

God Created the Heavens and the Earth

Genesis 1:1

Genesis 1:1: *“Let us read together Genesis 1:1, the first verse of the Bible. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” What a wonderful verse! The first verse of the Bible stands out in majestic greatness. It’s like a snow capped mountain peak, rising in majesty above the surrounding landscape. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”*

Background Notes

Let’s consider a few background notes as we begin our studies of the creation account in the book of Genesis. Moses, as you know, was the inspired author of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Moses was an eyewitness for the events recorded Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy -- but what about Genesis? All the events in Genesis from creation to the death of Joseph in Genesis chapter 50, the last chapter in the book -- all these events took place before the time of Moses. So how did Moses know about all these events in the book of Genesis, including creation? The critics of the Bible say that Genesis was written up much later than Moses’ time and that later Hebrew writers took material from ancient pagan sources about the beginnings of the universe and flood, and then put their own Hebrew spin on this material, and added the Jewish legends about the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph-- and thus you have the book of Genesis. Nothing could be further from the truth! We believe that the book of Genesis is real and accurate history, including the creation account. The creation account is not a Hebrew poem or Hebrew parable with symbolic language, or something like that. Hebrew poetry has a definite structure to it and the creation account of Genesis is not Hebrew poetry. It is **historical narrative**, just like the rest of Genesis. Now Moses may have had some historical documents to work with when he wrote Genesis. God certainly could have revealed all of these early events to Moses, but God may have ensured that the earlier patriarchs wrote about the events during their lifetimes, maybe even as far back as Adam. We know that God gave Adam the ability to speak intelligently, right from the beginning. Remember, Adam communed with God in the garden. Why not also the ability to write? So Moses may have had some of these earlier materials to work with when he wrote Genesis under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In any case, we can be sure that all of Genesis including the creation account is true, accurate, and historical.

Now concerning Genesis 1:1, this wonderful and majestic first verse of the Bible. Part of the supernatural stamp on this verse, showing that it’s the Word of God, is the numerical design found in this verse. In the Hebrew language, the verse consists of seven Hebrew words. Seven is God’s number of perfection and we see a number of sevens in the design of this first verse of the Bible. Not only are there seven Hebrew words, but there are also twenty-eight Hebrew letters.

That's four times seven. Now the clause or predicate "*In the beginning God created...*" consists of fourteen letters, which is two times seven, and the objects "*the heavens and the earth...*" also contain fourteen letters. Two times seven. The "*heavens*" contain seven Hebrew letters, "*and the earth...*" contain seven Hebrew letters.

Furthermore, in the Hebrew language every Hebrew letter has a numerical value. The Jews did not have the Arabic system of numerals. They used the Hebrew letters for numbers, so you can add up the numerical value of the letters and get the numerical value of a single word, or words, or sentences, and so forth. There are quite a number of designed features based on the number seven when the numerical values are taken into account. For example, the numerical value of the verb "*created...*" is 203. That is twenty-nine times seven and the numerical value of the three nouns "*God,*" "*heavens,*" and "*earth*" is 777. Quite amazing, isn't it? And there are other designed features based on the number seven found in this verse, but we need to move on to our doctrinal or teaching point.

Doctrinal Point

The Bible teaches that the universe was created, but God is eternal.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..." The Bible teaches that the universe was created, but God is eternal. But you may say, "Where did God come from?" Answer: He always was! God is eternal. But you say, "I can't comprehend such a concept." Well, neither can I, but we're finite. We have finite minds. How can we possibly think we can fully comprehend the infinite? The question is not whether we can comprehend how God can be eternal, but whether we believe what the Bible says: The universe was created, but God is eternal. Hebrews 11:6 says that: "*And without faith it is impossible to please God,...*" (NIV) and Hebrew 11:3 says, "*By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible*" (NKJV).

You're not kissing your brains goodbye to believe that God is eternal! To believe in an eternal God is not a blind faith, it is a reasonable faith -- because your only other logical option is to believe that the universe is eternal. Did you follow that? I'll say that one more time. To believe in an eternal God is not a blind faith, it's a reasonable faith, because your only other logical option is to believe in an eternal universe. If you don't believe in a God that is eternal, who created this universe, then you must believe in an eternal universe, because a universe can't just start out of nothing. Now, if you think a universe can create itself, then you really *have* kissed your brains goodbye -- right?! So, you either must believe in an eternal God, or an eternal universe. Those are your only two logical options. Both of those options require faith, and you must believe one of them. The human mind demands it. But now I ask you: Which option is based on the more reasonable faith? I am resting my case on the first verse of the bible. Genesis 1:1 teaches that the universe was created, but God is eternal. Psalm 90:1-2, "*Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*" (NKJV) The universe was created, but God is eternal.

I remember a couple of years ago watching Ted Koppel's program, Nightline. A couple of scientists were on his show, and they were talking about the Big Bang theory. The talk show host, Ted Koppel, asked them, "But where did the stuff, the thimbleful, the microdot of mass energy come from that started all this?" I will never forget what these scientists said: "Well, we're working on that one now; we're working on that question." Come on! You see, a person who doesn't want to believe in God will always come up with "something." They know that they have to go with an eternal universe because you can't get a universe out of nothing. They are just kidding themselves, to think that everything started with a big bang, out of nothing. At least Ted Koppel had the sense to ask the obvious question. You see the logical options you have? You have to either believe in an eternal God, or an eternal universe.

Now did you know that it's also more scientific to believe that the universe was created and not eternal? The second law of thermodynamics (which is a proven scientific law in nature) indicates that the universe is running down and becoming more disordered as time goes on. In other words, there was a time when the universe was wound up with no disorder. The second law of thermodynamics indicates that the universe is not eternal. It had a beginning. In fact, along with the first law of thermodynamics, the second law points toward creation. The first law of thermodynamics states that matter or energy is not being created at the present time— it is only changing in form. Once again, matter or energy is not being created now -- it is only changing in form. The first and second laws of thermodynamics, solid scientific laws to which all scientists subscribe, strongly indicate that the universe did have a beginning, and it didn't begin itself. It was created. Now that is solid science, so again, you're not kissing your brains goodbye to believe in an eternal God. It is the more reasonable option, and it's the more scientific option as well.

The word used for "create" in Genesis 1:1 is the Hebrew word *berra*. It is only used in the Bible for **God's** activity -- it is never used for man's activity. So the use of *berra* emphasizes that God brought this universe into existence *ex nihilo* -- that is, "out of nothing." This word create/*berra*, is only used for God's activity, not for man's activity. It emphasizes that God brought this universe into existence *ex nihilo* -- out of nothing. As Romans 4:17 says, "...God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist." The Bible teaches that the universe was created, but God is eternal.

Practical Application

Are your priorities in line with the first verse of the Bible?

Genesis 1:1 says, "*In the beginning God...*". Does God come first in your life? Maybe you are here this morning and you don't believe in God. The Bible says, in Psalm 14:1 and Psalm 53:1, "*the fool has said in his heart there is no God.*" (NIV) I trust that you are not in that category. But maybe you're here this morning and you believe in God, but he is not number one in your life. Listen, if you want to have a meaningful life, and a joyful life -- and we all want that, right? -- then get your priorities in line with the first verse in the bible, "*In the beginning God...*". Do you know God? Have you received Christ as your personal Savior? Are you serving the Lord? Are your priorities in line with the first verse of the bible?