

In the Beginning

Text: Gen. 1:1-2

Introduction:

1. Having sought to lay down a biblical framework for the study of Genesis, we now proceed to an exposition the text itself.
2. It is important to recognize that verses 1-5 describe God's creative work on day 1. Ex. 20:11 "**For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is**, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." This is important to recognise as we often say that God created light on Day 1 of creation. This is true but before He created light, He brought the universe in its basic form into existence as described in the first two verses.
3. Remember that Genesis 1 teaches us not just about the cosmos but also so much about the Creator. We see a God who works in a structured and orderly manner to bring the creation into being. We see a God of infinite wisdom, power and creativity at work. It is significant that every verse in this chapter with the exception of verse 1 and verse 27 begin with the conjunction 'and'. "This structure clearly means that each statement is sequentially and chronologically connected to the verses before and after. Each action follows directly upon the action described in the verse preceding it." (Henry Morris)
4. Genesis 1:1 is the foundational verse of the Bible. If you are prepared to accept the truth of Genesis 1:1, you won't find it difficult to believe anything else recorded in the Word of God.
5. In this message we will consider the pre-creation situation (before the beginning) and then what happened in the beginning.

I. BEFORE THE BEGINNING

We would do well to linger for a little time on the very threshold of Divine Revelation and look back towards eternity past. God back as far as the human mind can imagine, and you will find God there. What was the situation before the universe was created?

A. God was there in Reality

1. Genesis 1:1 takes the fact of God's existence for granted as though it were so obvious that only a fool could say "there is no God" (Ps. 14:1). The Bible starts with eternity past and ends with eternity future.
2. We are confronted with a choice when it comes to origins – either God is eternal or matter energy is eternal. The truth of an eternal, all knowing, all powerful, all wise Creator is far more intellectually satisfying than the belief that nothing turned into everything or that there was some primitive form of matter that exploded the universe into existence.
3. Psalm 14:1 exposes the real reason behind man's denial of the Creator – SIN! "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. **They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good.**"

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4. In Genesis 1:1, we are introduced to the first Name of God in the Bible – Elohim. It is the “Name of God which emphasises His majesty and Omnipotence. It is a plural Name with a singular meaning, a uni-plural noun.” The root meaning of the word is “power, strength and glory” (Davis).

B. God was there in Sublime Glory

1. John 17:5 “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the **glory** which I had with thee **before the world was.**” Here our Lord Jesus Christ makes reference to the glory He enjoyed with the Father before the world was in existence. Perhaps we get a glimpse of that glory in the following verse.
2. 1 Tim. 6:16 “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen.”

C. God was there in Loving Communion

1. John 17:24 “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for **thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.**”
2. Before the universe was created, the Father loved the Son. God was totally sufficient and satisfied in Himself for all of eternity past. God did not create the universe to satisfy a personal need. He created it for the Son of God (“all things were created **by him and for him.**” Col. 1:16) and to display His glory.

D. God was there planning Salvation

1. Christ foreordained to be our Saviour before the world began – 1 Peter 1:18-20 “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was **foreordained before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you,” Christ is described in Revelation 13:8 as the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”
2. Eternal life promised us before the world began – Titus 1:2-3 “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, **promised before the world began**; But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;”
3. We were chosen in Christ before the world began - Eph 1:4 “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:” Remember that we are “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (1 Peter 1:2).
4. Salvation given to us in Christ before the world began – 2 Tim. 1:9-10 “Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, **which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began**, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour

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Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:"

5. A.W. Tozer attempts to explain, "But we are not quite ready to leave that pre-creation situation, before the foundations of the earth were laid, when God dwelt alone, the uncreated Being; the Father in love with the Son, and the Son with the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost with the Father and the Son. God is the eternal God, dwelling in a tranquillity that had no beginning and that can have no ending. Now, you may note that I have not used the expression, "the pre-creation void." Void is a good and useful word. When we do not know what else to say, we call it a void. But before the Creation, God was there and God is not a void. He is the triune God and He is all there is. In His existence before the creation, God was already there busy; busy with eternal mercies, His mind stirring with merciful thoughts and redemptive plans for mankind not yet created."

II. IN THE BEGINNING (VS. 1-2)

What happened in the beginning?

A. God Created (Vs. 1-2a)

"Verse one is the record of the first part of the work brought into being on the first day: first the heavens and the earth in a basic form as to their material, then light." (Leupold)

1. God created **TIME** – "In the beginning"
 - a. The word 'created' is the Hebrew word 'bara'. "It is a word that is only ever used in the Old Testament of the work of God. Man can make and form things but only God can create something out of nothing." (Morris) Genesis 1 teaches creatio ex nihilo, "creation out of nothing". Hebrews 11:3 "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed **by the word of God**, so that things which are seen **were not made of things which do appear.**" Psalm 33:6 "By **the word of the LORD** were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."
 - b. God is Eternal meaning He is not subject to the limitations of time. He is beyond time and outside of time. Psalm 90:2 "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even **from everlasting to everlasting**, thou *art* God." "God, having no beginning or end, is eternal, which should properly be understood not as infinite time but **beyond time.**" (Sarfati)
 - c. Henry Morris writes, "The universe is actually a continuum of space, matter, and time, no one of which can have a meaningful existence without the other two."
 - d. "Modern physics has caught up with the Bible. Einstein's General Relativity shows that time is connected with matter... Time is now known to be part of the space-time universe, and doesn't exist independently of matter and energy." (Sarfati)
 - e. In Genesis 1 we see that God established a 7-day week and the 24-hour night and day cycle.

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- f. Question: When was the beginning? To come up with an approximate date we have to turn to the chronology of the Bible. The best known and probably the most reputable chronological system based on the Biblical data is that of Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656) who computed the date of creation as 4004 B.C. This sound incredulous and ridiculous to a generation that has been brainwashed by the so-called billions and billions of years of evolution but it was widely accepted in pre-Darwin scholarship. One writer notes, "For an educated man in the seventeenth or even eighteenth century, any suggestion that the human past extended back further than 6,000 years was a vain and foolish speculation."¹ (Colin Renfrew cited by Morris). In addition to Ussher's date, some other dates that have been computed (all in years B.C.) as: Jewish (3760); Septuagint (5270), Josephus (5555); Kepler (3993); Melanchthon (3964); Luther (3961); Lightfoot (3960); Hales (5402); Playfair (4008); Lipman (3916) and others.²
2. God created **SPACE** – "the heaven"
 3. God created **MASS** – "and the earth"
 - a. The 'earth' is the component of matter in the universe.
 - b. "At the time of the initial creation, there was no other planets, stars, or other material bodies in the universe, nor did any of them come into being until the fourth day. The word is also translated either "ground" or "land". (Morris)
 4. Summary: We live in a time, space, mass universe. We could call it a Tri-universe. This is fascinating as this reflects something of the Triune nature of the Godhead. Romans 1:20 reads, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, **even his eternal power and Godhead**; so that they are without excuse."
 5. Challenge: The same God that had the power to create the universe has the power to create in you a clean heart (Psalm 51:10) and to make you a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).
 6. Verse 2 goes on to explain several details about the earth at this point in time at the beginning of creation week.
 - a. It was "without form" meaning it was unformed. The word is used later in the Bible to describe the wilderness.
 - b. It was 'void' meaning it was empty and uninhabited.
 - c. It was dark. No evil implied. God was not yet finished with His creative work. Isaiah 45:7 "I form the light, and create darkness..."
 - d. Note: The above descriptions do not speak of imperfection but of incompleteness.

B. The Spirit Moved (Vs. 2b)

1. 'moved' = Hebrew word only occurs in two other places and is translated 'shake' (Jer. 23:9) and "fluttereth" (Deut. 32:11). "It

¹ Colin Renfrew, *Before Civilization* p. 21, cited by Henry Morris p. 44 (Genesis Record). Renfrew is Professor of Archaeology at the University of Southampton.

² Morris, p. 44.

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means to hover and seems to imply rapid back and forth motion.” (Morris) God does not do anything without a sovereign purpose so we believe the activity of the Spirit was connected to the creation of the universe.

2. “face of the deep” = the word ‘deep’ is the common biblical word for the oceans. It appears the waters covered the whole earth. (Sarfati)
3. Henry Morris gives an interesting scientific insight worthy of consideration: “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 gravitation 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.”
4. It appears the Omnipresent Spirit was there in anticipation of and preparation for the Creation events that would follow. We see the Three Persons of the Godhead are involved in the Creation of the Universe. In the New Testament, the emphasis is placed on the Son of God as the primary Agent of Creation.
 - a. John 1:1-3 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. **All things were made by him**; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”
 - b. Col. 1:15-17 “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: **For by him were all things created**, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”
 - c. Heb. 1:1-3 “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, **by whom also he made the worlds**; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”
5. Another ‘moving’ of the Spirit is found in the New Testament in relation to the inspiration of the Bible. 2 Peter 1:21 “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as *they were moved* by the Holy Ghost.”

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6. What can we learn about the Holy Spirit from this first reference to His Person?
 - a. The Holy Spirit is Omnipresent.
 - b. The Holy Spirit moves in supernatural power.
 - c. The Holy Spirit does preparatory work.

Conclusion:

1. Do you know Christ as Saviour?
2. Do you believe the Word of God as a Christian? Do you trust God with every detail of your life, knowing that He is all powerful?