



Probably at some point in most people's lives, the question comes up in our minds: What's the point of life? Many times, this question comes up in difficult times. Maybe you feel you've done everything right. Things seemed to be going well, and then *bam* you're hit with trials. Other times, maybe you've done something wrong, and you feel like such a failure. What's the point? Still other times, you could be doing quite well, but you realize that you could lose it all in an instant. What's the point of all of this?

It's a good question to ask and to ponder, and it's a question I think we ought to be asking when we approach the book of Genesis. In our English Bibles, this book is the first one. But did you know that in some ancient Jewish manuscripts of the Old Testament, they put Ecclesiastes first? If you know anything about Ecclesiastes, it's a book that basically asks, "What's the point?" This world is fallen, nothing works out just like how we want, and when it does, it fades away and in the end we die. Sounds like an encouraging read, right? Well, towards the end of Ecclesiastes, Solomon then leads us to the point: God. The point of all of life is God himself.

The seeming reason why Ecclesiastes was placed first was to acknowledge our common humanity with people and to get us to ask the question "What's the point?" Once we ask that, Ecclesiastes points us to God, and then Genesis reveals to us who God is and what he is like. I think **one of the purposes of Moses writing Genesis is to reveal who God is and what he is like in order to comfort and confront people who are struggling with the pains of life.** How can I know that? Well, think about who the main audience of this book is. We know Moses wrote Genesis. Who is he writing to? The Israelites. Where would the Israelites have been when they received this book? In the wilderness. Think with me what these Israelites have seen and endured and received before Moses gives them this book. They were in Egypt, a country that worshipped many "gods." They were enslaved there, and then God miraculously and powerfully rescues all of Israel out of Egypt. This rescue comes with such great power that the people leave Egypt, plundering many households, taking riches with them. Soon after leaving Egypt, they're stuck at the Red Sea while Pharaoh and his army are chasing them. Immediately they complain: Did God bring us out here to die? But God reveals his power, and they walk through while Pharaoh and his army is drowned in the waters.

This type of scenario continues in Israel's wilderness wanderings. There are difficulties, Israel complains, God rescues, Israel rejoices. Then there are difficulties, Israel complains, God rescues, Israel rejoices. At some point in the wanderings, God gives Moses the words for this book of Genesis. The Israelites may wonder "What's the point of living? What's the point of all this wandering? Why has God done this?" In the midst of what the Israelites might feel is chaos, the book of Genesis comes to call them to know who God is and what he is like. If they're tempted to go back to Egypt or to embrace other gods, Genesis reveals to us that God is the One who brings order from chaos. He is over all, and there are no other gods beside him. He is worthy to be trusted in all of life, and in trusting him, we find rescue and eternal life.

When you realize this context to Genesis, I think you can't help but relate. We ask similar questions, and we need to be reminded of, or introduced for the first time to, God. So now, we enter Genesis 1, and we are going to focus on verses 1-2. Open your Bibles there if you have them. Let's read these two verses together: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The 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.¹

Can God be trusted? Yes. This creation account is even to compel us to trust the Lord. Did you know that? I think some people turn this chapter just into a science lesson. While whatever Scripture speaks on regarding science is true, the creation account isn't just a story to help us know how things came about and in what timeframe. **The creation account is a revelation of God's majesty and power to bring order from chaos, calling humans to trust God for eternal rescue.** I know this is a *long* main idea for today, so we are simply going to break it down as we work through just two verses today. I pray that we see and savor God's majesty, and we are brought to trust him all the more in our daily living. God is the point, and he's worthy of our trust.

1. A revelation of God's majesty and power.

Psalm 19:1 begins with "The heavens declare the glory of God. . ."² Romans 1:20 adds that "[God's] eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made."³

How can the apostle Paul say that God's eternal power and divinity are on display in creation? Well, I think he gets that understanding from Genesis 1:1. The very name for God that is used here in verse 1 is the Hebrew word "Elohim." There are a few interesting realities that Moses connects with this word Elohim. behind the meaning of this word. The first is that he is **the Self-Existent One**. This is not what Elohim means. This is actually what Yahweh means. But Israel would have known this name. At Sinai, God revealed he is who he is. But here, in Genesis 1, we see the nature of Yahweh. Elohim is the Self-Existent One. How do we know this? Because, "In the beginning, God. . ." Who else is there? Who else is creating? No one. This is what I spoke of last week of God being self-sufficient. He's Self-Existent. There is nothing that created him, and there's nothing that he needs outside of himself. He exists because he is!

Think about how necessary this would be for the Israelites to hear. They've come out of a country like Egypt – a country with great wealth and power. Yet, they're wandering around in a wilderness. Are the other gods more powerful than the God they follow? Who is this God?

Think about how necessary this is for us in our day to hear. Look around our own country and we see chaos and confusion, don't we? Look at your own life and you experience struggles, right? And you may sometimes think to yourself, "Is God really that powerful if he lets these things or that thing happen?" Some have left the faith altogether because they say things like, "I've prayed and prayed and God didn't give me this, so he must not even be real." The struggles of the Israelites were as powerful at times. Yet, God through Moses wants the people to realize that even in the struggles and questions, God does not change. He can't change. Being self-existent means, he is who he always is. He will be who he always will be. He is Elohim.

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 1:1–2.

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 19:1.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 1:20.

Elohim also has another idea to it: **majesty**. The word Elohim here is in the plural. One idea for using the plural form is to show God's royalty and majesty. Kings in the ancient world would use the plural form to speak to their power and majesty and glory. Here, I believe God is doing that as well. Israel wonders about God's power. Is he powerless to save his people and lead them to the promised land? Elohim reveals that he is utterly majestic. I think we need to hear this in our day as well, too. I wonder how many times people today tend to value God at the level of valuing other human beings. Human beings have worth in being created in the image of God, but their worth comes from God who is infinitely more worthy. Elohim speaks to majesty! What does that word conjure up in your mind? When I think of God's majesty, I'm reminded of the model prayer Jesus gives to his disciples. He starts with "Hallowed be your name." What does that mean? It's essentially a prayer that God would cause us to know, feel, embrace his infinite worth and majesty! That we wouldn't treat him tritely, but with the glory he deserves! He is majesty!

Finally, I believe Elohim has another idea connected to it. There are many Bible scholars who disagree with me on this, so maybe I'm wrong, but I'm convinced enough to share this with you: **plurality**. I already said that Elohim is in the plural. While there's a royal sense to that, I also think it's hinting to the reality that God himself is plural. Meaning, I think the name "Elohim" serves as a seed, leading us to the doctrine of the Trinity. I think that even more when we get a little later in this chapter, and God says, "Let *us* make man in our own image," and creates more than one, and they are similar-yet-different. In addition, in just a moment, we read about the Spirit of God.

Look at what Moses reveals about God to the Israelites (and to us) in just this one word! Can you just savor these realities? I urge you to pray that the Lord would make his name *Elohim* hallowed in your heart even this week. Pray that you would see his majesty and power and that these realities would comfort and give you greater faith as you enter into this week.

Behold our God! Now, Moses could reveal Elohim as Self-Existent, Majestic, and Plural; but the question we might have is, "Does God care about us?" Since he's self-existent, he doesn't need anything. Since he's already majestic, he doesn't need us. Since he's plural, he doesn't need more community. So, God doesn't care about us, right? Wrong. The creation account is a revelation of God's majesty and power

2. . . .to bring order from chaos. . . .

We start Genesis, reading "In the beginning. . . ." When Moses adds "heavens and the earth," he's not referring to the creation of what we refer to as Heaven – the unseen realm. He is referencing the creation of this visible creation. The unseen realm could have been created before this or at the same time. What we do know is that verse 1 of Genesis serves as a heading for chapters 1-2, which speak of this planet (earth) and the universe (the heavens).

Then we read God created. We've already talked about this word for God, and now I want to emphasize the word for "created." If I ask you, "Have you ever created anything," you would respond, "yes." Then you talk to me about something you made or maybe a program you came up with all on your own, or a house you built or a work of art you created. Our English word for create can be used that way, but this Hebrew word was reserved *only for God*. It's only ever used to refer to the activity that only God can do. Only God can *create*. What we do is make or build off of what God has created. Elohim, the self-existent, majestic, plural created everything we see – every star – from the small ones like our sun to the hypergiants. He created microcells and black holes. Elohim, and Elohim alone, created. And when we

look at creation, we should see only a God like Elohim could have done this, with all the complexity and unity. God created the heavens and the earth.

How should this comfort and confront the Israelites? The gods of Egypt or the gods of Canaan are nothing. Anything that Egyptians or Canaanites have is because Elohim has allowed it. Everyone's existence is dependent on him. And isn't that the implication for us, too? Many in America aren't polytheists, believing in many gods. But actually, I think they are. Whatever you live for is your practical god. Maybe it's money. Maybe it's a spouse. Maybe it's sex, power, fame, affirmation. You live for them because you think they give you something great. But do you realize that all those things are under the authority of Elohim? Go back to Ecclesiastes, you can have power, sex, fame, money, and many wives – none of it is the point of life. Elohim is!

But the question is, "Can Elohim be trusted with my life?" Our lives feel chaotic. Does Elohim care? That brings us to this point of order from chaos. Creation itself sends this message that God cares for his creation. I can't help but wonder if many people, in talking about the creation account, skip verse 2. Can we just read it again? **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.** ⁴

This verse has been used for fodder for powerful debate. Before getting into the individual days of creation, we discover that the earth begins without form and void, and it's covered with darkness. Because of the connotation later in Scripture of darkness, and formless void being related to chaos and judgment; some conclude that this verse indicates that before this earth, there was another earth that God punished. This is called the gap theory. Meaning, something happened between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. I can understand why people would hold that view. However, the Hebrew language doesn't have strong enough connections like that in verses 1-2. If Moses wanted us to see this as a timeline, then there would be a different Hebrew word to connect the two verses. He doesn't do that. Instead, verse 2 simply shows the beginning of the seen realm. And it seems it started as chaos. But how can that be? Can God create chaos? He's the God of order, not confusion, right?

But right here, we need to make something clear. The ideas of darkness, water, formlessness and void are symbols that communicate chaos. Nighttime is not inherently sinful. Water is not innately sinful. But they are symbols, communicating chaos and judgment. Later in Jeremiah's writing, there's lament over God's people's continuous sinning, and Jeremiah writes these words from God: **"For my people are foolish; they know me not; they are stupid children; they have no understanding. They are 'wise'—in doing evil! But how to do good they know not."** ²³ **I looked on the earth, and behold, it was without form and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light.** ⁵ What does it mean that the earth was without form and void? And that there was darkness. To boil it down, it means there's no life. It means there is chaos on the earth because wrong is viewed as right.

Now, let's go back to verse 2. The earth is without form and void. There's no life. Darkness covers. No life. Waters cover – chaos. Is there any god who could overpower all of this adversity? Think again what the Israelites might be thinking in the wilderness. God is leading them to the promised land, but they're experiencing judgment. Sometimes chaos as the earth swallows' people in judgment. Will God remain faithful to his promise to bring them home? Verse 2 shows that Elohim was sending a message from the very beginning of creation. He's a God who brings order from chaos.

⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 1:2.

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Je 4:22–23.

In case you doubt this, look at these words from Isaiah 45:18: **¹⁸For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): “I am the Lord, and there is no other. ⁶**

The word “empty” here in Isaiah is the word “formless.” Some say, “See! God didn’t create this formless void because God says he didn’t create it empty.” But go on in Isaiah. He formed it to be inhabited. The implication is that God formed what was formless with the purpose that it would be inhabited with life.

God purposefully started with pictures of chaos to show all of creation that he brings order from chaos. Ok, why does all of this matter? Look and savor the glory here! Do you see God’s mercy and grace already shining to people in these first two verses? Before Adam and Eve sin, God is saying that mercy comes out of judgment. Order will come even though there’s chaos. Elohim is that powerful. The self-sufficient, majestic, plural God cares to reveal his glory through bringing life and order! No matter what chaos might come into this world, he is over it all. So, when Adam and Eve sin, we shouldn’t be surprised to hear God state promises of hope. When the world sins and is only evil continually, we shouldn’t be surprised that God has a plan of rescue. When we hear of the Tower of Babel and people trying to be like God, we shouldn’t be surprised that God has a plan to rescue.

The same is true for us today, too. The brokenness of our world, the chaos that we see in our country and countries around the world - our own circumstances where we feel chaos reigns – God brings order from chaos. To put another way, chaos won’t win! Jeremiah’s and Isaiah’s teachings continue with hope who created with the intent to form. And verse 2 concludes with this idea, too: **And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.**⁷ I believe the idea of this Hebrew word for hover is like the idea of a bird ruffling up its nest to be good for the life and effectiveness of its chicks. The Spirit of God has power over the chaotic waters – so powerful that instead of judgment coming from the water, there’s life to come!

Behold Elohim. Do you trust him? This leads to the final point:

3. . . .calling humans to trust God for eternal rescue.

Moses writes to the Israelites to trust God’s plan to save a people for himself and to eventually bring the seed of the woman who will rescue the heavens and earth that is fallen. In these two verses, we see Moses giving truths that should settle the Israelites in God’s power and goodness.

As we think about how Isaiah and Jeremiah use the ideas of formless and void, and how they’re calling people to turn to the Lord for forgiveness, I believe we can legitimately see these two verses as a call to trust God not only for rescue from our temporal, physical circumstances; but ultimately to look to him as your hope and satisfaction and trust. That Elohim himself would be your eternal rescue.

And I know that if you looked to him for forgiveness and grace, he’ll give it. In John 1, the apostle speaks of Jesus and specifies more of who Elohim is: **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.⁸**

⁶ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Is 45:18.

⁷ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 1:2.

⁸ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 1:1–5.

Elohim is plural. Somehow there's the Spirit of Elohim hovering. And then he speaks of himself as "us," and John 1 is referring to Jesus. Everything that was made was made through Jesus. This is creation. Only God creates, and we read that without Jesus, nothing was made, or created. And then John speaks of the darkness of this world, meaning the sinfulness of humanity. Everyone, since Adam and Eve, does not glory in God's glory supremely. That's darkness. But Jesus is light. He's come into the world as the light, and guess what? The darkness can't win. Chaos can't win! Light comes to overcome.

And how has Jesus overcome humanity's sinfulness and creation's brokenness? He, as the great representative for humans, lived the perfect life we could never live. He died the death we deserved to die. And he rose from the dead. He conquered sin by satisfying its punishment. He conquered death, and now gives life to anyone who trusts in him!

Is Elohim the ruler over all? Yes. Is Elohim all-powerful? Absolutely! Does Elohim care? Yes! Has Elohim always had a plan to bring order from chaos? Yes! Do your trials change any of this? No. So, take heart! The creation account is a revelation of God's majesty and power to bring order from chaos, calling humans to trust God for eternal rescue.