

Bara: A Word of Faith

June 4, 2023

Trinity Sunday

Pastor Matthew Ude

INI – SDG

Genesis 1:1-4 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was*¹ on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ³ Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴ And God saw the light, that *it was good*;

Barashim bara elohym: In the beginning God created.

With these words God introduces Himself to us. When we meet someone new, often, the first two things we want to know are their name and occupation. With these words God gives us His name and what He does. This is who our God is. He is the God who created all things out of nothing.

The word bara (create) is used sparingly in the bible. It is not used idly. The bible does not talk about a child creating a sandcastle, nor even a master painter creating his magnum opus. When the bible uses the word bara (create) it means it. It means to create out of nothing.

This word is used almost exclusively of God. In its piel form it can also mean "to cut down." That form is used of men five times. In its original form meaning to create it is only used of God.

God is the one and only creator. Man can take what God has made and they can refashion it into something new, but we can not create out of nothing like God does.

Isaiah 40:28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth,

This is who our God is first and foremost. He is the creator, and specifically our creator.

This how God is introduced to us from the very first sentence of scripture. **“In the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth.”**

This is how the Apostle John in his gospel introduces Jesus. **“In the beginning was the Word . . . All things were made through Him.”** The other gospels do not begin with creation only because they assume their readers are already familiar with Genesis 1:1.

This is how Paul introduces God to the people of Athens:

Acts 17:24 God, who made the world and everything in it,

The God whom we worship. The God to whom we pray. The one who gave us His law and His promises. This one is the creator of all things. This is the underlying foundation of scripture. Yet there are many who not only say that it is not true but that that it doesn't matter whether it is true or not. Yet, nothing could be further from the truth. Why should we worship Him if He did not create us? Why should we pray to Him if all things do not come from Him? Why should we listen to His laws if He is not our maker?

If God is not our creator than we owe Him nothing. If we owe Him nothing than God is only a bully who uses His power to subjugate men. If He is not the creator than he is only another being with great power but is not in fact either our father or our God.

But because He is our creator, we owe him everything. Because all good things come from Him therefore, we pray to Him. Because He is our maker, His laws are for our good. Because He is the creator, He is our Father. As Paul also reminds us:

Acts 17:28 in Him we live and move and have our being.

He is our Creator.

Not only did He create us in the beginning, but He also recreated after we fell into sin.

Bara (create) is only used of God, but it is used of God in two different contexts. The first is when God created all things out of nothing. An example of the second creation we find in Psalm 51:10.

Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me

Consistently the word bara (create) is used only in these two contexts. God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing. God created faith in your heart where there was nothing in you but the blackness of sin.

Tohu vabohu (without form and empty) that is what existed before God spoke in the beginning. The same is what existed in you before God called you to faith.

Deuteronomy 32:9-12 ⁹ For the LORD'S portion *is* His people; Jacob *is* the place of His inheritance. ¹⁰ "He found him in a desert land And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. ¹¹ As an eagle stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, Spreading out its wings, taking them up, Carrying them on its wings, ¹² So the LORD alone led him, And *there was no foreign god with him.*

The same word for emptiness that is used in Genesis is used here, tohu, emptiness. Certainly, this verse is speaking of the fact that God led the people in the wilderness, but it is saying more than that. It is going deeper. God proclaims that His people were nothing but empty darkness when He found them. He created them and made them His people. He created them out of nothingness.

Isaiah 43:1 But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

It is God who created you out of nothing, just as he created the world out of nothing. At times we think that we are something. But then we mess up, we fail, we fall, and we realize we are nothing.

Then we pray "create in me a clean heart o God."

That is to say, "I am as empty and dark in my heart as the emptiness before creation. You O God speak and create something in my emptiness."

Without God in our hearts there is only hatred, resentment, anger, bitterness, jealousy. These things are tohu vabohu, emptiness and formlessness. It is a sad thing to live in the emptiness of anger. We pray that God would speak and in our emptiness create His light, love and forgiveness.

“create in me a clean heart o God.”

He created out of nothing His church. He has made us His people. By His blood He has redeemed us from the darkness.

Through His power He calls us to faith, from the very first word of scripture.

God does not start small. He doesn't say to us ok baby steps on to the bus. He doesn't start with something we can understand and lead us to greater understanding. That is a solid method of teaching and leading kids. But that is not what God is doing here. He is not calling us to understanding but to faith.

He begins with a statement that is incomprehensible. “God created the heavens and the earth.” We can accept this statement by faith or we can reject it in unbelief, but we cannot grasp it by our intellect.

Sure we can understand the basic words, but the power, the wisdom, the eternity, God himself and how it is possible that He created all things in six days, those are not things our minds are capable of.

He is not a God who gives us a ladder we can climb by understanding to come to Him but rather he is a God that we grasp by faith. He calls us not to understand but to trust.

It is one of the greatest privileges in life to explore this world that He created with the minds that He created. He expects and encourages us to use our intellect to understand His creation. But he himself is beyond our comprehension.

The vastness of space is a small hint of his eternal nature, yet we can not even grasp the universe much less his eternity.

The intricacy of atoms and elements, of DNA and of life are a reflection of His wisdom and care, yet we have barely scratched the surface of his designs in nature or the working of the human mind. The working of His mind, His plans, His goals is far beyond us.

The God who created heaven and earth is not a God who can be contained within our minds, nor does he ask for our understanding but only for our faith.

“In the beginning God created,” he says to us and ask us to believe, to trust what He says to us.

If we will not believe Him here at the very first words of scriptures, why should we believe him later? If we won't believe him here, why should we believe him when the tornado (real or metaphysical) is tearing through our house and He says, “I am with you?” If we don't believe him here, why should we believe Him later when we commit some great sin and He says to us, “Be of good cheer yours sins are forgiven?”

God does not give us things we can understand, He gives us promises that we can believe.

There is a place and time to seek understanding, but not before God and not here. We come before God by faith in His promises and in His word.

Hebrews 11:3 ³ By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

By faith we able to hold on to God's promises, and by them we are able to accept what we can not understand. God created all things in six days. God is triune, three persons but only one God. But most especially, God loved us so much that He sent His only Son to die for us.

That kind of love is something that we cannot understand or imitate anymore than we are able to create or even understand a universe as vast as what God created. It is a love we know that God has shown to us.

As scientist explore the utter and inner reaches of God's creation, this vastness only reminds us of the vastness of His love. Amen