
Part 2: Ten Steps to Understanding

“...those who diligently seek me will find me.” (Proverbs 8:17)

The first verse of the Bible tells us to bring into the open that which is hidden. It unlocks the basis of the moral order that is integral to the nature of creation and sets its heartbeat.

In no other account is there a being who completely transcends all of creation and who simply speaks things into existence. The universe is presented as the product of a single, creative will. To explore the first verse is to explore the nature and resolution of the consequent divide.

Part Two pursues this by investigating every aspect of the first four words that fits within the criteria of this enquiry. Each of twenty-six components yielded by these words is examined. We look at the verse as a whole, its constituent elements, alternative ways of reading it, and pattern of letters within it.

The reader is challenged by the text, with its dualities and dilemmas and its call for our engagement. There is a shadow in the beginning and hint of a resolution. Step by step, the pieces of the puzzle are assembled. Twin themes emerge to provide a coherent and recurring message. They point to a history and plan for creation.

Genesis 1:1 reveals a potential harmony between Creator and creation which hinges on the answer to a profound question.

Step One: The Act of Creation

The beginning of the beginning. The word for creation, the absolute distinction between Creator and creation, and its deep and terrible implications.

Immovable, locked in place, hiding in plain view: the opening words of Genesis cannot be overlooked. The reader of the Bible, the *Tanach*, will read at least these words and the scribes will not err in replicating them. These words have been carefully transmitted and studied over the millennia. They provide the foundation for all that follows.

Let us begin our journey at the proper place, at the beginning. Here, in stark terms, the Bible sets out the basics of who we are and who God is. There is a Creator and there is the creation that He created; simple, yet hard to grasp. As a modern Jewish writer states, "There is a tension between the benevolent clarity and power of the narrative and the acknowledgment of mystery that inheres in the very first word and that develops as the implications of the beginning are realized."¹²

In step one, we glimpse the outline of this mystery. Folded within the opening words is a statement about the foundation of creation. Step by step, a powerful and unexpected statement is unfolded, a vast

¹² Zornberg, Avivah G (1996) *The Beginning of Desire: Reflections on Genesis*, Doubleday, N.Y., p4

