

Yes, God had a plan, a perfect plan. He didn't just create the world and then leave it to fend for itself. God's the perfect planner. Did you know that God planned for you to be in heaven before you were born, that already in eternity past he chose you to be his own, that he knows all the plans he has for you? In a verse that many of hold dear, he says, **"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (Jr 29:11).** We have a God who knew us before the creation of the world, who loved us all the way to his death on the cross, who claimed us as his own in the waters of Holy Baptism. Oh, yes, God is the perfect Planner.

If we subscribe to the theory of evolution, then our world is millions of years old, and life's principle is basically that the strong survive the weak. In other words, millions of years of weakness and death result in life. But God tells us that everything began good, very good. In fact, the Hebrew says, "It couldn't get any better." There was no death, no suffering, no sin. These things came from us, from Adam and Eve, when they succumbed to Satan's temptation in the Garden of Eden and rebelled against God. For Paul writes, **"Just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned" (Ro 5:12).**

In a Polish museum there's a sculpture of Mary holding Jesus. It was on a street corner for years, but no one really noticed it. The city decided to clean it up and restore it. But as they were restoring it, they discovered that it had been painted 27 times. Under 27 layers of paint they found a priceless masterpiece from the middle ages. The paint had totally obscured its beauty.

Don't we do the same thing? Don't we try to cover ourselves with the paint of our goodness and behavior and try to make ourselves look good before God, when at the beginning God created Adam and Eve as priceless works of art? How we need to recognize our sins and repent of our foolish attempts to make ourselves look good before God. We already are. In Jesus we already are! Not only did God create us, but he saved us from our sins by the priceless blood of Jesus. No matter what we've done or left undone, Jesus' blood removes the paint of sin's ugliness from us and restores us to what God created us to be in the beginning. As Paul puts it, **"If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God" (2 Cor 5:17, 18).** My friends, we are created—twice—in the beginning and in our baptism. To God be the glory! Amen.

Genesis 1 – Pentecost Potential – 193, 256, 195

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There are two questions that every one of us will ultimately ask, namely, "Where do I come from?" and "Where am I going?" The book of Revelation answers the second of these two questions—perhaps the one that's most on our minds at this time of pandemic and civil unrest—as God reveals to us what the future holds and how he will bring the world to an end. The first of these two questions God answers in the book of Genesis, especially in its introductory chapters. So, as we continue our *Pentecost Potential* series, and today celebrate the person and work of the triune God, let's look at our beginnings under the simple theme:

Created

- 1. God is the only Creator.**
- 2. God is the Lord over time.**
- 3. God is the perfect Planner.**

1. Unfortunately, some view the opening chapters of Genesis as a myth or a legend. But if God's Word is truth (as it claims to be), do we have a right to separate these chapters from the rest of Scripture? Neither Jesus nor any of the forty inspired writers viewed the creation account as anything but factual. They viewed the Bible as a whole and, therefore, completely true. This, then, is our starting point. If this is something with which you struggle, I urge you to speak to any one of us pastors. We want you to know where you come from, why you are here, and where you are going.

Moses starts out, **"In the beginning God created."** Scientists tell us that the universe has always existed or that, at the very least, there was some kind of ancient energy before the Big Bang. But if we take Scripture seriously, there was a definite point of origin, a starting point before which no one and nothing existed but God. Through Isaiah God says, **"This is what the LORD says, your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: 'I am the LORD, the Maker of all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself'" (44:24).** Since God was before creation, he is the eternal Creator.

Satan's lie is that there was no eternal creator and that we are nothing more than the results of time and chance. My friends, this is just a theory, a hypothesis, something that has never been proven. Science has been unable to create even the most basic forms of life. The theory of evolution is and ever will remain just that—a theory.

The Bible says that before the existence of the universe, before the world, before time, before life—before anything—God created. The Hebrew word that the Holy Spirit gave Moses here is “bara,” which means “to form out of nothing.” Only God can form out of nothing. And what did God first form, first create? Time. For the very first time there was a beginning. And God created the heavens, the vast open space—the end of which we cannot see even with the most powerful telescope. And God created the earth, not just the ground on which we stand and walk, but the basic elements of the universe, from which he would then create everything else.

Time, space, physical elements. Do you see these for what they are? The basic building blocks of everything we know? Time, space, physical elements—these three things God created, and from them everything we know—all within six 24-hour days.

But there’s something else. In verse 20 Moses writes, **“God said, ‘Let the waters teem with living creatures.’”** Do you see it? God created life. No one can create life from nothing—not even Mary Shelley’s Dr. Frankenstein. Only God can do that. God is the only Creator. Only the eternal God can create out of nothing.

2. One of the most common arguments against the biblical account of creation is the contention that this simply couldn’t have happened in six 24-hour days. Humanly speaking, that’s true. From all we know about the sciences, it takes time for things to grow. Trees and plants, even people, don’t grow overnight.

But do you remember what Jesus once said? **“What is impossible with man is possible with God” (Lk 18:27).** We worship and serve the God who does the impossible—the almighty God who caused torrential rains to flood the earth for forty days and forty nights, the God who split open the waters of the Red Sea, the God who caused the sun to stop in its tracks for 24 hours. He’s the God who, in the person of Jesus, walked on water, healed the sick, and raised the dead; who died on the cross for our sins and rose again. He’s the Spirit-God who caused saving faith in Jesus to spring up and grow in our hearts. These are all things that are impossible, according to our human reasoning, but they’re not too hard for the triune God. With him nothing, absolutely nothing, is impossible.

Of this triune God Peter writes, **“With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day” (2 Pt 3:8).** What we figure would take a thousand or a million years to accomplish, God can (and does) do in one day. Why do we feel the need to limit God? What he tells us in his Word will never fail us—never. It’s the truth, the absolute truth. No fewer than six times in the first chapter of Genesis we’re told, **“God said...and it was so.”**

Something else that’s worth our attention are these words repeated throughout the chapter: **“And there was evening, and there was morning—[a] day.”** The Holy Spirit very carefully uses a Hebrew word here, the word, “yom,” which literally means “a period of time.” It can mean a longer period of time, like a month, a year, or even many years. But throughout the Bible, whenever there’s a number attached to the word, “yom,” it means a 24-hour period of time. There’s only one possibility for what the Holy Spirit is describing for us in Genesis: a six 24-hour-day creation. God is the Lord over time.

3. When we read Genesis 1, we see that God very carefully planned and prepared every step in his great creative work for the existence of life. First, God laid the foundation, and then he began to build the house. In verse 7 Moses writes, **“And God said, ‘Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water. So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it.’”** God made the atmosphere by separating the water above from the water below—the sky and the ocean—the first two rooms in the house. And, then, in verse 9 Moses tells us about the third room, when he writes, **“And God said, ‘Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry land appear.’”** The third room in God’s beautiful house of creation was dry land.

But no one builds a house for it to stand empty, do they? So, after forming the heavens and the earth, God began to fill them. On the fifth day he filled the ocean with fish and the sky with birds. On the sixth day he filled the dry land with animals, even causing the land itself to produce them. And then, finally, he reached the great climax of creation, Adam and Eve, whom he created in his own image, his own likeness (something that we’ll look at next week). **“And God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.’”**