

## In the Beginning      Genesis 1:1

### Genesis 1:1 Introduction

- Question: Why is there something rather than nothing?
- Alternatively: Why does anything at all exist?
- Answer: Because God, who is eternally self-existent, willed to create the heavens and the earth.
- Today we will explore this verse in depth.

### Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

### Genesis 1:1 A Few Thoughts

- The whole Bible begins with God.
- No one seeks to prove his existence.
- He is presupposed rather than explained.
- We are given no evidence for God’s being, outside the fact that everything else exists and, presumably, came from somewhere.
- God is the ultimate “First Cause.”
  
- The first verse of the Bible is actually a statement which implies God’s eternal self-existence.
- God’s self-existence is then consistently maintained throughout Scripture.
  
- When God revealed himself to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3), he called himself “I Am”.
- It is an attribute of God’s very nature to exist.
- Existence is one of his key attributes – not an incidental detail. His existence is necessary.
- He cannot cease to exist, nor has he ever not existed.
- Being is essential to how he defines himself.
  
- Smarty pants theological term: aseity (*uh-’see-i-tee*)
- from Latin *a se* meaning “from oneself”
- Webster’s definition of aseity:
- the quality or state of being self-derived or self-originated; *specifically*: the absolute self-sufficiency, independence, and autonomy of God
  
- From time to time people will ask, “Who created God?”
- This question betrays a misunderstanding.
- It may be an innocent misunderstanding, as when a child asks the question.
- It may also be a willful misunderstanding, as when someone tries to prove the Bible doesn’t make sense.
- Nonetheless, the biblical God is, by definition, uncreated.
  
- Created gods, in the Bible, are known as “idols” or “false gods” and are expressly forbidden as objects of worship.
- The Bible reveals an uncreated God and a created space-time universe populated by a vast number of created beings.
- And God, the one true God, created it all.
  
- By the way: An eternal, uncreated space-time universe is impossible.

- An eternal (infinite) past makes no sense, because it would take an eternity (infinity) to get to the present time.
- In other words, we wouldn't be here yet.
- **Conclusion:** The entire space-time universe had a beginning.
- God is the one who began it.
- And so time, space, matter and energy all came to be.

#### **Deficient or inadequate views of God's relationship to the universe:**

- The following views represent something other than the biblical view.
- They are not simply extra-biblical (from outside the Bible), they are unbiblical.
- That is, they contradict the Bible.

#### **Pantheism:**

- God is the universe and the universe is God.
- Many traditional religions or philosophies boil down to this.
- God is all there is.
- Everything is God.

#### **Panentheism:**

- God is in the universe and the universe is in God.
- (Up to this point, Pantheism would totally agree, but there is more.)
- God is in the universe and the universe is in God.
- (Up to this point, Pantheism would totally agree, but there is more.)
- God is greater than the sum of all the parts of the universe.
- God is all there is – and still more than that.
- God is all there is – and then some.

#### **Deism:**

- God and the universe are distinct and disconnected.
- God is not deeply involved in the universe.
- God created the universe to run on its own.
- He put in the batteries, pressed the power button, and stood back to watch from a safe distance.
- He may have the ability to intervene in our lives, but chooses not to do so. We are more or less on our own.

#### **God's actual relationship to the universe:**

##### **Theism (the biblical view):**

- God created the world out of nothing or *ex nihilo*.
- God and the universe are distinct from one another.
- (Deism probably agrees up to here.)
- God, however, chooses to be and remains intimately involved in his created world.
- God's actual relationship to the universe:
- This is most profoundly expressed in the biblical history of salvation and the person and work of Jesus Christ.

- God, who had always been attentive to and in relationship with his created world, entered creation at a specific point in a most intimate and eternal way.
- The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit within all true converts to Christ expands on that relationship.

### **The Bible continuously speaks of God as an intimately involved Creator.**

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| • Exodus 20:11      | • Psalm 146:5-6   |
| • 2 Kings 19:15     | • Isaiah 37:15-16 |
| • 2 Chronicles 2:12 | • Isaiah 42:5     |
| • Psalm 115:15      | • Jeremiah 51:15  |
| • Psalm 121:1-2     | • Jonah 1:9       |
| • Psalm 124:8       | • Acts 17:24-26   |
| • Psalm 134:3       | • Revelation 14:7 |

### **Implications of God being the Creator**

1. Creation implies dependence.
2. Creation implies purpose.
3. Creation implies complete understanding.
4. Creation necessitates obedience.
5. Creation (by an all-wise and entirely loving God) results in compassion toward us in our self-imposed, sorry and self-destructive state.

#### **1. Creation implies dependence.**

- In other words, we could not exist without God both creating and then sustaining us.
- We honor him best when we live in full light of this truth.
- We dishonor him when we lose sight of it.
- Consider Daniel's reprimand of King Belshazzar of Babylon in Daniel 5:22-23.

#### **2. Creation implies purpose.**

- God had goals or intentions in the act of creation itself.
  - His overflowing love would be shared outside the Trinity with other created beings who would love him and one another.
  - He brings happiness and fulfillment to them, which in turn brings glory to him.
- God also has goals or intentions for each of us.
  - We are most blessed by using our God-given capacities and fulfilling our God-given purposes with all our heart.

#### **3. Creation implies complete understanding.**

- We don't always understand one another.
- We will never exhaustively understand God.
- But he, as our Creator, has a complete, in-depth understanding of each of us as individuals.
- His plans for us are intimately connected with such knowledge.
- See Jeremiah 1:4-5.

4. Creation necessitates obedience.

- Perfect obedience is a debt that we owe rather than something which earns us merit in God's eyes.
- Imperfect obedience (partial disobedience) cannot merit a reward, much less an infinite or eternal reward.
- The landlord will not reward you for *often* paying the rent.
- The grocery store will not reward you for *usually* paying your bill before leaving.
  
- Still, obedience is, in a sense, its own reward, as it enables us to live most safely and productively in God's world.
- We benefit by keeping our bills paid.
- God owes us nothing, but has decided to give us everything – potentially.
  
- We owe God everything and have decided to give him only what we deem fair, right or convenient – as if our perspective could be clearer on this than his.
- This is what is wrong with the universe.
- Disobedience in such a case is unrecoverable by us.
- How many times does the plane have to crash before we are willing to call it a catastrophe?

5. Creation (by an all-wise and entirely loving God) results in compassion toward us in our self-imposed, sorry, self-destructive state.

- God's plan of redemption reveals his character in ways that creation does not.
- See John 1:1-18.
  
- By receiving Christ, we receive the grace of God which is more than able to compensate for all of our sins.
- By receiving Christ, we enter into an eternally restored relationship with our Creator, the one who made the very world.
- By receiving Christ we become part of the family of God.

**Review: Implications of God being the Creator**

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