

Biblical Truth Trumps ALL Competing Ideas; Illustration: Ex-Nihilo Creation; Creation Verbs: Bara': Gen 1:1, Isa 45:18; 42:5; Psm 148:1-5, & Ktizo: Col 1:16-17

18. The Bible is the ultimate source of absolute principles regarding the plan of God, such as "God created the heavens and the earth." If the first thing the Holy Spirit reveals in the Bible is not true, then we can't trust anything else He discloses from that point forward.
19. From this we may conclude that what is false is what does not correspond to reality. But what comes first: Truth or reality? Truth! Truth is the source of that which is real.
20. What does **Genesis 1:1** communicate as a reality? That God created the heavens and the earth. The verb "created" is the Qal perfect of בָּרָא **bara**.
21. Several principles that define the truth contained in this verse are found in this one word:
 - Its use: God is always the subject of this verb.
 - Its application: The word is only used for the creative work of God and dissociates it from all analogy with human effort.
 - Its grammar: the Qal perfect expresses a completed action or state of being.
 - Its meaning: to create something from nothing. Latin: *ex nihilo*: out from nothing; Greek κτίζω, *ktizō*: to create from nothing.
 - Its underlying concept: God did not utilize any pre-existing resources external to Himself, e.g., matter and energy, to execute the creation of the universe including the earth.
 - The universe that was created was perfect:

Isaiah 45:18 - Thus says the Lord, who created [בָּרָא **bara**: to create from nothing] the heavens—God Himself Who formed [יָצַר **yatsar**: restoration by molding with water, Genesis 1:2-10] the earth and made it [עָשָׂה **asah**: restoration: to form by means of a pattern]. He established it and did not create it [**bara**] a waste place [תְּהוֹ **tohu**: "without form" Genesis 1:2], but formed it [יָצַר **yatsar**: restoration by molding with water] it to be inhabited—, "I am the Lord, and there is none else."

Isaiah 42:5a - Thus says the Lord, Who created [בָּרָא **bara**: to create from nothing] the heavens and stretched them out [נָטָה **natah**: figurative; the universe is spread out as a tent for the earth] ...

- The creation of the heavens and earth, i.e., the universe, occurred as the result of a command by Jesus Christ:

Psalms 148:1 - Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the heights!

v. 2 - Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him, all His armies!

v. 3 - Praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all stars of light!

v. 4 - Praise Him, highest heavens, and the waters that are above the heavens!

v. 5- Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded [the Piel of הִצַּו *sawah*: intensive for the verbalization of the order for matter, energy, space, and time to commence in a completed state] and they [those areas of the creation mentioned in verses 1-4] were created [the Niphal of בָּרָא *bara*: passive; these areas received the action of being created from nothing].

- Verse 5 is one of several passages informing us that the creative act of the Lord was initiated by His Word.
- The *ex-nihilo* creation is said to be “In the beginning.” This refers to the first moment of time following the Lord’s mandate that the universe come into existence.
- If the universe did not exist prior to the divine commandment, then God preexisted the universe. In fact, God has always existed. He chose to create the universe “In the beginning” by oral mandate.
- This excludes emanationism, a philosophical and theological theory that emerged in the first and second centuries.
- Emanationism contends that creation is an outflow from an infinite substance and is assumed to preclude creation out of nothing.
- A definition of emanationism is found on a Catholic Web site: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05397b.htm>:

Emanationism. The doctrine of creation teaches that all things are distinct from God, but that God is their efficient cause. God does not produce things from His own substance nor from any pre-existing reality, but, by an act of His will, brings them out of nothing. According to emanationism, on the contrary, the Divine substance is the reality from which all things are derived, not by any voluntary determination, but by a necessity of nature. And God does not produce all things immediately; the lower are more distant, and are separated from Him by necessary intermediaries.

Evolution implies the change of one thing into something else. The process of evolution is generally considered as an ascent, a movement upwards towards a greater perfection. Emanation is a descent; it begins with the infinitely perfect, and at every step the emanating beings are less pure, less perfect, less divine. The Infinite is postulated as a starting-point, instead of being the goal which the universe is ever striving to realize.

- Hints of this doctrine occur in the first two centuries AD in the writings of Philo, and of Basilides \bas-a-li'-dēz\ and Valentinus \val-an-ti'-nas\, both founders of Gnostic schools.
- The Koine Greek word that is used to translate *bara* in the Septuagint and which is used for creation passages of the New Testament is *ktizō*. The agent of creation is identified by Paul as Jesus Christ in:

Colossians 1:16- For by Him [ἐν, *en* plus the instrumental of means of αὐτός, *autos*: by means of Jesus Christ] were all things created [constative aorist passive indicative of κτίζω, *ktizō*] in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers—all things were created [intensive perfect passive indicative of κτίζω, *ktizō*] through Him [διά, *dia* indicating agency] and for Him [εἰς, *eis* indicating purpose].

Colossians 1:17 - And He [Jesus Christ] has existed eternally before all things [the angelic race and the universe], and by Him [ἐν, *en* plus the instrumental of means of *αὐτός*, *autos*: by means of Jesus Christ] all things hold together [intensive perfect active indicative of συνίστημι, *sunistēmi*: literally: to stand together with; to join parts together to into a whole].