

## Genesis Foundations Series

Genesis 1:2 – “The earth was without form, and void; and darkness [was] on the face of the deep.  
And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”

### Incomplete Creation: God Takes His Time

#### Genesis 1:1a – Is God Your Foundation? Everything Begins with God

- I. The Bible Shows Us that Creation is about GOD – Creation is God-FOUNDED (He exists, is the Creator; Creation about God)
- II. The Bible Shows Us that Creation is for GOD – Creation is God-FOCUSED

*Life Principle: God is deservedly to be the Central Focus of our Lives!*

#### Genesis 1:1a – “In the beginning, God”

##### 7 “Beginnings” Referred to in the Bible:

- (1) Eternity Past (Prior to Creation) – (2) The Beginning of the World (Creation) – (3) The Beginning of Jesus’ Earthly Ministry – (4) The Beginning of the Church (Pentecost) (5) The Beginning of Paul’s Ministry – (6) Title or Characteristic of Jesus Christ – (7) The Point of Conversion or Discipleship of Believers

*Life Principle: Begin @ the Beginning – witnessing, instruction, introduction, history, education*

##### What Does the Term “God” (Elohim) Indicate?

1. God is the Subject of the Bible (the existence of God is assumed)
2. God (*elohim*) is the standard Hebrew term for deity, and is also used for pagan gods, angels, men, and judges.
3. God (*elohim*) is plural possibly the form called the plural of majesty or intensity which can mean “the fullness of deity”
4. God (*elohim*) also hints at the plurality of persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – The Trinity.

*There are only two choices regarding the origin of the universe: (1) eternal mass, or (2) an Eternal Maker*

#### Genesis 1:1b – “...God created...”

##### “GOD CREATED” – The Concept of Creation

**The Usage of the Word “Create” (bārā)** (6x in creation account: 1:1, 21, 27[3x]; 2:3; cf. also 2:4a – about 50+ in OT.) – Its subject is always God (men do not create); used exclusively of God’s activity with no presence of existing material; it consistently refers to a new activity; it refers to the product, not the material from which it is made. The context indicates that creation was *ex nihilo* (“out of nothing”). *Create* does not necessarily mean an altogether new thing. “Create” / “make” are used interchangeably for the creation of human life. One God did the creating; (*bārā*) is singular. God created everything; is not part of creation.

**Rejects 9 Views:** Atheism; Pantheism; Polytheism; Radical materialism; Naturalism; Fatalism; Dualism; Humanism; Nihilism

*God Created EVERYTHING Ultimately Out of NOTHING*

##### “THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH”

- A. **Where is God going to put this creation? Heavens!** → SPACE (*Heavens (1) vs Heaven (8) vs heavens (9)*)  
In Genesis 1:1, the term refers to the component of space in the basic space-mass-time universe. (Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record*)  
**The Third Heaven – The Presence of God and Home of the Angels (2 Cor 12:2-4)**  
**The Second Heaven – The Realm of Outer Space (Ps 19:1)**  
**The First Heaven – The Atmosphere or “Air” (The Sky Where Birds Fly) – Gen 1:6-8**
- B. **What was God going to make things out of? Earth!** → MATTER (*Earth in v. 1 is not quite the earth of v. 10!*)  
Thus, Genesis 1:1 can legitimately and incisively be paraphrased as follows: “The transcendent, omnipotent Godhead called into existence the space-mass-time universe.” (Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record*)
- C. **How did God Do This? → By His WORD! (Ps 33:6-9; 148:1-6) – Ps 33:6 “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made...”**

*Principle: Identify the Basic Elements and Start There*

#### When Was the Beginning?: Three Views of the Timing of Verse 1

- (1) **Previous Creation** – Verse 1 refers to the heavens and earth which existed prior to the creation account. *This view is held by those who may hold to either theistic evolution or the gap theory.*
- (2) **Preview of Creation** – Verse 1 is a summary statement of what is to follow: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, the details of which are to follow.”
- (3) **Part of Creation on Day 1** – Verse 1 is part of Day 1. *The heavens and the earth are the first components of creation as God begins to create on Day 1. The evidence:*
  - A. Genesis 2:1-4 Includes Verse 1 as Part of the Six Days of Creation (Gen 2:1-4)
  - B. Conjunctions and Connectives Require a Single Day for Verses 1-2
  - C. The Presence of Earth and Water Components on Day 2 is Explained Only by Verse 1
  - D. Other Passages Combine the Heavens and the Earth in the Six Days of Creation (or their Events; e.g. Ex 20:8-11)

*IT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE!: A literal 6-day creation defines the method of interpretation of the Bible, and lays the foundation for understanding the rest of Scripture, which builds many teachings upon the normal sense (historical-grammatical) of interpretation.*

## Incomplete Creation: God Takes His Time

Genesis 1:2a-b “The earth was without form, and void; and darkness [was] on the face of the deep. ...”

### 1. The Subject – “The Earth”

Same word for “earth” as in Verse 1.

“It is wholly anticipatory when we say that “this undulating mass of waters was not the earth itself in the condition of *thohu* and *bohu*, but that it enclosed it; for on the third day the firm land goes forth from the waters.” (Delitzsch)

“describes with minuteness the original condition and progressive formation of the earth alone, and says nothing more respecting the heaven than is actually requisite in order to show its connection with the earth.” (Keil & Delitzsch)

It is here called the earth (though the earth, properly taken, was not made till the third day v. 10), because it did most resemble that which afterwards was called *earth*, mere earth, destitute of its ornaments, such a heavy unwieldy mass was it; it is also called *the deep*, both for its vastness and because the waters which were afterwards separated from the earth were now mixed with it. This immense mass of matter was it out of which all bodies, even the firmament and visible heavens themselves, were afterwards produced by the power of the Eternal Word. The Creator could have made his work perfect at first, but by this gradual proceeding he would show what is, ordinarily, the method of his providence and grace. (Matthew Henry)

### 2. The Situation – Three Conditions:

“All three describe the condition of the earth immediately after the creation of the universe.” (Keil & Delitzsch)

#### a. Without form – shapeless – *tohu* – unfashioned – uninhabitable

Is 45:18 For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it *and* did not create it a waste place, *but* formed it to be inhabited), “I am the LORD, and there is none else. (NAU)

#### b. Void – lifeless – *bohu* – empty – uninhabited

Used only with *tohu* (3x)

#### c. Dark – lightless – unpowered

The darkness is just the absence of the phenomenal, or the absence of light (for the vision view) in the condition of the earth itself,—in other words, night. (Lange)

Darkness is not always a symbol of evil in the Bible. Psalm 104:19–24 makes it quite clear that physical darkness (the absence of visible light) is not to be considered inherently evil or as the result of divine judgment. It conveys the fact that God makes the darkness and the night for animals to find their prey. (KJV Study Bible)

We have probably then to think in verse 2 of a confused and desolate “something”, which was later to become the earth, but which is at this moment still immersed in or surrounded by the swirling waters of an all-encompassing deep. That to the Hebrews was the chaos with which Creation began. It is far removed from the calm and motionless scene which under the influence of English translations like “without form and void” or “abyss” we usually, but quite misleadingly, envisage. (Gibson)

Moreover, proponents of the title view contend that v. 2 describes a chaotic earth whose elements oppose creation and are not harmonious with God’s good creation (cf. *Isa 45:18*; *Rev 21:1, 25*). But this expects more of the passage than it says. The description of the “earth” is best seen as neutral, if not positive; for elsewhere we learn that God is the Creator of “darkness” (*Isa 45:7*), and we recognize also that darkness (“evening”) was a part of the created order the Lord named and deemed “good.” As we showed at v. 2, the distinctive couplet *tōhû wābōhû* (“formless and empty”) portrays an earth that is a sterile wasteland awaiting the creative word of God to make it habitable for human life. (*New American Commentary*)

The parallel clause, however, shows that not the original state, but the ultimate design of the globe, was contemplated in Jehovah’s language: “He created it not *tohu*, he formed it to be inhabited;” *i. e.* the Creator did not intend the earth to be a desolate region, but an inhabited planet. There can scarcely be a doubt, then, that the expression portrays the condition in which the new-created earth was, not innumerable ages, but very shortly, after it was summoned into existence. It was formless and lifeless; a huge, shapeless, objectless, tenantless mass of matter, the gaseous and solid elements commingled, in which neither organised structure, nor animated form, nor even distinctly-traced outline of any kind appeared. (*Pulpit Commentary*)

### 3. The Strategy

a. God begins with the simple and moves to the complex.

b. God was at the beginning of several phases – creation had only just begun.

c. God uses six days to address each condition.

### 4. Summary Observations

a. God works by processes. (Matt 28:20; Rom 12:1-2; Col 2:6-7; 3:1ff)

b. God’s today is not His tomorrow. (2 Pet 3:1-13; Rev 21-22)

c. God has His plan and His pace. (2 Pet 3:8; Moses)