

In the Beginning God Created Outline

Genesis 1:1-2

- I. Introduction: Apollo 8
 - A. The intersection of science and faith
 - B. Genesis 1:1-2 demands one of two choices:
 - 1. “I don’t believe it”
 - 2. “I believe it”
- II. To deny the Biblical account of creation is to give up on the entire Bible.
 - A. The entire Bible rests on the foundation of Genesis 1
 - 1. Exodus 20:11; Job 38:4; Psalm 8:3, 96:5, 102:25, 115:15, 121:2, 134:3, 136:5, 146:6, 148:4-5; Jeremiah 10:12, 32:17, 51:15; Mark 13:19; John 1:1-3; Acts:4:24, 17:24; Romans 1:19-20; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9; 2 Peter 3:5; Revelation 10:6, 21:6, 22:13.
- III. The Beginning (Verse 1).
 - A. The Bible begins with a concrete, firm, factual statement: *In the beginning*.
 - B. The “beginning” is not a “time” within space and time.
 - C. Ancient thought:
 - 1. Greek—Time is circular.
 - 2. Hebrew—Time is linear.
 - a. The Bible travels from a point of beginning to a point of ending of creation.
- IV. God (Verse 1).
 - A. Before the beginning was God—the first cause.
 - B. The name of God in Genesis 1—Elohim.
 - 1. Plural—The “Majestic Plural”
 - 2. His name reflects His greatness, His “Almightiness” Psalm 104:1-4.

- V. The creation of all things (Verse 1).
 - A. God created *Ex Nihilo*—Out of nothing.
 - B. The three possibilities of origin:
 - 1. Matter is eternal.
 - 2. Matter is not eternal but it was generated spontaneously.
 - 3. All matter came into existence by one who created it into existence.
 - C. Classic philosophical maxim: '*Ex nihilo nihil fit*' 'Out of nothing, nothing comes'.
 - 1. Creation demands a creator.
 - a. Biblical creation: *Nothing + God = Everything*.
 - b. Secular "Science origin: *Nothing + Nothing + Chance = Everything*.
- VI. The condition of the earth (Verse 2).
 - A. Out of all creation, God's focus was on the earth.
 - B. God first created the ingredients of the cosmos.
 - 1. The earth:
 - a. Was formless (Tohu).
 - b. And Void (Bohu).
 - c. It was dark—no light
 - d. The Holy Spirit was there!
- VII. Conclusion
 - A. The Creator is...
 - 1. Jesus! John 1:1-3
 - B. Creation demands His Lordship.
 - 1. Jesus is not only the creator, but He is the sustainer of the cosmos.
 - a. Colossians 1:15-17

CREATION DEMANDS HIS LORDSHIP, HIS SOVEREIGNTY OVER OUR LIVES.

- b. Isaiah 45:9 "God the potter, we the clay".

c. Romans 9:19-24

In the Beginning God Created Pastoral Notes

Genesis 1:1-2

[About three weeks ago as I was making some notes for this morning's message... after reading Genesis 1...my thoughts immediately went back 55 years ago to one of the greatest scientific/technology achievements of that day...I was 14 and remember it vividly... I watched every bit of it on our black and white television set...When I made the decision to begin with this...I had no idea of how relevant it would be this morning... I'll tell you why in a minute.]

On Christmas Eve, December 24, 1968, the crew of Apollo 8, were the first humans to travel to the Moon...not landing on the moon...that would be Apollo 11... but go to the moon.

Apollo 8 was the first crewed spacecraft to leave Earth's gravitational sphere of influence, and the first human spaceflight to reach the Moon. The crew orbited the Moon ten times without landing, and then departed safely back to Earth.

Pushing the limits of the most advanced science and technologies of the time, Nasa achieved President John F Kennedy's 1961 national goal of sending an American to the Moon before the end of the decade.

Prior to leaving on the flight...the crew desired to draft a message to everyone back at earth from the moon... it was Christmas Eve... and they initially thought of a message of peace...*peace on earth*... but our country was in nothing close to peace... one of the most deadly years of the Viet Nam War...

So they drafted something else.

When astronauts Bill Anders, Jim Lovell and Frank Borman... on their ninth orbit of the moon... looking through their tiny porthole window from inside the Apollo 8 spacecraft... looking back at planet earth...broke out in what I would call worship...all three men... this is what they said... the transcript:

Bill Anders

"We are now approaching lunar sunrise, and for all the people back on Earth, the crew of Apollo 8 has a message that we would like to send to you.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

**And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.
And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.**

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

Jim Lovell

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

Frank Borman

And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called the Seas: and God saw that it was good.

And from the crew of Apollo 8, we close with good night, good luck, a Merry Christmas – and God bless all of you, all of you on the good Earth.

When I read through that the first time... I thought “*now there’s a cooperation between God’s Word and Science!*”...man used science to its limit in that day but kept it completely in the context of Almighty God... Creator and Sovereign over all the cosmos...

It took eight years, 10 practice-run missions, more than 400,000 engineers, scientists and technicians to achieve that mission... and yet... they acknowledged that God simply spoke the universe into existence.

[This is so relevant to us today because Bill Anders a week ago last Friday died in an airplane crash at age 90]

We begin what has been for me a highly anticipated series through the first three chapters of Genesis... the book of beginnings... of origins... as we saw last week the basis for all of life... the foundations of life...

This morning we will concentrate on just the first two verses of this magnificent, profound book... let me read them again:

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 And the earth was a formless and void (desolate emptiness,) and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

There is nothing ambiguous in those words... there is no room for misinterpretation... no room for allegory or metaphors... it is a straight forward statement which begs one of two possible choices...

1. You say "I don't believe it"...or
2. "I believe it."

If you fall into camp number one... listen to what I have to say and challenge your thoughts... If you are in camp number two... you claim to believe it... listen to what I have to say to make sure you really do believe it...because these two verses are the most controversial verses in all of the Bible... and...Genesis 1:1-2 are foundational to your Christian beliefs.... The entire Bible rests on these two concrete foundational verses.

Those words beg for controversy... beg for confrontation in our day.... They did back with Apollo 8...By the time the Apollo spacecraft splashed down in the ocean... Madalyn Murray O'Hair, founder of American Atheists, responded by suing the United States government, alleging violations of the First Amendment.....

Even within the Christian church... Genesis 1 has been met with tension... *It's just a Hebrew poem not to be taken literally...it's allegory.. it's symbolic...it seems to contradict "science" ... evolution obviously is the truth... But we need to consider that God did it all through the evolutionary process... not this literal creation.*

the truth is... it is foundational to everything that follows it in God's Word...from Genesis to Revelation...

If you give up on the Biblical creation account of Genesis 1... you give up on the entire Bible... just a few examples:

Exodus 20:11 **For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and everything that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day; for that reason the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.**

Job 38:4 [God speaking] **Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding...**

Psalm 8:3 **When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have set in place;** I have 15 more Psalms that say the same thing... God created the heavens and the earth.

Psalm 148:4-5 **Praise Him, highest heavens, And the waters that are above the heavens! 5 They are to praise the name of the Lord, For He commanded and they were created.**

Jeremiah 10:12 **It is He who made the earth by His power, Who established the world by His wisdom; And by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens.**

Jeremiah 32:17 **‘Oh, Lord God! Behold, You Yourself have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You,**

I'm working my way through the entire Bible skipping over dozens of similar passages... *but maybe all this is just in the Old Testament?*... where science was still pretty primitive!... Anything in the New Testament?... hundreds of years later?

Mark 13:19 **For those days will be such a time of tribulation as has not occurred since the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will again.**

John 1... we'll get that later... Acts 4:24 [the early church acknowledge Genesis 1] 24 **And when they heard this, they raised their voices to God with one mind and said, “Lord, it is You who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything that is in them,**

Acts 17:24 **The God who made the world and everything that is in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made by hands;**

Romans 1:19-20 **because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood by what has been made,** so that they are without excuse.

1 Corinthians 8:6 **9 and to enlighten all people as to what the plan of the mystery is which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things;** skipping, skipping... How about the last book of the Bible... does the truth of Genesis 1 carry all the way to the end?

Revelation 10:5-6 **Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven, 6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that there will no longer be a delay**

Revelation 22:13 **I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.**...you see?... all of Scripture rests on the truths laid out in Genesis 1...this may be an uncomfortable fact... **but if you reject the creation account in Genesis 1... you reject the Bible.**

so let's start at the beginning.... I have some headings...the first one is

1. The Beginning

1. In the beginning...the very first three words of God's Word. Note the Bible does not begin with "*Once upon a time*"... or "*A long, long time ago*"...or 1.48 Billion years ago... or 4.8 billion years ago... it begins with a firm...simple...confident... factual statement... **In the beginning...**

There is a beginning of everything!

This **beginning** is not a time within time and space... this is BEFORE time and space... time and space had not yet been created...they had a beginning... In ancient Greek thought... and much thought today... time is "circular"... there is no point of beginning...

The universe... the cosmos has always existed... and it exists in a circular reality... always repeating... never beginning and never ending...But Hebrew thought... which was formed by the revelation of God through men Like Moses... Isaiah... Jeremiah... David... Hebrew thought is linear rather than circular... there is a point of beginning... then all of life travels on a line eventually to an end...

And the Bible travels from the beginning to the very end... and beyond

The idea of a time... but not a time because it didn't exist yet... but for the sake of the limited human mind.... The idea of a time when time and space did not exist is something science cannot comprehend...we can't comprehend it...it is beyond the scope of science... science is limited to what can be observed... duplicated... repeated... falsifiable...

The Bible begins with tension with the science world with its very first words.

Science cannot confirm...explain... anything miraculous... it cannot answer the question of the ages "*why is there something rather than nothing?*"...in that it can't acknowledge a time when there was *nothing*... nothing....

But the Bible says... there was a beginning... **a marker...a pinpoint... that on one side there was nothing... and then...on the other side out of nothing everything became**...so... there was a beginning of all things...the cosmos..... **but there was something when there was nothing!**

2. God

In the beginning God... Not only was there a beginning to everything... God was there at that beginning... already there!... He is the first cause that science is searching frantically for... **In the beginning God...** God existed before the beginning of everything... God is eternal.

Think about that... there was no atmosphere... no air... no material anything... no anything.. no heaven... no life of any kind... no space... there was not one molecule...or anything even smaller...there was no energy force... there was nothing!... But the Godhead.

The Bible does not begin with the proof of the existence of God... the Bible declares the existence of God!... In fact... the first hearers of these words of Moses **assumed the existence** of God... They would not have paused here... **In the beginning God...** they would have completed the verse because *“of course there is a God!”*...

Of course... this is the first time God is mentioned in the Bible... we understand that the writers of the Bible used different names for God depending on what they were revealing about God... YAHWEH... Adonai...here is a very special name... Elohim...

The most common name for God in the Old Testament... Used over 2500 times in the “Tanakh” or the Jewish Bible... interesting because Elohim is grammatically plural rather than singular... “El” = God...”ohim” is “many”... but there is only one God right?...

Deuteronomy 6:4... The Shema... says **“Hear, Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!**... Elohim is what is called **“The Majestic Plural”**... sometimes called “The Royal Plural”... it’s a linguistic tool for emphasis of greatness...It has been used throughout history...outside of the Bible as well...

In fact... a good example of that would be back in the day of Queen Victoria... somebody told her a very tasteless joke and she responded *“We are not amused!”*... basically... *You offended the great Queen.... “We”*

A Majestic Plural emphasizes something that honors someone... God is infinitely faceted... so to put His name in the plural is bringing all those many facets together in One!

His name reflects His greatness... His all-powerfulness... His *omnipotence*... All knowingness... *Omniscience*... His ever presentness *Omnipresence*... His holiness... His great infinite love... His justice...and even His great wrath...This is where we get the idea of God ALMIGHTY.... All His attributes are there at this amazing creation.

Psalms 104:1-4

Bless the Lord, my soul!

Lord my God, You are very great;

You are clothed with splendor and majesty,

**2 Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak,
Stretching out heaven like a tent curtain.**

3 He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters;

He makes the clouds His chariot;

He walks on the wings of the wind;

4 He makes the winds His messengers,

Flaming fire His ministers.

Psalm 90... Which Gabe read in its entirety was the only known Psalm written by Moses...the oldest of the Psalms... the writer of Genesis... **(2) Before the mountains were born** (the Beginning!) **Or You brought forth the earth and the world...Even from everlasting to everlasting...YOU ARE GOD!**

This is worship isn't it?

3. The Creation of all things

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...Elohim bara... God created...that Hebrew word doesn't just mean God created something... it is a word ONLY used of God... and it carries with it creating something OUT OF NOTHING... ex nihilo...

Of course... that's the rub isn't it... there's a lot of rub already 1. There is a **beginning** to the cosmos. 2. There is a **God**... and 3. He **created the cosmos**... and HE DID IT FROM **NOTHING**.

the idea of something coming from nothing is absurd, unscientific, and illogical. If something exists, it must either have the power of being in itself or it must come from something that has the power of being in itself. Otherwise, nothing at all could exist.

Three possibilities...Three ways to look at the origins of the cosmos:

1. Matter is eternal—always existed... no beginning...so matter is eternal (eternity—a concept science has difficulty with!)...(the predominant theory is “Cosmic Inflation”) all culminating with a small dense ball of matter exploding creating the universe...through a process of **time and chance**... **the problem with chance is that chance doesn't cause anything!**

2. Matter is not eternal but it was generated spontaneously—there was a moment when there was no matter but there was energy... then through some spontaneous combustion there was matter. No cause.

3. All matter came into existence by one who created it into existence.

Those are the only possibilities... **and all three of those possibilities requires SOMETHING eternal in it**... either matter was eternal... or the ingredients for matter was eternal... or a creator that is eternal....

Science is going to embrace one of those three perspectives... all of which transcend the ability and method of science... but one of those three will be what you will learn in science class... but it won't be the last one!

But God created out of nothing everything.

Science doesn't...can't grapple with this idea... but the philosophers throughout history have... R.C. Sproul was a theologian but his early training was in philosophy...he said something in a conference years ago that was so profound... you'll have to pay attention to get it...it is simple yet profound.

"If anything exists now, then there could never have been a time when there was nothing... because the most fundamental maxim of all reason, all science and all philosophy is the maxim... 'Ex nihilo nihil fit' ... 'Out of nothing, nothing comes' simple...profound!

"If there was ever a time when there was nothing...referring to before creation... before the cosmos... that would include God... if ever there was a time when there was NOTHING... including God... the only thing there could possibly be now... could not possibly be... now.

If there was NOTHING before creation, it would be impossible to have a creation... but there was something... GOD!....so... **CREATION DEMANDS A CREATOR!**

If we were to put all of this in an equation... it would look like this... NOTHING + GOD = EVERYTHING. Science suggests NOTHING +NOTHING+ CHANCE = EVERYTHING... why is it so absurd to believe in a creator...God?

By what means did God accomplish the feat of creation ex nihilo? **By His speech.** Augustine called this *the divine imperative or fiat*....A "fiat" is from the Latin for "let it be done," the word fiat is a binding edict issued by a person in command... So Augustine called this the fiat of God... God spoke the words "**Let there be**" (Gen. 1:3, 6, 14)—meaning "*There must be*"—and things appeared.

Psalm 33:6

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made...And by the breath of His mouth all their lights.

Hebrews 11:3 **By faith we understand that the world has been created *by the word of God* so that what is seen has not been made out of things that are visible.**

It is said that man can only make things, only God can create things... man can't create anything! All that man can do is take what is there and make things out from it...A man can make an omelet but he can't make an egg... God creates from nothing!

Do you see the awesomeness of all this?... so amazing... so big!...**Creation demands a creator... a creator implies a designer... a designer implies purpose... and purpose gives worth**.... We like the universe have been created by a creator who designed with propose so we have a purpose and we have worth....this is foundational.

Remove the creator...there's no design... you remove purpose...remove the purpose for life... you have nihilistic chaos, meaninglessness and futility.... Well.. we need to get to verse 2.

3. The Condition of the Earth

Read verse 2

Notice the focus of creation was the earth... not Neptune... Jupiter... the moon... or any other object out in space... it is the earth.... God singled out the earth... theologians have compared and described this creation earth as a “theater” where God displays His glory and plays out His work of redemption of man.

What we see in verse 2 are all the ingredients needed for God to create... God created the ingredients that He will need to create His creation... Look at the ingredients...

1. **What He first created was “formless”**... it was just a bunch of stuff...random molecules... without shape... lifeless... I picture chaos...

2. **It was “void”**... meaning ...empty of anything useful... I want to teach you some great Hebrew... Seminary for me was over 40 years ago... I took Hebrew... Until recently... the only Hebrew words I could remember were these two words.... Are you ready?

The Hebrew words for formless and void are Tohu and Bohu.... Tohu and Bohu... lets try it together!

So God first brings into existence the building materials...think of an artist... a painter... he first sets up his canvas... nothing on it... but he has an idea of what he wants on it... he takes his palette and squeezes the different colors he plans on using onto the palette...

You've seen Bob Ross right?... one of his techniques was to take an empty white canvas and paint it solid black... then he would apply his colors... the reason he did that was the colors would be more vibrant being painted on black... that's what I picture here.

It says **darkness was over the surface of the deep...** light doesn't come until verse 3... so all is completely dark... and it was covered with water... **the surface of the deep** and **the surface of the waters....**

There is some activity on this formless and void mass... **the Spirit of God was hovering** over it... the Holy Spirit...third person of the Trinity... the Triune God is at work in all of creation... God didn't just create the cosmos then leave it alone... He was involved... He was there!...hovering over the not yet formed earth.

That word "hovering" is used only in one other place in the Bible... Deuteronomy 32... a poem which speaks of God's care for Israel using the metaphor of an eagle:

**He found him in a desert land,
And in the howling wasteland of a wilderness;
He encircled him, He cared for him,
He guarded him as the apple of His eye.
11 As an eagle stirs up its nest,
And hovers over its young,
He spread His wings, He caught them,
He carried them on His pinions.
12 The Lord alone guided him,
And there was no foreign god with him.**

The same word... denotes God's loving care for His creation. God has this black canvas... and His palette and brush is ready for creating... So... to conclude this morning with a few points...

1. The Creator is...

I mentioned John 1:1 earlier and that we would visit it soon... well soon has arrived...turn to John 1... notice the first three words... **In the beginning...** sound familiar?... John 1 has been called the Genesis of the New Testament... listen carefully:

Read verses 1-3

Did you catch that?... Jesus is the creator!... it was Jesus who created the canvas, the palette, the tubes of paint and created the painting of the universe....

Read verses 4-5

Jesus is the designer of creation... giver of life... In Christ there is life....perhaps the most profound verse in all of Scripture... **Read 14**

2. Creation demands His Lordship

The fact of a Creator...God... who designed and sustains us...did I mention that not only God--Christ created the world *but He sustains it?*... He holds it all together...

Colossians 1:15-17

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation: 16 for by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or rulers, or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

He's more than just a creator who brought the world into existence... He controls it... He sustains it...He is sovereign over all of it... He is Lord over it!... **CREATION DEMANDS HIS LORDSHIP, HIS SOVEREIGNTY OVER OUR LIVES.**

We are all each... **A piece of pottery among the other earthenware pottery pieces!** All created by the same potter... **Will the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?'** Isaiah 45:9

Romans 9:19-24 ...**who are you, you foolish person, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? 21 Or does the potter not have a right over the clay (Lordship!),** to make from the same lump one object for honorable use, and another for common use?

... **And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon objects of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24 namely us, whom He also called, not only from among Jews, but also from among Gentiles**

He is Lord.. we need to acknowledge Him as Lord of our lives... we need to join the ancients who "assumed" God... commentator John Gibson wrote this regarding these two verses:

"Far from being an invitation to give God the first place in our lives and feel good for doing it... the very first verse of the Bible is a searing rebuke from a God-filled past to a godless present, from an ancient world that could not think at all without the idea of God...to a modern world that regards the idea of God as an optional extra...That is what sermons on this great verse should be saying.

A reason the Bible begins with the creation of the world by creator God is to be a reminder to us of His sovereignty over all the earth and all that is within it... we need this reminder because we forget...

Even though the history of the world is linear... some things repeat... history:

1. God created, sustains and controls
2. Man forgets!
3. God reminds.
4. A day is coming when no one will ever forget again!