

March 20, 2005 AM

THE HISTORY OF HISTORY
GENESIS 1:1-2

1. THE INITIAL CREATION OF ALL THINGS (1)

Some have sought to translate this “When God began to create the heavens and the earth.” Seems to be a theological ax to grind. Opens the door for God to create using preexisting material.

The straightforward simply translation of Genesis 1.1 is correct. And we know that God made all things of nothing because this is the divine commentary in Heb 11.3.

Creation *ex nihilo*: creation out of nothing

History as the context for Scripture: “in the beginning” is an historical statement. History, then, provides the context in which God is active, man is involved, and is where God and man relate to one another. The Bible, God, and our lives are not about living outside of history or escaping from it but living within it.

Our understanding of our relationship with God, therefore, must be comprehended in terms of history. Historical events are not *peripherals* to what God is *really doing*. Historical events *are* God’s actions as the God of history.

History: Looking toward a conclusion: Looking back at the starting point implies that history has progressed. “Beginning” looks for an “ending” or a conclusion.

The Hebrew term translated “beginning” is often paired with the word “end.” Cf. Isa 46.10; Rev 1.8

The beginning of **Genesis 1:1** finds its anticipated end when Jesus Christ has put all enemies under his feet, having abolished all authorities and powers and he comes again for the resurrection of the dead. Then comes the end (cf. **1Cor 15:20-28**).

History is not directionless and, thus, meaningless. History is the unfolding of God’s sovereign plan which is moving toward its proper conclusion. This, of course, means that life lived within history is not meaningless. It has purpose.

Creation of heaven(s) and earth: “God” is the translation of the Hebrew word *elohim*. The emphasis in the word is upon might and power (along with authority).

Emphasis in the sentence is upon the action of God: “created.” Hebrew word is only used with God as the subject. Man does not “create” like God “creates.” We only understand our “creations” by analogy and as creatures.

Questions: **(1)** Is this a *summary statement* of all that is about to be done or is it a statement that God created everything at one time and then shaped, molded and formed from his “original” creation.

It seems that the latter is more plausible considering the context. God takes the original creation and divides it up, ordering the world, and then causes things to be formed from the ground, seas, etc.

1) Creation is one and many.

Every created thing comes from the same “stuff” and is, thus, related. “Alien” things are not brought in from the outside bit-by-bit. All of creation, then, is interrelated.

This includes man who is made “from the dust of the ground.”

We are all from one creation but God develops the world so that distinctions are created within it.

Living together in harmony with one another and rest of creation is rooted, in the nature of our Creator and the manner in which he creates (i.e., the way we were created).

2) All of creation is interdependent.

We are ultimately dependent upon God, the One in whom life exists. But we are also dependent upon one another and other aspects of creation for our continued life. (E.g., food. Ground dependent upon us for cultivation; we are dependent upon the ground for food.)

3) *As a member of creation and the height of God's creation, man is creation's representative.*

Man is created from the ground as a part of creation to be creation's representative. Goes a long way to helping you understand why our Savior had to be 'adam, a man.

4) *As God's image bearers man has a responsibility to care for and develop creation.*

God takes the creation he has made and forms it, develops it and fills it. We do this as we image him.

Note the fourth word/commandment (cf. **Exod 20:8-11**). Six days of labor, one of rest, is not only gives us the pattern but also the progress of our dominion. We start with materials and develop them.

This activity includes other humans. We are to love, care for, and cultivate them.

(2) What is the relationship of "the heavens and the earth?"

Either referring to the totality of the earth ("heavens") being the firmament, or heaven is the abode of God. (I tend to take the latter view.)

Heaven is created complete and mature while earth is created "unformed and unfilled" as we will see in a moment. (E.g., The angels in heaven are created as a complete host, a fixed number. Humans are created a maturing and multiplying group who is growing into a host.)

2. THE UNDEVELOPED CONDITION OF THE EARTH (2)

The earth is "unformed and unfilled.": "and the earth was *tohu wabohu*."

Jeremiah 4:23 uses this language to speak of judgment upon God's people. This judgment, in short, will be exile from the land, and returning the land to its original creation status. God's is going to wipe the slate clean (e.g., like the flood).

The phrase best denotes the fact that the world was simply undeveloped and, therefore, uninhabitable. Cf. Isa 45:18

"unformed and unfilled" - The first three days God "forms," the second three days God "fills."

Darkness was over the face of the deep: darkness and deep are both threats to man.

Darkness is sometimes associated with evil in the Scriptures (cf. e.g., **Isa 5:20**). Also associated with God himself (cf. Ps 18:11). The glory cloud of God brings both light and darkness (cf. Ex 14:20; and also Deut 4:11; 5:23)

The deep is that which is broken up in order to flood the earth in judgment in which Noah and his family were the only survivors (**Gen 7:1**). The Red Sea is a threat, but God brings them through and destroys their enemies (Ex 15:8).

The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters: *ruach* (S/spirit, wind, breath). Spirit of God is "hovering" over the face of the waters.

Moses uses this term "hovering" later in **Deut 32:10-11** when speaking about how God cared for his people in the wilderness. As an eagle "hovers" over its nest, so God has done this with his people. Moses, not so incidentally, picks up there on creation language when he says that God found them in a *tohu*, a wilderness and then hovered over them to care for, provide for and protect his people.

This is what the Spirit of God is doing in original creation. He is active in creation, giving life to the creation.

He is the one "building" creation like a house. Later on in Scripture we read of God's Spirit coming upon people for certain "house-building" tasks. This creation imagery and building God's house is shown later as the Spirit of God fills Bezalel of the tribe of Judah to build God's tabernacle/house (cf. **Exod 31:1ff.; 35:31**).

Application: (1) The God who created all things is the One who has re-created us as his people.

Application: (2) Each one of us has responsibility concerning the rest of God's creation.