

## St. John Chrysostom: Chrysostom Genesis Homily 2 CLEANED

St. John Chrysostom: Chrysostom Genesis Homily 2 HOMILY 2 On the beginning of creation: In the beginning God created heaven and earth. Looking at you today filled with great happiness. My joy is not just that of loving parents pleased by their children, but is deeper: see you assembling here in a spiritual gathering, eager to hear the sacred words, for physical nourishment for spiritual sustenance, and demonstrating in action the Lord's words: Human beings live on bread alone, but not on bread alone from the mouth of God. Let us be like farmers: when land has been cleared of weeds, they sow seed generously when our souls are free from distracting passions and intemperance when calm and tranquility reign we are ready to ascend to considering spiritual matters instead of carnal ones. Now, while fasting disciplines our desires and brings the soul, is the time to lay down spiritual teaching. If we do not use this peace for our edification, when will we do it when we are beset by gluttony and idleness? We would then be powerless to do anything good, and you, sweet thoughts, would not be able to receive instruction. Now, with fasting fostering soberness and equality among all, both rulers and subjects, rich and poor women there is no difference in how we eat; all enjoy simple food, luxury, taking greater delight in modest than great banquets. You see the power of fasting: it changes attitudes purifies minds. Therefore, I speak to you with energy, know that I sow seed in fertile ground, expecting a rich harvest. So, let us consider what Moses says: In the beginning God created heaven and earth. Why does Moses, born generations after these events, address this first? When God created humans, he spoke directly to them. He spoke to Adam, conversed with Noah, and accepted hospitality. Even when humans strayed, he did not abandon them but, when they were unworthy of direct communication sent them messages instead letters via Moses calling humanity back. The content of those In the beginning God created heaven and earth. Moses, inspired by God, wrote what no one else could know by human declaring, In the beginning God created heaven and earth. Do not ask how; simply believe. God brings all things from nothing according to his will. Human reasoning cannot fathom even human art show gold is formed from the earth, or how glass from sand. Do you understand the manner of creation? To say that everything came from pre-existing matter and from nothing is foolishness. Moses preempts such ideas: In the beginning God created heaven and earth. Do not inquire any further, but simply believe. Moses, in his wisdom, does not first speak of angels or invisible realities. He takes his audience from the visible knowledge of the Creator, for the Jews, surrounded by visible creation, still failed to worship the true God, instead creating idols of creatures. Moses

therefore starts with heaven and earth to direct to the Maker rather than things made. Likewise, Paul, when speaking in Athens, adapts his message, saying: God, the world and everything in it, Lord and maker of heaven and earth, he does not dwell in man-made temples, nor can he be served by their presentation to suit their hearers' capacities. Paul and John, in later generations, spoke clearly about unseen realities: In him were created all things, those in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, all were created by him and for him (Colossians). John adds, Every thing through him, and without him not a single thing was made. But for the people of Moses' time, it was enough to learn basics. Moses' approach, guided by the Spirit, provided what his audience could bear and simultaneously opposed those of Mani or Marcion, who said that matter pre-existed. To anyone making such claims, simply answer: God created heaven and earth. If they do not accept Scripture, let them be; what more can you say who will not list God? The divine nature is seen in the order of creation: God stretches out the heavens before laying the foundation of the earth, doing what humans cannot. Do not apply your standards of logic to God's works; let the works themselves point to the Maker. As Scripture says: What the eye cannot see is understood through the things God has created. If someone doubts that God can create from nothing, ask them: Was the first human from the earth? They agree. Then ask: how can flesh, bones, nerves, and all fleshly qualities come from so broad a change into the various substances in the body, like blood and bile? If they cannot explain things seen, how will they understand what is done? When they persist in their disbelief, keep repeating: In the beginning God created heaven and earth. This single statement overthrows all their arguments. The text continues: The earth was invisible and without shape. Why is the earth formless, while the sky is finished and bright? This is intentional: so we know not to attribute the earth's gifts to itself, but to the God who formed it from nothing. If the earth is our mother and provider, and we return to it in death, there is a danger we might venerate it excessively. But God shows us it was first formless, lacking beauty and utility, to remind us that its benefits come from Him. Rather than become mired in complex and damaging speculation, remember what has been said here, and share it with your family so your household becomes like a church. Another, drive away the evil one by the grace of the Holy Spirit and peace remain in your home. When you remember by this teaching, I am able to teach you more. Let your life match your faith. Let your light shine before others, so they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Faith without works is dead, and works without faith are dead. We must hear Christ's words, or our edifice will collapse in times of trial. Those strong in faith become stronger under adversity, but weak are toppled even by small trials, not by the strength of the attack, but by the lack of preparation. Let us be watchful and disciplined, thankful in all circumstances. If we live in this way, we will enjoy God's favor in this life and have assurance in the life to come. May we reach this, through our Lord Jesus Christ, with Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory forever. Amen.

