

Why Study Genesis? In a modern world with science and sophistication, why would we dare go back to this ancient creation story? Why would we dare to look so foolish as to ask people if they believe in this God, who created the world out of nothing?

Well, as long as the world is moving along fine, just as we hope it will, then we don't need to study it. But when the computer breaks, you reach for that manual.

Apollo XIII – Get in touch with every engineer and every designer of every piece of electronics on that spaceship. Then get in touch with every assembly line worker who put it together, if there is a light bulb that has one extra amp of electricity, I want to know it.

Well, if I may be so cheesy as to offer a metaphor—this little spaceship that is orbiting the sun every 365 days, has gone awry, and we need to reach for the owners manual. I want to suggest that everyone does this, they go back to their meta-narrative, their story that makes sense out of the world for them. What is the best one?

Answers to Va. Tech:

Cary Tennis – Salon Magazine: You are thinking about what happened at Virginia Tech.

The worst thing of all, the hardest to fathom, the most infuriating but the most important, is this: It literally means nothing. It is random, senseless, incomprehensible. We wish it meant something. It would feel better if it meant something. We try hard to manufacture something that it can mean. But it stubbornly means nothing. Literally, it is a sign of nothing, the nothing that surrounds us, the nothing we must face, the implacable end we come to. The fact that it means nothing is the worst thing about it. We can make up meaning, and we must. But we must know we are making it up. We make up our faith. We make up our rituals. We do what we have to do to live with it without going mad.

All the while, our impossible burden is to live with the nothingness that it means. Let us try to do that with dignity and grace. Let us try not to take shelter in illusion. Our illusions are manifold, our rituals abundant. It helps to lay wreaths. But there is no safety from madness.

The universe is random and cruel. Death will come. You can't know the hour. So live in the world now, as it is.

That is the bottom line, my friend. You have to live in your world as it is and in order to live in your world as it is you must find peace with yourself.

Va. Tech English Department:

We are Virginia Tech
We are sad today
We will be sad for quite a while
We are not moving on
We are embracing our mourning
We are Virginia Tech

We are strong enough to stand tall tearlessly
We are brave enough to bend to cry
And we are sad enough to know that we must laugh again
We are Virginia Tech
We do not understand this tragedy
We know we did nothing to deserve it
We are Virginia Tech
The Hokie Nation embraces
Our own
And reaches out
With open heart and mind
To those who offer their hearts and hands
We are strong
And brave
And innocent
And unafraid
We are better than we think
And not yet quite what we want to be
We are alive to imagination
And open to possibility
We will continue
To invent the future
Through our blood and tears
Through all this sadness
We are the Hokies
We will prevail
We will prevail
We will prevail
We are
Virginia Tech

So there you have two attempts to weave a story together, a story that will make sense, and they both have nothing to come back to but their own strength. We just have to be strong enough to admit that nothing means anything, or we just have to be strong enough to prevail. Where is our hope? There is no hope, or our hope is in that we are hokies?

I don't know about you, but I need more than that, I need something a little bigger, a little stronger than myself to fall back upon. I need the Christian story – In the Beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Our God created a beautiful and good world out of the chaos, and He brought this world into His rest, and he still offers that rest to you.

The Person who creates: God Created the World

In those six words we have the foundation of our faith: In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth.

Because of when and where we live, all kinds of questions come up at this point, questions about how God created – the Bible does not tell us. I am happy to discuss those questions later, one on one or in another setting – but the point of this text is the simple declaration – everything that exists, exists because God made it.

The very core of our faith is that we exist, everything exists because of the word of God – he spoke into the nothingness, and the universe came into being.

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

There is an apologetic purpose for Moses' time and for ours. Moses was writing to those who grew up under the Egyptians, and telling them, don't worship the sun, or the river, or the animals, but worship the God who created them, and who gives them life.

The purpose for us is much the same – what do you worship, what you see or what you do not see?

The fact of this question, the hardness of Christianity is right here, do you believe in a miracle.

Dr. Kelly in Dillon South Carolina – people were furious, because the ultimately refused to believe in the miracle.

Richard Pratt – the most sophisticated thinker I know, insists that God created the world in six days, because the Bible our ultimate authority says He did.

Do you really believe in a world beyond what you can see. That God affects the world, that he has impact in this world where we live. Do you truly believe in heaven, or in the resurrection and hell?

What do you go to for comfort? Security? Help?

The Pattern of Creation

2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

There was darkness, and loneliness and chaos, and there was God. And God spoke, and God's Spirit moved, and something good came out of the chaos.

We have some important themes here for you to understand. The first is the sea, the scene of desolation and chaos. The great uncontrollable, where you are tossed

and lost. We have pictures of the sea throughout the bible, Noah, the Red Sea, Jonah, Jesus walking on the sea, calming the sea, and finally at the end of the Bible we are told of a world with no sea.

That is the picture of the world at creation, God did not simply speak out a perfect world, he spoke out a chaotic, dark and void world, and then he continued.

His Spirit Hovered – provided a rhythm, to creation, a song.

You don't think about the baseline unless it is off, then it creates dissonance, the Spirit is bringing order and harmony out of the dissonance.

Jack and Diane, or like rap music and your rearview mirror.

God's Spirit wasn't alone, there was also God's word. God spoke and there was light, God's word has power, it is an agent to itself. We are later told that that word took on a name – the name of Jesus.

The Purpose of Creation

The Spirit and the Word brought beauty into creation – and we see God singing over it (that's probably what this text is, a song). Seven times we are told, it was good, it was good, it was good, it was good, it was good, it was good, and it was very good.

Do you see what God is doing – he is not grading, not some redneck saying, ahh good enuff, but he is taking pleasure – like when you bite into a chocolate and sit back to say, it is good.

John Piper
Jerram Barrs

Christians throughout history have joined in and sung this song – It is good. That is why Christians have always enjoyed life, good food and drink. We have an entire book of the bible celebrating intimacy and love, because God created these things and they are good.

The strangeness of Christians today not enjoying creation.

- Dispensationalists with the wrong idea of end times
- Manipulators who only see beauty in resources

Do you see that God created more than he had to, he created goodness!

We had to breath – but he gave us smell

We had to eat – but he gave us chocolate

We had to speak – but he gave us music

We had to see – but he gave us color

We had to feel – but he gave us touch, and endorphins

We had to procreate – but he gave us sex

This is important for numerous reasons:

- Temptation – will you believe that God is good and wants you to be trusted, or do you believe he has locked you out of the amusement park?
- Bitterness – will you believe that God has left you alone in an awful world, or do you believe the world is awful because we have insisted on bringing dissonance into the world, and throwing off the creator. And that only by re-storing peace with the creator, can we have hope in the world.

You can believe that there is no God, not really, not one that matters. And if you believe that, then there can be no harmony, only you alone trying to do whatever you have to. You have nothing more to trust than that you are a hokie.

Or you can look into creation, and see something more. See the possibility of beauty, the reality of love, the miracle of being loved, you can desire the pleasure that comes from worshipping God in and through his creation, you can join in the song with him.

After he finished creating, he did something unheard of in any creation legend, he rested. And he still offers that rest to us. Lay down your skepticism, your disbelief and your anger. Admit that you have all those feelings, and that you have tried to manipulate this world to please yourself instead of joining in this world to please God. Receive the grace of Jesus, that powerful creative word, and trust his life and death. In doing that you will have peace with God, and then you will find peace in the chaos.

What does that look like: Christopher de Vinck.

"You could place him in an institution?"

"But," my parents answered, "he is our son. We will take Oliver home, of course."

The good doctor said, "Then take him home and love him." That was sound medical advice

Oliver grew to the size of a ten-year-old. He had a big chest, a large head. His hands and feet were those of a five-year-old, small and soft. We'd wrap a box of baby cereal for him at Christmas and place it under the tree. We'd pat his head with a damp cloth in the middle of a July heat wave. His baptismal certificate hung on the wall above his head. A bishop came to the house and confirmed him.

Oliver could do absolutely nothing except breathe, sleep, eat, and yet he was responsible for action, love, courage, insight.

For me, to have been brought up in a house where a tragedy was turned into a joy, explains to a great degree why I am the type of husband, father, writer and teacher I have become. I remember my mother saying when I was small, "Isn't it wonderful that you can see?" And once she said, "When you go to heaven, Oliver will run to you, embrace you, and the first thing he will say is 'Thank you.'" That leaves an impression on a boy.