

*In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. The God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day" (Genesis 1:1-5).*

These five verses mark the beginning of the book of *Genesis*. They recount the story of God's creation of the world. There is a lot of information contained in these five verses, but I want to focus on two themes in this essay. First, I want to draw your attention to the way each new day is recorded, because that has some bearing on how Jews and Christians record their significant events. Second, I want us to note that although *Genesis* is the first book of Hebrew Scripture, the Holy Trinity is already present. That is to say, the Trinity is present from the beginning of time, and before.

So, let's begin with time, and particularly the transition from one day to the next. I suspect most of us think of the day beginning when we open our eyes in the morning, although, if asked, we would agree that the new day begins at 12:01 (one minute after midnight). Midnight is considered the transition point because it is twelve hours from the midpoint of the daylight hours, and so the day is held to begin twelve hours from midpoint of the daylight hours. I guess that's clear enough. For our Jewish ancestors, however, the transition from one day to the next was not measured in that way. Rather, as *Genesis* tells us, the day began with evening—sunset. In fact, before God's creative activity, there was no light at all. So, everything begins in darkness, and it is light that is created. Thus, one day moves into another beginning with darkness and moving into light, and finally, with a new day moving back into darkness.

This manner of recording the transition from one day to the next accounts for the Jewish and Christian practice of commencing feasts and fasts on the evening before. For example, Christmas Eve, a feast with which we're all familiar, begins at sundown because that is the beginning of the new day. In other words, Christmas Eve—the Eve of the Feast of the Incarnation—commences when the sun sets, and not in the morning. Of course, that is not a unique feature of Christmas but simply the way in which one day passes into another.

In some ways, this arrangement makes perfect sense. After all, at sunset it is natural to think of the day being at an end and the night beginning. For the Jews, however, sunset marks the beginning because darkness is the natural state, and light is created by God.

I hope this reflection on time is clear enough. So on to the second point, the existence of the Trinity before the creation. For this to be clear we need to consider what is said about God and God's activity in the opening lines, particularly in Genesis 1:2-3. In verse 2, the author of Genesis says, "a wind from God swept over the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2). The word for "wind" here is *rauch*, which is also the Hebrew word for Spirit. Thus, a *wind* from God moving over the waters is God's Spirit—the Holy Spirit. And as the Spirit is moving over the waters, we are told that God speaks, i.e., "Then God said, "Let there be light". In fact, for every creative act on the six days, God creates by speaking. And of course, what is spoken are words, or the Word. And according to Christian theology, drawing on Hebrew Scripture and Greek philosophy, the Word spoken by God is the Logos (which means "word" by the way), the rational ordering principle of God's creation. "Logos" is the designation for the Second person of the Holy Trinity who became incarnate in the person of Jesus the Messiah; the Christ. And so, the Trinity is already present in *Genesis*, the first book of Hebrew Scripture.