scholars, the complete process of creation is best understood to be: “six consecutive 24-hour periods,” aka, “**solar days.**” Each day is distinguished by the phrase, “*Evening and Morning.*”

A. **Other theories exist**, which directly contradict Biblical fact. To name a few:

1. **The Revelatory Day Theory** – This view teaches that God revealed His creative work to Moses ***in a series of visions*** over a six-day period.

2. **The Age-Day Theory** – Many qualified scholars conclude that **the days are not to be taken as literal**, but are representative of long periods of time, perhaps millions of years. (*Many Progressive Creationists hold this view, but it is a forced interpretation of the text*)

3. **The Gap Theory or Ruin-Reconstruction Theory** – This view explains a “first creation” to occur millions-billions of years ago. Then, at some point a **catastrophic event** like the fall of Satan transpired, which left the earth in the ruined state as mentioned in **(v.2)** God then re-created the earth in six-literal days, then repopulated it as recorded in **(Gen 1:3-27)**.

- This view teaches that the **earth is old** because of the first creation, but **man is young** because of the recreation. **But many problems stem from this view.** The most evident is the fact that nowhere in the Bible does it mention two creations. Furthermore, when God finished his creation, after day six He called it “very good.”

B. **Choose your theory!** Mankind only has theories of God’s workings, but God alone knows the who, what, why, when and how of **His marvelous workings: (Rom 11:33-36)** *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! **How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!*** ³⁴ *“For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?”* ³⁵ *“Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?”* ³⁶ **For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.**

V. **WHEN DID GOD CREATE? (1a):** *“In the beginning,”* **Several Thousands Ago!** God... *“...Created the heavens and the earth.”* Science assumes billions of years, the **Scriptures declare** thousands of years.

A. **Chronological Examinations: A “chronology”** is the arrangement of events or dates in the order of their occurrence. Both the Jews and James Usher (*Cir. 1630 AD.*), conclude that the date for Creation suggests a **YOUNG EARTH!**

- Ussher’s chronology dates creation precisely at **4004 BC**.
- Traditional Judaism claims that the year **2010 AD.** is actually year **5770** of creation.
- Biblical genealogies of **(Gen 5 & 10)** were used by both parties to determine the date.
- Most conservative Bible scholars and even most unbelieving naturalistic scientists agreed that the earth as we know it, at most, is **roughly 10,000 years old**.

B. Considering Existence as mentioned in (Genesis 1:1) – In 1903, *Herbert Spencer* revealed that careful examination of this text provides us with: The Matrix of Existence.

MATRIX of EXISTENCE				
<u>TIME</u> <i>beginning</i>	<u>FORCE</u> <i>God</i>	<u>ACTION</u> <i>created</i>	<u>SPACE</u> <i>the heavens</i>	<u>MATTER</u> <i>the earth</i>

- This verse clearly teaches that God created the **SPACE – MASS – TIME continuum** which is the only viable answer to our existence.

CLOSING THOUGHT: When anyone contemplates the complexity of creation and existence, truth will lead them to just believe God’s account. In just ten transliterated words, He explains it all! *In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the earth.* **Genesis 1:1**

VI. WHAT WAS GOD’S STARTING POINT (2): As we move into verse two, keep in mind that this too is a an extremely controversial statement. “...*the earth was without form and void...*” – How can something that was **just created** (*implying form and substance*) have at the same time neither form nor substance (*i.e., formless and void*)? This seems to imply an incomplete or partially completed state, which is contrary to God's creative process described in this chapter. – **But God’s word never contradicts!** This was written in a way to “set the stage” for God's first creative activities. It's not a pause in creation, but an explanation of God's handiwork as He forms, then energizes by His Spirit.

- A. The Earth:** The *{Heb. “Eretz”}*, refers to the 25% of **dry land** which humans’ dwell on. The English translated word “*Earth*”, refers to the whole planet.
- B. Without Form and Void:** The text clearly teaches that the skies and the land were without form and void before God prepared them for humans.
 - 1. Grammatically:** The word *{Heb. “Tohu”}*, *without form* and *{Heb. “Bohu”}*, *void* is used elsewhere in scripture in reference to uninhabited land or wasteland (cf. **Deut 32:10**)
 - 2. Mythologically:** Ancient Greek Cosmology believed that *in the beginning, there was only Chaos, which was the gaping emptiness. Then, either all by themselves or out of the formless void, sprang forth 3 primordial deities: Gaea (earth), Tartarus (Underworld) and Eros (Love). Once Love existed, the two female deities were able to procreate and shape everything known and unknown in the universe.* (*Greekmythology.com/the creation*)
 - 3. Scripturally:** Isaiah reveals **God’s Intention** for created work: (**Isa 45:18**) *For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: “I am the Lord, and there is no other.”*

C. **Darkness upon the face of the deep:** The “formlessness” of the **deep** mentioned in verse two is intriguing, indeed! **Morris**, refers to this as *“a watery suspension, wherewith the Godhead would then perform the next steps of creation.”* (Morris)

1. **In Proverbs 8, we see creation through the lens of wisdom** (*personified*). She provides a front row seat to experience what transpired. **(tt. Prov 8:24-27)** *When there were no depths I was brought forth, When there were no fountains abounding with water. ²⁵ Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills, I was brought forth; ²⁶ While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, Or the primal dust of the world. ²⁷ When He prepared the heavens, I was there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep.* (Imagine this scene!)

2. **Morris comment on this is deeply insightful:** *“The fact that this compass (circle) had to be set on the face of the deep shows that the face of the deep originally had no such sphericity. It was formless, exactly as intimated in Genesis 1:2. Elements of matter and molecules of water were present, but not yet energized. The force of gravity was not yet functioning to draw such particles together into a coherent mass with a definite form. Neither were the electromagnetic forces yet in operation and everything was in darkness. This physical universe had come into existence, but everything was still dark – no form, no motion, no light.”* (Morris - The Genesis Record, pg. 51, 3rd para).

D. **The Spirit...Hovered:** The Hebrew word for **Spirit** is {**Heb. “Ruach”**}, which can be translated **“breath”** or **“wind.”** – This is a direct reference to the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit! **YES...He is the active power of God present within creation.**

- The term **“hovered,”** does not imply sitting and waiting, or floating above the formless earth. It is better described as **the Active Force,** which energized the electromagnetic and gravitational forces of all matter.
- Energy cannot create itself, thus we see here that **the first impartation of energy** within the universe is attributed to the moving of the spirit of God!
- *When we read the Genesis creation story from a Trinitarian perspective, we can clearly see the Holy Spirit's role as the one who makes the divine work of creation flawless.* - J. Piper

Closing Thought: This this **BEGINNING OF CREATION.** God formed it for you! – **Augustine** said, *“The Bible is not a scientific textbook to answer the ever-changing inquiries of science, but rather a theological textbook seeking to reveal God and the means by which HE SAVES US!*