

God the Creator

<i>Text</i>	Genesis 1:1
<i>Readings</i>	Psalm 104:1-9,24-35
<i>Theme</i>	God is the eternal and almighty Creator of this earth and the universe
<i>Purpose</i>	To show that belief in God the Creator is foundational to a Christian worldview

Some of you will remember an old and famous song sung by Julie Andrews who was trying to teach some children about the basics of singing. She sang; “Let’s start at the very beginning, a very good place to start.”

That is a good principle for any area of learning or study or work. You need to start at the very beginning; it is a very good place to start.

Today we are looking at the very first book of the Bible and at the very first words of this book of Genesis. The word “genesis” means origin or beginning. The first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis, is a book about the beginning of things - how things got started, how they originated.

That is especially true of the first twelve chapters. They tell us about the beginning of the world, of mankind, of life, of marriage, of sin and of God’s great plan of salvation.

This makes this book, and especially these chapters, the **foundation** for the rest of the Bible. *You can’t understand the rest of the Bible without this book.*

When Brethren missionaries went to New Guinea in the early 1950’s they preached on the book of Genesis for two years. They knew this was fundamental to a proper understanding of God and his work and of salvation.

That makes good sense. If you want to learn about a new subject, or you want to begin reading a book, you don’t start in the middle; no, you start at the beginning. So too with the Bible.

Most New Zealanders know little or nothing about this book. If they are going to understand the Christian faith they need to know the story of Genesis. They need to know how things began.

This is why the gospel of John is also a good place to begin reading the Bible because provides us with a New Testament parallel to the book of Genesis. John deliberately recalled the book of Genesis when he wrote; “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

This first book of the Bible is fundamental to everything else because *if you get the beginning wrong you'll also get everything else wrong.*

It's like building a house; if you get the foundation wrong then everything else will be out of square and out of line.

Or like baking a cake; if you make a mistake with the initial ingredients then it's not going to cook properly.

So too with the Bible. If you don't believe in God the Creator and you misunderstand the work of creation that will affect everything else after that. So we must get off on the right foot, with a proper understanding of these chapters.

This is one of the reasons the whole matter of creation is so controversial. Both creationists and evolutionists know that the origin of the universe is fundamental to everything else - it is the foundation of your worldview.

The opening words of the Bible tell us how the world began. We read; **"In the beginning..."** This describes the beginning of time, and of this earth and, indeed, of the whole universe.

The subject of this sentence is **God**. "In the beginning *God*". God is the first person we meet in the Bible, and he is the main character in all the Scriptures. The Bible is all about God.

Keep this in mind as you read this book: the Bible is a book by God and about God. It's not primarily about us, or how to be happy, or how to get to heaven; nor is it a science textbook, or a history of the whole world. No, it is a book written about God telling us how we can know him.

"In the beginning *God*." The emphasis is not on *how* the world was made but on *who* made it - *God* made it.

This verse teaches us two significant truths about God. He is Eternal and he is the Creator.

1. God Is Eternal

The Bible **assumes the existence of God**. It does not argue the case for his existence and it doesn't try to prove that he exists - it simply assumes he is there.

Many people have come up with "proofs" for the existence of God. Some of these are complex philosophical arguments; some are arguments from creation, from natural revelation; some are arguments from our own existence as human beings. There are many rational and reasonable arguments in support of the fact that God exists, that he is there. Large and heavy books have been written about this all through the centuries.

But in the end you cannot prove by rational argument that God exists. You cannot convince someone of this just by arguing the case. Ultimately this is a matter of faith. It is a reasonable faith and a believable faith and a faith that can be defended, but it still comes down to faith.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6).

We need to point out that **any alternative view** is also a position of faith. Many people in the western world believe in the theory of evolution. This too is a position of faith. This too is a belief. Just as Christians cannot give conclusive proof of creation so too unbelievers cannot give conclusive proof of evolution. No one was there when it happened. We don't have any eye-witness accounts. Nor has anyone managed to reproduce what happened either by creation or evolution, although many have tried. So we can't replay it to see what took place. We can't run it through in slow motion to examine it more closely.

Imagine you are watching the highlights of an important game of soccer. When there is a goal they will always show you a replay, sometimes even in slow motion, so you can see exactly what happened. Or if you have videoed it you can watch it again and again to see what happened.

No one can do that with the beginning of the world - there are no replays. So whatever you believe about the origin of the world is a position of faith, of belief.

Essentially there are only two options: You either begin with eternal *matter* or with an eternal *God*. You have to start with *something* or *someone*: either with an eternal primordial soup or with an eternal divine being.

The Bible teaches us that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

He is eternal. He was there at the beginning. He has no origin or beginning. He was there before anything else was there. He has always been there. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the A and the Z, the beginning and the end. He is the same, yesterday, today and forever. He is eternal.

God created us with a sense of this eternal God. Solomon in Ecclesiastes tells us that God has “set eternity in the hearts of men” (3:11). He created us so that we could know him and worship him. Every human being has a longing to know God, or to find a substitute for him. We were created as spiritual beings. There is a vacuum inside of us that only God can fill.

There are endless illustrations of this.

You see it in primitive tribes and their worship of the sun, moon and stars.

You see it in the people who followed ancient pagan religions and turned from the creator to the creation and worshipped animals or idols they had made.

You see it today in the constant search for other forms of life in the universe. About ten years ago two American astronomers found one or two planets outside our solar system that they believed had conditions that may be hospitable to life. It prompted a Time magazine cover story "IS ANYBODY OUT THERE?" (Feb 5, 1996).

These sorts of questions are being asked all the time. People are fascinated by this subject. This is because God made us spiritual beings with a desire to know him. Augustine said; "Our hearts are restless till they find their rest in thee." You see that in the lives of unbelievers around you all the time. They are restless and searching, seeking to fulfil the emptiness inside of them that can only be filled by a true knowledge of this eternal God. God is eternal.

2. Secondly, Genesis 1:1 teaches us that GOD IS THE CREATOR.

As the Creator he is **almighty**. The Hebrew word for God in all of Genesis 1 is the word 'Elohim'. This describes God as sovereign and almighty; He is a God of majesty and splendour and might. His name is mentioned 35 times in 34 verses. He is the main player, he is the primary character, he is the one doing everything.

God wants you to remember this in your life - every day, in all you do. This is our controlling perspective on life - that God is there and that we know him and serve him and live for him.

This is not easy to maintain because we live in a society that ignores God. Don Brash observed this in his Orewa speech in January 2006 when he said; "NZ is a liberal, tolerant and secular society, a society that embraces the Western enlightenment ideals of personal liberty, private property and rationality as the basis of decision making. These values are so central to our society that we hardly ever think about them." That sums it up for most New Zealanders; there is no mention of God, no belief in God, no place for God.

This is why Christian education is so important - whether through home-schooling or the Christian school. We want all of you children and young people to learn about God. We want you to put him in the centre of your life.

But this must be true of all of us: Is God central in your life? Do you live for him? Do you love him and serve him and worship him?

This Almighty God **created** the world. The Hebrew word for create (*bara*) is always used of God's activity. The word 'bara' does not necessarily mean creation out of nothing, but in this case it does:

Romans 4 verse 17 speaks of a God who "calls things that are not as though they were."

Psalms 33 verses 6 and 9 say; “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.”

The writer of Hebrews says; “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what was seen was not made out of what was visible” (11:3).

We should also note that while the work of creation was done primarily by God the Father **all three persons of the trinity** were active. Genesis 1:2 describes the presence and power of the Holy Spirit; “...and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”

On the sixth day of creation the Father conversed with the other two Persons of the trinity and said, “Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness.” (1:26).

John 1:3 describes the role of God the Son: “Through Him all things were made, without him nothing was made that has been made.”

The Apostle Paul echoes this in Col 1:16, “For by him all things were created”.

And the writer of Hebrews says “all things were created by him and for him” (Hebrews 1:2)

These three persons created **the heavens and the earth**.

The phrase “the heavens and the earth” means that God created everything. ‘Heaven’ and ‘earth’ are opposites that imply the totality of everything in this universe; all that we see on this earth, and all that we can see and can’t see in this universe.

That God created the heavens and the earth means that he is distinct from his creation.

We say this against the creation myths of the ancient religions that had gods arising out of the world. This view is reflected in old Maori legends and in other religions. These ancient and modern pagan religions blur this biblical distinction between God and the world.

Eastern religions do the same. They blend God and the world together. This is the viewpoint of pantheism that has been taken up in New Age movement. Pantheism believes the creation emerged from God, that the world came out of God. It makes god part of the world, god is in everything, god is in you and you are god.

But in the Christian worldview God is the Creator and we are his creatures. God, up there, made the world, down here. God is above us, beyond us and distinct from us. He is almighty, infinite and transcendent and we are weak, finite, and earthbound.

Today we have started at the very beginning, a very good place to start! We start here because Genesis 1 is foundational and fundamental to the rest of the Bible and to what you believe and how you live.

The Bible begins with God. “In the beginning God.”

It begins by stating that God exists and that he is the Eternal, Almighty and Triune Creator.

He made the heavens and the earth. He made you and me and the 6 billion other men, women and children who live on this globe. He made us so that he could know us and we know him.

This is why he has written this book, the Bible. In it he has told us about himself.

This is also why he sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus came into this world as God, but he also came as a human being, just like us. Jesus was willing to do this so that we might come to know God, truly and personally.

While he was on earth Jesus prayed to his Father and said; “Now this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” (John 17:3).

Jesus came so that you may know him, and through him, know God the Father as the one who is the Eternal Creator, and so that you may live each day in his presence.

Amen