

# Journey From the Beginning



NOTES

## LESSON 1 . . . Understanding Creation (Genesis 1:1-19)

**T**he first book of the Bible is named *Genesis*, which means origin, source, or beginning. *Genesis* ends about four hundred years before Moses lived. Most scholars agree Moses wrote the book through divine revelation during the Israelites' wilderness wandering (1446-1406 B.C.). Moses would pitch a tent he called *the Tabernacle of the congregation* outside the camp where he often met with God, who gave him direct instructions that he wrote down (Ex 33:7-9). Within this relationship, Moses also received direct revelation about creation.

**Understanding creation** requires at least **two** actions . . .

### **Reflect on the Creator (1:1).**

The Bible beautifully begins: *In the beginning, God created* (1:1a). This verse contains two amazing revelations about God. First is His self-existence. *In the beginning*, God already existed. Before time, space, or matter, God existed. When God appeared to Moses at the burning bush, Moses asked God His name so he could tell the Israelites who had sent him. What did God tell him in Exodus 3:14b?

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The Hebrew name translated *I AM* (HĀYĀ, haw-yaw´) is a verb that means “to be.” It is very difficult to translate because it is neither past, present, nor future tense. It is actually all three tenses at once and carries the idea of eternal existence. God is, has always been, and will always be. How does Psalm 90:2 express this truth?

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The second awesome revelation in this verse is *God created the heaven and the earth* (1:1b). The Hebrew word translated *created* (BĀRĀ, baw-raw´) is used only to describe divine activity. It means “to create out of nothing.” To create something from nothing, you must speak it into being. How is God’s voice of command described in Hebrews 11:3?

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This verse is one of the greatest statements ever made about the atomic and molecular structure of everything. God created atoms and molecules that cannot be *seen* with the naked eye, but out of them He created *things* we can see. Since the Bible assumes certain truths are self-evident, it never argues God’s existence. The Bible assumes anyone with eyes to see and a mind to reason knows there is a God. A universe with a beginning requires a Beginner, which some scientists call “ID,” or “intelligent design.”

We are just beginning to appreciate the complexities of atoms and molecules, and the vastness of the universe. The harmony and orderliness of the universe from an atom to the expanse of space are evidence of intelligent design beyond human understanding. The reason is found in Isaiah 41:20a-c. Explain below:

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To understand creation, **reflect on the Creator** and . . .

**Realize creation is a divine process (1:2-19).**

When first created, *the earth was without form, and void* (1:2a), which means “chaotic and uninhabitable.” We all know from experience anything that begins in disarray has a tendency to become more and more chaotic. In other words, chaos cannot correct itself. For example, if your car’s engine begins missing and running poorly, it will become increasingly worse if it is not corrected by someone with intelligence. Everything is like that. If something falls into disorder, it will continue in that tendency until there is intelligent intervention. There is an Intelligent Force that keeps everything in the universe on course and in order. How is this fact described when referring to God the Son in Colossians 1:17?

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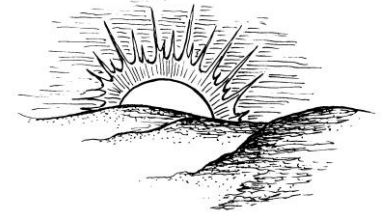
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Also, in the beginning, *darkness* covers the surface of the watery depths (1:2b). The earth is covered with water and *darkness*. *The Spirit of God* hovers over *the face of the waters* (1:2c). This seems to imply the basic elements were sustained in a watery environment. However, everything needs to be energized, which requires an Energizer—the Holy Spirit. Into this context comes the first recorded words of God. What are they (1:3b)?

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When our all-powerful God speaks, what He commands happens. Therefore, at His command, light comes into existence. God sees the light is good and separates the light from the darkness. He calls the light *Day* and the darkness *Night*, resulting in *evening* and *morning*, which is *the first day* (1:4-5). This means the earth is now rotating on its axis and there is a source of light on the side of the earth corresponding to what we will come to know as the sun.



This brings us to an important point: How long was *the first day*? Since light did not exist until verse 3, how much time transpired in verses 1-2? The Hebrew word translated *day* (YOM) does not always mean a 24-hour day, but can also be translated “time” and “age,” such as *the day of the LORD* (Isa. 13:6; 2 Pet. 3:10). However, it does appear from the text that after the first day of creation, the days were literal 24-hour days, since there was *morning* and *evening*. Yet, we can’t get too technical because there is no such thing as a 24-hour day. Each solar day—one complete rotation of the earth—is only 23 hours, 56 minutes, and 4.1 seconds.

On the second day, God commands there be a *firmament*, or expanse, to *divide the waters from the waters*. This means He separates the atmospheric *waters* from the terrestrial, or earthly, waters. God calls the expanse *Heaven*, meaning the atmosphere or sky (1:6-8a). This is the *evening* and *morning of the second day* (1:8b-c). So far, God has created light, atmosphere, and oceans, which are the elements necessary for life.

On the third day, what does God say, or command (1:9)?

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This also happens as God commands. He calls the *dry land Earth* and the gathered waters *Seas*, and He sees it is all *good* (1:10). Geologists tell us this was the result of volcanic eruptions and the buckling of the earth’s crust. How is the process described in Psalm 104:8?

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Next, God commands the earth to produce vegetation, including seed-bearing plants and seed-bearing *fruit* trees that can produce in kind. All this happens exactly as God commands (1:11-12). This is the *evening* and *morning of the third day*, suggesting it is an actual solar day (1:13).

God has implanted in each created organism a seed programmed to enable the continuing reproduction of that particular organism. Today, we call that seed DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), which contains the genetic code of

all cellular organisms and causes reproduction in kind. There may be tremendous variety and mutations, but the varieties will always be in kind. For example, there are hundreds of kinds of grasses and flowers. However, grass will never evolve into a goat, nor will a flower become a fly.

What does God command in Genesis 1:14?

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In obedience to God's voice, luminaries are created so the sun, moon, and stars begin to give light on the earth and to govern the day and the night. God sees it is all *good*. This all happens on the *fourth day* (1:15-19).

How could there be light on the first day when God did not make the sun until the fourth day? There are two possible answers. First, the source of light on the first three days of creation may have been intrinsic (originating from within), singular, or cosmic light.

Second, it is important to note the purpose of the visible sources of light is for *signs* and *seasons*, so there can be *days, and years* (1:14b). So, the emphasis is on the fact they became visible from the earth's surface. In verse 16, the sun and stars probably became visible from the surface of the earth because of the breakup of the cloud blanket. The sun apparently existed from the first day but only appeared, or became visible, on the fourth day.

This is supported by the fact that, after verse one, the Hebrew word for *create* (BARA) is not used again until verse 21. Therefore, everything in the first four days is a rearranging or developing of what God already spoke into existence in verse one. Creation is a divine process. God used a process to give us our Bible. He uses a process to bring us salvation. God also uses a process in guiding our lives. How does Philippians 1:6 describe this truth?



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To understand creation, reflect on the Creator and realize creation is a divine process.