

In the Beginning Genesis 1:1

An argument can be made that the first verse of the Bible is the foundational verse upon which all other verses rest and is the most important verse of the Bible. In *The Genesis Record* by Henry M. Morris he conveys this position by stating the following:

“The first verse of the Bible is the foundational verse of the Bible Chapter 1 of Genesis is the foundational chapter of these first eleven chapters, since it summarizes the creation of the world and all things therein. . . . Genesis 1:1 is the foundational verse of this foundational chapter, speaking of primeval creation of the universe itself. It is the foundation of all foundations and is thus the most important verse of the Bible. . . . It has been pointed out that if a person really believes Genesis 1:1, he will not find it difficult to believe anything else recorded in the Bible. That is, if God really created all things, then He controls all things and can do all things.”¹

We might supplement this statement by Henry Morris by saying that if a person cannot accept Genesis 1:1 it opens the door to the likelihood that eventually they will find it difficult to accept anything else recorded in the Bible.

Why Is Genesis 1:1 So Important?

Is what we have said about Genesis 1:1 one true or are we going overboard making a fanatical and extreme statement? I believe Genesis 1:1 is critically and vitally important for a number of reasons.

First, to deny Genesis 1:1 is to deny a statement in the word of God. The Bible is God’s word. It is good for converting the soul (Psalm 19:7). God has the highest regard for His word (Psalm 138:2). God inspired the words of the bible so that they are from His heart and His manual for our lives (2 timothy 3:16-17). To reject God’s word is to put oneself in eternal peril (Matthew 22:29).

Second, to deny Genesis 1:1 is to undermine God’s stated purpose for our lives. Seeing God as our Creator gives us purpose and identity as well as accountability. The apostle Paul was inspired to write:

- **1 Corinthians 8:6 - ⁶ yet for us *there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.***

If we accept God as our Creator then it follows that we should live for Him. But if we deny God as Creator and instead see ourselves as the product of chance evolution whose ancestors are a

¹ Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record* page 37.

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globule of protoplasm, then we are accountable to only ourselves and God is pushed off the throne. This is the root of sin because Lucifer sought to usurp the throne of God and has been trying to do so in the world and hearts of humanity ever since he was thrown out of heaven by God (Isaiah 14:12-17).

Third, to deny Genesis 1:1 is to position yourself on the receiving end of God's wrath. In Romans 1:18-32 the Bible states that God's wrath is revealed from heaven against those who suppress the truth of God in unrighteousness. What "truth" is it that is suppressed? It is the truth that God is the Creator! (Romans 1:19-23). When God is denied as Creator man takes center stage in the universe. When your world view has Man at its center, the result is chaos in one's thinking (Romans 1:21-23) and in one's relationships (Romans 1:24-31).

Genesis 1:1 is vitally important and we need to put it in its rightful place of priority in God's revelation.

Genesis is the Beginning of God's Revelation about Himself

What does Genesis 1:1 tell us about God?

First, Genesis 1:1 reveals God as Eternal. The beginning of the first verse in the Bible states, "In the beginning God. . . ." The word "beginning" is translated from the Hebrew term BERESHITH (Strong's #7225 - בְּרֵשִׁית *rêshiyth, ray-sheeth*) which means, "the first, in place, time, order or rank; firstfruit; beginning, chief (-est), first (-fruits, part, time), principal thing."² This word in this context is referring to the beginning of time. Before this point there was no time. This verse is in many ways the most important, most rudimentary and most foundational to the Bible and human existence because it ***assumes the existence of God.*** The Bible is primarily a book ***about God.*** Humanity is not the central focus of the Bible, God is. And the first thing the Bible tells us about God is that God preexists the "beginning." This is an infinite idea that our finite minds find hard to grasp.

God has given humanity revelation of Himself in His word. The first thing revealed about God is that He is eternal, He has no beginning or end, He always was, always is, and always will be (Genesis 21:33; Deuteronomy 33:27; 1 Chronicles 16:36; Psalm 90:2, 4; Isaiah 44:6; 1 Timothy 1:17).

The New Testament supports the preexistence of God as well (John 1:1-5, 10-14, 18). When this earth is done away with and the New Heavens and the New Earth are created by God we will enter once again the no-time-zone of existence.

Second, Genesis 1:1 reveals God as Plural in nature. The Hebrew term translated "God" is ELOHIM (Strong's # 430 - אֱלֹהִים - *ělôhîym, el-o-heem*). The grammatical form of this term is that it is a uni-plural noun. This is our first evidence that God is Triune in nature.

²Strong, J. (1997, c1996). *The new Strong's dictionary of Hebrew and Greek words* (electronic ed.) (H7225). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

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There are many other places in Scripture that build on this aspect of the nature of God (Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1, 2, 10, 14).

Third, Genesis 1:1 reveals God as Creator. The first act of this eternal God is that He “**created.**” The first characteristic of God and His nature that He chooses to reveal to us is that He is **creative**. God is Creator of the universe and all things. This is something we see about God throughout the Bible (Proverbs 3:19; Isaiah 44:24; 45:7, 12; Jeremiah 10:12; Acts 17:24; Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6).

An important fact recognize is that the Hebrew term translated “created” is BARA (Strong’s 1254 - בָּרָא **bârâ**, *baw-raw*’; a prim. root; (absolutely) to *create*³) and it is a word used for **creating out of nothing. Only God can create out of nothing in this way.** The word is found 49 times in the Old Testament (20 of those occurrences are found in Isaiah 40-65). (See for examples of the use of this term: Genesis 1:1, 21, 27; 2:3, 4; 6:7; “produced” – Exodus 34:10; Numbers 16:30; Deuteronomy 4:32; Psalm 51:10; Isaiah 40:26, 28; 41:20; 42:5; 45:18; 65:18).

Romans 4:17 expresses this concept of creating out of nothing well when the inspired word states:

- **Romans 4:17 - 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;**

We owe our existence to God! And because of that we should look to Him as our Lord for meaning and direction in life. God has revealed His will in His word and we need to follow it (Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12).

When an inventor assembles out of preexisting materials an invention he or she secures a patent so no one can steal their invention. The inventor owns their invention and has a right to do with it as they please simply because they are the ones who put it together. How much more is this true of God who didn’t merely assemble us but called us into existence from nothing!

Fourth, Genesis 1:1 tells us God is Sovereign; He is in control of the Universe. Because God created “**the heavens and the earth**” the universe and us, He is in control over it. The word “heavens” (Strong’s # 8064 - שָׁמַיִם **shâmayim**, *shaw-mah*’-yim) refers to the sky, above the sky, outer space and beyond to the realm of God. “Earth” (Strong’s # 776 - אֶרֶץ **erets**, *eh*’-rets) refers to the material world, the basic elements of existence. We see this truth not only implied in Genesis 1:1 but taught throughout the Bible in such verses as:

³Strong, J. (1997, c1996). *The new Strong's dictionary of Hebrew and Greek words* (electronic ed.) (H1254). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

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- **Jeremiah 10:12** - He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion.
- **Isaiah 45:9-13** - “Woe to him who strives with his Maker! *Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth! Shall the clay say to him who forms it, ‘What are you making?’ Or shall your handiwork say, ‘He has no hands?’*¹⁰ Woe to him who says to *his* father, ‘What are you begetting?’ Or to the woman, ‘What have you brought forth?’”¹¹ Thus says the LORD, The Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: “Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; And concerning the work of My hands, you command Me.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.¹³ I have raised him up in righteousness, And I will direct all his ways; He shall build My city And let My exiles go free, Not for price nor reward,” Says the LORD of hosts.

God is sovereign and in control of all that He has made and He has created it all!

Fifth, Genesis 1:1 in context tells us that God is Good. When we look at Genesis 1:1 in its context we see God comments at the conclusion of His creation that what He had made was “good,” even “very good” (Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). What God created was “good” and “very good” because God is good. Isaiah was inspired to write:

- **Isaiah 45:5-8** - *I am the LORD, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me. I will gird you, though you have not known Me,*⁶ *That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting That there is none besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other;*⁷ *I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the LORD, do all these things.*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.

God is Eternal, Plural in nature, Creator, Sovereign and Good. There is a great deal revealed in the first verse of the Bible about God. But there is also something revealed about humanity in this first verse.

What Does Genesis 1:1 Tell us About Ourselves?

In the New Testament book of Hebrews it states the following:

- **Hebrews 11:3** - 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.**

This tells us that Genesis 1:1, which Hebrews 11:3 points us to, is a ***faith indicator***. The Bible states Genesis 1:1 as fact. It is up to us to either accept or reject that fact. Those who reject this inspired and revealed fact of God are exposed as faithless according to Hebrews 11:3.

The importance and necessity of faith in God is further shown in Hebrews 11 when it states:

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- **Hebrews 11:6 - ⁶ But without faith *it is impossible to please Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.***

Without Faith you can't please God because if you don't believe that God exists, how could you be in a position to please Him or even care to do so? Furthermore, if you don't believe God exists, how could you pray to Him and expect Him to reward those who diligently seek Him? Genesis 1:1 is the beginning of God's revelation of Himself to humanity and it begins with a call to accept that God exists. If you can't do that, you are lost.

We have established that Jesus believed the Pentateuch was written by Moses (Luke 24:27, 44). Jesus said something very interesting about what Moses had written. He said:

- **John 5:46-47 - ⁴⁶ For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. ⁴⁷ But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"**

If you don't believe Genesis, a book inspired by God and written out by Moses, then according to Jesus, it isn't likely you will be able to believe in Jesus either. If you can't believe in Jesus, you can't be saved (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

When I was a small child I remember a particular pair of scissors my grandmother used to own. She had a drawer in the kitchen where she kept household tools and it was there that these scissors were kept. What made these scissors so different and noticeable was that in each of the blades about half way up there was a V-like chip. One day I asked my grandmother how that chip got there. She told me that my grandfather was doing some electrical work one day and got it into his head that he could save time by just cutting through some electrical wires "real quick" instead of turning the power off before he cut the wires. My grandmother told him not to try it, but he did. Well, he did cut through the wire, and after he picked himself up from being jolted across the room, he looked at the scissors and low and behold, there was a V-like indentation chipped out of the blades where he had cut the wire. Sometimes we think we know better than God. We're headstrong and foolish and act contrary to how He says we should in His word. The result is pain and regret and sometimes permanent damage. God has given us revelation of Himself and a manual for life; we would do well to pay attention to it.