

### Once Upon a Time, In the Beginning...

**Genesis 1:1 ESV** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. **2** The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. **3** And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. **4** And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. **6** And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." **7** And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. **8** And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. **9** And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. **10** God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. **11** And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. **12** The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. **13** And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. **14** And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, **15** and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. **16** And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. **17** And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, **18** to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. **19** And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. **20** And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." **21** So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. **22** And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." **23** And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. **24** And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. **25** And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

- I. Once upon a time, there was nothing but God. There was no matter or energy, no light or darkness, no animate or inanimate objects. There were no stars or planets. There were no angels, demons, people, plants or animals, there was only God.
  - A. Close your eyes and try to imagine a reality where nothing exists but God . What do you imagine? Go ahead and try!

1. What do you see in your mind's eye? Light? Darkness? And Old man with a long beard? A familiar concept of Jesus from movies, art, or Sunday school? What you are attempting to see is very difficult, isn't it?
  2. "We learn by using what we already know as a bridge over which we pass to the unknown. It is not possible for the mind to crash suddenly past the familiar into the totally unfamiliar. Even the most vigorous and daring mind is unable to create something out of nothing by a spontaneous act of imagination. Those strange beings that populate the world of mythology and superstition are not pure creations of fancy. The imagination created them by taking the ordinary inhabitants of earth and air and sea and extending their familiar forms beyond their normal boundaries, or by mixing the forms of two or more so as to produce something new. However beautiful or grotesque these may be, their prototypes can always be identified. They are like something we already know." A.W. Tozer
- B. This simply means that when you try to imagine what was before creation, your imagination will certainly fail you. Physically, we are a part of the universe that **has been** (past tense) created, so everything our minds can conceive must necessarily use the ingredients of this present reality in which we find ourselves.
- II. But if we **could** see into that reality that preceded us, what would we see? I am convinced that we would see a reality in which the true, unfiltered, manifest essence of God was experienced in ways we cannot begin to understand.
- A. For example, there would be no **space** to confine us. But as it is for us now, we are prisoners of this planet (though a few have ventured a little ways from it!)
1. At this point in our history, mankind has only travelled as far as the moon, a distance of roughly 240,000 miles.
    - a) This may seem like quite a distance for you and I, but the Milky Way galaxy that we occupy is approximately 100,000 light years wide, containing over 100 billion other stars! On top of that, it is only **one** of an estimated **100 billion** galaxies in the known universe!
    - b) We haven't even budged off of our front porch!
  2. Yet if we were to go back to the very beginning, at the point when God created, instead of innumerable galaxies, there would only be one "place" - the place known as the presence of God.
  3. That is not to say that God is not still omnipresent, because the Bible teaches clearly that he is, but at the beginning he was not just everywhere, He was everything and everyone!
- B. There would also be no **time** to which we were subject. As it is for us now, time is a merciless master that does not pause or slow down.
1. Regardless of the fantasies put forth by my generation, where Marty McFly and Doc Brown can jump in their DeLorean and go 30 years in the past or future to right wrongs and insure a positive outcome, you and I must live (sometimes painfully) within the confines of time.
    - a) We can not relive and undo the regrets and mistakes of the past.
    - b) We cannot fast forward to a preferred future. Time is like a wave that we are fated to ride, no matter where (and through what) it takes us.

2. But if we **were** to go back to the beginning, though it is hard to grasp, we would only find ourselves, not in a timeline as we now know it, but in the never-ending “now”, where God dwells.
  3. “Suppose I am writing a novel. I write ‘Mary laid down her work; next moment came a knock at the door!’ For Mary who has to live in the imaginary time of my story there is no interval between putting down the work and hearing the knock. But I, who am Mary’s maker, do not live in that imaginary time at all. Between writing the first half of that sentence and the second, I might sit down for three hours and think steadily about Mary. I could think about Mary as if she were the only character in the book and for as long as I pleased, and the hours I spent in doing so would not appear in Mary’s time (the time inside the story) at all. This is not a perfect illustration, of course. But it may give just a glimpse of what I believe to be the truth. **God is not hurried along in the Time-stream of this universe any more than an author is hurried along in the imaginary time of his own novel.** He has infinite attention to spare for each one of us. He does not have to deal with us in the mass. You are as much alone with Him as if you were the only being He had ever created. When Christ died, He died for you individually just as much as if you had been the only man in the world.” C.S. Lewis
- C. There would also be no **matter**, that is to say, “no stuff”. This means there would be nothing for me to covet after, cling to, or be distracted by. The only thing would be God himself.
1. This is not to say that created matter is bad or evil.
    - a) Did you notice that when God finished creating on each day, the Bible says that he saw that what he created was “good”.
    - b) The problem is that I, as a sinner, am prone to look past the creator and his goodness, and fixate only on the creation.
  2. The Apostle Paul foresees a day in our future when the nature of things will return to this “God-filled” state.
    - a) **1 Corinthians 15:28 ESV** When all things are subjected to him (Jesus), then the Son himself will also be subjected to him (the Father) who put all things in subjection under him (Christ), **that God may be all in all.**
    - b) Wouldn’t it be good if we were preparing for that day by learning to treasure God alone instead of all the other things we crave and chase in this life?
    - c) **Psalms 119:37 ESV** Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.
- III. Though we would not find space or time or matter, what we would find is a boundless reservoir of love. This makes perfect sense when you consider that John says in **1 John 4:8b ESV** “God **is** love”; and that all there waisted the beginning **was God.**
- A. **John 1:1 ESV** In the beginning **was** the Word, and the Word **was with** God, and the Word **was** God. **2 He was in the beginning** with God.
1. This makes plain to us that Jesus existed in the beginning, but that he didn’t exist alone. He was “with God” even as he “was” God.

2. The Spirit as well existed from the very beginning. We can see that in Genesis 1's description of how he hovered over the raw materials of the unfinished earth.
- B. However, if you could have peeked in on their pre-creation existence, I don't think you would have been able to distinguish where one person of the trinity "ended" and another one began. Such was their closeness and the depth of their love!
1. This is an ideal that is set before men and women in marriage when the scriptures say, **Genesis 2:24 ESV** Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and ***they shall become one flesh.***
  2. That is why the mystery that God could be three distinct persons, and yet one God, is some difficult for our minds! It is because we have never seen the kind of love that makes it possible!
- C. But for all of eternity past, the trinity existed like that.
1. They had perfect love. Perfect harmony. Perfect trust.
  2. They experienced a complete lack of insecurity, anger, frustration, selfishness, or impatience with one another.
  3. They found complete satisfaction the fellowship they had with one another. They needed no additions, no improvements. Within the love of each other they had all of the excitement and adventure they could ever want. They never needed to add anything to their perfect fellowship to remain passionately interested in each other. God was enough for God!
- IV. Well that sounds good, but if what I am saying is true, then why would God alter that perfect state of affairs by creating?
- A. By creating, God was, in actuality, changing the way things functioned, and expanding the magnitude of his beautiful artwork on the canvas of what would now be known as reality.
- B. Many preachers, multiple books, and a ton of resources on the internet seek to answer the mysteries behind how God created. Great debate surrounds this question: Six literal days? Millions of years of evolution? What about dinosaurs?
1. It is a fascinating subject, and I can assure you that from both a theological and scientific basis, you can confidently place your trust in the fact the Bible is true and God is the creator of the Universe! If he is not, every other word in the Bible is a lie.
  2. I will not, however, be exploring the science of creationism today. My concern is not with "how" God created, but rather "why" He did. Why did God create the world?
- C. There's a funny thing about love. True love is always creative. It always has the impulse to create.
1. How many paintings have been painted, sculptures sculpted, songs and poems written, buildings built, homes decorated, meals cooked, gifts made or purchased and given for the glory of love?
  2. Creation is the expected overflow of love! It is the tangible display of what is bursting the heart!

- D. Gerald Bray, wrote a massive volume stating that the basis of all orthodox theology is the fact that God is love. This is true when considering not only his salvation, but most certainly his role as creator!
1. I believe that God's impulse to create was driven by both the glory of his love for himself (that is, the Father for the Son and the Spirit, The Son for the Father and the Spirit, and the Spirit for the Father and the Son); as well as the love of his own glory.
    - a) Because we are sinful creatures, capable of incredible and insidious pride, we sometimes wince at the thought of God's love of his own glory.
    - b) But if God's glory is the highest thing in the universe, the highest thing we can know and experience as created beings, (and it is) than for God to love his own glory enough to display it so others may experience and love it as well is, in itself, an act of love!
  2. In other words, God "shows off" his glory so we can experience His glory, love His glory, and ultimately be changed into his image by His glory.
- E. **Revelation 4:11 ESV** "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."
- F. **Psalms 19:1 ESV** The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
- G. So the love that always existed within the Trinity has overflowed, Now light has entered our universe. Light that has its origin, not in celestial bodies in the sky above us, but in the Word of God. Check the scripture...God spoke light into existence four days before the sun and the moon existed! God determined that light was good!
1. **Psalms 119:130a ESV** The unfolding of your words gives light...
  2. **John 1:5 ESV** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
    - a) Even on the fourth day when God created the sun, moon and stars, it says, "And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night".
    - b) The message is that God will never leave you in total darkness! Even when it seems like nighttime, God has ordained a "light to rule the night". Darkness will never be more powerful than light! Is there a message for us in an election year?
  3. **1 John 1:5 ESV** This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.
- H. Moreover, the love within the Trinity has overflowed, now we have an atmosphere. And we are reminded by this that we are made alive and kept alive not merely by natural air, but by the very breath of God.
1. The same Greek word is used in the Greek version of the Old Testament (Septuagint) when it says that God breathed into man the breath of life, as is used when the New Testament tells us that the Holy Spirit showed up as a rushing, mighty wind on the day of Pentecost.
  2. Jesus told the woman at the well in John 4 that, "God is *pneuma* (Spirit, Breath, Wind)". Is he the air you breathe? Does his life sustain your life?

- I. The love within the Trinity has overflowed and dry land has been separated out of the flood. By this God has reminded you that he has provided a place for you to stand even if it seems like you're going to drown!
  1. **Isaiah 43:2a ESV** When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you...
    - a) God told Noah how to build an ark to save his family from the flood!
    - b) Three times in the history of his people Israel he moved the water out of the way so his people could pass through!
    - c) When the water created a problem for his disciples in the New Testament, Jesus just told it to shut up and settle down, and it obeyed!
    - d) Once he even told Peter to walk on it, just like Christ! Even when Peter's faith failed, Jesus lifted him up and walked him back to the boat!
  2. The message? There is nothing that Jesus can't heal you of, deliver you out of, or save you from. He will move the flood out of the way and give you a place to stand!
- J. The love within the Trinity has overflowed, and now the glory of that love is expressed in comets racing across space at over a million miles per hour, stars that are 1500 times the size of our own, blazing 5000 light years from earth, and yet still visible in our night sky.
  1. This reminds us that life, reality, and the universe are bigger than we can ever fathom, but that God still catalogs and manages every bit of it perfectly.
    - a) **Isaiah 40:26 HCSB** Look up and see: who created these? He brings out the starry host by number; He calls all of them by name. Because of His great power and strength, not one of them is missing.
    - b) If God is in control of trillions of stars and planets, comets and moons, and never loses even one, don't you think you can trust him with your life?
  2. This was what he had to remind Job of at the end of his trials:
    - a) **Job 38:31 NIV** "Can you bind the chains of the (constellation) Pleiades? Can you loosen Orion's belt? **32** Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the Bear with its cubs? **33** Do you know the laws of the heavens? Can you set up God's dominion over the earth?"
    - b) God has created a universe too vast for you to grasp so that you will learn that he is in control, even when you cannot be.
- K. The love within the Trinity has overflowed and now reproducible life has burst forth in the skies above us, in the seas beneath us, and is inhabiting every part of our earth.
  1. Elephants and tulips, humpback whales and peacocks, kangaroos and bumble bees, apple trees and alligators; all have been created to loudly proclaim the glory and majesty of God!
  2. His creativity and attention to detail is seen in all this variety! How you could be an atheist after spending a night in the woods, or even visiting a zoo is beyond me! The God who meticulously paints butterfly wings has put a terrifying roar in the mouth of the lion.
  3. What does this teach us? That God is a God of Life! Jesus said to his opponents: **Luke 20:38 ESV** Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him.

- a) Jesus said he was the **living** bread that came down out of heaven. He told the woman at the well that he would give her **living** water. He told his followers that out of them would flow rivers of living water!
- b) He said he was sent by the living Father! In John 14:6 he said he was the way, the truth, and **the life**.
- 4. **John 10:10b ESV** "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."
- V. Even though God created this amazing world so long ago, he has never retired from the creating business! He has never ceased from the life-giving business!
  - A. **2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation**. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
  - B. Just as the Holy Spirit hovered over the earth when it was formless and void, considering it, imagining what it would be, He is now hovering over you, though you are incomplete, formless, empty and void.
    - 1. Just as he did eons ago, he wants to unleash a tidal wave of beauty, order, and creativity into your life through Jesus.
    - 2. Do you want life? The breath of Life? There's only one place to get it. Do you want light that shatters darkness? There's only one place to find it.
    - 3. Do you want beauty instead of emptiness? Jesus can give it! Do you want order instead of chaos? God has already ordained it!