

Genesis a Different Approach

Genesis 1:1

Former Pastor Dr. Joel Minto *

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Last time I wrote: “Genesis 1:1 “When God began to create” A thought to ponder since that translation is direct from the Hebrew. What does that simple statement mean to you. Does it change how you view creation? What thoughts does it conjure in your mind? So did you give it any thought? We normally see in English” In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” So how is your thinking changed if we compare the two translations?

As English readers of the scriptures we are at a distinct disadvantage when we read the text. In Hebrew there are no vowels only consonants there is no punctuation. In order for the author to make sure the reader knows what they are talking about the author must change the order of the words to provide emphasis or punctuation. This was normal for these writers and even Paul in the New Testament uses the same technique in Greek to place the most important word or concept he is discussing at the very front of the text, no matter what would grammatically be acceptable in English. Skip Moen in one of his lectures to Doctoral students discusses the two Hebrew words “arum and aram”. They are first found in the very last verse of Chapter 2 and the first verse of chapter three in Genesis. However since there was no such thing as chapters and verses these two words appear very close to each other and have the same consonant structure. What the Hebrew reader would see is a connection for these two words but we would miss entirely since we read arum as shame and aram as cunning. But there is a connection between the two the Hebrew reader would get but the English reader doesn't get. We will get into that more when we get there but for now think about how shame and cunning might be related in the telling of this story.

Here is Genesis 1:1 in Hebrew: Bereshith bara Elohim et Hashamayim v'et ha'arets

While I said we would be doing the first verse of the Tanuk, God's scripture to a particular people we will not get any farther than the first word, Bereshith.

The purpose of the narrative

According to Nahum Sarna in his book Understanding Genesis: “Whether the Hebrew Genesis account was meant to be science or not, it was certainly meant to convey statements of faith. As will be shown, it is part of the biblical polemic against paganism and an introduction to the religious ideas characteristic of the whole of biblical literature. It tells us something about the nature of the one God who is the Creator and supreme sovereign of the world and whose will is absolute. It asserts that God is outside the realm of nature, which is wholly subservient to Him. he has no myth; that is, there are no stories about any events in His life. Magic plays no part in the worship of Him. The story also tells us something of the nature of man, a God-like creature, uniquely endowed with dignity, honor and infinite worth, into whose hands God has entrusted mastery over His creation. Finally, this narrative tells us something about the biblical concept of reality. It proclaims the essential goodness of life and assumes a universal moral order governing human society.”

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
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
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
The ancient Rabbi's actually had a hard time with this since the first letter of the first word is the second letter of the Hebrew language. They were puzzled because they would expect the first letter of the first word would be aleph or the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet.




ר – this is the letter '**resh**' - which in the ancient script is pictured as -  - which is the head of a man and carries the meaning of '**top, beginning, first**' as in being the top of the body or the head of a tribe and the one who rules; and also speaks of possession or inheritance that is decided by the chief.

- א – this is first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and is called '**aleph**' and in the ancient script is pictured as -  - which is '**the head of an ox**' and represents '**strength**', meaning 'muscle' as the ox is the strongest of the livestock animals. This also carries the meaning of '**yoke**' as an ox is placed in a yoke in order to plough or pull a heavy load in the right direction.

- ש – this is the letter '**shin**' which in the ancient script is pictured as -  - which is the picture of '**two front teeth**' and carries the meaning of '**sharp or press**' which is what the teeth do and also speaks of the sharpened word that comes forth from the mouth as the teeth '**chew**' or '**meditate on the Truth**', making what comes forth pure and sharp!

- י – this is the letter '**yad or yod**' which in the ancient script is pictured as -  - which is the picture of '**an arm and hand**' and carries the meaning of '**work, make, throw**' from the primary functions of the arm and hand and also represents worship or giving thanks in the extending of hands as a gesture of this.

- ת – this is the letter '**taw or tav**' which in the ancient script is pictured as -  - which is the picture of '**two crossed sticks**', and can represent for us '**seal, covenant, mark or sign**'; as this once again points to the complete work of Messiah in the renewal of the Covenant in His Blood that brings the two Houses of Yisra'el and Yehudah together in Him, as One, for He is not only the '**aleph**', but is also the '**taw**' – the beginning and the end of all creation!

Each letter here, in itself, pictures for us, and points to Jesus; and we can certainly understand how He was in the beginning and He has worked out His perfect salvation plan for His creation, right from the beginning!

Thus, "In the beginning...", God reveals that the SON (the Hebrew letters BET and RESH form the Hebrew/Aramaic word "bar", or Son) of GOD will be DESTROYED with his HANDS on a CROSS. What a wonderful beginning of the book of Genesis, in it God reveals even before the fall the redemptive plan He already has in mind. Next time we will examine a little farther this very first word.