

CHAOS TO GOSPEL

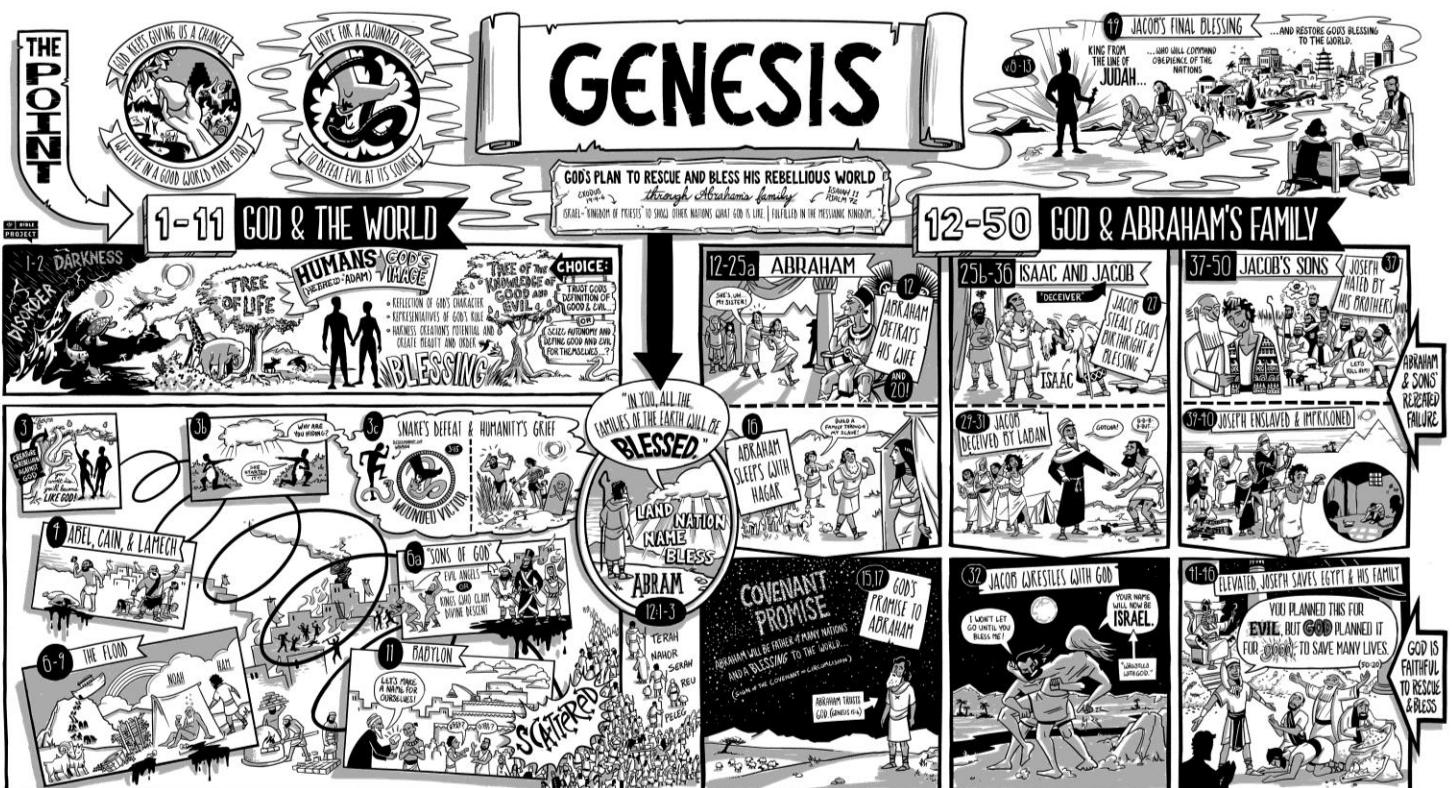
Gospel in Creation: Genesis 1:1-5

September 13, 2025

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
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.*
Genesis 1:1-2

Creation

1. The Bible Project poster is exactly right – the opening “panel” of Genesis (the introduction by Genesis’ structure” prepares a place for humanity to be blessed and to know him, between the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
2. Listen for these in the opening verses of Genesis:
 - as important as “who?” and “how” are going to be, look especially for the “why?”
 - listen for the hints of the answer to our gospel question: How can Jesus’ righteousness and promises be applied to me?



created by the Bible Project

Genesis 1

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.

Answering quickly what are going to be very deep questions

1. Who?
2. What?
3. Where?
4. When?
4. How?
5. Why?

Why is understanding creation so important?

1. Creation is "practice" for reading God's special revelation

We know God by two means:

First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe, since that universe is before our eyes like a beautiful book in which all creatures, great and small, are as letters to make us ponder the invisible things of God: God's eternal power and divinity, as the apostle Paul says in Romans 1:20. All these things are enough to convict humans and to leave them without excuse.

Second, God makes himself known to us more clearly by his holy and divine Word, as much as we need in this life, for God's glory and for our salvation.

Belgic Confession, Article 2

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ² For by it the people of old received their commendation. ³ By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. ⁵ By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him . . .

Hebrews 11

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

Romans 1

2. When God gets ready to bring salvation out of chaos, the first thing he does is send his Spirit and bring the light!

*³⁰ When you send forth your Spirit, they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.*

Psalm 104

*²³ I looked on the earth, and behold, it was without form and void;
and to the heavens, and they had no light.*

*²⁴ I looked on the mountains, and behold, they were quaking,
and all the hills moved to and fro.*

*²⁵ I looked, and behold, there was no man,
and all the birds of the air had fled.*

*²⁶ I looked, and behold, the fruitful land was a desert,
and all its cities were laid in ruins before the Lord, before his fierce anger.*

Jeremiah 4

We have so far noted that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters as the first act of the six-days' work and that by this movement nothing on the earth contributed or was congruous, that this movement was a mystery and yet very real. Note, next, that this movement was most effectual. "The earth was without form, and void," but that did not defeat the purpose of the Spirit of God. "Darkness was upon the face of the deep," but He could work in the dark. The darkness did not hinder Him and, blessed be God, the deep depravity of our nature does not prevent the Holy Spirit from creating it anew in Christ Jesus! Without God, the turning of a heart of stone into flesh would surely be impossible! And if there had ever been an impossibility of impossibilities, I feel that the changing of my nature would have been that impossibility—and each Christian here may feel the same with regard to himself or herself. But nothing is too hard for the Lord! Though a man may have had no knowledge of the Gospel up to the time when the Spirit of God came upon him, or though he may have been as violently opposed to that Gospel as he possibly could be, yet let the Spirit of God savingly deal with that man and all hindrances disappear, all opposition gives way and the work of Grace is effectually accomplished! Light

came when God said, "Let there be light." The waters were separated, the dry land appeared and the winged fowl, the fish that swim in the deep, the cattle that crowd the fields and man, himself, in the image of God— all these came at the Lord's command! Chaos had become a garden and death blossomed into life!

Spurgeon's "The Spirit's Work in the New Creation" sermon

Observe, dear Friends, the state of the world. It is said to have been "without form and void. And darkness was upon the face of the deep." Such is the state of every human heart till God the Holy Spirit visits it. So far as spiritual things are concerned, the human heart is in a state of chaos and disorder. There is no thought of faith, of love, of hope, of obedience—it is a spiritually confused mass of dead sinfulness in which everything is misplaced. It is void or utterly empty. Search the human heart through and it is true of it as Paul says, "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing."

Over the whole, as in the old creation a thick darkness reigns, comparable to that of Egypt—a darkness that might be felt. This is true of all men—not of the ignorant in the lowest haunts of London, whose depraved parentage and education have prevented them from knowing Divine things—but this is true of those who are trained up under the sound of the Gospel and whose morals are good and exemplary. They are still darkness, naturally, until God the Holy Spirit comes to renew them.

In the whole world, whether it is among kings, statesmen, or Divines, there is not one who has so much as a spark of spiritual light unless he has received it from above. And he can only have received it from above through Him who is "the true Light which lights every man which comes into the world," who is enlightened at all. Dark, dark, dark is the whole of humanity—it dwells in the black darkness of sin and must perish there unless the same Divine power which said, "Let there be light," of old, shall bestow spiritual light. You observe that the first Divine action in connection with the formation and shaping of the world, was this—"The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

The secret work of the Holy Spirit begins in the human heart—we cannot always say precisely when or how. "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell from where it comes and where it goes: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." In the hearts of God's chosen ones this Spirit works mysteriously and silently, but most efficaciously. The expression translated, "moved upon," conveys in the original the idea of a bird brooding over its nest. The Holy Spirit mysteriously quickens the dead heart, excites emotions, longings, desires.

It may be some of you are feeling His operations this morning. You have not yet received the Divine light, but there are workings of the Divine energy in your spirit. You are not easy in your present lost estate—you are discontented to be what you now are—you are desirous to enter into God's marvelous light. For this I thank God and take it as a hopeful symptom. And I pray that He may, this morning, if it is His gracious will, lead you farther and make you feel today that early operation of Divine Grace by which light is given to the darkened soul.

Spurgeon's "Light Natural and Spiritual"

Resources for studying Genesis 1-3

I found these commentaries helpful:

Bruce Waltke's *Genesis: A Commentary* (Zondervan, 2001).

John Sailhammer's *EBC* commentary on Genesis (Zondervan, 1990).

[H. C. Leopold's *Exposition on Genesis*](#) (Baker Book House, 1950).

I recommend Lee Strobel's *The Case for a Creator* (Zondervan, 2004) as a good introduction to the argument for creation.

Alexander Maclaren has a very short summary at https://www.ccel.org/ccel/maclaren/gen_num.ii.i.i.html

All of Vern Poythess' work in Genesis is good. See "Christian Interpretations of Genesis" at <http://www.frame-poythress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/2013ChristianInterpretationsOfGenesis1.pdf>, "Ten Things You Should Know" at <https://www.crossway.org/articles/10-things-you-should-know-about-genesis-13/> and "Let There Be Light" at <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/let-there-be-light>

Ligon Dunon has a wonderful sermon advocating for the six-day creation position at <https://fpcjackson.org/resource-library/sermons/the-first-things-creation-3-the-days-of-creation/>

Ligonier has a "What does R. C. Sproul really believe" article at <https://www.ligonier.org/posts/what-rc-sprouls-position-creation> and a good study at <https://www.monergism.com/adams-fall-and-mine>

Doug really likes Spurgeon's sermons on the first day at <https://chspurgeon.com/sermons/light-natural-and-spiritual-660> and <https://chspurgeon.com/sermons/the-spirits-work-in-the-new-creation-3134>

Ron Thompson, an engineer who writes interesting theology, posted this good description of the "Big Bang Creationism" and the polemic nature of the Genesis 1 poetic creation story at <https://gpront.blog/2024/01/20/genesis-11-5-day-1/>

Timothy Keller has a classic "The First Wedding Day" sermon at <https://www.monergism.com/first-wedding-day-%E2%80%93-genesis-218-25> It is interesting that "[Marriage](#)" was the most popular series ever preached at Redeemer.

Keller also has a good message on Genesis 3 at <https://www.monergism.com/paradise-crisis-%E2%80%93-genesis-31-9> His sermons on Genesis 1 are available at <https://gospelinlife.com/book-of-the-bible/genesis-1/>

Ligon Duncan has a great Genesis "First Things" series with this more philosophical look at Genesis 1:1-3 at <https://fpcjackson.org/resource-library/sermons/the-first-things-creation-1-in-the-beginning-god/> His sermon on the days of creation is at <https://fpcjackson.org/resource-library/sermons/the-first-things-creation-3-the-days-of-creation/>

Michael Milton has a good defense of the 6-day creation position at <https://michaelmilton.org/2010/04/01/dr-doug-kelly-creation-rtis-and-the-foundation-of-scripture/>

Christopher Yuan has a fine summary of the male/female themes in Genesis 2 at <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/he-made-them-male-and-female>

Bob Deffinbaugh has a helpful sermon on Genesis 3 at <https://bible.org/seriespage/fall-man-god%E2%80%93s-perfect-plan>