

Genesis Foundations Series
Genesis 1:1b – “In the beginning, God created”
The Concept of Creation

The Usage of the Word “Create” (*bārā*)

- It occurs in the creation account six times (1:1, 21, 27[3x]; 2:3; cf. also 2:4a). (About 55x in the OT.)
- In the Old Testament, its subject is always _____. Biblically speaking, _____ “create.”
“Men can ‘make’ things or ‘form’ things, but they cannot *create* things. God also can ‘make’ and ‘form’ things (Hebrew *asah* and *yatsar*, respectively), and do so far more effectively and quickly than man can do. The work of creation, however, is uniquely a work of God. The work of making and forming consists of organizing already existing materials into more complex systems, whereas the act of creation is that of speaking into existence something whose materials had no previous existence, except in the mind and power of God. (Morris, *Record*)
- It is often contrasted with the verb *āsāā*, meaning “to make” or “do,” which may have as its subject human activity (as well as divine). In particular *āsāā* is used where “making” involves existing material. As the argument goes, *āsāā* can refer to human activity in which preexisting material is transformed, but *bārā* is used exclusively of God’s activity with no presence of preexisting material.
- Used in the Old Testament consistently in reference to a new activity. – God created something _____.
- Conveys the idea of a special activity accomplished only by deity that results in newness or a renewing.
- Always refers to the _____ created and does not refer to the _____ of which it is made.

The Meaning of the Word for “Create” (*bārā*)

- Traditionally interpreted the verb as a technical term for *creatio ex nihilo* (“creation out of nothing”).
- “Create,” however, does not necessarily mean an altogether new thing.
- In the context of the creation account itself “create” and “make” are used interchangeably for the creation of human life (vv. 26–27; cp. 2:7; 5:1).
- If the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* is expounded here, it must be from the tenor [context] of the text and not from this single lexical term. Elsewhere in the narrative it is apparent that God created *ex nihilo* (e.g., 1:3).
- Context [here and in all of Scripture] demands in no uncertain terms that this was a creation without preexisting material.
 - Is 40:28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.
 - Is 45:8 Rain down, you heavens, from above, And let the skies pour down righteousness; Let the earth open, let them bring forth salvation, And let righteousness spring up together. I, the LORD, have created it.
 - Is 45:12 I have made the earth, And created man on it. I -- My hands -- stretched out the heavens, And all their host I have commanded.
 - Is 45:18 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: “I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other.
 - Is 48:13 Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, And My right hand has stretched out the heavens; *When* I call to them, They stand up together.
 - Jer 10:16 The Portion of Jacob *is* not like them, For He *is* the Maker of all *things*, And Israel *is* the tribe of His inheritance; The LORD of hosts *is* His name.
 - Mark 13:19 “For *in* those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.
 - John 1:3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.
 - Acts 4:24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: “Lord, You *are* God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them,
 - Acts 14:15 and saying, “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them,
 - Acts 17:24 God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.
 - Rom 4:17 (as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed -- God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;
 - 2 Cor 4:6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
 - Col 1:16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.
 - Heb 1:2 has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;
 - Heb 1:10 And: “You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands.
 - Heb 11:3 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.
 - Rev 4:11 “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”
 - Rev 10:6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer,
 - Rev 14:7 saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

God and “Create” (*bārā*)

- _____ Did the Creating – Even though the word for “God” (elohim) is plural, the verb for “created” (*bārā*) is singular.
- God Created _____ – The declaration of v. 1 without any intimation of competing preexisting matter is so distinctive from its ancient counterparts that we must infer that all things have their ultimate origin in God as Creator.
- God Is _____ of Creation – Since God is Creator of all that exists, he is antecedent to it, distinct from it, while yet intimately involved with it. The God of nature is not subject to the laws of nature.

“The use of the word ‘create’ here in Genesis 1:1 informs us that, at this point, the physical universe was spoken into existence by God. It had no existence prior to this primeval creative act of God. God alone is infinite and eternal. He also is omnipotent, so that it was possible for Him to call the universe into being. Although it is impossible for us to comprehend fully this concept of an eternal, transcendent God, the only alternative is the concept of an eternal, self-existing universe; and this concept is also incomprehensible. Eternal God or eternal matter—that is the choice. The latter is an impossibility if the present scientific law of cause and effect is valid, since random particles of matter could not, by themselves, generate a complex, orderly, intelligible universe, not to mention living persons capable of applying intelligence to the understanding of the complex order of the universe. A personal God is the only adequate Cause to produce such effects.” (*Morris, Record*)

SCRIPTURE IMMEDIATELY REJECTS AT LEAST *EIGHT* PHILOSOPHIES (Col 2:6-8)

1. **Atheism** – “_____ God” – Genesis states that God does exist; the universe was created by *God*.
2. **Pantheism** – “_____ is God” – However, Genesis is clear that God is distinct from His creation; God is apart from and independent of his creation; God is *transcendent* to that which He created.
3. **Polytheism** – “_____ Gods” – However, in Genesis 1:1, “created” is singular in the text; there is only one God; one God created all things.
4. **Radical materialism** (matter is _____) – Genesis presumes that God is eternal, and created all matter; matter is not eternal but was itself created.
5. **Naturalism** – (things evolved _____ – evolution) – However, Genesis states that God *created* all things; Creation took place when someone outside nature intervened (emphasis on process); the universe was created and did not evolve.
6. **Fatalism** – A personal God freely chose to create; creation has a purpose.
7. **Dualism** – (multiple _____ exist side-by-side) – Genesis is clear that God was alone when He created. He is God alone.
8. **Humanism** – (_____ -centered or _____ -focused) – God, *not man*, is the ultimate reality.
9. **Nihilism** – (_____ – no meaning, logic, reason) – God made the universe for a purpose.

Actually all such false philosophies are merely different ways of expressing the same unbelief. Each one proposes that there is no personal, transcendent God; that ultimate reality is to be found in the eternal cosmos itself; and that the development of the universe into its present form is contingent solely on the innate properties of its own components. In essence, each of the above philosophies embraces all the others. Dualism, for example, is a summary form of polytheism, which is the popular expression of pantheism, which presupposes materialism, which functions in terms of evolutionism, which finds its consummation in humanism, which culminates in atheism.

The entire system could well be called the system of atheistic evolutionary humanism. Other philosophical ideas could also be incorporated into the same monstrous structure: naturalism, uniformitarianism, deism, agnosticism, monism, determinism, pragmatism, and others. All are arrayed in opposition to the great truth, marvelously simple, and understandable to a child, yet inexhaustibly profound, that “in the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.”

It is remarkable that, when there have been so many anti-theistic philosophies (ancient and modern) affecting untold millions of people, the book of God makes no attempt to prove that God exists. The opening verse of Genesis simply takes this fact for granted, as though it were so obvious that only a fool could say “there is no God” ([Psalm 14:1](#)).

That this fact is *not* obvious, however, is obvious in light of the contrary fact that *only in the Bible* does such a revelation appear. That is, all of the other ancient religious books and religious systems, as well as all modern philosophies, begin, not with God, but with preexisting matter or energy in some form. In the primeval chaos (of water or fire or whatever), the forces of nature (or the gods and goddesses personifying them) then begin to bring about the cosmic changes which developed the world into its present form.

In spite of the universal prevalence of such pantheistic evolutionary cosmogonies among the nations of antiquity, the inspired account in Genesis does not attempt to refute them or to prove the existence of the true God. The reason for this strange silence is, most likely, the fact that the Genesis account was written before any of these other systems developed. The others were developed later for the very purpose of combating and replacing the true account in Genesis. The latter had been written originally, possibly by God Himself (“the generations of the heavens and the earth”) soon after the Creation, setting forth in simple narrative form the actual events of Creation Week. At that point in time, there was no need to argue about the reality of God and the Creation, since no one doubted it! (*Morris, Record*)

GOD Created EVERYTHING, Beginning with NOTHING.