

Context and Consequence

Thought experiment: Consider what it means to change.

- List out all of the necessary ingredients if you will for something to change.
- How does something, anything, go about the process of changing?
- Can anything which does not exist change?

What you've just done is create the context of change. Now let's go one step further.

- What does it mean that something has changed?
- This is a bit more difficult.
- We are, in essence, asking what consequences come about because of change?
- Can anything which did not begin change?¹

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

<u>Context</u>	<u>Consequence</u>
<p>In the beginning, <i>Bereshith</i>, is neither "from eternity," as in John 1:1; nor "in wisdom" (Chaldee paraphrase), as if parallel with Proverbs 3:19 and Psalm 104:24; nor "by Christ," who, in Colossians 1:18, is denominated 'the starting point'; but "at the commencement of time." Without indicating when the beginning was, the expression intimates that the beginning was. The absolute beginning of all things.</p>	<p>Time, Psalm 90:2, a Psalm written by Moses with a special phrase not used elsewhere in scripture to convey eternity and God's ever present nature. St. Augustine first made clear this argument that God is the maker of all time.² C.S. Lewis illustrated it with the paper analogy³, and A.W. Tozer wrote "Time marks the beginning of created existence, and because God never began to exist it can have no application to Him. 'Began' is a time-word, and can have no personal meaning for the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity."⁴</p>

¹ Malachi 3:6 and Rom. 1:20 speaks of the immutable nature of God. A.W. Tozer wrote "One who can suffer any slightest degree of change is neither self-existent, self-sufficient, nor eternal, and so is not God." *The Knowledge of the Holy* The Immutability of God

² St. Augustine *Confessions* Book XI Chapter 13

³ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*.

⁴ A.W. Tozer *The Knowledge of the Holy* The Eternity of God.

God, Elohim, Throughout the first account of creation (Genesis 1:1 to Genesis 2:3) the Deity is simply called Elohim. This word is strictly a plural of Eloah, which is used as the name of God only in poetry, or in late books like those of Nehemiah and Daniel. It is there an Aramaism, God in Syriac being Aloho, in Ohaldee Ellah, and in Arabic Allahu--all of which are merely dialectic varieties of the Hebrew Eloah, and are used constantly in the singular number. In poetry EJoah is sometimes employed with great emphasis, as, for instance, in Psalm 18:31 : "Who is Eloah except Jehovah?" But while thus the sister dialects used the singular both in poetry and prose, the Hebrews used the plural Elohim as the ordinary name of God, the difference being that to the one God was simply power, strength (the root-meaning of Eloah); to the other He was the union of all powers, the Almighty. The plural thus intensified the idea of the majesty and greatness of God; but besides this, it was the germ of the doctrine of a plurality of persons in the Divine unity.

Triune Work, "*Perichoresis* - whatever God does, all members of the Godhead are participants because each member of the Trinity mutually indwells the other, though each may have a particular role. In creation, 'the Father originates, the Son effectuates, and the Spirit completes.'"⁵

This will become even more evident as we discuss verse 2 and 3 in the coming weeks; the Spirit hovering over the waters of the deep and God speaking (the eternal Logos of John 1:1 and Heb. 1:2)

⁵ Chad Owen Brand *A Theology for the Church* The work of God: Creation and Providence. Quote attributed to Kevin J. Vanhoozer *Remythologizing Theology*

<p>Created Acts 17:24; Hebrews 1:10; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11; Nehemiah 9:6; Job 9:8; Job 38:4; Psalm 89:11; Psalm 102:25; Psalm 115:15; Psalm 124:8; Psalm 136:5; Psalm 148:5; Isaiah 40:21; Isaiah 42:5; Isaiah 45:18; Jeremiah 10:12; Jeremiah 51:15</p> <p>Numerous other passages of scripture utilize the phrase “create” paired with “from the beginning”⁶</p>	<p>Ex Nihilo - Out of Nothing “By what means did you make heaven and earth? What tool did you use for this vast work? You did not work as a human craftsman does, making one thing out of something else as his mind directs. ... Nor did you have in your hand any matter from which you could make heaven and earth, for where could you have obtained matter which you had not yet created, in order to use it as material for making something else? It must therefore be that you spoke and they were made. In your word alone you created them.”⁷</p>
<p>The heavens and the earth, <i>Universe</i>, In Hebrew there is no word for Universe;⁸ therefore, this phrase is used to delineate everything or all substances in existence.</p>	<p>All Matter, An instantaneous act of creation by sheer will bringing all substance into being at one time.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. St. Augustine-God created in two stages; first, matter, second, fashioning matter into the world as we know it.⁹ 2. Martin Luther-1:1 original creation of formless matter, which God shaped over six literal days.¹⁰ 3. John Calvin-<i>creatio ex nihilo</i>, rejected creation in a single moment, affirmed six literal days of creation.¹¹

⁶ “These phrases show that creation involves the beginning of the existence of the world, so that there is no pre-existent matter.” Werner Foerster, κτίζω in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* as quoted in *Introducing Christian Doctrine* Millard Erickson

⁷ St. Augustine *Confessions* Book XI Chapter 5 cf. Psalm 33:9

⁸ Dr. Steve Boyd, Hebraist - There is no word in Hebrew for Universe therefore “heaven and earth” equates to He created everything. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3txmpHQJ520&t=29s>

⁹ St. Augustine *Confessions* Book XII Chapter 7-8

¹⁰ Martin Luther *Lectures on Genesis* Chapter 1-5

¹¹ John Calvin *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis* vol. 1