

# Genesis 1v1

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[ 0 : 00 ] Please have your Bibles open to Genesis chapter 1.! Genesis chapter 1, and let me read again God's Word.

! In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.! In 1968, as Apollo 8 audited the moon, a year before man landed on the moon, the voice of Bill Anders, one of the astronauts, sounded back to earth.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. As this astronaut looked out from outer space back to earth, he was led in worship.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. It was a statement of fact, but it was also a statement of foundation.

It was factual, yes, but it was also foundational for four reasons. I want to look at four reasons why Genesis 1.1 is foundational.

[ 1 : 18 ] First verse in the Bible, but foundational for lots of reasons. Number one, it is liturgical. It's liturgical. This is the first call to worship in the Bible.

God calls us to worship through His Word, and these are the first words of Scripture, calling us to worship God for who He is and what He has done in creation.

We don't begin worship with a prayer. Maybe if you've just been coming to IPC, you may have noticed this. We don't begin worship service with prayer.

We begin the worship service with Scripture. Why? Because we don't initiate worship. God initiates worship. God speaks to us, and then we speak back to Him.

We speak in song. We speak in prayer. But we've got nothing to sing, nothing to say in prayer, until He has first spoken to us. And Genesis 1.1 is, in that regard, the first call to worship.

[ 2 : 22 ] In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. It's liturgical. Second, it's theological. It's liturgical because it's theological.

What do I mean by that? It's a big word. I just mean it's about God. God, the opening verse of the Bible is about God. Somebody has put it well. The first subject of the Bible is God, and He remains so throughout the whole Bible.

And I think this verse gives us 12 things that we can deduce about God. That's right, I did just say 12, not 2.

All right? So, boys and girls, you know your maths. Four points plus 12. Four plus 12 is 16. This, don't tell your mums and dads, this is a 16-point sermon.

Okay? But don't tell them that. Okay, here we go. Twelve things. You may be thinking of that little ditty, wonderful things in the Bible I see. Some put there by me. Some put there by God.

[ 3 : 26 ] Some put there by me. But hopefully you'll see that they're all put there by God. Okay, number one. God is one. In the beginning, God.

In the beginning, there was God and only God. This is one of the Bible's great claims. There is one God, and besides Him, there is no other.

Genesis 1-1 begins with the exclusivity of God. In the beginning, God, one God, made the heavens and the earth.

But not just His exclusivity. When we speak about God's oneness, it can also refer to His simplicity. Not that God is simplistic, but that He is a simple being.

What do I mean by that? He is not composite. God is not made up of parts. You and I are made up of parts. You're made of a body and a soul. That's why you're created.

[ 4 : 28 ] The chair you're sitting on is made up of parts, wood and screws. It was created. If something is simple, it has no parts, it cannot be created.

God is the only simple being in the world. He is not made up of parts. Therefore, He was not created. God is one exclusively, and He is one simply.  
Deuteronomy 6-4, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Exclusively one and simply one. That's the first thing we can deduce about God from this verse.  
Second, God is spirit. God is spirit. Before the creation of the heavens and the earth, there was nothing but God. Space, time, matter, energy were all created by God.  
But if they were created by God, that means God does not exist in space, time, matter, or energy. God is outside of those things.  
[ 5 : 36 ] And the way the Bible explains that is God is spirit. He's not made of matter. He's not bound by time or space.

He is not energy. God is outside of those things. God is spirit. It's what Jesus said in John 4-24. God is spirit.  
Boys and girls, you might know your shorter catechism. What is God? God is a spirit and does not have a body like us. Number three, God is eternal.  
God is one spirit, eternal. For God to be present in the beginning. In the beginning, God. In other words, God existed before there was a beginning.  
In the beginning, God. And because he existed before there was a beginning, he existed before time. Which means he will exist after time. Which means God is eternal.  
[ 6 : 40 ] Psalm 90 verse 2. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world from everlasting to everlasting.

You are God. God is one spirit, eternal. Number four, infinite. In the beginning, God made the heavens and the earth.  
The heavens in Genesis 1-1 are not the sky heavens. You go out of the building tonight, you look up, you see the blue sky or the cloudy sky. That's not the heavens of Genesis 1-1.  
The heavens of Genesis 1-1 are the invisible heavens. Where the angels dwell. Where God himself condescended to dwell after he created them.  
The heavens are the invisible heavens. The earth is the visible earth. But those invisible heavens, they may be invisible, but they are not infinite. They were created.  
[ 7 : 38 ] In the beginning, God created the heavens. The invisible heavens. God created them, which means they are finite. They are limited. And God created the earth, which we know is also limited.

Now for God to create limited space, finite space, he himself cannot be finite. He must be infinite, infinite, limitless, boundless.  
You cannot put God in a bucket. You cannot, let me say this, even put him in the heavens. Remember what Solomon said in the temple? The heaven of heavens cannot continue.  
God is infinite. Number five, God is unchangeable. God is unchangeable.  
He is one spirit, eternal, infinite. He is unchangeable. Before God created everything, what was there? Only God.  
[ 8 : 46 ] Therefore, was there anything that could change God before the beginning? No. Because there was nothing but God. So before the beginning, before the heavens and the earth, God was unchangeable.

There was nothing outside him that existed. Therefore, there was nothing that could potentially change him. And when he did create the heavens and the earth, because he's the creator and the heavens of the earth are creation, it cannot change God.  
God remains unchangeable. He was unchangeable before creation. He is unchangeable after creation. God is unchangeable. That's the fifth thing that we can deduce from Genesis 1.1.  
Number six, God is self-existent. Self-existent. He's one spirit, eternal, infinite, unchangeable.  
Number six, self-existent.  
Let's think about this. Before God created the heavens and the earth, was there anything that he was dependent upon? No. Because what existed before the heavens and the earth?  
[ 9 : 56 ] Nothing but God. Therefore, what was God dependent upon? Only himself. God is self-existent. This is what theologians call the aseity of God.

A-S-E-I-T-Y. The aseity of God. It comes from the Latin phrase, a-say. Two words.  
A-from-say-himself.

God is from himself. Which really means God is self-existent. God is dependent on nobody except himself. It's actually in his name.

Remember the name, boys and girls, that he gives himself at the burning bush with Moses? What's the name? I am who I am. It's a statement of self-existence.

Of being. God's name is being. B-E-I-N-G. He is self-existent. Number seven, God is life.

[11:01] God is one eternal, infinite, unchangeable, self-existent spirit. God is a living spirit. For God to create life on the earth and in the invisible heavens with the angels, which are living creatures, for God to create life, he's got to get life from somewhere.

Where does he get life? Well, if there was nothing that existed before the heavens and the earth except God, then life has to exist in himself.

For him to impart life in the earth, for him to impart life in the angels in heaven. He had to have life. God is life. And he had to have it in himself. God is life. God doesn't go somewhere to get life to then impart it to his creation.

God is life itself. As I live forever, says the Lord. Deuteronomy 32, verse 40.

[12:09] Number eight, God is immortal. God is one, spirit, infinite, eternal, infinite, unchangeable, self-existent life.

Number eight, immortal. Now, what does immortal mean? It does not mean eternal. Eternal means God has always existed and always will exist. He is everlasting to everlasting.

Immortal means God cannot die. God cannot die. How do we deduce that from Genesis 1-1? Well, before God created the heavens and the earth, what was there?

Nothing but God. Was there anything that could take God's life from him before the heavens and the earth? No. Because there was nothing but God, and God has life himself.

So God cannot die. And then when God creates the heavens and the earth, because he is the creator and the heavens and the earth is his creation, it cannot take God's life from him.

[13:12] God has life in himself, and that life cannot be taken from him. He is immortal. He cannot die. That's what Paul says to Timothy.

God alone has immortality. 1 Timothy 6, 16. Number nine, God is creator.

God is creator. God is one, spirit, eternal, infinite, unchangeable, self-existent, life in himself, immortal. Number nine, God is creator.

It's an obvious point. But Genesis 1-1 is interesting because in the beginning God created. Now, boys and girls, this goes back to the Hebrew that you learned this evening.

Remember? Barah, Barah, created Elohim, God. Barah, Elohim. That verb, Barah, it occurs 39 times in the Old Testament.

[14:16] 39 times. And do you know what's interesting about that verb? God is only ever the subject of that verb in the Old Testament. Only God creates.

Nobody else creates. Only God Barahs. Only God Barahs. And in the beginning God Barahed out of nothing.

He created everything out of nothing. The heavens and the earth are what's called a merism.

They're two polar opposites that encompass everything in between.

The invisible heavens and the visible earth. North to south. East to west. Head to tail. Heavens and earth. It means everything. In the beginning God created everything out of nothing.

God is the creator. Psalm 96 verse 5. All the gods and peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens.

[15:25] He's the creator. Number 10. He's omnipotent. Omnipotent or all-powerful. He's one. Eternal.

Spirit. Infinite. Unchangeable. Self-existent. Life himself. Immortal. Creator. Number 10.

All-powerful. Omnipotent.

If in the beginning God the creator made everything from nothing, then he must be all-powerful.

Number 11. He is omniscient. He is all-knowing.

All-wise. Omniscient. If in the beginning God the creator made everything from nothing, then he must know everything. And it's not that he knows everything because he studied everything.

God didn't have a textbook which he looked up and read and thought, ah, that's how you make a universe. Let me start. Let there be light. No.

[16:23] God has never learned anything in his life. God has known everything instantly all at once.

God has never grown in his knowledge. God has never, let me put it like this, God has never had a thought in his life because he knows everything instantly.

From his wisdom he made the heavens and the earth. God is omniscient. And finally, number 12, God is sovereign.

God is sovereign. God is one, eternal, spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, self-existent, life, in himself, immortal, the creator, omnipotent, omniscient.

Number 12, sovereign. If God is the all-powerful, all-wise creator who can make everything from nothing after he makes the heavens and the earth, do you think he's still in control of it?

[17:26] If he's all-powerful, all-wise, has life in himself, cannot die, is he still in control of it? Yes. He's in control of all of it.

All of it. This is what we mean by God's sovereignty. God can do what he pleases, and he is in charge of everything that he's made.

So those are the 12 things I think we can reasonably deduce from God, about God, from Genesis 1-1, by good and necessary consequence.

Let me put all of that into a single sentence. God is one spirit, eternal, infinite, unchangeable, self-existent, living and immortal in his being, the omnipotent, omniscient, creator and sovereign of all things, in heaven and on earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And that is why Genesis 1-1 is the first call to worship, because it gives us a big God to worship.

[18:36] Genesis 1-1 is liturgical because it is theological. And isn't that what the angels are doing in heaven? Revelation 4-11, What are the angels doing in heaven right now?

Worshiping God for who he is and what he made. And if that's what the angels are doing in heaven, then what ought we to do here on earth? Worship God for who he is and what he has made.

So, Genesis 1-1 is liturgical. Second, it's theological. And third, it's Christological. Christological.

In other words, it's about Christ. Now, where is Jesus in Genesis 1-1? In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Is he there in verse 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. Is he there in verse 3?

[19:54] And God said, let there be light and there was light. Where is Christ in Genesis 1-1-1-3? Well, John gives us the answer in John 1.

Paul gives us the answer in Colossians 1. Where is Christ? He is the mediator of the creation. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

All things were made through him. There was nothing that was made except by him, says John. How does that connect to Genesis?

And God said. God's spoken word, let there be light. That is a reference to Christ. He is the mediator of creation.

And he mediates creation alongside the Spirit. Genesis 1-2. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

[21:01] So how did God create? God the Father is the origin of creation. God the Son is the mediator of creation. God the Spirit is the agent of creation. God the Father created everything from nothing through his Word and Spirit.

God the Spirit. Christian worship is Trinitarian. And it's Trinitarian from the first three verses of the Bible.

God the Father, through his Son, by his Spirit, makes everything out of nothing. And so we worship God, not just as a monad, as the creator of all things.

The Muslims do that. The Jews do that. No, we're Christians. We worship God, one God, in three persons.

And all three persons were involved in the creation. And so Genesis 1-3, read in light of John chapter 1 and Colossians 1, is a call to worship the triune God.

[22:12] Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So Genesis 1-3 is Christological. It's liturgical.

It's a first call to worship. It's theological. It's about God. And it's Christological. It's about Jesus. And number four, Genesis 1-1, is practical.

It's practical. Do you remember Paul's words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3-16 and 17? All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.

All Scripture, including Genesis 1-1. So how is Genesis 1-1 teaching? How is it rebuking? How is it correcting? How is it training in righteousness?

Well, it's interesting to see how Genesis 1-1 is picked up and used by later writers in the Bible, particularly in the Psalms.

[ 23 : 23 ] Let me read you two Psalms. Psalm 121. I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.

Do you see how the Psalmist is reading Genesis 1-1? My help comes from the Lord who made everything from nothing. Psalm 124 verse 8.

Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. Psalm 124 verse 8 was John Calvin's call to worship in his Geneva liturgy.

That is what Calvin's church service began with every Lord's Day. Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. Let's stand and sing the verse hymn.

It's there in the Dutch tradition as well. Notice what the Psalmists are saying. God is your helper because he is first your creator.

[ 24 : 30 ] Let me put it like this. God can help you with anything because he made everything. He can help you with anything because he made everything.

Some of you know, I mentioned it this morning just briefly, that eight years ago we had a tragedy in our family. Our daughter Layla we were expecting at nine months in her mother's womb.

And one Sunday night, the 13th of March, we were expecting her on the 20th of March, 2016. And on the 13th of March, one week before her due date, while we slept, she departed this earth.

It was a big shock to us. We had a little bit of a warning, something wasn't quite right. And then we were reassured by the doctors, everything, by the nurse on the phone, everything was fine. And we went to bed that night, woke up, and found in the morning that she died.

And the bottom of our world gave way. We were in free fall. And over the days and the weeks leading up to her funeral, there was a passage of Scripture that became a deep comfort to me.

[ 25 : 47 ] And this might surprise you, but it was Genesis chapter 1. As I read that chapter, I thought, I live in a world where something horrible has just happened.

Who is in charge of this world? I needed to know who's in charge. And as I read Genesis chapter 1, I realized there is one God who made everything, and He is still in charge of this world.

And here's the way He made the world to work. He spoke light into darkness. He made the morning to follow the evening. And He made seeds to fall into the ground to die, and then come to life and produce new life.

That's what I got from Genesis 1. God is the Creator. He's sovereign over all things. And after darkness, light. After evening, morning. After death, resurrection.

And I thought, we're going to be okay. It's painful. It's traumatic what we're going through. But it's okay.

[ 26 : 56 ] Because God made everything. And so, He can help us with anything. And so, it's the same for you. Whatever happens in your life, may Genesis 1.1 be one of your great go-to verses.

God can help you with anything because He made everything. This is what the opening verse of the Bible teaches us.

It is liturgical. It's a call to worship. It is a call to worship because it's theological. We have seen 12 things about God. And it's Christological.

The creation occurred through God's spoken word, which is His Son, by His Spirit hovering over the waters. And it is practical. God can help you with anything because He made everything.

Well, let me pray for us. And then we'll respond by worshiping Him. Thank you.