

**“The Book of Beginnings”**  
**Prologue (1:1–2:3)**  
**The Beginning (1:1–2)**

**1. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”**

The word *God* is *Elohim* (the plural form of *eloha*) – the One to be dreaded.

- When it’s used as a plural in sense, it’s translated *gods*. We find this translation 260 times in the Bible. It refers to idols (Ex. 12:12) and humans (Ps. 82:6).
- When it’s used as a singular in sense, it’s translated *God*. We find this translation 2,310 in the Bible. It’s the most common Hebrew name for God.

*Elohim* created (v. 1), said (v. 3), saw (v. 4), separated (v. 4), called (v. 5), made (v. 7), placed (v. 17), and blessed (v. 28). Creation is the direct result of His activity (vv. 1, 21, 27). *Elohim* is the life-giving God. See Acts 17:19–34.

**2. “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep”**

The expression “without form and void” doesn’t refer to something that has become *deformed*, but to something that’s yet to be *formed*. The Septuagint translates the expression as “invisible and unprepared.” There was no land or light – that is, it wasn’t ready for humanity. See Isa. 45:18).

**3. “And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters”**

The same verb is used in Deut. 32:11 to describe an eagle fluttering over its young. It watches them and protects them. Similarly, the Spirit keeps watch over creation.

*1. God is self-existent*

God is Creator. He didn’t assume this role (i.e., a new state of being) at the time of creation. He didn’t become the Creator. Rather, He is the eternal Creator. His act of creation is eternal by virtue of the fact that time begins with creation; that is to say, the creation of the universe isn’t a moment that follows another moment. There’s no moment prior to “the beginning.” This is important when it comes to our understanding of God. Simply put, God is beyond the created universe, including time and space. He knows no past or present, but remains in the same indivisible point of eternity.

Because God has no past or future, He doesn’t experience successive states of being. He doesn’t become something He isn’t. He doesn’t change because change requires a cause that makes

something to be; but there's no cause prior to God. He alone is uncaused. He's "the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (Jas. 1:17). What He was, He is; and what He is, He will be.

God's self-existence means that He's a perfect being. Nothing can be added to Him or subtracted from Him. God is one, simple, indivisible essence, and His essence is one simple act (infinite and immutable) by which He lives, understands, wills, loves, etc.

## 2. *God is self-sufficient*

Because God is a perfect being, He's happy in Himself (Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 1:11; 6:15). The divine persons delight in each other. The Father has infinite satisfaction in the Son and the Spirit, and the Son in the Father and the Spirit, and the Spirit in the Father and the Son – all in each and each in all.

Because God is one, He can't be divided in nature (being). Yet there are three ways of existence in the nature of God, because of three real relations – paternity, filiation, and spiration. There is, therefore, a distinction between the nature and the three existences. They're "distinct subsistences, distinguished from one another by their unchangeable order of first, second, and third (Father, Word, and Spirit) and their incommunicable properties of paternity, filiation, and procession, or unbegotten, begotten, and proceeding" (Thomas Manton). God revealed this when the Father sent the Son and the Spirit into the world; that is, God made Himself known in the *missions* of the Son and the Spirit. These revealed that God's life takes place in eternal relations of origin. The Father sends the Son and the Spirit in time because the Son and the Spirit proceed from the Father in eternity (Jn. 8:42; 15:26).

Because God is a perfect being, whose life takes place in relations of origin in the same indivisible point of eternity, He's necessarily sufficient and satisfied in Himself. His happiness lies in knowing Himself, loving Himself, and delighting in Himself.

"God was under no constraint, no obligation, no necessity to create. That He chose to do so was purely a sovereign act on His part, caused by nothing outside Himself, determined by nothing but His own mere good pleasure; for He 'worketh all things after the counsel of his own good will' (Eph. 1:11). That He did create was simply for His glory ... The force of this is [that] it is impossible to bring the Almighty under obligations to the creature; God gains nothing from us" (A. W. Pink).

## 3. *God is good*

Creation declares the greatness of God's power and wisdom. See Ps. 145:1–6. It also declares God's goodness. See Ps. 145:7–9. "The creation is nothing else but an effusion of the bounty and goodness of God. He made the world, not that He might be happy, but that He might be liberal" (Thomas Manton). God was blessed without us, enjoying an absolute sufficiency within Himself. Therefore, He didn't create for His own benefit, but for our benefit. His great aim was "to raise up objects out of nothing, to whom He would communicate His goodness" (Thomas Manton).