



Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church  
*Pastor Terry's Thoughts of the Week*

## בְּרָא

Now THERE'S an interesting word! It is pronounced "Barah", rather gutturally! It is used in the Hebrew Bible for "created" – but only once! It is used in the sentence, "In the beginning God בְּרָא the world." At no other time is that word used. I find that rather fascinating. A special word for a special creation. The very beginning.

Today we hear about all kinds of ideas about the beginnings of the world. There is "creationism", "intelligent design", "the big bang", "evolution" and probably a few others that don't make the news. For me the only thing that makes sense is "in the beginning, God."

When I looked at the world in school, from grade school through college, I was fascinated with how complicated life was as well as how related one thing seemed to the other. I never had a problem with how it was all done – it was so complicated it was all beyond me anyway – but through it all I could see God's hand. I think he has given us a wonderful creation and the brains and skill to keep looking to see how he did it. But that probably won't happen.

For all the science we have, we can only "discover", that is, we can seek and look for more and more information, but we can only discover what God has already done. That בְּרָא was so special, human beings will be asking questions and seeking answers until the final days of this wonderful creation.

Can we create? To a certain extent, we can bring new things to light. We can build and expand knowledge, but we can never אָבַד, we can never create something out of nothing. That is work only God can do. We can call the process anything we want, we can try to put an age to the world, we can try to figure out how this or that piece of creation came to be what it is today, but we will still have to work with the stuff that is already here, that which God has created out of nothing.

So, then, what does this say about our faith? Can we disagree with those who have one view of the process of creation while we hold another? I think so. I think the basis of our agreement is “God did it.” From the earliest days of Hebrew penmanship, a special word was created so that somehow we would be impressed with the fact that only God can create something out of nothing.

Sometimes the arguments about creation get pretty hot and heavy. When I was shown this wonderful word as we began to study the Hebrew language, something became very clear: I will never be able to do what God has done, I will never be able to fully understand how God did it all, but I know that the ancient people who first came to know God realized the incredible depth of the wonder of the world they lived in. It was so wonderful and filled with life that only God could have done this wonderful thing and only he could create in a way far beyond human understanding. So, a special word for a special creativity. אָבַד.

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