

Genesis Foundations Series

Genesis 1:1a – Is God Your Foundation? Everything Begins with God

- I. The Bible Shows Us that Creation is about GOD – Creation is God-FOUNDED (He exists, is the Creator; Creation about God)
- II. The Bible Shows Us that Creation is for GOD – Creation is God-FOCUSED – *Life Principle: God is to be Our Central Focus!*

Genesis 1:1a – “In the beginning, God”

7 “Beginnings” Referred to in the Bible:

- (1) Eternity Past (Prior to Creation) – (2) The Beginning of the World (Creation) – (3) The Beginning of Jesus’ Earthly Ministry – (4) The Beginning of the Church (Pentecost) (5) The Beginning of Paul’s Ministry – (6) Title or Characteristic of Jesus Christ – (7) The Point of Conversion of Believers – *Life Principle: Begin @ the Beginning – witnessing, instruction, history, education...*

What Does the Term “God” (Elohim) Indicate?

1. God is the Subject of the Bible (the existence of God is assumed)
2. God (*elohim*) is the standard Hebrew term for deity, and is also used for pagan gods, angels, men, and judges.
3. God (*elohim*) is plural possibly the form called the plural of majesty or intensity which can mean “the fullness of deity”
4. God (*elohim*) also hints at the plurality of persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – The Trinity.

There are only two choices regarding the origin of the universe: (1) eternal mass, or (2) an Eternal Maker

Genesis 1:1b – “...God created...”

“GOD CREATED” – The Concept of Creation – *God Created EVERYTHING Ultimately Out of NOTHING*

The Usage of the Word “Create” (bārā) (6x in creation account) Its subject is always God (men do not create); used only of God’s activity with no presence of existing material; refers to a new activity; it refers to the product, not the material from which it is made. The context indicates that creation was *ex nihilo* (“out of nothing”). *Create* does not necessarily mean an altogether new thing. “Create” / “make” used interchangeably for the creation of human life. (*bārā*) is singular. One God created everything; but is not part of creation.

Rejects 9 Views: Atheism; Pantheism; Polytheism; Radical materialism; Naturalism; Fatalism; Dualism; Humanism; Nihilism

“THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH” *Life Principle: Identify the Basic Elements and Start There*

- A. **Where is God going to put this creation? Heavens!** → SPACE (*Heavens (1) vs Heaven (8) vs heavens (9)*)
In Genesis 1:1, the term refers to the component of space in the basic space-mass-time universe. (Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record*)
The Third Heaven – The Presence of God and Home of the Angels (2 Cor 4 12:2-4)
The Second Heaven – The Realm of Outer Space (Ps 19:1)
The First Heaven – The Atmosphere or “Air” (The Sky Where Birds Fly) – Gen 1:6-8
- B. **What was God going to make things out of? Earth!** → MATTER (*Earth in v. 1 is not quite the earth of v. 10!*)
- C. **How did God Do This?** → **By His WORD!** (Ps 33:6-9; 148:1-6) – Ps 33:6 “*By the word of the LORD the heavens were made...*”

When Was the Beginning?: Three Views of the Timing of Verse 1

- (1) Previous Creation – Verse 1 refers to the heavens & earth which existed prior to the creation account. *This view is held by those who may hold to either theistic evolution or the gap theory.*
- (2) Preview of Creation – Verse 1 is a summary statement of what is to follow: “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, the details of which are to follow.*”
- (3) Part of Creation on Day 1 – Verse 1 is part of Day 1. *The heavens and the earth are the first components of creation as God begins to create on Day 1. The evidence:* (A) Genesis 2:1-4 Includes Verse 1 as Part of the 6 Days of Creation (Gen 2:1-4); (B) Conjunctions and Connectives Require a Single Day for Verses 1-2; (C); The Presence of Earth & Water Components on Day 2 is Explained Only by Verse 1; (D) Other Passages Combine the Heavens & the Earth in the 6 Days of Creation (or their Events; e.g. Ex 20:8-11)

A literal 6-day creation defines the method of interpretation of the Bible, and lays the foundation the rest of Scripture.

Incomplete Creation: God Takes His Time (1:2a-b)

1. **The Subject** – “The Earth”
2. **The Situation** – Three Conditions (the condition immediately after v. 1):
 - a. **Without form** – shapeless – *tohu* – unfashioned – uninhabitable (Is 45:18 – God wasn’t finished)
 - b. **Void** – lifeless – *bohu* – empty – uninhabited (3x – Used only with *tohu*)
 - c. **Dark** – lightless – unpowered
3. **The Strategy**
 - a. God begins with the simple and moves to the complex.
 - b. God was at the beginning of several phases – creation had only just begun.
 - c. God uses six days to address each condition.
4. **Summary Observations**
 - a. God works by processes. (Matt 28:20; Rom 12:1-2; Col 2:6-7; 3:1ff)
 - b. God’s today is not His tomorrow. (2 Pet 3:1-13; Rev 21-22)
 - c. God has His plan and His pace. (2 Pet 3:8; Moses)

The Protector and Power of Creation – The Holy Spirit (1:2c)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)

Spirit or Wind? (Are we reading into the text?)

It could be translated “mighty wind” here. It is not “wind” here for at least 3 reasons (adapted from Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, pp. 111-112):

1. **None of the other eighteen occurrences of this phrase in the OT means anything like “mighty wind.”** (e.g. The next appearance of this phrase is Ex 31:3, where Bezalel is filled with the [same phrase] in order to be equipped to build the tabernacle. Obviously a “tempestuous wind” did not come upon Bezalel.)
2. **It is true that there are some plausible examples in the Hebrew Bible of *elohim* used as a superlative, that is, as an adjective rather than a noun. But even these examples are ambiguous.** Thus, in Gen 23:6, is Abraham addressed as “a prince of God” or as “a mighty prince”? In 30:8 does Rachel wrestle with “wrestlings of God” or with “mighty wrestlings”? Is Nineveh “a great city of God” or “an exceedingly great city” (Jonah 3:3)? But even if the translation were transparent in these three references, this would not allow one to apply the same force to *elohim* in Gen 1:2c, for two reasons. First, how could the reader of the original or the translator be expected to differentiate the *elohim* of v. 2c from all other occurrences of *elohim* in the first chapter? Second, taking *elohim* as superlative, and as a further descriptive part of the chaos of formlessness and darkness, places *elohim* in v. 2c in opposition to the *elohim* who in v. 1 creates the heaven and the earth, and who in v. 3 speaks. [It isn't natural language.]
3. **If the author had intended to say “a might wind” he could have used unambiguous expressions that would have more clearly communicated this.** [This would be a poorest choice way to indicate this.]

Why does this make a difference? Two reasons: (1) We need to be careful with our interpretation process – just because something sounds good to us does not make it true; (2) We want to accurately understand the Word!

Waters? What Waters?

This seems to relate to the “earth” that was created in verse 1. The unshaped, uninhabited, unenergized matter that yet was nothing because of a lack of energy and design.

This term is synonymous with “the face of the deep.” Again the word “face” means “presence,” and the thought is that the formless waters, like the formless earth, were essentially a “presence” rather than a cohesive body.

Although the marvelous universe had been called into existence by the omnipotent Creator, it had not yet been imbued with energy and set in motion. This must await the energizing action of the Spirit of God and the activating power of the Word of God. (The Genesis Record, p. 51)

What Did the Spirit Do?

^{NKJ} And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. (moved, moving, YLT – fluttering)

Deut 32:11a ^{NKJ} As an eagle stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, / ^{ESV} that flutters over its young,
Jeremiah 23:9a ^{NKJ} My heart within me is broken Because of the prophets; All my bones shake. / ^{NAU} All my bones tremble;

In any case, the idea seems to be mainly that of a rapid back and forth motion.

In modern scientific terminology, the best translation would probably be “vibrated.” If the universe is to be energized, there must be an Energizer. If it is to be set in motion, there must be a Prime Mover.

It is significant that the transmission of energy in the operations of the cosmos is in the form of waves—light waves, heat waves, sound waves, and so forth. In fact (except for the nuclear forces which are involved in the structure of matter itself), there are only two fundamental types of forces that operate on matter—the gravitational forces and the forces of the electromagnetic spectrum. All are associated with “fields” of activity and with transmission by wave motion.

Waves are typically rapid back and forth movements and they are normally produced by the vibratory motion of a wave generator of some kind. Energy cannot create itself. It is most appropriate that the first impartation of energy to the universe is described as the “vibrating” movement of the Spirit of God Himself.

As the outflowing energy from God's omnipresent Spirit began to flow outward and to permeate the cosmos, gravitational forces were activated and water and earth particles came together to form a great sphere moving through space. Other such particles would soon come together also to form sun, moon, and stars throughout the universe. There was now a “compass” on the face of the deep, and the formless earth had assumed the beautiful form of a perfect sphere. It was now ready for light and heat and other forms of enlivening energy. (The Genesis Record, p. 52)

The Spirit Is Involved in Creation

- **Job 26:13** By His Spirit He adorned the heavens; His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.
- **Job 33:4** The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
- **Ps 104:29-30** You hide Your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the earth.

Preparing to Act (like a military preparatory command?), to Empower or Energize? (Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 3:18; cf. 2 Peter 1:20-21)

- **Titus 3:4-7** ⁴ But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
- **1 Peter 3:18** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,
- **2 Peter 1:20 - 2:1** ²⁰ knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

Protecting & Preserving What Has Been Created (the universe was not matter friendly at the moment!)

- **2 Cor 1:22** who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.
- **Eph 1:13** In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,
- **Eph 4:30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
- **Eph 5:18** And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,
- **Phil 2:1** Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,
- **2 Tim 1:14** That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.
- **1 John 4:13** By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.