

# Genesis 1:2-5

---

What you thought you knew about Genesis

# Genesis 1:1-5

---

## The Creation

**1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. **2** And the earth was a **formless** and **desolate emptiness**, and **darkness** was over the surface of **the deep**, and the **Spirit** of God was **hovering** over the surface of the waters. **3** Then God said, “Let there be **light**”; and there was light. **4** God saw that the light was **good**; and God separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light “**day**,” and the darkness He called “**night**.” And there was **evening** and there was **morning**, one day.

# תְּהוֹ

**Original Word:** תְּהוֹ

**Part of Speech:** Noun Masculine

**Transliteration:** tohuw

**Pronunciation:** TOH-hoo

**Phonetic Spelling:** (to'-hoo)

**KJV:** confusion, empty place, without form, nothing, (thing of) nought, vain, vanity, waste, wilderness

**NASB:** waste, formless, futile, meaningless, nothing, waste place, chaos

**Word Origin:** [from an unused root meaning to lie waste]

1. a desolation (of surface), i.e. desert
2. (figuratively) a worthless thing
3. adverbially, in vain

# תהו

---

תהו evokes a scene of shapelessness, desolation, and futility. The word is often paired with “בהו (void)” or with verbs of wasting and overthrowing. It can describe physical barrenness, moral emptiness, political ruin, or spiritual vanity. In each context, תהו stands as the polar opposite of God’s ordered purpose.

# בְּהוּ

- 
- **Original Word:** בְּהוּ  
**Part of Speech:** Noun Masculine  
**Transliteration:** bohuw  
**Pronunciation:** BOH-hoo  
**Phonetic Spelling:** (bo'-hoo)  
**KJV:** emptiness, void  
**NASB:** void, emptiness  
**Word Origin:** [from an unused root (meaning to be empty)]
    1. a vacuity
    2. (superficially) an undistinguishable ruin

# בְּהוּ

---

בְּהוּ (bohu) describes an uninhabitable emptiness—an evacuated state devoid of structure, order, or life. When paired with תְּהוּ (tohu, “formlessness”), it conveys total desolation: first in the primordial creation scene, then in prophetic scenes of judgment. Unlike mere “nothingness,” bohu depicts a tangible ruin that still awaits—or has forfeited—the shaping hand of God.

# חֹשֶׁךְ

**Original Word:** חֹשֶׁךְ

**Part of Speech:** Noun Masculine

**Transliteration:** choshek

**Pronunciation:** kho-shek

**Phonetic Spelling:** (kho-shek')

**KJV:** dark(-ness), night, obscurity

**NASB:** darkness, dark, obscurity

**Word Origin:** [from [H2821](#) (חֹשֶׁךְ - darkened)]

1. the dark
2. hence (literally) darkness
3. (figuratively) misery, destruction, death, ignorance, sorrow, wickedness

# חֹשֶׁךְ

---

The noun ḥō·šek occurs about eighty times across the Hebrew Scriptures. Its semantic range covers tangible nightfall, thick obscurity, and figurative darkness that conveys calamity, wickedness, ignorance, or the hiddenness of God. The term is set in continuous tension with “light,” forming a primary biblical polarity that serves creation theology, covenant history, prophetic warning, and pastoral consolation.

# תְּהוֹם

**Original Word:** תְּהוֹם

**Part of Speech:** Noun

**Transliteration:** thowm

**Pronunciation:** teh-HOME

**Phonetic Spelling:** (teh-home')

**KJV:** deep (place), depth

**NASB:** deep, deeps, depths, ocean depths, springs

**Word Origin:** [(usually feminine) from [H1949](#) ( - תְּהוֹםnoisy)]

1. an abyss (as a surging mass of water), especially the deep (the main sea or the subterranean water-supply)

# תְּהוֹם

---

While lexicons render תְּהוֹם as “deep,” “abyss,” or “subterranean water,” the biblical usage is richer than a mere geographic term. “Tehom” consistently evokes the unfathomable, untamed, and inaccessible realms—whether primordial waters, subterranean springs, or metaphorical depths of distress. It is never personified as a rival deity; rather, it serves as a backdrop against which the LORD’s sovereign power is displayed.

# רוּחַ

**Original Word:** רוּחַ

**Part of Speech:** Noun Feminine

**Transliteration:** ruwach

**Pronunciation:** roo'-akh

**Phonetic Spelling:** (roo'-akh)

**KJV:** air, anger, blast, breath, X cool, courage, mind, X quarter, X side, spirit((-ual)), tempest, X vain, ((whirl-))wind(-y)

**NASB:** spirit, wind, breath, winds, side, mind

**Word Origin:** [from [H7306](#) (רוּחַ - Spirit)]

1. wind
2. by resemblance breath, i.e. a sensible (or even violent) exhalation
3. (figuratively) life, anger, unsubstantiality
4. by extension, a region of the sky
5. by resemblance spirit, but only of a rational being (including its expression and functions)

# רוּחַ

---

Genesis 1:2 introduces רוּחַ as the dynamic presence of God “hovering over the surface of the waters.” From the outset, the Spirit is portrayed not merely as force but as the personal agent who brings order out of chaos and initiates life. Job later testifies, “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life” (Job 33:4), reinforcing that every living being owes existence to this creative Spirit.

רָחַף

---

**Original Word:** רָחַף

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** rachaph

**Pronunciation:** rah-khaf'

**Phonetic Spelling:** (raw-khaf')

**KJV:** flutter, move, shake

**Word Origin:** [a primitive root]

1. to brood
2. (by implication) to be relaxed

# רָחַם

---

רָחַם appears three times in the Old Testament, each occurrence portraying divine activity that is both protective and powerful. Whether describing the Spirit at creation, the faithful care of the covenant God, or the overwhelming impact of prophetic revelation, the verb underscores God's nearness in decisive moments.

# אור

**Original Word:** אור

**Part of Speech:** Noun Feminine

**Transliteration:** owr

**Pronunciation:** ohr

**Phonetic Spelling:** (ore)

**KJV:** bright, clear, + day, light (-ning), morning, sun

**NASB:** light, lightning, lights, broad, dawn, daylight, early morning

**Word Origin:** [from [H215 \(-אורshine\)](#)]

1. illumination
2. (concretely) luminary (in every sense, including lightning, happiness, etc.)

# אור

---

The noun אור ('ôr) occurs about 122 times, ranging from the primeval command that launched creation to prophetic visions of the coming Kingdom. The contexts fall naturally into several spheres: (1) physical luminosity, (2) theophanic glory, (3) moral and spiritual enlightenment, (4) revelatory instruction, and (5) eschatological salvation. Though the Old Testament employs rich metaphor, its usage never divorces “light” from the personal source—God Himself.

# טוב

**Original Word:** טוב

**Part of Speech:** Adjective; verb; verb; feminine; noun masculine; noun feminine; noun feminine

**Transliteration:** towb

**Pronunciation:** tove

**Phonetic Spelling:** (tobe)

**KJV:** beautiful, best, better, bountiful, cheerful, at ease, X fair (word), (be in) favour, fine, glad, good (deed, -lier, -lieth, -ly, -ness, -s), graciously, joyful, kindly, kindness, liketh (best), loving, merry, X most, pleasant, + pleaseth, pleasure, precious, prosperity, ready, sweet, wealth, welfare, (be) well (-favoured)

**Word Origin:** [from [H2895](#) (- טובwell)]

1. good (as an adjective) in the widest sense
2. used likewise as a noun, both in the masculine and the feminine, the singular and the plural (good, a good or good thing, a good man or woman)
3. the good, goods or good things, good men or women), also as an adverb (well)

# טוב

---

From the opening verses of Genesis, “God saw that the light was good” ([Genesis 1:4](#)), טוב underlines the Creator’s own assessment of His handiwork. Across the six days the refrain “and God saw that it was good” ([Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31](#)) communicates the harmony, beauty, and suitability of all that God brought into being. This foundational portrait establishes that goodness is not a human construct but a divine attribute embedded in creation itself. In ministry, these verses encourage believers to affirm the worth of the material order and to cultivate stewardship rather than contempt for the world God called “very good” ([Genesis 1:31](#)).

# יום

**Original Word:** יום

**Part of Speech:** Noun Masculine

**Transliteration:** yowm

**Pronunciation:** yohm

**Phonetic Spelling:** (yome)

**KJV:** age, + always, + chronicals, continually(-ance), daily, ((birth-), each, to) day, (now a, two) days (agone), + elder, X end, + evening, + (for) ever(-lasting, -more), X full, life, as (so) long as (live), (even) now, + old, + outlived, + perpetually, presently, + remaineth, X required, season, X since, space, then, (process of) time, + as at other times, + in trouble, weather, (as) when, (a, the, within a) while (that), X whole (+ age), (full) year(-ly), + younger

**NASB:** day, days, today, time, daily, years, life

**Word Origin:** [from an unused root meaning to be hot]

1. a day (as the warm hours), whether literal (from sunrise to sunset, or from one sunset to the next), or figurative (a space of time defined by an associated term), (often used adverb)

# יום

---

Whether marking a single sunrise, an era, or the climactic intervention of the Almighty, יום serves as Scripture's primary temporal lens. Its approximately 2,303 occurrences tell one story: time itself is God's servant, structured for His glory and our good, moving inexorably toward the day when faith becomes sight.

לַיִל

---

**Original Word:** לַיִל

**Part of Speech:** Noun Masculine

**Transliteration:** layil

**Pronunciation:** lah'-yil or lay-leh'

**Phonetic Spelling:** (lah'-yil)

**KJV:** ((mid-))night (season)

**NASB:** night, nights, tonight, nocturnal

**Word Origin:** [from the same as [H3883](#) ( - לַיִל winding stairs)]

1. (properly) a twist (away of the light), i.e. night
2. (figuratively) adversity

לַיְלָה

---

“God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.” ([Genesis 1:5](#)). From the outset, night is neither accidental nor evil; it is a divinely named segment of the daily cycle. Scripture’s rhythm of “evening ... morning” teaches that God’s work often begins in darkness and moves toward light.

# עֶרֶב

**Original Word:** עֶרֶב

**Part of Speech:** Noun Masculine

**Transliteration:** `ereb

**Pronunciation:** EH-reb

**Phonetic Spelling:** (eh'-reb)

**KJV:** + day, even(-ing, tide), night

**NASB:** evening, twilight, evenings, night, every evening, sunset

**Word Origin:** [from [H6150](#) (עֶרֶב - close)]

1. dusk

# עֶרֶב

---

Genesis opens with the refrain “And there was evening, and there was morning” ([Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31](#)). By placing evening first, Scripture establishes the biblical day as beginning at sundown. This ordering becomes the framework for Sabbath observance ([Leviticus 23:32](#)) and every subsequent festival reckoning.

# בֹּקֶר

**Original Word:** בֹּקֶר

**Part of Speech:** Noun Masculine

**Transliteration:** boqer

**Pronunciation:** boh'-ker

**Phonetic Spelling:** (bo'-ker)

**KJV:** (+) day, early, morning, morrow

**NASB:** morning, every morning, mornings, dawn, day, daybreak, soon

**Word Origin:** [from [H1239](#) ( - בִּקֵּר - seek)]

1. (properly) dawn (as the break of day)
2. (generally) morning

# בִּקְרָא

---

בִּקְרָא consistently denotes the first appearance of light after night, a divinely fixed boundary separating darkness from day ([Genesis 1:5](#)). It therefore stands for new beginnings, hope, vigilance, and the certainty of God-ordained order. Scripture frequently pairs “evening and morning,” underscoring the daily rhythm of creation that testifies to the faithfulness of the Creator ([Psalm 55:17](#)).