

## Breaking Through the Darkness

On May 4, 1992, Time magazine reported that NASA's Cosmic Background Explorer satellite – COBE – had discovered landmark evidence that the universe did in fact begin with the primeval explosion that has become known as the Big Bang. "If you're religious, it's like looking at God," proclaimed the leader of the research team, George Smoot.<sup>1</sup>

**Genesis 1:2-5**, "2The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. 5God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were **the first day.**"

**Genesis 1:1** gives the principal statement with three circumstantial clauses following in v. 2, suggesting there is no gap between 1:1 and 1:2. The word *created* (Heb. *bara*) suggests God created **ex nihilo, "out of nothing."** It was not a refashioning of previous materials (cf. Rom. 4:17; Heb. 11:3). The days of creation are referred to as "it was evening and it was morning," suggesting twenty-four hour days. The statements "second day," "third day," also demand twenty-four hour days.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. The Starting Point

The construction of the Hebrew phrase that opens verse 2 is significant. The subject comes before the verb, as if to emphasize something remarkable about it. It might be translated, "As to the earth, it was formless and void." Here is a new planet, the very focus of God's creative purpose, and it was formless and void. **The Hebrew expression is *tohu wa bohu*. *Tohu* signifies a wasteland, a desolate place. *Bohu* means "empty."** The earth was an empty place of utter desolation.<sup>3</sup>

It is not a state of desolation into which the earth *fell*; it is how the universe appeared *in situ*, before God finished His creative work. **The picture it conjures up is reminiscent of a potter wishing to fashion a beautiful vessel and then fill it to be used. He first takes a lump of unformed clay and places it on the wheel to mold and fit it to his purpose.** In a similar way, God began with raw material. He first created a basic mass of elements that contained everything necessary to make a habitat for the life He would later create. And then using that mass of elements, He carefully shaped it and formed it into the perfect finished work He had planned from the beginning.<sup>4</sup>

The word *deep* in Scripture is an expression used for the sea (cf. Isaiah 51:10).

<sup>1</sup> As quoted in Kay Warren and Tom Holliday, *Foundations Curriculum* (Saddleback Church).

<sup>2</sup> Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1989), 39–40.

<sup>3</sup> John MacArthur, *The Battle for the Beginning: The Bible on Creation and the Fall of Adam* (Nashville, TN: W Pub. Group, 2001), 74.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

Psalm 104:5–6: “You who laid the foundations of the earth, so that it should not be moved forever, You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.”

## **2. The Sovereign Presence**

The presence of the Holy Spirit at creation points to an attentive, active God, Who is involved in His creation.

The Holy Spirit is essential for all life and creation.<sup>5</sup>

- “By His Spirit He adorned the heavens” (Job 26:13).
- “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (Job 33:4).
- “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth” (Psalm 33:6).
- “You send forth Your Spirit, they are created” (Psalm 104:30).
- “For in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).
- “In [His] hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind” (Job 12:10).

## **3. The Spoken Power**

- Light displays God’s glory!
- God is called “the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (James 1:17).
- Because God is Himself light, “in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5).
- God “dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see” (1 Timothy 6:16).

John MacArthur writes, “What is light? Even the best physicists struggle to explain it. It has characteristics of both particles and waves. Light photons behave like particles, like tiny specks of dust, except that they have no volume. The energy of a photon is concentrated in a finite space, existing at any given moment in a specific location, yet moving at a definable, measurable velocity. And that is why we speak of the ‘speed’ of light. Yet light also exhibits the characteristics of a wave, which is not a finite entity. A wave, unlike a particle, exists in no finite space; it has a variable frequency; and it may be illustrated mathematically as a sine curve that has no beginning or end. Wave motion, unlike particle motion, involves the transfer of energy from point to point without the transfer of matter. A light wave is essentially a deformation of electric and magnetic fields. To complicate matters further, light waves can behave like particles, and the particle-like photons can behave like waves.”<sup>6</sup>

## **4. The Spinning Planet**

“Day” Indeed, the word *day* is sometimes used figuratively in Scripture to speak of an indeterminate period of time (“the day of your gladness”—Numbers 10:10). But throughout Scripture, wherever the word is modified by a number (“He rose again the third day”—1 Corinthians 15:4), the clear reference is to a normal solar day.<sup>7</sup>

Whenever the numeral appears with the Hebrew word *yom* (day) it demands a twenty-four hour day.<sup>8</sup> Exodus 20:9–11 emphasizes a twenty-four hour creation by analogy to the command for man to labor in six days and rest on the seventh day even as God did.<sup>9</sup>

## **5. The Spiritual Parallel**

See Ephesians 4:18, John 16:8 and 1 Peter 1:23

**2 Corinthians 4:6 – “For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”**

<sup>5</sup> List of verses taken from MacArthur, 79.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 80–81.

<sup>7</sup> MacArthur, 70.

<sup>8</sup> See also Weston W. Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled* (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1976).

<sup>9</sup> Enns, 304.