

## Genesis One

### *The Beginning of the Universe*

1 In the beginning<sup>1</sup> Elohim<sup>2</sup> created the heavens and the earth.<sup>3</sup>

### *The Later Condition of the Earth*

2 And the earth was a waste and empty;<sup>4</sup> and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of Elohim hovered<sup>5</sup> over the face of the waters.<sup>6</sup>

### *The Restoration of the Earth*

#### *Light*

3 And Elohim said, Let light be, and light was.<sup>4</sup> And Elohim saw the light, that it was good, and Elohim divided the light from the darkness.<sup>5</sup> And Elohim called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, day one.

#### *The Firmament*

6 And Elohim said, Let a firmament be between the waters, and let a separation be between the waters and the waters.<sup>7</sup> And Elohim made the firmament, and He separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament, and it was so.<sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup>And Elohim called the firmament heaven.<sup>8</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, day two.

#### *Dry Land*

9 And Elohim said, Let the waters under heaven be collected together into one place, and let the dry land appear, and it was so.<sup>10</sup> And Elohim called the dry land earth; and the collection of the waters He called seas, and Elohim saw that it was good.

#### *Vegetation*

11 And Elohim said, Let grass sprout on the earth, herbs producing seed, and fruit trees producing fruit which seed is in it according to their kind on the earth, and it was so.<sup>12</sup> And the earth sprouted grass, herbs producing seed according to their kind, and trees producing fruit which seed is in it according to their kind, and Elohim saw that it was good.<sup>13</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, day three.<sup>9</sup>

### *Light Bearers*

14 And Elohim said, Let there be luminaries<sup>10</sup> in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, for seasons, for days, for years,<sup>11</sup> <sup>15</sup>and let them be for luminaries in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth, and it was so.<sup>16</sup> And Elohim made the two big luminaries; the bigger luminary to rule the day, and the smaller luminary to rule the night, he made the stars also.<sup>17</sup> And Elohim set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth,<sup>18</sup> and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness, and Elohim saw that it was good.<sup>19</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, day four.

### *Sea and Air Creatures*

20 And Elohim said, Let the waters swarm with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of heaven.<sup>21</sup> And Elohim created the large sea-creatures,<sup>12</sup> and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind, and Elohim saw that it was good.<sup>22</sup> And Elohim blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and increase, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds increase on the earth.<sup>23</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, day five.

### *Land Creatures*

24 And Elohim said, Let the land produce living creatures according to their kind, livestock, and crawling things, and beasts<sup>13</sup> of the land according to their kind, and it was so.<sup>25</sup> And Elohim made the living things of the earth according to their kind, and the beasts according to their kind, and everything that crawls upon the ground according to its kind, and Elohim saw that it was good.

### *Mankind*

26 And Elohim said, Let us make man in our image,<sup>14</sup> after our likeness,<sup>15</sup> and let them rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the beast, and over all the earth, and over every crawling thing upon the earth.<sup>16</sup> <sup>27</sup>And

## *Genesis One*

Elohim created man in His own image, in the image of Elohim He created him; male and female He created them. <sup>28</sup>And Elohim blessed them, and Elohim said unto them, Be fruitful, and increase, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that crawls upon the earth. <sup>17</sup>

### *God's Communication to the Man*

29 And Elohim said, Behold, I have given you every seed-yielding herb, which is upon the whole face of the earth, and every tree, which has fruit on it that has seed in it. It will be for food to you. <sup>30</sup>And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that crawls upon the earth, in which is the breath of life, I have given every green vegetation for food, and it was so. <sup>18</sup> <sup>31</sup>And Elohim saw everything that He had done, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, day six.

## End Notes

1 The Hebrew title for Genesis is the first word of the Hebrew text, *Bereshit*, (בְּרֵאשִׁית) translated into English as *In the beginning*.

2 Throughout this non-commercial translation, the words for God are transliterated into English rather than translated *God*. While reading, the student will be able to note which Hebrew word for God occurs.

*Elohim* is one of the words translated *God*, perhaps the most common. It is a plural form of *el*, the singular form which is also translated *God*, which emphasizes God's strength. The same word is used by biblical writers to refer, to false gods, and to men who were in a position of power. Angels were also called *elohim*. It occurs about 2,600 times in the Hebrew Bible.

Differences of opinion occur as to why *elohim* is used so often in the plural. Some have supposed that it is a veiled reference to the different persons of the Trinity. If that is so, it is so veiled that many people reject that view. A more common view is that it is a "plural of majesty," which seems unlikely as individual pagan deities are called *elohim* by the ancient writers. Also, the plural form is also used as a straightforward plural, *gods*.

The most likely reason for the plural is that it became an idiom of the language, referring to both singular and multiple gods. It would therefore have been the most reasonable Hebrew word to describe the creator God, since the creation from nothing is the most powerful of all miracles.

3 The phrase *heavens and earth* is a figure of speech called a *merism*. Merism (Latin *merismus*, taken from the Greek μερισμός [*merismós*], meaning *a division*) is a figure of speech in which a combination of the parts of the whole refer to the whole. In this case, the whole of the created universe is divided into two parts, heaven and earth.

Keil and Delitzsch state, "This sentence, which stands at the head of the records of revelation, is not a mere heading, nor a summary of the history of the creation, but a declaration of the primeval act of God, by which the universe was called into being." Johann Keil & Franz Delitzsch, *Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament*, under the verse. E-sword, electronic copy.

The term "heavens" refers to the extra-terrestrial universe unless it is somehow restricted by the context.

The term "earth" refers to the entirety of the total land and water mass of the planet unless it is restricted by the context. "No other verse tells of the earth's creation unless with 'heavens' here, Exodus 20:11 and 30:17 notwithstanding. There read, 'For six days the Lord *worked on* heaven and earth...' etc." – Dr. Bernard Northrup.

It is clear that Moses, the author of this section, was referring to creation of the universe from nothing, and that his original audience, Israel during its period of wandering, would have so understood it. It has become popular to suppose that this was a second act of creation (see *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* for a presentation of this erroneous approach), but this recent view is reactionary, and cannot be sustained by normal interpretive methodology. See this translator's position paper, *The Three Views of the Creation of Genesis 1:1-2* in the file "Genesis 1.1-2 Creation Views," on the website garlandshinn.com, under Old Testament/Genesis.

It is also clear that there is a time gap between verses 1 and 2. See this author's work *Reasons for Believing in the Gap Between Genesis 1,1 & 1, 2* on the same website.

4 Verse 2 clearly speaks of an earth that had become *waste and empty*, implying that it had previously not been so. The only other place in Hebrew Scripture where the words *waste and empty* (תָּהוּ וָבֵהוּ) occur, most likely taken from this use, is in Jeremiah 4:23, where the prophet speaks of judgment.

That *Elohim* did not create the earth a disordered waste (לֹא-תָהוּ בְרֵאשִׁית) is affirmed by *Yahweh* in Isaiah 45:18, which also reflect the reformation of the earth after its creation.

5 Piel participle of הָרָה, *hover*. The root only occurs in the Piel. Various translations exist for this word. The most common are *moved* or *was moving*, and *hovered* or *was hovering*, which is preferred by Brown, Driver, and Briggs in their *Hebrew and English Lexicon* (hereafter BDB). The word is only used three times in the OT, and seems to carry the idea of a female bird brooding over its young. See Deut 32:11 where it is used of an eagle hovering over its young still in the nest.

6 The narration immediately focuses on the earth, since this was of primary import to the original readers. They were wandering in the wilderness, and needed to know that *Elohim* had paid specific attention to the formation of the earth, which would have emphasized God's sovereign care over His creation. The series of days which follow are from an

## End Notes

earthly perspective, not heavenly, which give the reader pause to realize that the revitalization of the earth after the judgment which made the earth formless and empty was orderly, and altogether a series of sovereign acts.

- 7 From the statements in verses 6-7, it is clear that there was a large amount of water above the earth, a canopy, perhaps of water vapor. It is also clear from reading further in Genesis, that no rain fell in the primordial earth, and that at the Noahic flood the canopy broke open, contributing to the flood.
- 8 The Hebrew word *heaven* is dual in the original, the common idiom. In this case, the word is limited to the expanse between the upper waters and the lower waters. In English we would call it the *sky*, that is, the atmospheric heaven.
- 9 The repetition of the phrase *according to its (their) kind* is significant. The replication of plants and animals is limited by kind, which is today called species. God allows very little artificial cross seeding, and when it is allowed, it often produces plants and animals which cannot reproduce naturally.
- 10 The Hebrew word *ma'or* (מְאֹרָה) refers to a light bearing body, hence the translation *luminary*.
- 11 The four purposes for the luminaries are not parallel. Three are the common distinctions still made, *seasons*, *days*, and *years*, parallel concepts still in play today. But the first mentioned, *signs*, is distinct. In Moses time throughout the Hebrew period until the death of Christ, heavenly signs were available. Not all related to luminaries, but some did. Most notable was the star of Bethlehem, correctly interpreted by the eastern Magi, and the darkening of the earth at Christ's crucifixion. The Hebrew Scriptures include events where the heavenly bodies acted as signs, such as the reverse of Ahaz's sun dial during Hezekiah's day (2 Kings 20:5-11; Isaiah 38:8). Today, God gives no signs other than those recorded in Scripture.
- 12 The Hebrew word *tanim* (תַּנִּינִים) means reptiles. The idea seems to be large sea serpents, animals which may be extinct today.
- 13 Probably refers to wild animals, animals not meant for domestication.
- 14 Michael S. Heiser, in his book entitled *Angels* says concerning this verse, "In our discussion of Old Testament angelology, I'll draw your attention to the plural language of Genesis 1:26 ("let us make humankind in our image," LEB). That language isn't a cryptic reference to the Trinity. God is speaking to his heavenly host. He is sharing his wisdom with them—decreeing his will, as it were. If he were speaking to members of the Trinity, they would already know what's in God's mind, because they are coequal and coeternal with him. Instead, the plural language of Genesis 1:26 intentionally connects humanity, God, and the members of the heavenly host with respect to an important biblical concept: imaging God." He goes on to present an abnormal interpretation of the concept of God's image in man, reducing it to being about representation, "acting on God's behalf at his behest. Human's image God in earth. The heavenly host images God in the spiritual, non-terrestrial world." (Michael S. Heiser, *Angels*. [Bellingham, WA: 2018]), xv. He probably gets this idea of representation from the fact that the word *image* occurs in passages dealing with idols, which are physical representations of false gods, which pagans believed were physical beings. Such is surely not what the word means here. This approach is without exegetical foundation, and is contrary to the clear statements of Scripture. If his statement about the persons of the Trinity being already aware of each one's knowledge is meant to indicate that they never communicate with one another, such a statement is utterly false. He has confused the nature of God's desirous will, with the determinative will of individual persons, as well as confusing the omniscience of God with God's foreknowledge. It is beyond the scope of this note to discuss his error at length. Suffice it to say, Mr. Heiser has fallen into a kind of Sabellianism, the confusion of Trinitarian persons and their acts, sometimes called modalism. He has expressed an unbiblical view of the counsel of God when he expresses the idea that this communication is "decreeing his will, as it were." The divine persons of the Trinity do communicate with one another, and while they share a desirous will, they met in Trinitarian counsel to bring together their determinative wills, which belong to the persons and not to the nature, so as to produce the singular decree. Some theologians have referred to the communication within the Trinity as the "communion of the persons." At any rate, communication among members of the Trinity is a well-known doctrine. As to whether plural expression is a reference to the Trinity, such is certainly more likely than that God is speaking to spirit beings. As for Heiser's reduction of the image of God in mankind to a representation, see the next note.
- 15 This statement has drawn great speculation. While the meaning of *image* and *likeness* can be debated, the intent is clear. God created man to be similar in some ways to Himself, including an independent intellect, one not instinctual

## *End Notes*

as is the animal's. Man, as created, had the ability to rule righteously over the creation in all aspects. It is highly likely that it is this capacity of intellect, along with imagination (something rarely included in discussions of God's image), of which God's image in man consists. Man is certainly not a physical representation of God as the images produced by the pagan world were.

Much is made by theologians of the tarnishing of the image of God after Adam's sin. This would indicate that the first man's created state included a lack of unrighteous behavior. If tarnishing is true, it includes a lack of pure righteousness in man if the image of God in man is still operable at all, and includes his intellect. Man is the only sentient being on earth. While spirit beings share these characteristics, nowhere in Scripture are they said to have been created in God's image. The word *image* (צלם) occurs only 17 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, and only in this passage is any creature said to be created in God's image.

Often the ideas of will and emotions are included in the image of God. However, if they are part of the image, they must be refined parts, as animals also show will and emotions. That they are not the same as those of human beings is a fine line to draw. The primary way in which mankind differs from animal kind is in the areas of intellect and rational decision making.

Much has been made of the plurals in this verse. As noted above, *Trinitarians* often view this as a reflection of the multiplicity of the persons inhering God's essence. Another view is that the form is a "majestic plural." It seems unlikely, however, that Moses' audience would have drawn such a conclusion. It's more likely that there was a communication within the Godhead, though no *organized* doctrine of the Trinity occurs in the Hebrew Bible. But certainly distinctions of persons in the Godhead can be inferred from this and other passages.

- 16 Man was to rule over all animals, from the largest to the smallest, including sea animals. It appears then that God created the animals with no fear of humans, and no concern that man would hunt them for any reason. Mankind as created was not carnivorous, since it was given fruit of the trees and other vegetable matter to eat. No animals could be dangerous, as there was no death, and no situation could arise in which a "wild" animal could harm a human. Consequently, the original nature of creation was a perfect paradise for man and animal alike.
- 17 This command by God is impossible to apply subsequent to the sin of Adam. Adam's acts prior to his disobedience were not simply obedience to God's will. They also involved a purity of life and a lack of experience in disobedience. To apply this command to mankind as a whole is untenable. It certainly should not be viewed as some kind of "cultural mandate" as it is sometimes viewed and applied. Humanity in its sinful state *cannot* rule righteously, as God intended. The situation within creation today is a far cry from what it was, and the reason is found in one word: *sin*, that is, the willful violation of God's known requirements.
- 18 From this statement it's clear that God intended that all the animals be herbivores. Carnivores were not part of the original creation because before the sin of Adam and the subsequent change in character of the creation, nothing was intended to die. Death is the direct result of Adam's sin. See note on verse 26 above.