

Basic Bible Study on Genesis 1:1

Genesis 1:1 is the very first sentence of the Bible, and it tells us that everything—time, space, stars, oceans, and every living thing—had a definite starting point. That starting point was not an accident or an endless cycle, but the deliberate act of a personal, all-powerful God who spoke the universe into existence out of nothing. This one verse establishes that God is eternal, sovereign, and good, and it quietly points forward to His Son, the Word through whom all things were made and who would one day redeem what sin would break. In these few words we find both the foundation of all reality and the first hint of the gospel of grace.

Discover (Uncovering the Meaning of the Text)

1. What does the phrase “in the beginning” tell us about time and the universe—did anything exist before this moment?
2. Who is the “God” introduced here, and what does it mean that He “created” rather than shaped or found something already there?
3. What is included in “the heavens and the earth,” and why does the verse use this pair of words to describe everything God made?

Dig (Going Deeper into the Truth)

4. How does the New Testament connect this verse to Jesus Christ—particularly in John 1:1-3—and what does that reveal about who Jesus is?
5. Why is the idea that God created “out of nothing” (ex nihilo) important, and how does it set the Bible apart from other ancient creation stories you may have heard?
6. In what ways does the Hebrew word Bereshit itself seem to point ahead to the cross, and how does that affect your understanding of God’s eternal plan?

Apply (Living the Truth Today)

7. If the same God who spoke galaxies into being also planned your redemption before time began, how should that change the way you face today’s worries?
8. When you look at creation—sunsets, mountains, or even your own body—how can you turn those moments into deliberate acts of worship to the Creator introduced in this verse?

9. In conversations with people who believe the universe is eternal or accidental, how could you gently use Genesis 1:1 as a starting point to share the hope you have in Christ?

Verse-by-Verse Commentary

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

This verse stands as the unshakable foundation of all divine revelation, proclaiming truths that shape every doctrine of Scripture. The Hebrew phrase *berē' šît* .

Most remarkably, the word *berē' šît*—אֵלֶּיךָ שֵׁיט—contains a hidden portrait when its six letters are viewed through the ancient pictographic script that preceded the modern Hebrew block letters. Each letter carried symbolic meaning:

Bet (ב) pictured a tent or house, meaning “in,” “within,” or “household.”

Resh (ר) depicted the head of a person, meaning “head,” “chief,” or “first.”

Aleph (א) showed the head of an ox, symbol of strength, leader, and God Himself.

Shin (ש) resembled teeth, meaning “consume,” “destroy,” or “fire.”

Yod (י) portrayed a hand or arm, meaning “work,” “deed,” or “hand.”

Tav (ת) was two crossed sticks, the mark of a covenant sign or cross.

Read together in this ancient imagery, the word quietly declares: “The Chief Son of God will be consumed by His own hand on a cross.” This sovereign encoding of the gospel in the very first word of Scripture points unmistakably to the eternal Son—the Agent of creation—who would one day stretch out His hands in redeeming love .

In Jewish tradition, the Torah portion Bereshit is read annually at Simchat Torah, a joyous celebration marking the completion and immediate renewal of the yearly cycle—an exquisite picture of God’s eternal, ever-fresh purpose. For believers illuminated by the Spirit, that reading now resounds with the voice of the Son once veiled in the opening word, now gloriously unveiled as Alpha and Omega .