

Genesis 1 – Creation

“In the beginning, God...”

Throughout the Bible, there is never any attempt made to prove the existence of God. In the old comedy series Family Ties the somewhat ditzy daughter Mallory, has a homework assignment from her philosophy class to prove that she exists. After days of anguish, a moment of illumination brings a smile to her face. Standing in the kitchen with her family listening, she exclaims, "I shop! Therefore, I am!!!"

Fortunately, God doesn't face that anguish. Being perfectly content to be the great I AM, He never bothers to try to prove it. He always was and is and always will be. And it is upon this truth - the eternal existence of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, that the rest of the revealed Word and Nature of God is built.

With that in mind, we'll begin our journey through the book of beginnings.

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

In verse one of chapter one virtually the first thing the Lord communicates to us is His triune being, His 'compound' unity. You

see, the Hebrew word for God can be El which is singular, Elah which is dual, or Elohiym which represents three or more. Here, the word used is Elohiym and as such is referring to the Trinity. Along this same line, we find in Deuteronomy what is known as the Shema which says, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One!” (Deut 6:4) The word for “One” in this verse means a united or compound oneness. This is a wonderful and yet mysterious truth - God is triune and yet One.

And he desires our response to Him to be triune as well for the next verse says - “You shall love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” (Deut 6:5) Notice that the command is to each part of man -- the **heart** (that is, the seat of the spirit), the **soul** (the character), and the **strength** (that is, the flesh).

It's fascinating when you consider that God the Father is **Spirit** (Jn 4:24), Jesus the Son came in the **flesh** (2 Jn 7), and the **soul** is made alive by the breath of God, the “ruach” or “pneuma” -- the Holy Spirit (same word - Jn 20:22).

Rabbi Simeon ben Joachi, commenting on the word Elohim says: *“Come and see the mystery*

of the word Elohim; there are three degrees, and each degree by itself alone, and yet notwithstanding they are all one, and joined together in one, and are not divided from each other.”

Next, right after the fundamental truth of His eternal triune existence, He places what is to many the highest hurdle of faith - that He indeed created everything. It wasn't just some fortuitous happenstance, a cosmic fluke, or an incredibly lucky series of evolutionary events.

The story is told of Sir Isaac Newton, ridiculed by Voltaire as a 'doting fool' for his faith in the Almighty, who in desiring to demonstrate this principle of creation to his 'learned' friends, made a handsome model of the solar system. As his companions gathered in his home, they saw the model and praised Sir Isaac for his remarkable work. He responded by saying that he couldn't take the credit, because it had simply appeared out of nowhere; it just came into being on its own. His guests argued that this was ridiculous - of course it didn't just appear. There had to be some designer, some careful thought given by someone for such a masterful model to have been built.

Then the 'light came on' and they realized they'd been 'had'. For indeed, just as it was absurd to suppose that the little model had accidentally appeared out of nowhere, it was also ridiculous to think that the marvelous complexity and intricacy of the universe appeared without a Masterful Creator behind it.

The fact of God's creation is all the more amazing when we consider the greatness of the universe. For instance:

A typical galaxy contains billions of individual stars; our galaxy alone (the Milky Way) contains 200 billion stars. It is shaped like a giant spiral, rotating in space, with arms reaching out like on a pinwheel, and our sun is one star on one arm of that pinwheel. It would take 250 million years for the pinwheel to make one full rotation. But this is only our galaxy; there are many other galaxies with many other shapes, including spirals, spherical clusters, flat pancakes. The average distance between one galaxy and another is about 20 million trillion miles. Our closest galaxy is the Andromeda Galaxy, about 12 million trillion miles away. (David Guzik)

For every patch of sky the size of the moon, if you look very deep,

there are about a million galaxies. But God is bigger than all of that; The Bible asks, *“Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?”* -- Isaiah 40:12

And the more man tries to comprehend its greatness, the more he finds himself perplexed. Recent observations, for example, suggest that the universe is younger than its oldest stars - an enigma that has astronomers scrambling for explanations.

The biggest mystery, however, strikes even scientists as so astonishing as to be absurd: 99% of the universe, according to some estimates, is made of totally unfamiliar material. Commonly known as dark matter, it is actually mostly transparent; it neither shines nor casts a shadow. According to some theories, it also is the glue that holds the universe together, and keeps it from expanding forever into endless space.

Interestingly enough, in the Hebrew, there are just seven words in this opening verse which are composed of 28 letters or 7 multiplied by 4. Now, seven is the number of perfection, and four

speaks of creation. Thus we have a subtle emphasis upon the fact that the creation was perfect as it left its Maker's hands.

So here, in the beginning, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit create the universe, the time-space continuum and all that occupies it. By the way, the Hebrew word here for create is "bara" which is to create something out of nothing. You know, the best man can do is to refashion or make something out of existing material. However, in this opening sentence, God distinguishes Himself as God by doing what only God can do - creating everything out of nothing.

“The earth was without form and void;”

Interestingly, as was just noted in verse one, the Hebrew word used for create is “bara” which means to create something out of nothing whereas afterward the word used for create is “asah” which means to refashion out of existing material.

Partly because of this, there are Bible scholars who propose that between verse one and two we may have the indication of a cataclysmic event. Their proposition has two parts; first,

they say that the word for "was" here in verse two is equally translated "became" so that it would read "The earth became without form and void:" The second part is that they point to the Hebrew expression "tohuw va bohuv" translated "without form and void" and refer to Isaiah 45:18 which says: *“For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited;”*

The expression, "Who did not create it in vain" again uses the same Hebrew "tohuw"; that is, God did not create it in the state of “tohuw” or emptiness, but rather it “became” that way. The proposal goes on to say that perhaps it was at this time that the devil was cast out of heaven to the earth. This may have caused massive changes in the environment - freezing the recently discovered woolly mammoths instantly in ice packs, tilting the earth on its axis, and bringing massive worldwide destruction - the death of all then-existing life such as the dinosaurs. This view is generally referred to as the Gap theory.

Others say that this is not the case, but rather that verses one

and two are simply the beginning of the creation of all material things.

In any event, these two initial verses tell us of the eternal existence of the Creator and that He did indeed create all things from nothing. If you can accept these two first principles, believing the rest of the Bible should be easy by comparison!

“...and darkness was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering (literally brooding) over the face of the waters.”

“Deep”, here, literally is “abyss” and refers to the vast seas that covered the whole earth. In type (i.e. symbolically), we can see pictured the unbelieving world. Throughout scripture, the sea is a picture or type of the Gentile or unbelieving nations. So in reading this, we can't help but sense the poetic picture of God's purpose -- to bring His Spirit in to places of darkness and unbelief (like your life and mine).

And so He, the Holy Spirit, brooded over the darkness, not to condemn but to convict and to comfort, to bring the loving, creative power of God to bear.

“Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.”

Repeatedly, we find that God spoke the creation into existence; all of it was accomplished through His Word. John the apostle opens his gospel with this fundamental truth, *“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him and without Him nothing was made that was made.”* (Jn 1:1-3)

His first creative act was to bring forth light, and that should be our first act as well whenever we deal, as believers, with spiritual darkness. By way of analogy, you can enter a dark room and start swinging at the air, obviously to no avail, or you can simply turn on the light. The Psalmist wrote, *“The entrance of Your Word gives light...”*

And thus, in the work of the new creation we witness that these three are inseparably joined together -- the sovereign will of God the Father, the creative agency of the Word of God (His Son), and the loving care of the Holy Spirit. Just as the light made manifest here the emptiness upon which it shone, so the entrance of God’s Word into the heart of man reveals the ruin and emptiness which sin brings.

“And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.”

Here are another couple of principles. First, what God does is good, in fact, verse 31 says “very good”. He can’t help it; you see, He is good; that’s an attribute of His character. And it’s a very unbalanced attribute, infinite in fact. We need to get this down, God is good. He’s not the “force” of Star Wars or the yin and the yang. He’s totally, completely, infinitely good. And what He does is good. Jesus said, *“A tree is known by its fruit.”* that is, we can see by the goodness of what He has created that He Himself is good.

Now, you might protest, “If God is good then why is this world in such a mess? If He created it and it’s His fruit, I’d have to say that I don’t think it’s very good at all. Why is there death and disease and violence and hatred and ...” Hold that thought, and we’ll answer it in Chapter Three. For now, know that those things are NOT His doing -- in fact, He often gets a ‘bum rap’.

The second principle is that light and darkness do not coexist. They are forever separate. It is, however, one of the devil’s schemes to change that and to

mix the two, spiritually speaking. He loves to contaminate good with evil, light with darkness, purity with poison, and to convince man that as long as he’s got some good, some light, or some purity, it’s all right. Concerning this tactic, God repeatedly says to His people, “come out, and be separate”. Why?

Take a glass of pure, clean spring water and a mug of slimy, foul-smelling toxic waste. Which one would you drink? Most of us would pick the clean spring water. Now, take a spoonful of the toxic waste and stir it into the spring water and consider again, which one would you drink? Most of us would say, eyuck! neither one!

The same is true with God, you see there is no evil in Him, none whatsoever. The Psalmist says, *“Taste and see that the Lord is good.”*

“God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.”

Note the ordering here, the evening and the morning were the first day. Contrary to our own perspective that the day begins each morning and grows

progressively darker, in God’s economy, the day starts dark and gets progressively brighter. For the Jewish people, the new day begins at sundown. You know, I think we’re going to be very surprised to get to heaven and find out just how many of our earthly perspectives have been “upside down” (Acts 17:6).

“Then God said, “Let there be a firmament (expanse) in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.”

Thus 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. So the evening and morning were the second day.”

On the second day, God created what we call the sky. Understand that there are three “heavens” in the Bible; the sky, the cosmos, and the spiritual realm. Paul intimates in one of his epistles that at one point he was temporarily caught up into the third heaven.

At this point however, with the sky put in place, there then existed large bodies of water both beneath it and above it. That is, the earth had, at this time, a canopy shell of water above the

sky. Scientists say that this would have created a 'green house' effect moderating temperature over the whole planet and would have filtered out much harmful cosmic radiation.

“Then God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into 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 He called Seas. And God saw that it was good.”

Now then, after the separation of the waters by the sky, it seems that God created vast subterranean water chambers which caused the earth to be pushed upward and thus appear. “One place” in the Hebrew means just that - “one place” -- that is, there were probably no isolated continents or islands at this time, not yet; just one surface land mass. Around and in the midst of this land mass then was the water identified as various seas.

“Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind whose seed is in itself, on the earth”; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself

according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the third day.”

Next, God brought forth what was to be the food supply for all the creatures. We'll see specifically in verse 29 that man was given these foods to eat. The symbolically important thing is that man was to eat that which had life-bearing seed in it. Spiritually, there is a lesson here for us -- in type, seed like this speaks of the Word of God as in the parable of the sower (See Luke 8:11) and Jesus, quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3 said, “*Man shall not live on bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*” So man's initial diet was also a reminder of the source of life.

“Then God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so. Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night, He made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day

and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.”

The next revealed part of the creation was the sun, moon, and the stars. If you hold to the Gap Theory, this would likely be referring to the unveiling of these light sources, perhaps the clearing of the atmosphere so they could be visible. Otherwise, this is the actual creation of the starry heavens. One of my 'learned' friends once asked me, “If this is the creation of the stars then we'd have to wait thousands and thousands of years just to see them as their emitted light would be limited to 187,000 miles/sec. My response was simply that if God can make the universe, why can't He also make the photons of light already in their courses? It's apparent that He made Adam and Eve as full grown adults rather than as little children. In other words, He didn't just initiate an immature process but a fully formed one.

As for signs and seasons, recall that the wise men from the orient knew of the birth of Jesus because of a star. They understood the sign. It is tragic, however, that people have relied

on astrological signs to guide their lives. That was never God's intent and it is a false, deceitful practice which is leveraged by Satan to manipulate gullible men and women. Signs are just that -- indicators. How would it look for me to get my guidance on how to live my life strictly from road signs or billboards? They might tell me to watch for deer crossing or to buy a Big Mac, but what a shallow person I'd be! The direction for our lives is found in God's Word and understood by the help of God's Spirit.

Here are a couple sure signs -- the sun is a 'sign' of Christ, “*But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings.*” (Mal 4:2), and the moon is typical of God's people (Rev 12:1). Both are obtaining and reflecting their light from the sun or Son.

As the sun rules over the day, Jesus said, “*While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*” When Jesus was in the world it was 'day'. He also said, “*I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day.*” When He left, it again became 'dark'; as the moon rules over the night, Israel and the Church have had the commission to bring the light of the truth into this dark world.

“Then God said, “Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens. So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas and let birds multiply on the earth.” So the evening and morning were the fifth day.”

God’s first command to any living creature is again a revealer of His heart. *“Be fruitful and multiply.”* How often we can be tempted to picture God as against us or down on us when in truth His desire is for us, for our fruitfulness and fulfillment. He even made the things He commanded us to do enjoyable!

Note also that the living creatures were made “according to their kind”. In other words, a tuna was a tuna and a stork was a stork. And tuna only make more tuna and storks only make more storks (of course, they bring baby boys and girls too! - ha!).

God established the fruitful order of nature and when the order is confused, it becomes unfruitful.

For instance a horse may mate with a donkey but the resulting mule is sterile - mules don’t make more mules. Even in the cross-breeding of plants, your seedless varieties are made by cross-pollination of different species.

“Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind”; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.”

Now that scientists are crossing the borders of the creation, planting human tissue in animals and vice versa you can’t help but feel, ‘this is going to be unfruitful’. We can think we’re pretty smart in altering genetic codes and unraveling the mysteries of DNA but messing with the natural order or “proper domain” of things is one of the reasons the abusso or bottomless pit is filled with especially nasty demons. *“And the angels who did not keep their proper (own) domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”* (Jude 6)

“Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

Like God, man is a triune being. We’ll soon see that in creating him, God took the lowest part of creation, the dust of the earth and combined it with the highest possible ‘ingredient’, the breath of His Spirit. Together, they made a living being or literally a living soul. So man’s being is triune in that he has a spirit, a soul, and a body. It is his spirit that communed with God and if he had chosen to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Life he would have lived forever.

I think that may be one reason we are frustrated by time. People rush faster and faster to get nowhere in particular; we strive with schedules that are ever more crowded and stressful. The confines of time and more specifically, the time of death is ‘instinctively’ alien and troubling partly because we

were not designed for it. We were created to commune with our Creator apart from the confines and callous demands of an expected life span.

Now, originally Adam’s spirit was the primary influence upon his soul. The spirit, being the seat of his will and what we would think of as his deepest part, that is his heart, was in direct fellowship with God Who is also Spirit (John 4:24). This influence reigned over his soul which we think of as the personality, the character. The soul is the seat of our logic and our emotions.

But the soul, being created by the combination of both the spirit and the flesh is influenced by both as well. Initially, man’s flesh was without sin and did not struggle against the spirit’s control over his soul. This is what the Bible calls being spiritually minded *“...to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”* (Rom 8:6). However, when Adam rebelled against God, just as God promised, he died - first, and immediately, he died spiritually, and eventually, because of sin, he died physically as well.

Ever since, man’s soul has been the pivotal battle ground. As his spirit became powerless, being separated from God, his sin-filled flesh then reigned over his soul.

He became carnally minded “...to be carnally minded is death...” (Rom 8:6).

His flesh reigned over his soul as his spirit was dead. But the good news is that when someone responds to the gospel and welcomes Jesus Christ into their life, believing in Him as the risen Lord and Savior, Christ sends His Holy Spirit into that person bringing new life to his spirit. At that point then, the believer is no longer a captive to his sinful flesh; he is free not to sin.

And with this new life, a struggle is born. *“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts (wars) against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish...Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like...but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...”* Gal 5:16-23

The believer has a choice. He can sin, but he doesn't have to as

formerly. He can be carnally or spiritually minded, and the difference is drastic for *“the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”* Rom 8:7-10.

We'll see in Chapter Two that Adam was made in the image of God; this pertained to his own triune composition and quite possibly to his completeness. God is complete, in fact we witness that in the heavenly realm, those closest to Him proclaim that He is *“Holy, Holy, Holy”* (Rev 4:8). This word “holy” is actually where we derive our word “whole” or entire. Man's completeness would have pertained to his character. It's quite possible that he initially held a composite character in the sense of both masculine and feminine qualities. As God is both strong and yet gentle, chastening yet compassionate, so Adam, before the creation of Eve was probably a beautiful, complementary composite in his

character. Of course, we can't be dogmatic on this but I think it's in the ‘highly possible’ category.

“Then God blessed and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it”

This is fascinating! Man was to subdue the earth. Now, with no sin in the world, the creation was at peace. This subduing, then, would not apply to the animal kingdom. In fact, to clarify, the Lord says,

“Have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

The Hebrew word for subdue means to tread down and conquer, whereas dominion implies a rulership. Some Bible scholars believe this is speaking of a directive for man to subdue the evil spiritual entities that had occupied the planet (See Job 1:6,7). This is consistent with the other uses of this verb in the Old Testament. For example, Micah wrote, *“He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. He will again have compassion on us and will subdue our iniquities.”*

“And God said, “See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed: to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food,” and it was so.”

Imagine lions and tigers eating grass and fruit! This was paradise. All was in harmony. There was no food chain. Every creature ate of what grew from the earth. When Christ comes again, it appears that He may reestablish this order. Speaking of His millennial reign on earth, Isaiah wrote, *“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”* Isa 11:6-9

“Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was

very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”

So we see that the creation of all things was accomplished as God spoke. That is, He worked creatively through His Word. As we study the pattern of this creative (or restorative) process with planet earth, we can also see a pattern for the restoration of an empty, wasted soul. And it is beautifully characteristic for it is God's delight to restore, to create a new man, a new soul -- *“The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul.”* Psa 23:1-3 *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ...”* 2Co 5:17,18