

# “LET THERE BE LIGHT”

Genesis 1:1-5

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September 21, 2014

## INTRODUCTION

No book in the world has a more majestic beginning than does the Bible in these words: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Notice that the Bible does not even make an attempt to prove the existence of God. It simply states that God was already there at the time that the earth and the heavens began. As would be true with any human invention, if we want to understand its details and its purpose and its explanation, we should speak to its creator. Likewise, if we want to know how this creation originated and what its purpose is, we need to listen to the Creator.

Paul comments on our passage in II Cor. 4:6, comparing to the first day of creation our reception of inward light through Jesus Christ; Christ has enlightened us concerning God’s glory—giving us knowledge about God’s glorious person and attributes. We continue to grow in such knowledge and this inward light continues to increase until we enter His presence and attain more perfect knowledge about our glorious God.

**YOU MUST WALK IN THE LIGHT AS HE IS IN THE LIGHT AND HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.** [I John 1:7]

### I. THE SUMMARY OF THE CREATION (1)

#### A. The Actor: God

- The Bible begins and ends with God – it is the revelation of himself and his ways.
- We see God’s omnipotence in Genesis 1, which arouses holy fear rather than love.

#### B. The Time: “in the beginning”

The reference here is to the absolute beginning—cf. Jn. 1:1; Is. 46:10.

#### C. The Activity: “created”

- The Hebrew verb *bara’* is used only of divine activity.
- The material used is never mentioned.
- Reference is to something which has not previously existed – not necessarily ‘out of nothing.’

#### D. The Scene: “the Heavens and the Earth”

- The reference is to the entire universe, including everything.
- The details of Heaven’s creation are not given – such as angels, stars, planets etc.
- Verse one is a summary statement as is clear from 2:1, 4.
- “Heavens and Earth – an expression for the **organized** universe.
- Included is the original creation of matter, though it isn’t specifically mentioned in the detailed account.
- For the creation of the Angels Cf. **Ps. 104:1-4** with Job 38:4-7.

### II. THE FIRST DAY (2-5)

#### A. The sphere of operation – **the Earth**; first word in the sentence for emphasis; the heavens do not attract the interest of the writer (2).

1. Three deficiencies of the Earth.

- a. “Without form”—the word *Tohu* originally meant “unformed”, “waste” in the sense of not being put into shape.
- b. “Void”—i.e. “empty.” The Earth needs to be shaped and then populated. The same is true after the first day and yet it is still “good” – verse 4.
- c. “Darkness”
  - “Upon the ‘faces’ of the deep”—i.e. the deep had a variety of aspects [faces], not dull monotony.
  - God’s normal method is to work from the formless to the formed; cf. Psalm 139:13-16 of a child formed in the womb; Eph. 4:11-16 – building up the church.

Creation solves these three deficiencies.

- Light replaces darkness (3-5).
  - Order (form) replaces formlessness.  
The firmament separates the waters (day 2).  
The dry land is separated from the seas (day 3).  
The heavenly bodies are adjusted in relation to the earth (day 4).
  - Fullness (population) replaces the void (emptiness)  
Plant life (day 3)  
Lights in the heavens (day 4)  
Air and sea animals (day 5)  
Land animals and Man (day 6)
2. The Divine Agent of preparation – the Spirit of God
    - Not “a mighty wind-- in this case another familiar Hebrew word would have been used.
    - Such an idea is derived from the Mesopotamian account of creation which describes an important role for the winds. But Genesis describes straightforward history.
    - These other accounts are basically nature myths; creation is incidental; moreover, the winds in those myths are destructive – here in Genesis the action of the Spirit is not.
  3. His activity: “moving” – i.e. hovering. The word is active meaning “continually hovering.”
    - Such a verb would not be appropriate as a description of the wind.
    - The verb is used of a mother eagle hovering over her young as they leave the nest (Deuteronomy 32:11).
    - The Spirit is a living being hovering over the created Earth like a bird.
    - The Holy Spirit kept the creation stable during the entire process; all was under His control.
    - The verb does not mean “brood” as though the “world egg” originated the earth!
    - The Spirit of God prepares for the creative acts to follow, and is active in the creation itself.

## B. The Creation of Light (vv. 3-5)

### 1. Divine fiat

- Not necessarily spoken in Hebrew!
- Not necessarily spoken in actual words.
- Yet there is genuine divine speech from which our speech is derived.
- Speaking is a revelation of thought; here it is a free act of God.
- Creatures do not emanate from God and are not part of God!
- They are not the result of natural processes.

- a. God worked by his word (Hebrews 11:3).
- b. Since The Son Of God is the Word, he created everything (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16; I Cor. 8:6).
- c. In him is Life – the Light of men (John 1:4).
- d. Thus here he first makes light – a necessity for all organic life; light includes the heat that accompanies it.
- e. Christ is the Wisdom who was with God at creation (Proverbs 8:22-30).

**Thus we see the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in this creation passage.**

2. The fulfillment – “There was light.”
  - The sun was not created first – showing that men wrongfully worship the sun.
  - Light is first—**directly from God, who is Light!**
3. The satisfaction (4a)
  - “God saw” – the same as with “God said.” This is not an empty word; it is full of meaning.
  - “That the light was good” – i.e. perfect, adequate for His purpose.
  - The activity here is not merely experimentation by an unskilled craftsman!
4. The separation (4b). It is not that he disentangled the two, but, He “caused a division.”
  - In time – functioning during different periods.
  - In space – covering different parts of the earth (Job 38:19-20).
  - “Dividing” is prominent in Genesis 1 (see vv. 4, 6, 7, 14, 18)
  - This activity brings Cosmos out of chaos – cf. Isaiah 5:20).
5. The signification – “day and night” (5a)
  - All light is not “day”; all darkness is not “night”. These are alternating periods=“day and night.”
  - A name represents its nature, not just a convenient label – the reality of it and its function.
6. The summary (5b): “And there was evening and there was morning, one day.”
  - Days did not begin with “evening.” Gloom before light is not the evening.
  - Evening comes after the light was created—“then came evening”, ending the daylight period.
  - “Then came morning”, ending the darkness.
  - “Day one”—the interchange of light and darkness and the beginning of the next light = one day.
  - Moreover, a day does not consist of the sum of evening and morning; evening is only about 4 hours; the same is true for morning.
  - God’s activity ceases at evening; His works are of light—not darkness!
  - The reckoning of the days from evening to evening arose from the custom of regulating seasons by changes of the moon.

## CONCLUSION

Light is first, for it is:

- 1) Life-giving (Jn. 1:4)
- 2) Truth-giving (II Cor. 4:6)
- 3) Gladdening (Eccl. 11:7)
- 4) Pure (I Jn. 1:5-7)

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