

The First Truth Claim in the Bible

By Jim Myers

*When **Elohim** began creating the heaven and the earth.
The earth was unformed and without substance,
darkness was over the surface of the Deep,
and the breath of Elohim hovered over the surface of the waters.
(Genesis 1:1-2)*

The words above are an English translation of first two verses in an ancient scroll called “**The Torah**,” which is written in the **Hebrew language**. The scroll contains the books of *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy*. These are the first five books in *Christian Scriptures (the Bible)* and *Jewish Scriptures (the Tanakh)*. Dr. Ike Tennison, Rabbi Jeffrey Leynor and I concluded that the first ten chapters in Genesis were originally a separate scroll – *a wisdom scroll of the Temple in Jerusalem which Cyrus the Great King of Persia decreed would be built*. It replaced the First Temple in Jerusalem that was destroyed by Babylonian armies in 586 BCE. We called the wisdom scroll, “**The Torah’s Wisdom of the Beginnings.**”

Before I discuss the verses above, I want to make sure you understand the following information about the first story in Genesis:

- It is not a story about how to create a physical universe.
- It is not a theological story.
- It is not a fictional story.
- Its words were not viewed as inerrant or infallible.
- It was viewed as the ancient **Wisdom Scroll of the Temple in Jerusalem.**

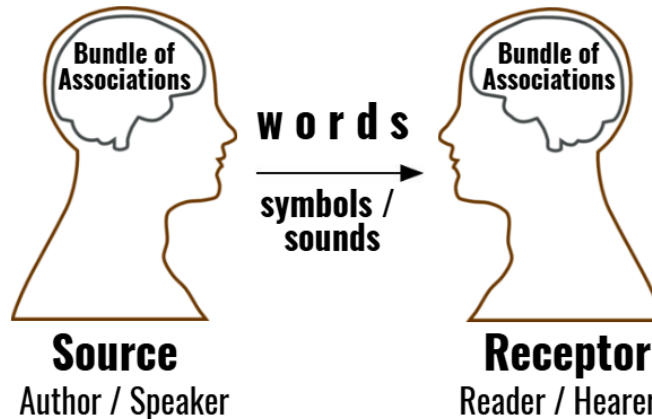
It was **written by scribes** around **470 BCE** and it was **read by scribes**. This Temple Scroll reveals the order in which things were created, their relationships with each other, and **how they must function** to **maintain order in the Creation**.

*You will memorize the **relationships** and **functions** of **everything in this story**
by ritually reading the verses for each day just before sunset.*

BHC Discussion Guide

Now let's Explore Genesis 1:1-2 and discover the first truth claim in the Bible. I created **Guidelines**, **Linguistic Models**, and **Belief Models** so everyone will be able to work with the ancient languages the translators of Bibles written in English translated. I will explain them as we Explore the Bible. Below is the first model.

BHC Basic Communication Model



1. A **Source** communicates **words** to a **Receptor**.
2. A **word** is a **symbol** or group of symbols with an **attached bundle of associations** which are a product of the **Source's culture, time period, geographical location,** and **personal experiences**.

Symbols + Bundle of Associations

Alphabets & Punctuation Marks **Meanings Created From Belief Models**

Below are the first three Hebrew words in the Bible:

3 2 1
בְּרָא שֵׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים
← Read Right to Left

I will translate them below from Left to Right (using the above order of the words).

(1) *when he began* ~ (2) *he created* ~ (3) *Elohim*

BHC Discussion Guide

Rules of the English language requires a change in the word order:

“When Elohim began creating”

The first “Truth Claim” is linked to the word “Elohim” which is a transliteration of the third Hebrew word. The graphic below shows how to transliterate a Hebrew word.

- At the top of the graphic is the Hebrew word.
- The second line reminds us that Hebrew words are read in the opposite direction of English words.
- Match the numbers by the Hebrew symbols with the numbers below English symbols at the bottom of the graphic.



* Letters 6 & 7 combine and are transliterated as "i."

A transliteration simply changes the Hebrew symbols into English symbols, but nothing is done with the “Hebrew bundle of associations.” English translators usually translate Elohim as “God.” The immediate problem is that in America Jews, Christians, Muslims and other religions also use the word “God” for the deities of their religions. It is very important for Jews and Christians to transliterate the Hebrew words that are found in the stories of the Hebrew Bible. Jesus also spoke and taught in Hebrew, but we have to reconstruct his Hebrew words from Greek manuscripts. BHC does that for you.

BHC Discussion Guide

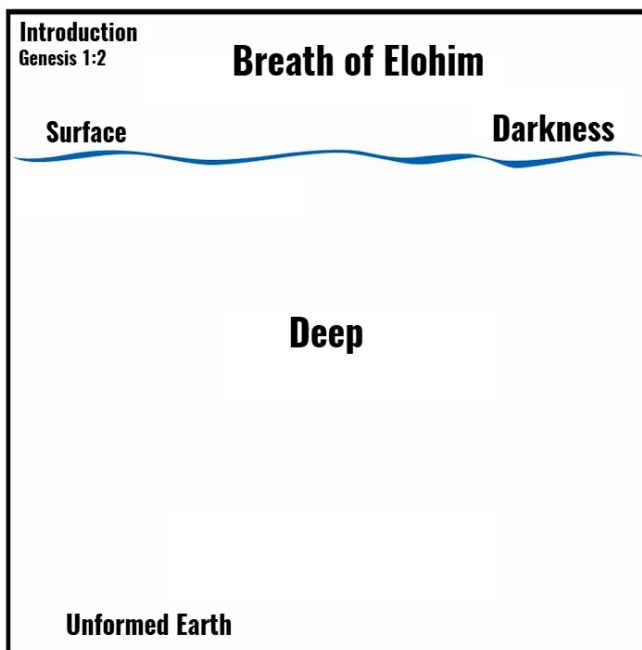
Exploring Genesis 1:1-5

¹ When **Elohim** began creating the heaven and the earth.

² The earth was unformed and without substance,
darkness was over the surface of the Deep,
and the breath of Elohim hovered over the surface of the waters.

The first verse is the title of the first story in “**The Torah’s Wisdom of the Beginnings.**” Nothing is created in the first verse. The second verse describes what existed before anything is created.

- The Earth was unformed, without substance, and not functioning.
- Darkness was over the surface of the Deep and not functioning.
- The Deep is over the unformed Earth and under the Darkness and was not functioning.
- The breath of Elohim is hovering over the surface of the Deep in the Darkness. Elohim has breath and is hovering. Elohim is functioning.
- The Skies do not exist.



Please note that Elohim is not touching the surface of the Deep. He is completely independent of the materials below Him.

- *Elohim is completely separate from them.*
- *However, three things existed with Elohim before He did anything.*
- *We have no information about Elohim, the unformed Earth, the Deep, or the Darkness before this moment.*

BHC Discussion Guide

³ *Elohim said, “Let Light exist!” Light existed.*

We now know that “**Elohim speaks**” and “**by the breath of Elohim His words were released into the Darkness**” and instantly “**the Light existed!**”

^{4a} *Elohim saw the Light is Tov.*

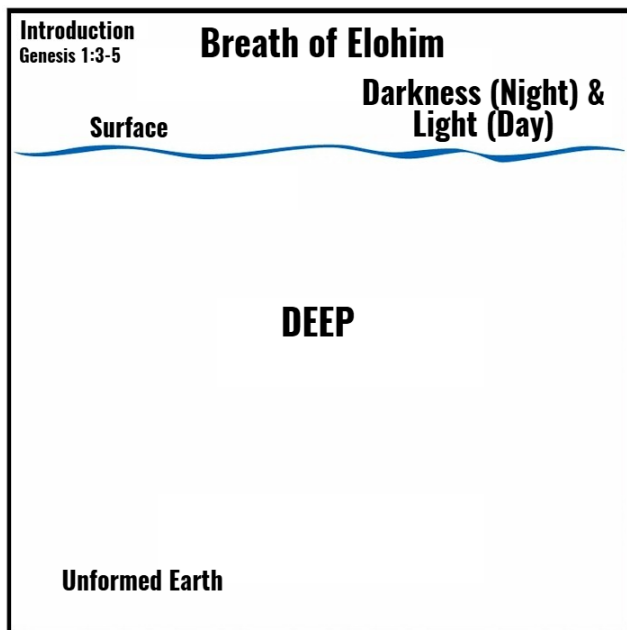
The construction of this verse in Hebrew is very important and unusual. I will be able to show you what this means in a future verse. For now, I want you know that the Hebrew word “**Tov**” is usually translated “**good**.” I will also explain this in a future verse. It is important for Explorers to understand that “**the breath of Elohim is the sole source of the Light**.” *In the ancient world, sources of light were heavenly bodies, lightning, or fires.*

^{4b} *Elohim distinguished between the Light and between the Darkness;*

^{5a} *He named the Light Day, and the Darkness He named “Night.”*

The presence of the Light reveals one of the Light’s functions: It makes it possible for distinctions to be made. Another function of the Light is to co-exist with the Darkness in the area above the surface of the Deep waters. The names “**Day**” and “**Night**” **reveal they will co-exist in perpetual cycles.**

^{5b} *It was evening and it was morning, Day One.*



- Each Day begins in the evening as the **sun sets and Darkness follows**.
- **Dawn** signals the return of the Light.
- Each cycle is numbered according to the appearance of the light. **Day One** means “**Light One**” in a cycle. **Day Two** means “**Light Two**” in a cycle. **Day Seven**, is “**Light Seven**” and the end of the cycle.

This marks the creation of time.

End of Day One

The First Truth Claim in the Bible

- *Elohim is the only functioning thing in the first two verses.*
- *Elohim was only identifiable by the presence of His breath.*
- *Elohim's breath produced the words that created the Light.*
- *Every appearance of Day is Tov in Elohim's eyes.*
- *No longer is Darkness feared, because it's new name "Night" indicates "morning" will always appear again.*

There is only One Elohim and Elohim is not part of the Creation.

If something is part of the Creation – the ground, the Seas, the air, grasses, plants, trees, heavenly bodies (sun, moon, and stars), water creatures, winged flying creatures, earth creatures (animals, or humans) – **it is NOT Elohim!**

Now it's time to begin a discussion!

- Find someone to explore Genesis 1:1-5 with.
- Agree to follow the BHC Primary Guideline Below:

*Our Belief Systems will be large enough to include all facts,
open enough to be examined and questioned,
and flexible enough to change if errors or new facts are found.*

- Begin reading this guide, comparing it to your Bibles & start talking!

Shalom!