Genesis 1:1-5

In the beginning
when God created the heavens and the earth,

[2]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.

[3]Then God said,
'Let there be light';
and there was light.

[4]And 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,
the first day.

Mark 1:4-11

[4]John the baptizer
appeared in the wilderness,
proclaiming a baptism of repentance
for the forgiveness of sins.

[5]And people from the whole Judean countryside
and all the people of Jerusalem
were going out to him,
and were baptized by him
in the river Jordan,
confessing their sins.

[6]Now John was clothed with camel's hair,
with a leather belt around his waist,
and he ate locusts and wild honey.

[7]He proclaimed,
'The one who is more powerful than I
is coming after me;
I am not worthy
to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals.

[8]I have baptized you with water;
but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

9 In those days Jesus came
from Nazareth of Galilee
and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

[10]And just as he was coming up out of the water,
he saw the heavens torn apart
and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.
[11]And a voice came from heaven,
'You are my Son, the Beloved;
with you I am well pleased.'

Genesis 1:1-5

We start 2024 with the opening words of Torah
This first creation story is in the Priestly voice
The second in the Jahwist and Elohist voices
This story probably newer than the one after it

We hear the words through tradition,
Of a theist divinity unmoved mover,
Creating time and space
Ex nihilo

The second verse supports other readings
Tohu va bohu, 'out of the depths'
Spirit of God, wind, bringing order
Out of anarchy 'no beginning'

The first word:
let there be light
and there was light

The formula continues:
God saw that the light was good,
Separated the light from dark

Then God names:
Light Day, Dark Night

Concluding formula
And there was evening, and there was morning
The first day

Too bad we won't hear all six days in Epiphany
http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2022/01/6-days-of-creation-genesis-01.html
That link will take you to notes, audio, podcast from Jan 2022

Mark 1:4-11

We start with a replay from Advent
Vv4-8 as Mark's summary of John the Baptist
Reviewing John's baptism, which Jesus receives,
Is Jesus' baptism just another one – or how not?

Mark says Jesus comes from Nazareth in Galilee
And was baptized by John
Mark offers no motive or dialogue for either
Either John resisting, or Jesus elaborating

Coming out of the water, deed done,
Jesus sees the heavens torn, Spirit descending
Mark doesn't say anybody else saw it
Is it Jesus' religious experience? If so, how does Mark know?

Then a voice comes from heaven:
'You are my Son, the beloved, with you I am well pleased'
In context of the previous verses, did only Jesus hear it?
Again, if so, how does Mark know?

Did anybody else experience this when John baptized them?
Did Jesus tell his disciples of his subjective experience, vision?
Did the Spirit enter him, remain on/in him, as it had not before?
Do we seek that for us, or celebrate him as unique?

If anybody has the legs for it –
How does the creation story, 'out of the depths'
Shape Jesus' baptism, 'coming up out of the waters'
With divine affirmation of the outcome?

Our own experiences of baptism are rich and varied
http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2023/12/mark-1-starting-jesus-stories.html
That link is for this Advent's notes and audio, Dec 2022