

The Beginning

Genesis 1:1-3a

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. ³ And God said ...

God Created - the Basic Facts

Who created (v. 1)? _____

What did he create (v.1)? _____

When did he create (v. 1)? _____

Where did he create? [Technically, there was no "where" until he created it!]

Why did he create? [This question is answered in other Scripture passages. (See below.)]

How did he create (v. 3a)? _____

God Created - More Details

Summarize what the following Scripture passages teach us.

Who was involved in creating?

- The Father - 1 Corinthians 8:6 _____
- The Son - Colossians 1:16; John 1:1-3 _____
- The Holy Spirit - Genesis 1:2 _____

What did God create?

- Nehemiah 9:6; Acts 14:15; John 1:3 _____

Why did God create?

Because he wanted to.

- Revelation 4:11 (especially the 2nd half of the verse) _____

Not because he needed anything.

- Acts 17:25 _____

For a purpose: Creation was made to reflect the nature of its creator.

- Romans 1:20 _____

- Psalm 19:1 _____

Through creation, we also learn about God's greatness (and our "smallness").

- Isaiah 40:21-26 _____

- Ecclesiastes 5:1-2 _____

- Psalm 8:3-4 _____

How did he create?

By simply uttering the word (or command).

- Hebrews 11:3 _____

- Psalm 33:9 _____

<p style="text-align: center;">"God spoke and it was" God took <i>nothing</i> and, by uttering a command, created <i>something</i> out of it!</p>
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In a manner that demonstrated wisdom.

- Jeremiah 10:12 _____

- Psalm 104:24 _____

More about the "reflection of God" in creation:

As mentioned above, creation was created in a way that would reflect the nature of its creator.

Because of the effects of sin (and the resulting "curse" in Genesis 3), creation is presently in a marred

condition. It still reflects God's nature, but not as well as it used to. Also, it is wearing out - again due to the consequences of sin. However, God has promised that he will one day restore all things. The earth will be purified by fire and it will become like a *new* earth. (The heavens will also be made new.)

- Consider what these verses say: Romans 8:22; Psalm 102:25-27; Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:10-11, 13; Revelation 21:1

One aspect of this "new creation" has already begun... in God's people.

- What do these verses say? 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10; 4:24
- Interestingly, we also are purified by the "fire" of trials - 1 Peter 1:6-7.

The "Time Span" of Creation

How long did it take?

Genesis 1:31-2:1; Exodus 20:11; 31:17 (see also v. 18) _____

- In the Exodus passages, who is speaking? _____
- Is there anything in these passages to suggest that he *didn't* mean a normal "day"? _____
- If people disagree with what these verses say, who is in error? People or God? _____

Some people claim that the word "day" is merely symbolic of millions or billions of years. Nothing in the Genesis 1 passage suggests such a view! Such an "interpretation" (*mis*-interpretation) didn't really exist until *after* people began to deny the accuracy of the Scriptures, and wanted to modify the Genesis account so it would "fit" the opinions of people who opposed it.

Is the work of creation still going on?

- Genesis 2:2 _____

What is God/Jesus doing today, as far as creation is concerned?

- Colossians 1:17b; Hebrews 1:3 (middle of the verse) _____

The "Starting Point" of Creation (v. 2)

What was creation like, when it was initially created?

Formless - no distinct shape or boundary. Things that would occur, to give creation *form*:

- Day 1 (Genesis 1:3) - light and darkness
- Day 2 (Genesis 1:6-7) - a sky that separated the waters above it and the waters below it
- Day 3 (Genesis 1:9-10) - dry land

Empty - no inhabitants. Things that would occur, to give creation *inhabitants*:

- Day 3 (Genesis 1:11-12) - vegetation
- Day 4 (Genesis 1:14-18) - sun, moon, stars
- Day 5 (Genesis 1:20-21) - sea creatures, flying creatures
- Day 6 (Genesis 1:24-27) - land creatures, humans

Here, these two words (formless and empty) indicate a readiness for *construction* - the development of shapes (or boundaries) and the filling of creation with inhabitants. Later, the prophets will use these same two words to indicate the consequences of *destruction* - a judgment against certain nations (Isaiah 34:11; Jeremiah 4:23). Judgment would be so severe, that it would be as though the *constructive* work of creation was *reversed*!

There were three things present at the "beginning" of creation:

- **Darkness** - the *absence* of light; "nothingness"
- **Watery depths** - ocean-like depths of water
- **The Spirit of God** - hovering (or moving) over the waters, poised ready for action

At this point, creation could be described as
a dark, empty, wet "blob" surrounded by "nothingness."
It was the starting point for something grand to happen
... and that was why the Spirit of God was there.

The "Creator - Creature" Distinction

At the end of verse 2, there is only *one* significant "distinction": the distinction between God and everything that is "not God" (all of creation). However, this is the most significant distinction in all the Bible, for it *defines* the relationship between creation and God.

What is the significance of this? Here are just a few things:

- God is *not* a "super creature," like other creatures, except more powerful. On the other hand, the devil is *not* an eternally existing "competitor" to God, but is a created being (initially good, according to Genesis 1:31).
- God is not like us. We don't make (or define) him based on *our* "image" (what *we* are). Rather, we were made in *his* "image" (a reflection of what *he* is - Genesis 1:27).
- The contrast between God and creation is so great, that we can comprehend God *only to the extent that he reveals himself in terms we can understand*. This is possible only because God *designed* creation to reflect his character. Even then, our understanding is limited, because *finite* creation can never fully reflect the character of the *infinite* God.
- The difference between the Creator and creation is so great, that there are ways God will interact with creation that we cannot fully understand or respond to. (To help us comprehend this difference, God has compared it to a human interacting with an inanimate piece of clay - Jeremiah 18:3-6; Romans 9:21.) On the other hand, he has also chosen to interact with us on *our* level - and on *this* level, we are accountable for the way we respond.