

## In the Beginning: Genesis 1:1-2

**Main Idea:** Before anything existed, God already was; the eternal, self-existent Creator is the first truth of Scripture and the foundation of all we know.

### **I. Before All Things | Genesis 1:1a**

Genesis is the book of beginnings. The Greek translators of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, titled it Genesis, a word meaning "origin" or "generation," while the Hebrew title is simply *bereshit*, the book's opening word, translated "in the beginning." Authorship has historically been attributed to Moses, on both internal and contextual grounds, and the rest of Scripture names the first five books of the Bible the books of Moses. More importantly, the Lord Jesus Himself treats the Pentateuch as the writing of Moses and as real history rather than fable (Matt. 19:4-6; John 5:46-47). **This is important because Christianity is not built on man's speculation or religious imagination but on historical revelation.** God really did create, He really did make man in His image, sin really did enter the world, and God really did promise a Redeemer. Believers would do well to read Genesis as what it claims to be, the truthful account God has given of His own work.

The opening words of Scripture are among the most significant words ever written: "In the beginning, God." Before the Bible tells us anything about creation, humanity, sin, redemption, or history, it focuses our attention to God Himself. The subject of the first sentence is not man but God. This is important because Scripture is ultimately God's revelation of Himself. **From the opening verse onward, God is the source, center, and purpose of the biblical story.** The phrase "in the beginning" refers to the beginning of all created things. It is the beginning of the heavens and the earth, the beginning of matter, the beginning of history, and even the beginning of time itself. Yet it is not the beginning of God. Before there was a universe, before there were stars, planets, angels, or people, God already existed. Psalm 90:2 declares, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." Unlike everything else in existence, God has no beginning and no end. **God does not derive His existence, power, or life from anything outside Himself; He is the uncaused Cause, holding in Himself the life He gives to everything else (John 5:26; Acts 17:25, 28).** God alone exists eternally. He is not bound by time because time itself exists by His decree. He does not enter history as though He were one character among many. Rather, all of history unfolds according to His sovereign purpose.

Because God is eternal and self-existent, He is also unchanging. Created things change because they are influenced by forces outside themselves. People grow, learn, age, and decay. Circumstances change and emotions fluctuate. God does not. Malachi 3:6 states, "For I the LORD do not change." **The God who created the world in Genesis is the same God who called Abraham, delivered Israel, sent His Son, and reigns today. His character, promises, purposes, and perfections remain constant.** The church has historically referred to this truth as God's aseity. God exists of Himself and depends upon nothing outside Himself. He receives life from no source because He is life itself. When Moses asked God for His name, God replied, "I AM WHO I AM" (Ex. 3:14). God is the self-existent One whose being is not derived from anyone or anything else. **God's unchanging and self-existent nature should give believers stability knowing that God's promises will stand even when the world doesn't.**

These truths have profound implications for believers. Paul proclaimed in Athens that God is not "served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything" (Acts 17:25). God did not create the world because He was lonely, incomplete, or lacking something. He did not save sinners because He needed them. God is perfectly complete within Himself. **Therefore, His acts of creation and redemption are displays of His grace and glory.** The fact that the self-sufficient God chooses to show mercy to sinners should fill His people with humility, gratitude, and worship.

#### **To Ponder:**

1. Many people today build their identity around personal achievement, experiences, or self-expression. How does Genesis 1:1 challenge a worldview that places man at the center rather than God?
2. Why is God's eternal existence foundational to every other doctrine in Scripture? What doctrines begin to unravel if God is not eternal and self-existent?
3. How should the truth that God never changes affect the way you respond to uncertainty, suffering, and major life transitions? What areas of life do you feel tempted to depend on temporal things rather than the unchanging God?

## II. Over All Things | Genesis 1:1b-2

The sentence now turns from who God is to what God does: He "created." The Hebrew verb is *bara*, and in this form Scripture reserves it for God alone. It speaks to God's divine act of creation out of nothing. **The act of creation establishes His authority, ownership, and sovereignty over everything that exists.** Human beings can build, shape, invent, and arrange existing materials, but only God creates out of nothing. Before creation, there was no preexisting matter waiting to be shaped. There was only God. By His sovereign will and power, He brought all things into existence. Hebrews 11:3 explains that "what is seen was not made out of things that are visible." Creation is not the result of chance, accident, or necessity. It is the deliberate work of the Creator. This truth guards us against two errors: it denies that the universe is a piece or extension of God, and it denies that some other material shares in his eternal nature.

The phrase "the heavens and the earth" refers to the entirety of creation. It is Scripture's way of describing everything that exists. Every galaxy, every ocean, every living creature, every natural law, and every atom owes its existence to God. Nothing exists apart from Him. Because God created all things, He possesses rightful authority over all things. **Creation and lordship cannot be separated. The Creator is necessarily the ruler of His creation.** What God made belongs to God, and what belongs to God is ruled by God. When God was done with creation, his rule didn't end on the sixth day. There is no evidence in scripture that allows for the idea that God created all things and then stepped back to let it play out on its own. He intentionally and consistently "upholds the universe by the word of his power" (Hebrews 1:3).

Unlike the false gods of the surrounding nations, the God of Genesis does not struggle against rival deities or battle cosmic monsters to establish His rule. He simply speaks, and creation comes into existence. Psalm 33:9 declares, "For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm." **There is no gap between God's will and God's power. What He purposes, He accomplishes.** The New Testament further reveals that creation was accomplished through the eternal Son of God. John intentionally echoes Genesis when he writes, "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1). He then explains that "all things were made through him" (John 1:3). Likewise, Paul teaches that "by him all things were created" (Col. 1:16). The Father creates through the Son, and Genesis 1:2 introduces the Spirit of God actively present at creation. Even in the opening verses of Scripture, we see the foundations of the doctrine of the Trinity. **The beauty of this truth is that Christ, the eternal Word through whom all things were created, also entered creation as a man to redeem his creation.** Through His perfect life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection, Christ accomplishes a new creation in those who trust Him.

Verse 2 describes the earth as "without form and void," covered in darkness and deep waters. This is not a picture of God struggling against chaos but of an unfinished creation awaiting His ordering work. The earth is unformed and unfilled, prepared for the creative activity that follows. In the midst of this, "the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." The Hebrew term for 'hovering' conveys the idea of gentle, protective movement. Deuteronomy 32:11 uses the same imagery to describe an eagle caring for its young. The God who transcends creation is not distant from it. **He is both transcendent and personal. He is infinitely above creation, yet intimately involved with it. He rules over the universe without being separated from His creation.** The God who created all things is also the God who cares for His creation.

Genesis begins with God because everything begins with God. Before there was a world, there was God. Before there was light, there was God. Before there was humanity, there was God. The eternal Creator stands before all things and reigns over all things. **Just as God brought light into the darkness of the original creation, He brings spiritual light into darkened hearts through the Gospel. The God who created all things from nothing is fully capable of giving new life to dead sinners.**

### To Ponder:

4. How does the doctrine of creation challenge the idea that we are free to define our own purposes and priorities? How should the truth that every part of creation belongs to God affect the way you use your time, resources, abilities, and relationships?
5. Are there areas of your life where you function more as though you belong to yourself than to God? What would submission to the Creator look like in those areas?
6. How does the doctrine of creation encourage believers to trust God's power to transform people who seem spiritually hopeless? What impact should these truths have on our evangelism and Gospel witness?