

In the Beginning – How Did Ancient Israel Read Gen 1?

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MAIN VERSES

[Read Gen 1?](#) • [Genesis 1:1](#) • [Genesis 1:2](#) • [Genesis 1:24](#) • [Isaiah 45:7](#) • [Isaiah 49:4](#) • [1 Corinthians 15](#) • [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) • [John 1:1](#)

Context

What's this week's Torah portion about? Creation, the beginning, chaos, the fall. It's interesting. I was speaking to you guys—you know Tyler Rosenquist at theancientbridge.com? Awesome. She has a new series now, Context for Kids, and she's taken all this Near Eastern stuff that we're studying and, as adults, we're all diving into academia, putting it all together—honor and shame, patron-client relationships, all this big, deep stuff—and she's making a children's curriculum out of it, which is absolutely incredible. I was watching her children's Torah portion review of this week, and I was talking to her online, and it's incredible because we were talking about context. She made a little graphic meme that she put on her Facebook page, and it says: "Context, a noun, definition—historical facts that keep my mind from masquerading around acting like the Holy Spirit." And this is context.

What she meant by that is sometimes we read the Bible and we say, "Ooh, I don't know what that means, but I want it to mean this. I feel like the Spirit of God tells me it should mean this." And so we understand and self-explain the scriptures, even in things we don't fully understand. I've done it a lot in the past. I'm sure everyone has. And that's what we do without context.

Over the past couple months, maybe a year or so, I've been diving into history, studying history and the language and culture of ancient Israel because I want to know what the faith of ancient Israel was like. Now, we always talk about, "Oh, the faith of ancient Israel was in Yahweh, their God." Well, yeah, I know that, but what was their practicing faith like? What was their mindset like? A lot of times in Hebrew and even Messianic Judaism, in the Messianic movement, we believe that ancient Israel was Jewish, that Judaism was the foundation of their faith. We know

from history that's not the case. Rabbinic Judaism didn't start until about 300 BCE with the influence of Greek colonization. It was an evolution of faith in exile and so on and so forth.

The Practicing Faith of Ancient Israel

The faith that ancient Israel had was very practical. A lot of times we read scripture with many different applications. And I'm not saying that scripture does not have many applications—it certainly does. But in ancient Israel, scripture was written as a testimony of their God and how they should walk out their faith. They didn't need a bunch of commentary on top of that to make it applicable to their lives. They just walked it out. And so context is a very, very, very interesting thing.

The Serpent in the Garden

We were talking about the snake a little bit. I was talking with Tyler about the serpent. And God said, "You're gonna be on your belly for all of your days, right?" And so automatically, what do we do? Well, the snake must have had legs, obviously, right? If the snake's gonna crawl on its belly from now on. After the fall, I've read some science books that propose if we believe in evolution, then snakes used to have legs. I don't really believe in evolution, though. So what is he talking about?

She was saying, well, a lot of scholars believe that in the Near East, snakes—vipers, if you will—were portrayed as deadly, of course. And what happens when a snake is going to strike? What does it do? It's no longer on its belly. It curls up and it raises up to strike you. And if a snake struck me right now—it's a five-foot snake—where would it hit me on my body, you think? Knee, hand, waist, right? Maybe my neck, like in the movies. Snakes on a plane, flying through the air. So if a snake is put down on its belly, could it be as simple as this? Could it be? I don't know. Could it be as simple as the lethal consequences or the potential that a serpent has will never be like it once was, and it will be laid to rest on its belly?

So Matt, that's kind of a stretch. We know snakes still bite us today, but we're not talking about all snakes. We're talking about that snake. We're talking about that snake in the garden. And how do we know this? Well, is there any further evidence? Let's look at what the next few scriptures say. It talks about the woman having seed, right? And the seed will put its heel where? On the snake's head. So the bottom of the foot will be on the snake's head. Why? Because the snake is on the ground. And the snake will strike the heel of the seed. It will be put

down on the ground. And so we could say that snakes had legs, and the legs were chopped off, or maybe the power and the sting of the snake were taken away.

Context—I don't know for a fact, but it's very interesting when we learn some other angles of context, how the scriptures can kind of come alive a little bit, right? And so, context. Context.

Recommended Resources

Before we go into the study, I want to endorse a couple of resources. I do not always fully recommend that fellow believers read a lot of the academic sources that are read in colleges and universities and so on and so forth that I study for many of these messages. Number one reason is: most academic resources on history that pertain to the Bible are written by scholars who are not believers, and they offer no edification to your relationship with God. This is just a fact book.

John Walton, PhD holder in Near Eastern Studies—this is what he does. His books are very academic and are recognized throughout many, many universities and colleges. I actually met a Baptist student who just graduated from seminary recently, and he was talking about John Walton, and I was like, "Really? You've read his books too?" He was like, "Yeah, we read them in seminary now because they need to prepare us for the ideas of context and studying actual history and Near East culture in school, in seminary." And I was like, that rocks. If you guys would like to study [Genesis 1](#), possibly in the context of how ancient Israel understood it, this book—The Lost World of [Genesis 1](#) by John Walton—I highly recommend. Highly recommend.

Another one of his books—it's a pretty good book—is Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament. It kind of takes you along the streamlined workflow of how ancient Israel saw the texts that were being written to them from God. Also, Danny McGurk has done a portion of this teaching. He's pretty much already taught this message that I'm about to teach at [ancientcovenant.com](#). It's a lot longer and has a lot more facts. And of course, Tyler Rosenquist at [ancientbridge.com](#).

I list my sources whenever I get something, guys, because I don't ever want you guys to think that I'm just making stuff up, number one, or that God just injects knowledge into me because he doesn't do that for me. There are some teachers out there who may do that for you; doesn't do it for me. And so I want to give you guys sources. At least if you disagree with everything I'm about to teach, you can blame these sources.

Bereshit—In the Beginning

Anybody know what this is? I meant to have it. This is the very first verse of the Bible, right? We're very familiar with it in the Hebrew. Bereshit, Elohim, berah, right? Berah right there is the word that's translated as create. But we'll come back to that a little bit later. Berah—aleph, tav. Everybody knows about the aleph and tav. In Revelation, Messiah is known as the alpha and omega. And in Hebrew, that's the aleph and the tav—the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. And so here we have them right there. "And in the beginning, Elohim, berah, created, with what? Through what? The Aleph Tav, Hashemayim, va'at, ha'aretz—the heavens and the earth."

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." What's interesting about this verse is sometimes we take this verse and we try to put it into our culture. Now, what I mean by that is when we read this verse, all we see is, poof, "In the beginning, God created the heavens." In the beginning of what? Maybe not. He created the heavens and the earth. If the word "bara" means created as in fabricated material, then yes, that's what it means. And then verse 2 goes into, "The whole of creation, the earth, was void and unformed and chaotic, and it was a nasty ball of goop."

The Awakening of Society

In about the 1500s or so, when the Reformation was taking place against the Catholic Church, people began rising up and people began having a rogue attitude towards religion. Now, this is not good or bad—it's just history. This is when the human mind within culture began to evolve. And what I mean by that is human beings began to question authority. Now, in the case of the Reformation, sure, that was a good thing. But they began looking at religion and saying, "Prove it. I don't understand that. How do you have the authority for this? Right?" And so about two hundred years after that, there was a man by the name of Thomas Paine who wrote a book called *The Age of Reason*. And it was pretty much a rebuttal to organized religion, right?

And so you have this awakening of society that's waking up to knowledge. It was a beautiful thing. It's like, wow, we can actually think for ourselves and we can study for ourselves, and science began to evolve into what we have today. I mean, modern science is absolutely incredible. You know that big thing that's in Switzerland, the CERN thing, the hydrion—that thing is cool. I know it's going to create a black hole and Nephilim are going to come out and kill everybody, but if that doesn't happen, then it's kind of cool. It's pretty cool. Scientists don't really know what's going to happen when they smash these big particles together, and so they're waiting to see what's going to happen.

It's kind of like if we were wondering what's inside of an egg, we'd smash it, and hopefully a black hole doesn't open up. Science is cool, and I love science. So what happened during this age of reason, if you will, is that people began to look at the Bible and say, "Guess what? This isn't lining up with modern-day science. It must not be real." Or, "If it's the Bible, then it has to line up with modern-day science, right?" But what if it doesn't? Maybe I'll stop there.

Ancient Israel and Science

One thing about ancient Israel, guys—ancient Israel was filled with physicists, right? Physics, if you will. Mathematicians, filled with them. They understood that if water came down from heaven, physics dictates that water must be in heaven, right? The waters were divided, right? If water falls from heaven, then water must be in heaven, right? It's very general. Ancient Israel was not filled with scientists. People were not concerned about the inner workings of cells and genetics of the world. People didn't think of the world being round or flat or square or triangle. People didn't care. They understood when they saw the stars and the moon that they were for signs and seasons and that God had orchestrated them in a certain movement. They could calculate math—every so often, every month, the moon disappears and comes back, and you got these stars and all this stuff. They understood these things, but they never pursued science like we do today.

A Controversial Question

Now, I have a question, and this is controversial. If ancient Israel was not accustomed to our modern-day science today—and how many of you guys know that science is never something that's concrete? It's always in a state of flux, if you will. It's always evolving. So 200 years from now, we're going to have different science books. And theories that we believe today will be debunked, and we'll have new ones. Just like 200 years ago, the same thing happened, right?

So if ancient Israel did not understand science today—with enough energy you can make matter, E equals MC squared, right? In the theory of relativity, right?—did God write the testimony of creation to them in our modern scientific terms? Or did he write to them in a language and a culture that he understood they would understand? Controversial. Controversial.

I'll tell you right now, I'm not a fan of using the Bible as a science book because I don't believe it was written as one. Remember that whole Bill Nye Science Guy debate with the other guy, the Christian apologist? I mean, I was rooting for him. I was rooting for my brother up there. He

did not win that debate. He didn't. If you watch it, I mean, we can admit that, right? Maybe we can't. That's fine. Oh, Lord.

John Walton's Perspective

Here's a quote from John Walton. He is a believer, by the way. "But we cannot afford to let this idea run away from us. The Old Testament does communicate to us, and it was written for us and for all humankind."

You know my favorite quote that I quote to you guys? "Scripture was not written to you, it was written for you." This guy is the one who quoted it originally, right? And it's from this book. But it was not written to us. The Bible was not written to us; it was written to ancient Israel, right? It is God's revelation of himself to Israel and secondarily, through Israel, to everyone else.

As obvious as this is, we must be aware of the implications of that simple statement.

The Challenge of Translation

Since it was written to Israel, it is in a language that most of us do not understand. Hebrew? Ancient Hebrew? Who here understands ancient Hebrew? A few, maybe. No, I can sound out some words. I'll be honest. All right?

And therefore, it requires translation. But the language is not the only aspect that needs to be translated. Language assumes a culture and it operates within a culture and it serves the culture and is designed to communicate into the framework of a culture.

In other words, just because we can take a word and translate it to something in our culture doesn't mean that in the ancient culture that word meant the same thing.

Idioms Across Cultures

I want to name a few English idioms and show you a few phrases in English that we understand. You'll see the words are all English, and a thousand years from now people will be able to translate these English words into their languages. But I want you to think—a thousand years from now, when people see these phrases, what are they going to think? Are they going to think the same way that we do? You ready?

I'm going to get myself in trouble. It cost an arm and a leg. Kevin wanted that new Corvette, but it cost him an arm and a leg. In ancient United States culture, we would sacrifice appendages for

the sake of modern... Seriously!

This is how we translate the Bible, guys. This is how we do it. When we're reading through Genesis, beat around the bush. Brad wanted to avoid conflict, so instead he beat around the bush. This mysterious figure, Elvis, seemed to approach every single church fellowship service as well as every single secular band service. When the events were over, Elvis would leave. He was an omnipotent character who survived through all generations. I mean, just imagine: kill two birds with one stone. Matt decided to go to the grocery store to kill two birds with one stone.

What Gets Lost in Translation

What if when we translate scripture, [Genesis 1-1](#), "God created the heavens and the earth"—as obvious as that is, what if there's something more in there? What if there's something that we're missing? For example...

In the ancient world, people believed that the seat of intelligence, emotion, and personhood was in the internal organs, particularly the heart, but also in the liver, kidneys, and intestines.

In the ancient world—geez, where was it?—I was with Jenny somewhere recently, and we were discussing the study of the brain. No, it was in Alexandria. Ancient Alexandria is when people started to realize that the brain is attached to every single nerve and sensory receptor in the body. Maybe it's good for something.

See, originally in the ancient world, they believed that the brain was actually a radiator for the blood, right? It lets off heat. And they thought that your emotion came from your heart or your kidneys or your liver, right? Oh, the Lord is speaking to me, right? No joke.

I have a bad feeling about this. It's a chili you ate.

The Heart: Metaphor Across Languages

Many Bible translations use the English word "mind" when the Hebrew text refers to the entrails, showing the ways in which language and culture are interrelated.

In modern language, we still refer to the heart metaphorically as the seat of emotion. "I love you with all my heart."

See, in a heart, ain't nothing in the heart. It's bleep bleep bleep bleep bleep. "I love you with all my heart." No, I love you with my brain, because that's where all my thinking is, where my

nerves and passion are. I love you, you're my brother, my sister—from the heart, right?

Want to see a few scriptures? This is great.

"I will give honor and thanks to the Lord who has told me what to do. Yes, even at night my mind teaches me." So that word that's translated, my mind, is actually kidneys. "Even at night my kidneys teach me." Whoa! Right?

"Oh let the evil of the wicked come to an end and may you establish the righteous, you who test the minds and the hearts. Oh righteous God." The kidneys. God's going to test your kidneys to see if you're righteous or not. I'm glad the translators changed that to "mind" because that would have confused a lot of people.

So we see that if we don't fully understand the culture along with the language, then translating the language sometimes does not give us the full view of everything that's going on.

Genesis 1 and Divine Power

And before I go any further with this topic, I want to make something very clear. I do believe that God created heavens and the earth. Duh. Duh.

But I believe that [Genesis 1-1](#)—and [Genesis 1](#) is speaking about something bigger, something more specific of what he did. See, creating the world, creating everything materially is pretty cool. I mean, I can't do that. But in the ancient world, it wasn't as big of a deal as a God who managed and organized and controlled everything.

See, one could create something and just not manage it, not take care of it. But if you took care of it, then it was a testimony of your power—how you would take something of chaos, form it, give it function, and manage it from then on. Kind of like a child. You can have a baby, right? It's pretty cool, but are you going to be a father and a mother to it, right?

I got to put that disclaimer out there because someone, here we go.

Which Science?

If God were intent on making his revelation correspond to science, we have to ask: which science? I love this quote because it's so true. Which science? Which science?

In other words, who here believes in a black hole? Black holes exist, right? Yeah, we've never seen one. Can't do experiments on them, right? Black holes are generally a theory. We see the

effects of black holes in the universe. We don't know for a fact if they exist or not. 200 years from now, what if we find proof that they don't exist?

And what if God wrote about black holes in the Bible just to communicate a message to us? It gets you stirred up. It's incredible. It's incredible.

Science moves forward as ideas are tested and new ones replace old ones. So if God aligned revelation with one particular science, it would have been unintelligible to people who lived prior to the time of that science, and it would be obsolete to those who lived after it.

We gain nothing by bringing God's revelation into accordance with today's science. In contrast, it makes perfect sense that God communicated his revelation to his immediate audience in terms that they understood.

In other words, what John Walton is proposing is: In order to truly understand the message of the scriptures—yes, these scriptures were written for us—but we have to imagine as if they were written to us.

And if they were written to us, then what type of language would we have spoken and what type of culture would we have lived in? I want to make the Bible a science book as much as anyone else, but it was not written as a science book. It was written as a testimony of God. Making it into a science book to achieve personal goals is not right; it's going to butcher it. It's going to butcher the message of scripture, and it's going to make us look really bad when we go on live debates with Bill, now a science guy, and he whips us. It was a horrible debate. I'm like cheering for my guy the whole time, and I'm like, man, this is rough. He made a few good points, but it's a long debate.

Though we long for the Bible to weigh in on these issues and give us biblical perspectives or answers, we dare not impose such an obligation on the text. God has chosen the agenda of the text and we must be content with the wisdom of those choices. If we attempt to commandeer the text to address our issues, we distort it in the process. The Bible talks about earth being surrounded by water. The Bible talks about when the water was separated, dry land appeared. The Bible talks about God commanding the earth to produce vegetation. In [Genesis 1:24](#), God commands the earth to produce livestock: "Earth, bring forth all living creatures." Ancient Israel didn't care. They were on earth. They didn't have telescopes and they weren't going up in space with little GoPro cameras. They wanted to know about their God. Their God made everything, but more than that, he managed everything.

What Ancient Israel Cared About

Let's see here. I'm going to go into function here in a minute. So when reading creation accounts of ancient Egypt or Babylon or Mesopotamia, something very interesting happens, and we see a theme of certain deities creating certain items in creation. Some gods may be responsible for the earth, some are responsible for the sea, and then this guy, his blood came out, dripped on the clay, and it created humans, something like that. A multitude of deities creating things, but most of the time, the focus was not about gods poof, creating things out of nothing. That was already known because, look, I'm standing on earth. The gods created the earth, right? The testimony of all creation accounts in the Near East were for the purpose of attributing power and authority and responsibility to certain gods. In other words, in Egypt, you would have a god over the river, you would have a god over the sky, you would have a god over fertility, the livestock, all these different gods over all these different things. They were responsible for maintaining the function of whatever they were over. So the god of the Nile was responsible for the function of the Nile. The god of livestock, the function of livestock. God of weather, the function of weather.

One God Over Everything

It's incredible because when the Torah was written, a testimony like no other was written, and that was of one God providing functionality and responsibility for every aspect of creation. Blasphemy in the Near East. I don't care. My God. Bigger than your God. That's literally what the text of Genesis was saying.

Now, in the Near East, or in ancient Hebrew, we read this word, bara, which means to create, right? And it's used about 48 to 49 times in scripture. And every single time this word is used and translated as create, it's always attached to God as the subject, okay? We never see Moses bara-ing anything, okay? It's only God. Now, taking into account the culture of ancient Israel and all of the neighboring creation accounts, many scholars, including John Walton, propose that the word bara should not be create. It should be make functional, to make functional. This would have been something that would have given more credit and more weight to Yahweh as a God, not simply someone who just spoke something into existence, because any of the gods can do that, but someone who gave function to every single aspect of creation, okay?

God Renovating Creation

What's in [Genesis 1:2](#)? The earth was formless and void, big muck. And what did he do? Separated the waters. Dry earth appeared. Vegetation came out of that. Everything that was there, he renovated and made functional, right? This is what all of [Genesis 1](#) is about. [Genesis 1](#) is not simply about God materialistically creating the universe. We know that. It's about him going through with a blueprint and saying, this is going to do this, and this is going to be responsible for this, right? And I'm going to make the waters above and below, and the earth will have dry land. I'm going to make the fish in the sea, and the earth spit out some vegetation. All right, what's going to eat the vegetation? Now I got to give it function. Animals! The earth spit out some animals, and then I'm going to gather the dust together, and I'm going to breathe into this dust my breath, and man will wake up, and now everything I've created has a function in contrast to man, to rule over it.

Material Ontology Versus Functional Ontology

Material ontology. Ontology is the study of existence, if you will. So material ontology versus functional ontology is essentially what John Walton and several other scholars are proposing in relation to the traditional study of Scripture. Is [Genesis 1](#) the story about how God poof, created everything? Or how God designed everything with function? We take the idea of a chair. When you create a chair, when does it become a chair? When you sit in it, when it has function. A company. When does a company become a company? When it functions, when you start doing business. A computer! You build a computer. So anyone ever built a computer before? Come on, really? Yeah, you plug everything in. I've never fabricated computer parts, but I did buy individual parts that already existed and I put them together and then I installed software. When I turned the computer on, all of the hardware that I put together and designed for a function, along with the software, created a computer, okay? If I rip the computer apart, it's just computer parts now. It's no longer a computer. Unless people or gods are there to benefit from the function of creation, existence is not achieved.

So I want you guys to take this concept, and you don't have to accept it. That's fine. I know it's a lot. What in the world? But as we go through the next few slides, take this concept in reading [Genesis 1](#). Now, does [Genesis 1](#) speak about God fabricating things in material form? Absolutely. But I would propose that [Genesis 1](#) is introducing to you a testimony of how great God is through his function and design. In the ancient world, an item's function was the focus, not its material status.

What Scholars Are Saying

So here we go. I have another quote here. I know I've got to have a lot of quotes. You bear with me. I think this is the last long one. This is a quote from the Bible Knowledge Commentary, an exposition of the scriptures. I actually found this on my Logos Bible software, and I was amazed when I read the commentary on [Genesis 1:1](#) and 1:2. So I'm not the only crazy one out there, right? These verses—[Genesis 1:1](#)—you can turn to your Bible in [Genesis 1:1](#) if you want. We can go ahead and read these things. You know what it says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." These verses have traditionally been understood as references to the actual beginning of all matter. Traditionally, a creation out of nothing and therefore part of day one. But, I love those but's there because those but's always mean a sacred cow is fixing to die or something. But, the vocabulary and grammar of this section require a closer look.

The word *bara*, which is translated as created, may express creation of nothing. It might, but it certainly cannot be limited to it. Rather, it stresses that what was formed was new and functioning as something new and perfect. The word is used throughout the Bible only with God as its subject. So what this commentary is suggesting is not necessarily the same thing as what John Walton is suggesting, but it is suggesting that this word *bara* doesn't simply mean poof, created. It means something that is functioning, something that is perfect, something that is made new through the divine intervention of God.

Verse 2: The World in Waiting

Verse 2: "And the earth was unformed and void," right? The clauses in verse 2 are apparently circumstantial to verse 3, telling the world's condition when God began to renovate it. It was a chaos of wasteness, emptiness, and darkness. Anyone ever notice that before? In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And then what was the creation? Now we have a lot of theories like the gap theory. So there was a civilization before verse two and then man sinned and all civilization went to Sheol and that's when dinosaurs existed before verse two. And there are a lot of theories out there. I don't really subscribe to any of them. But what this author is suggesting is that verse 1 is declaring what God is doing for the rest of the chapter.

In other words, I was always taught that verse 1, everybody still with me? I know I'm yakking a lot, trying to get a big concept into it. I was always taught in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Poof! Right? I was always taught that verse 1 was when time began. Poof! What if, what if, verse 1 is dictating the beginning of creation week? And so in the beginning, God gave function to heavens and earth. Now we already know God created it all, but that's not what [Genesis 1](#) is about. [Genesis 1](#) is about God expressing his testimony on why he should be worshiped, how mighty he truly is. In the beginning, God gave function to heaven

and earth. And here is how he did it. The earth was without form and void, and darkness covered over the face of the earth, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

God Gave Function to All of Creation

Here's how God gave function to all of creation. The earth in the beginning was formless and void, junk, and then God intervened and made it perfect. It's a testimony of all of our lives. So I started looking at this word in verse 2. Formless is *tohu* and the word void is *bohu*. And according to David Sumera, after a full semantic analysis, he translates *tohu* as unproductive rather than descriptive of something without physical shape or form. In other words, according to this scholar, the word formless means unproductive or without function. In the beginning, God gave function to heaven and earth. And how did he do this? Well, the heaven and earth were without function and void. And then God's spirit hovered over the waters. This same word is used in [Isaiah 49:4](#). "I have spent my strength for nothing and have no purpose." That's *tohu*. No purpose, no function. We'll get there in a minute. Does it make sense now when Paul is talking in [2 Corinthians 5](#)?

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. What if the concept of creation had to do with function and not necessarily the focus of materialistically appearing? When you came to be a believer in Christ, did you start existing at that point materialistically? Spiritually. You had function. Through Messiah, you were given function in your life. Before Messiah, you were *tohu* and *bohu*. Functionless. No purpose. So if through Messiah you are a new creation, right? You now have function. You see, existing materialistically is pretty cool, but now having a function, having a purpose in God's kingdom, having a role in God's kingdom, that's a little bit weightier. It's more complex and it's much more specific, right?

A New Creation in Christ

What function do you have? For Paul keeps talking, we forget to keep reading, right? And verse 20: "Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Messiah, be reconciled." In other words, before you came to the knowledge and acceptance of Yeshua as your King, you had no function. You had no purpose. You were void without form in God's kingdom. After you accept Messiah as your Lord and Savior, you now are a new creation. You have function. You have a purpose. You have a role. You have a reason to exist in God's kingdom now. What is that reason? Because you're now an ambassador for Messiah. You guys know what an ambassador is? A messenger, right? A messenger takes the message from the king and delivers it, right? I love that. I love that. This verse never meant so

much to me until I understood this concept. So if you are a new creation of Messiah, are you living out that function?

In verse 2, in Genesis chapter 1, remember what it says, right? Nothing had function, right? Everything was void, not formed, so on and so forth. Then what happened? What hovered over? Spirit, because that's exactly what Messiah says is going to do. He says, listen guys, the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all of the things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. And so here we have it again in the salvation message. Something has no function. It has no purpose, you and I. And then because of the testimony of Messiah, we have function and we have function through what? The Spirit. It's the same thing as in the beginning. You don't have to accept that [Genesis 1](#) is focusing on function rather than materialistic existence. That's okay. But this is awesome. This is incredible. Where did that come from? Oh yeah! So I got this off of a website and it goes through and it lists the six days of creation.

The Six Days of Creation

So on the first day, God creates light. That's what we were taught. But if you read it in the Hebrew, He didn't create light. It says that He called light. Oh, we could go down some rabbit trails with that. Who is the light? And since God was the only one that was there, then the light was within him, so the light came from him, so on and so forth. It's very interesting because in the Near East, light and darkness were never seen as materialistic things to begin with. So God wouldn't have created light, right? Light was a condition. Light was separated from darkness. Then he calls the light day and the darkness night. Why does he do that? Because a day is a period of light. And so now he organizes light for a function. You will be day. Here is your purpose. Night, darkness, here is your purpose. Day two, God creates the firmament and divides the waters above it and below it. That word create is not in there, but he takes what was already there in verse 2 and he molds it to perfection. Day three, God gathers the waters together and dry land appears. A function of earth is now coming about. Earth and sea are named, and then God brings forth grass, herbs, and fruit-bearing trees on the earth.

Now, day four is really interesting because then he creates a sun, moon, and stars. So light existed before the sun, moon, and stars, right? Now, what's he do with the sun, moon, and stars? Takes all them stars. All right. We got to give you function, okay? Of course, God made them, but what's he going to do with them? Big sun right there, greater light, little lesser light moon over here. So that these would be for signs and seasons, right? New years, new moons, the days, the weeks, the months. You will have a calendar now, a function for the sun, moon,

and stars. Didn't just make them for willies. Day five, God creates birds and sea creatures. They're commanded to be fruitful and multiply, function, function. Day six, God creates. He actually tells the earth, spit out some beasts. And then the very next verse, he says, and God created the beasts. Livestock reptiles upon the earth. He then creates man and woman in his image and likeness.

I love that because if we look at this, so God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them. Why is scripture so concrete that he created male and female? Of course he did, right? Because the very next verse, what's the function of male and female, right? And he blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and multiply. He created male and female for a function to be fruitful and multiply. Everything in scripture has a function to it if it's part of God's creation. If it doesn't have a function, then it doesn't really exist. All right. Did I put the Isaiah verse in here? I don't think I did. Hold on. Can we attack a controversial verse? How about God created evil? Oh, we weren't supposed to do that. We're not supposed to do that because God never created either. Even though Isaiah says he created evil, we'll just skip over that verse. It's Isaiah, is it 49? Maybe that's the other one. Hold on. Someone find it. Bible study creates light. Calamity is another version. Let's see here. Come on. Who's going to find it? It's in Isaiah. Here we go. I'm going to do something. Google during services. I'm waiting for my 3G to load. Do you guys know what verse I'm talking about? Oh, it was close. That's it. 45.7. Everybody turn to 45.7. [Isaiah 45](#). It's not a phone. It's a Bible. Come on. And when you have it, let me know. Of course you do. I just said that to give me time to have it and all y'all got it. [Isaiah 45.7](#). I form light and create darkness. I make well-being and I create calamity. I am Yahweh who does these things. So that word calamity, Israel, is evil. I create evil is what the verse says. How many of you, it kind of bugs you a little bit that God creates evil? Ah, now we have, make sure my inner linear confirms this real quick. That word create is brah. So if brah is not materialistically speaking, then God creates, brings light and he gives function to darkness. God brings peace and gives function for evil, makes it functional. How big is your God, right? How big is your God that nothing is too big for him to make functional and use for his purposes? He turns to good. That's exactly right. So I remember reading this verse last night, and I'm not even sure if I put it in here. Yahweh gave function to every single aspect of life. He made grass so that the cattle would have something to eat and then he made cattle to eat the grass and then give the grass something to eat. Everything had a function. It's true. Everything has a function in God's creation, right? Look at y'all being dirty minded. He took the lights in the sky and designed them to orbit in a certain frequency so we would have night and day rest and work. Then he designed everything to multiply after its own kind and continue a fluid cycle. Do you guys know what President's Day is? What is President's

Day? We honor the president. And what do we do on President's Day? Barbecue. How many of you guys go to work on President's Day? You guys realize it's a federal holiday, a day that people used to observe. Does your work close on President's Day? Mine didn't. Yours does? We got one. You just ruined my whole thing. Most companies do not close on President's Day.

The Seventh Day

They used to. It used to be a day that you would take off work and you would rest. You wouldn't do any work because you would be resting. And the whole purpose of the day was to focus your attention on the leader, your king of your country, the president, and do nothing but honor him on this day.

Six days God spent creating and giving function to all aspects of creation. And on the seventh day, he walks into his office—his oval office, if you will—and he sits down and he rests in his creation. That's the function of Shabbat, guys. That's why he was the first one that did it. God rested.

What do you think, you take a nap? No. It's just like a president. You spend all this time campaigning, going to debate, spending all this money on the signs and so on and so forth. And then when you're elected president, you go into the White House and you sit down. Did your job stop? No. But now you're sitting in the position, in the chair, and you're resting in your office, right? This is what God did.

On the seventh day, he sat down with his creation and said, yes, this is good. Every single week, we turn to him, and we do not go to work. We rest, and we look at him, and we promote all honor and glory to him. Why? Because of the six days of creation. That's why. Who was the first to keep Shabbat? God. And we reciprocate that same type thing, right?

God's Testimony in Creation

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Was this interesting at least? You don't have to believe it. That's fine. Matt's a heretic. I know.

When you read [Genesis 1](#), it'll really speak to you. Wow. Function.

In every single other creation account in the Near East—and I'm not saying that Israel stole other creation accounts, but I am saying that Israel lived in a very similar culture as Mesopotamia, Egypt, so on and so forth—no one focused in on what their God created. Of

course God created the universe. Duh, moron. But what your God is doing with creation is what counts—his authority and his power.

The testimony of our God in the Near East three, four thousand years ago would have been daunting. Very daunting. That your God does all of it? Gone right. Huh.

The Word Reshit

So I want to take this word right here. How many of you guys know that Breshit—a sacred cow, right? It's not really a sacred cow. It's just Breshit is not the word, right? The word for in the beginning is Reshit, right?

And for those of you who study Hebrew, the Beit, right? This little be right here is actually a prefix that invokes, like, in or a specific time of in the beginning, right? So the word for the beginning is Reshit. Everybody say Reshit. Okay. People have a hard time saying it because when you translate it to English—never mind. Reshit.

So when you look at the word Reshit, it does mean in the beginning, right? But it also is the same word in Leviticus for first fruits. When you gather in the first fruits, the Reshit, the first that comes out. That was amazing when I heard this. I went back and confirmed this. I'm like, look at that. It's first fruits.

Firstfruits and Messiah

Now, why is this significant? Why is this significant? Because we know according to first Corinthians, right?

"But Messiah has indeed been raised from the dead. He is the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. Messiah is referred to the firstfruits. For since death has come through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Messiah all will be made alive. But each in his own turn, Messiah the firstfruits. Then he who comes, those who belong to him."

So if we take the concept of [Genesis 1](#), and it may be a stretch, I know. The Reshit. Be-Reshit Elohim berah. Et chashamayim v'et ha'arets. The firstfruits was at the beginning. Does that even make sense? In the firstfruits, God created the heavens and the earth. Maybe that's a stretch. Maybe it's a stretch to, you know, the lamb, the lamb sacrificed before the foundation. No, no, no, no, no. In the beginning, the firstfruits, God made the heavens and the earth functional. So with the firstfruits, God used the firstfruits to give function to all creation.

Messiah, The Beginning

So then we go to [John 1:1](#), which was most likely written based off the Jewish targums at the time. But what's he say?

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And he was with God in the beginning, through him, through him, all things were made. And without him nothing was made that has been made. And in him was life, and the life was the light of men."

Through him all things became functional in God's creation.

We wonder when Messiah speaks about coming to the Father through him, right? He is the door. No man comes to the Father except through me, and we always have some metaphorical yada, yada, yada.

In 2005 or 2006, I was talking to Rabbi Ariel. He was a Messianic rabbi in Israel in his Omen of Fula. And he was raised Jewish, rabbinic Jewish. He never went to a church in his life, and he has a very fantastic testimony of how he became the belief in Messiah. But I was speaking to him, and he brought up this concept, and he was like, well. Everyone thinks that going through Messiah is some metaphorical thing, but if. That's right. Amen. If Messiah was the beginning, look at this. If Messiah was there at the beginning right next to God, then we have to go through Messiah to get to God.

And the way that he explained it, and whether you agree with this or not, that's fine. I thought it was pretty cool. You have Messiah, and as John says, it was through Messiah that all creation came to become functional. And so therefore, in order to get back to God, creation has to go back through Messiah in order to be exposed to God's glory, just like in the beginning.

The Bible as God's Testimony

Now whether you agree with that or not, that's fine, but I find these concepts pretty cool. And though we can take the word Breshit and go to some pictographic Hebrew explanation or look up the gematria of these words or look up some really cool rabbinic commentary, I enjoy context greatly because context will always bring forth the greatness of our God as Israel saw it thousands of years ago. And that is what I kind of wanted to present today.

Maybe it's heresy, and that's okay to say that the Bible was never supposed to be some type of science book compared to our modern science. Or maybe the Bible is supposed to prove science,

but science can't be proven. It's something that is ever evolving. Can't we just read the Bible as a testimony of our God, as Israel did? Hmm, I think that was my last slide.

So I encourage you guys—I encourage you guys to get John Wallen's book. That was just rocking, an amazing book. But read through [Genesis 1](#), and every time you see the word create, it came to function. He made it functional.

Every time you pray to your king, Father, thank you for having the grace and mercy to save me. It's not just bringing you in the kingdom, right? He can open the gates and bring anyone in the kingdom, but once you're in the kingdom, he's going to give you a uniform and a name tag and say, guess what? You work for me now, and here's what I want you to do for your job in my kingdom, right? It's a function. You have a role to play in God's kingdom now.

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