

# Cosmology in the Ancient Near East

Cosmology is the study of how the universe was formed and how it is sustained today. When we talk about *ancient* cosmology, we are referencing how the ancient people thought about the origins of the world as they knew it. This is important when studying the Bible since the Bible is an ancient text, written by people soaked in their ancient background and worldviews.

## Similarity Between Genesis 1 and other Origin Stories

The people living in the ancient near east often had similar stories about how the world came to existence. These similarities might strike some modern readers but let's look at a few similarities between ancient cosmologic texts and Genesis 1.

- Creation occurs in stages (Enuma Elish -Babylonian Creation Myth)
- Humanity formed from dirt (Atrahasis Epic -Sumerian-Akkadian)
- Earth started as a watery uninhabitable place (The Egyptian Creation Myths)
- God resting after creation (Sumerian-Akkadian)

"When on high no name was given to heaven, nor below was the netherworld called by name, Primeval Apsu (deep abyss) was their progenitor, and creator Tiamat (salty ocean) was she who bore them all, they were mingling their waters together, when no gods at all had been brought forth, none called by names, none destinies ordained, then were the gods formed within these two ..."

Excerpt from Enuma Elish

"The waters speak  
I am the Waters, unique, without second.  
Atum speaks  
That is where I evolved, on the great occasion of my floating that happened to me.  
I (Atum the creator) am the one who once evolved—  
Circlet, who is in his egg.  
I am the one who began therein, (in) the Waters.  
See, the Flood is subtracted from me:  
see, I am the remainder.  
I made my body evolve through my own effectiveness.  
I am the one who made me.  
I built myself as I wished, according to my heart."

The Coffin Texts 714

These are just a few examples of how similarities show up in the origin stories of ancient people. There are similarities compared to Genesis 1 as well. Does this negate the validity of Genesis 1 if it is just like the other creation myths? Surprisingly, there are striking differences that set Genesis 1 of the Bible apart from other ancient origin stories.

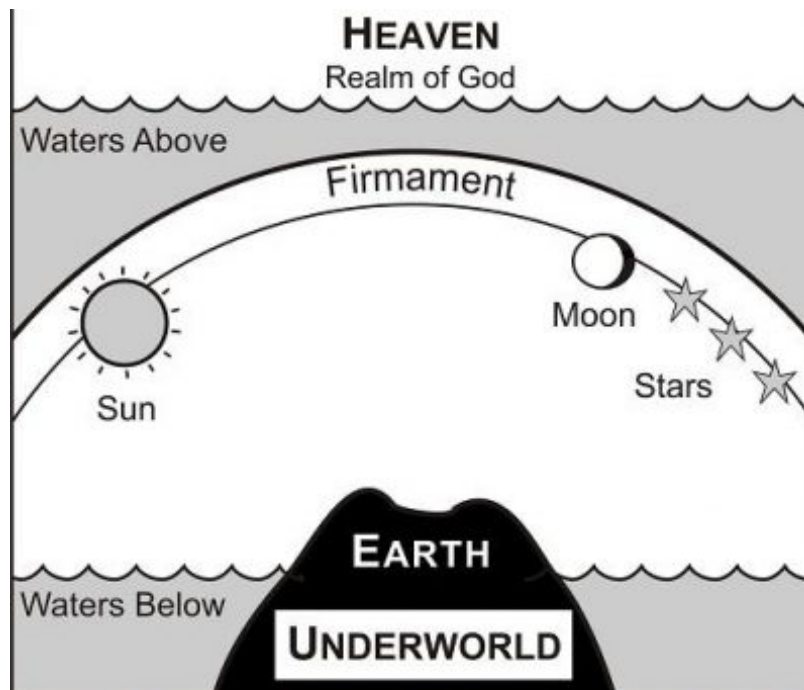
- God speaks creation into existence (not a violent battle or “birthed” creation)
- God is completely sovereign, no other being vying for power, no other divine being mentioned
- Humanity is not made slave but is bestowed with vocation to rule

These differences speak volumes to the weightiness of the words and patterns of Genesis 1. This opening chapter is not just another origin story. It is saying something different from all the rest, namely that there is a God who ordered creation by His words and who alone stands in control of the cosmos. Genesis 1 may show similar plot structures and themes but rejects the myths to show the truth about God and creation.

Along with these differences, it helps to add to our understanding the way in which ancient Israelites saw the world. When we think of the world, we think of a round green but mostly blue ball hovering in black space orbiting the sun. The ancients had a much different and much simpler worldview.

## The Three Tiered Universe

Ancient Israelites saw the world in 3 tiers or levels. The sea, land, and sky made up these tiers. The sky was also thought to have three parts. The lower part where birds fly, the space where the stars are, and heaven or God's space hovering above it all. This worldview shaped the way they thought about the cosmos and no doubt it shaped Genesis 1.



"The 3-Tier Universe" - The regional geography led ancient Near Eastern people to the reasonable conclusion that the earth was encircled by a sea. Journeys in any direction eventually led to a body of water: the Mediterranean Sea is west, Black and Caspian Seas north, Persian Gulf east, and Arabian and Red Seas south.

The three tiers correspond to inhabitants and the rulers of those tiers. The sky belongs to God and he rules from his space in the heavens. Us humans rule down here on the land. The waters are seen in ancient cosmology as chaotic and dark, leading to death, with no one claiming rule over it and it is better to stay on land where we are.

- Heaven= God's space
- land= human space
- waters/sea= no one's space

## Ordered Creation not Material Origins

Genesis 1 is a poetic mosaic of how the God of the universe spoke and ordered creation into existence and under control. The ancient stories had elements of bringing chaos into order and that is certainly happening in Genesis 1. It is establishing Yahweh God as *the* God over creation. It is *not*, however, a meticulous account of the origins of material. This is a big debacle in the scientific validity of Genesis 1. The creation account in the Bible is not trying to be nor will ever be a scientific research notebook detailing how material life and elements came into being. Genesis 1 is a literary piece of art that functions as a way to establish God as the God of the universe and lays out the role of the created beings in the universe (humanity-rule the land, heavenly lights-rule the sky). Its role in Scripture is to establish God's sovereignty and creation's role and function in the cosmos.

Genesis 1 does not allow for 21st century scientific questions to be answered but it does allow for ancient philosophical questions that form a worldview. Genesis 1 can answer these simple yet profound questions:

1. Who are we?
2. Where are we?
3. Where are we in the story of history?

These are the questions that Genesis 1 will answer as we will discover in our study.

# Literary Structure of Genesis 1

## 1:1 Summary Prologue

In the beginning, God **created** **the skies and the land** [7 words]

## 1:2 Exposition of Prologue in 3 Lines

Now, **the land** was wild and waste (תהו ובהו *tohu va-vohu*)  
and darkness was over the face of the deep abyss (תהום *tehom*)  
but the breath of *Elohim* was hovering over the face of the waters (המים *hammayim*) [7 x 2 words]

Day 1

Day 4

Day 2

Day 5

Day 3

Day 6

## 2:1 Summary Epilogue

Thus were finished **the skies and the land** and all their host

## 2:2-3 Exposition of Epilogue in 3 Lines

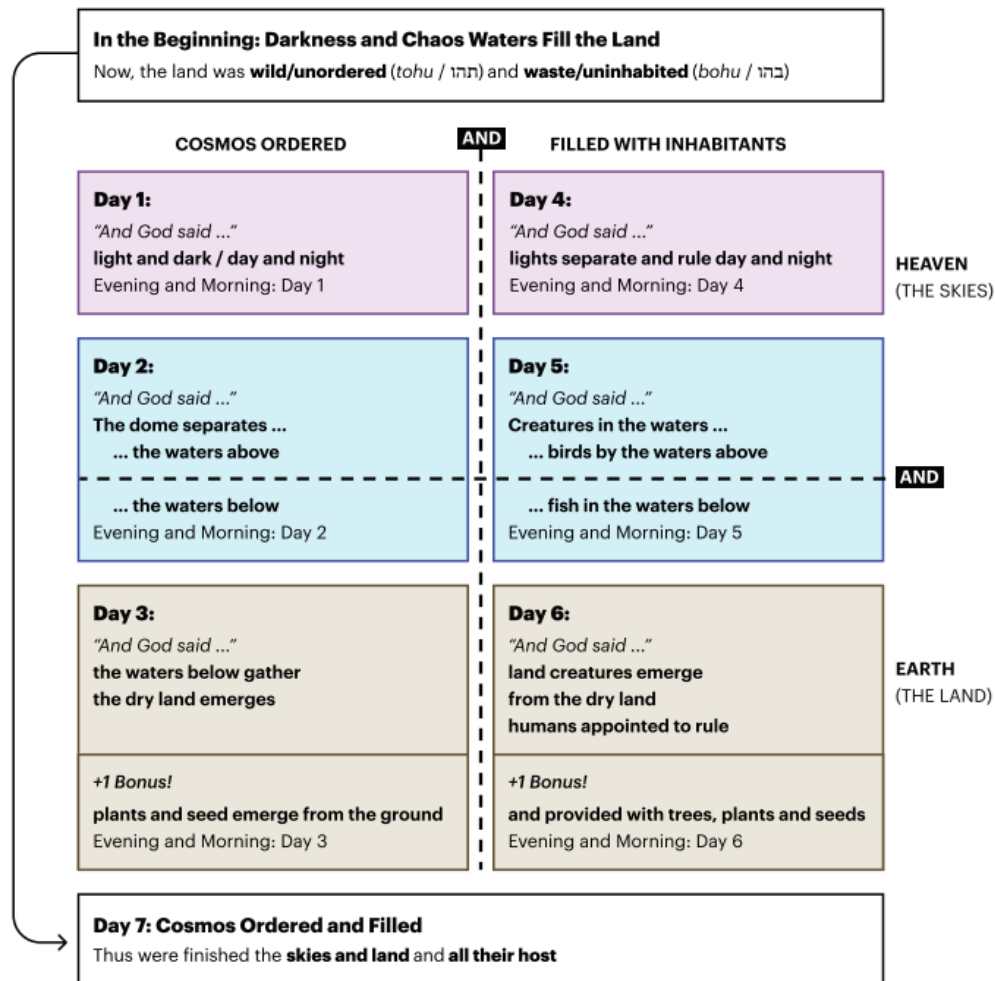
1. And God **completed on the seventh day his work which he had** **made** [7 words]
2. And he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had **made** [7 words]
3. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it [7 words]  
because on it he rested from all his work which God **created to make** [key word of 1:1]

Notes: The opening and summary contain the same key words (skies, land, created). They also contain patterns of seven words in Hebrew, ending with the 3 lines of 7 words in the summary.

From a macro view, the prologue and epilogue to the creation account function as the caps of the narrative and include the most important information: **God created the skies and land and rested on the 7th day**. We start with a chaotic watery abyss and at the end of the cycle, there is a complete and ordered cosmos.

# Structure of the Creation Days- Horizontal Relationship

The structure of the days of creation are symmetrical in design and intentional in the delivery. With the goal of Genesis 1 defining God as the one to bring order out of the chaos, the cycle of days aims to reach this goal. Rather than using material processes, the author uses a literary device of ordering and pairing to make his case as the following diagram shows.



The diagram helps the reader see the relationship between days. The goal of the days is to define how God brought order from the chaotic beginning. Days 1-3 are God separating and days 4-6 describe God filling those spaces. Days 1 and 4, 2 and 5, and 3 and 6 are paired together. The pairing finds meaning when we see each latter day as filling the space of the former.

- Day 1 and 4 lights fill heavens
- Day 2 and 5 birds and fish fill the sky and sea
- Day 3 and 6 animals and humans fill the land

Each pair finds God creating or separating spaces and God filling those spaces with creatures or rulers (lights and humans). We also see symmetry in days 1 and 4 relating to the heavens, days 3 and 6 relating to the land and days 2 and 5 in the center with relation to the chaotic waters.

## Structure of the Creation Days- Vertical Relationship

The first 3 days and the last 3 days of creation also relate to each other in two themes. Days 1-3 describe the ordering of space and days 4-6 describe the filling of those spaces.

### Days 1-3 Separation/Ordering

- Day 1- Separating light/dark.
- Day 2- Separating heavens and seas (water above and below)
- Day 3- Separating water below- creating land
  - Day 3 includes a bonus! Vegetation and green plants appear. This mirrors the day 6 bonus which provides humanity with plants to eat
  - Day 1 and 2 describe God separating the spaces (light and dark, water above and below). On Day 3 God orders the chaotic waters into designated places so that land and life can appear.

<p><b>Day 1</b></p> <p><sup>3</sup> and God said,          "LET THERE BE light"          and there was light.  <sup>4</sup> and God saw that the light was good;          and God separated the light from the darkness.  <sup>5</sup> and God called the light "day,"          and the darkness He called "night."</p> <p>And there was evening          and there was morning,          one day (יום אחד).</p>	<p><b>A</b></p> <p>God orders the heavens          - Light = divine glory          - Dark = disorder and chaos</p>
<p><b>Day 2 - Part 1</b></p> <p><sup>6</sup> and God said,          "Let there be a dome          in the middle of the waters,          and let it separate the waters          from the waters."</p>	<p><b>B</b></p> <p>God commands the chaos          waters to be split</p>
<p><b>Day 2 - Part 2</b></p> <p><sup>7</sup> and God made the dome,          and he separated the waters below the dome          from the waters above the dome;          and it was so.  <sup>8</sup> God called the dome "skies".</p>	<p><b>B'</b></p> <p>Fulfillment of God's          command to split          the waters</p>
<p><b>Day 3</b></p> <p><sup>9</sup> and God said,          "LET THE waters below the skies          BE gathered into one place (מקום אחד)          AND LET THE dry ground BE seen";          and it was so.  <sup>10</sup> and God called the dry ground "land,"          and the gathering of the waters He called "seas"          and God saw that it was good...</p>	<p><b>A'</b></p> <p>God orders the land          - Land = refuge from God          - Waters = disorder          and chaos</p>

## Days 4-6 Filling

- Day 4- Fills heavens with lights who “rule”
- Day 5- Fills sky with birds and seas with sea creatures
- Day 6- Fills land with animals and humans
  - Day 6 includes a bonus! Fruit and plants for food
  - Days 4 and 6 mirror each other as they each have “rulers” in their designated spaces. Each is ruling on God’s behalf. Lights rule and separate. Humanity rules and subdues the land.

<p><b>Day 4</b></p> <p><sup>14</sup> and God said,  <i>“Let there be LIGHTS  in the expanse of the skies  to separate the day from the night,  and let them be for SYMBOLS...”</i></p> <p><sup>16</sup> and God made the two great LIGHTS,  the great LIGHT to rule the day,  and the small LIGHTS to rule the night;  and also the stars.</p> <p><sup>17</sup> and God placed them  in the dome of the skies  to give LIGHT on the land,  and to rule the day and the night,  and to separate the LIGHT from the darkness.;  and God saw that it was good.</p>	<p><b>A</b></p> <p><b>God delegates heavenly rulers They are “symbols” They rule light and darkness and separate the calendar</b></p>
<p><b>Day 5 - a</b></p> <p><sup>20</sup> and God said,  <i>“Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures,  and let birds fly above the land...”</i></p>	
<p><b>Day 5 - b</b></p> <p><sup>21</sup> and God created the great sea-monsters  and every living creature that moves,  with which the waters swarmed after their kind,  and every bird of wing after its kind;</p>	<p><b>B</b></p> <p><b>God apportions the waters above and below to birds and fish God also makes “sea-monster”</b></p>
<p><b>Day 5 - a’</b></p> <p><sup>22</sup> and God blessed them, saying,  <i>“Be fruitful and multiply,  and fill the waters in the seas,  and let birds multiply on the land.”</i></p>	
<p><b>Day 6</b></p> <p><sup>26</sup> and God said,  <i>“Let us make HUMAN  in our IMAGE,  according to our LIKENESS;  and let them rule  over the fish of the sea  and over the birds of the sky  and over the cattle  and over all the land,  and over every creeper that creeps on the land...”</i></p> <p><sup>28</sup> and God blessed them,  and God said to them,  <i>“Be fruitful and multiply,  and fill the land,  and subdue it;  and rule over the fish of the sea  and over the birds of the sky  and over living creature that creeps on the land.”</i></p>	<p><b>A’</b></p> <p><b>God delegates earthly rulers They are divine images They rule the land and its wild creatures</b></p>



## Repeated Words Between the Days

The use of repeated words throughout the poetic narrative illuminate themes that will become relevant later in the biblical story. Almost all major themes start in Genesis 1-11 and we can see many here in the creation account with the use of repeated words. The relationship between the days goes deeper when we see repeated words linking them together.

- Day 1 and 4 share the same vocabulary as both deal with light and darkness. The words *light, day, night, and rule* are repeated during these days. God is the light on Day 1 and separates light and dark. On Day 4, he creates signs that give their own light (sun and moon) to now fill the role God was doing on Day 1. God is still sovereign, but he delegates the role of separating day and night to the lights he created.
- Days 2 and 5 are linked together by both discussing the waters above and below the sky dome. On Day 2, God separates the waters above and below, creating what we call "sky". On Day 5, God fills these spaces with creatures, sea creatures and birds who are called to be a part of the blessing of abundance.
- Days 3 and 6 focus on the land. God provides plants and animals to fill the land. He creates humanity last, of who *rule* over the creatures of the land. Day 6 also mentions the *seed* of the trees that parallels the *seed* of the plants in Day 3. Each of these days has a bonus element and they both deal with the "seed" that multiplies and which provides food for the creatures in Day 6.

Each of the key words in Genesis 1:1 are repeated by multiples of **seven** in the opening movement of Genesis.

- "God" = 35x (7x5) in Genesis 1:1-2:3
- "Land" = 21x (7x3) in Genesis 1:1-2:3
- "Skies" and "dome" = 21x (7x3) in Genesis 1:2-2:3

Key words that are repeated **seven times**:

- "Light" (5x) and "day" (2x) = seven times on day one
- "Light" on day four
- "Living creature" (חיה) on days five and six
- "God saw that it was good"

God speaks 10 times in Genesis 1:1-2:3.

- Seven of those times are divine creative commands to the creation itself: "Let there be"
- Three of those times are divine initiatives toward humanity: "Let us make 'adam,'" "be fruitful and multiply," "behold I have given to you"

# Days 1-3 Ordering Light, Water, and Land

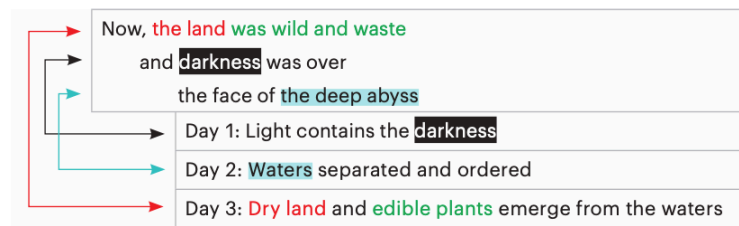
## Day 1- Genesis 1:1

Genesis 1:1 begins with the famous declaration, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”. However, the Hebrew language does not portray this opening statement as a complete summary that is to be described in a systematic way. Rather, it begins with a more ambiguous but accurate translation of “When God began to create...” thus a narrative flows from this opening act of a God active in separating and ordering.

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
הָאָרֶץ the land	וְאֵת and	הַשָּׁמַיִם the skies	אֶת את	אֱלֹהִים God	בָּרָא he created	בְּרֵאשִׁית In-the- beginning
א = aleph / ת = taw						

- There are 7 words in the first sentence that represent a theme of completeness in Genesis 1.
  - The 4th word is the first and last letter of the alphabet, again representing completeness.
- The word for “beginning” is in Hebrew, *reshit* / רֵאשִׁית. This refers not to a first point in time, but to a preliminary period of time. A time period of when God began to create, not an exact fixed point in time.
- The word earth in Hebrew is *’erets* (אֶרֶץ) does not mean “earth” but rather “**land**”) thus an organization of the cosmos as skies and land being separated is seen here rather than a general statement of a globe like structure being formed.

## Day 1- Genesis 1:2



- Notice that the three elements of “disorder” in Genesis 1:2 all find parallels in ancient Near Eastern cosmologies, and each one is separately addressed in Days 1-3 of Genesis one.
- Genesis 1:2 now introduces us to three chaotic cosmic layers (darkness, land, water). Each of these will be addressed and ordered in the first three days.

## Ex Nihilo

This phrase simply means “out of nothing”. It is thrown around so many times in debates and discussions about the creation account from Genesis. Essentially, the argument is that God created something out of nothing, or that God created all things out of nothing. We think of it as there was nothing, except God, and then he created the heavens and the earth. However, I want to point out something that is often never taken note of. The one writing Genesis, the author of the first book of the Bible, didn’t have that view. In fact, most ancient cultures didn’t have an idea of nothing. There was no category for nothing to exist. To them, and we’ll get to this later, it began as chaos. To them, way back when, God brought order out of the chaos and so there was never nothing in their worldview. They never really thought about what was before, just that God made everything and here we are. But the idea of “out of nothing” can become confusing to us, so let’s see if we can sort out what is being created when God creates things out of nothing.

## Time- A Philosophical View

What happened when God created the heavens and the earth? One aspect of creation, was the creation of time. This can get quite confusing and a question can arise from this thought. How can God exist before time? If time marks the beginning, how can there be anything before the beginning? This is a question that confuses many and many use it to disprove the existence of God, but it can also be used to prove His existence. Let’s think about time for a moment. What can time be defined as? Well we can think of time in three separate, yet continuous, divisions. There is a past, a present, and a future. Perhaps these three divisions reflect the Trinity of God in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But when it comes to God, there are at least two views on this subject of time in relation to God Himself. The two views we are going to discuss are:

## Temporal and Timeless

In the temporal view we see God as being bound by time, or inside of time itself. If God is temporal, He has a past, present, and future but it also means that He has a beginning and an end. In this view, there is no way God could have created everything in the beginning because He would be bound by time itself and would have had a beginning after time was created.

The other view, however, is that God is timeless, meaning that God transcends time and has no past, present, or future. In other words, God is actually “outside” the realm of time which would verify the fact that He transcends time. This means that God could in fact have created everything before the beginning because He has no beginning and He created the beginning of time. This seems to be the most biblically accurate (Psalm 90:2, Isaiah 40:28).

This is beyond our understanding of time. We humans think about everything having a beginning and anything without a beginning is simply too hard to grasp. This is what makes God incomprehensible. To some, it is the point in which they reject. But to those who believe, it gives hope and awe for a God who can do all things. This is important in understanding our role in relation to God’s role. Since God is eternal or timeless, and we as humans are temporal or temporary, this means that God is Sovereign Lord and always will be. We as humans, as we will see later, were made by an eternal God who did not need us, but wanted us. He wanted to establish a relationship with us and that is beyond comprehension. But let’s get back to the beginning. So God created time in the beginning along with the “heavens and the earth”. This is when time began. God had always been but it was at that point in which time began as we think about it on planet earth.

## “God” In Hebrew

The next word we see in the first sentence of the Bible is “God” and what follows is the creation of the heavens and earth which we will discuss in just a moment. But this word “God” is interesting in the Hebrew Bible. In Genesis 1:1, the word for “God” is “Elohim” in Hebrew. “Elohim” is a plural form of the word “El” in Hebrew which can refer to any deity and in this case the Deity of God. So when this word “Elohim” is used, it would be like saying the God of Israel is the God of all other elohim or “gods”. When the ancient Hebrews would use this term “Elohim”, they were saying that God is the chief Elohim, there is no God above Yahweh. What is interesting is that right after this plural word for God is used, a singular verb comes after which is the word “created”, indicating the true unity in God’s nature.

## Space & Matter

The next words of our sentence are “created the heavens and the earth”. This is space and matter coming into existence being created by an eternal God who has always been. This is the creation of spacetime as many think about it today. The word “heavens” used here is an interesting one. It comes from the Hebrew word, “shamayim”, which can be used to refer to the sky. We now know that when we look at the sky it is not flat, but three-dimensional. We are looking into space. It was here that God created space and time at the same moment. Space, as we know it, is three-dimensional. It has width, length, and height. Again, this could be a reflection of God’s divine Triune identity. We see in this sentence that God created the heavens, which most likely means the universe, or space itself. It also means that God created space in a three dimensional form to be able to create all of these stars and galaxies. So not only did God create all of the beautiful things we can and can’t see with our eyes, but He also had to create a space to put them. This is what is being described here. God created the literal 3D space we know of to create the earth. It is odd to think about not having space. This means nothing at all would have existed before this moment. But one might ask about God. Where was God if there was no space? The way we think about space is three-dimensional. It is hard for us to comprehend any other form of space, but perhaps God was in “Godspace”. This is a term used to describe God in a fourth dimension or something like it. The point is that God was in His own space before He created all the 3-D space we know and live in today. In conclusion, time was created in the beginning, “heavens” declares the creation of space, and the earth was the creation of matter.

The Hebrew authors thought of the earth and the heavens a little differently than we do today, however. To them, when they think of God creating the heavens and earth, they think of it as God creating what’s down here and what’s up there. The earth to them was not a globe but it was where they were at, what they were standing on. The heavens were where God resided, above the “sky dome”. So in a basic sense, they would have seen the creation of the world as, “Way back then, God created what’s down here and what’s up there”. It is basic but yet full of truth. The ancient Israelites had a different perspective on the world than we do today.

This always begs the question, “Is space never ending?”. The simplest answer we can give is that we really don’t know for sure and probably never will. The important idea to remember is that God created everything and out of all His creation, He loves us. Then the sentence mentions the earth, which is the same earth you and I are on right now. What is interesting is that this planet is mentioned separately from all the other stuff in space or the “heavens”. The rest of the creation story, and the rest of the Bible, focus on this element of creation. Everything else created in the rest of this story is connected directly to earth and its inhabitants. This is so interesting to think about. Out of all the space and matter He created, it is this relatively small

spherical mass that God becomes so enthralled with and gives all his attention to. This is where we begin to see God's love for us, right here, in the beginning.

## **A formless, empty earth**

The next sentence that follows is verse 2, "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." There is so much here. So right away we see this description of the earth God has just made and the NIV translates it as formless and empty. The Hebrew word for formless here is translated as "tohu" which means "to lie in waste" or "desolation". The Hebrew word for empty here is "vohu" which means "to be empty", meaning there are no inhabitants. The phrase that occurs here is "tohu va-vohu" which can be best translated as "wild and waste" or uninhabitable. You get this picture of this desolate and wild place where no life exists. Let us also remember that no light exists at this point, at least the way we think about light, There is no light at this point. Just darkness and chaos. This scene is described in Job 38:9, "When I made a cloud its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band,". It was just darkness. The word for "deep" is translated "tehom" which means "an abyss". In other words, a deep place can be used to reference the ocean. In Hebrew, it also comes from a root word meaning confusion or chaos. This most likely is referring to the surface of the ocean or the surface of the earth itself. We get this image of a howling wasteland that is desolate and dark and chaotic. However, even in this dark, hopeless scene, we see hope. The hope is the Spirit of God that hovers over the waters.

## **Spirit of God**

This Spirit of God is so important to the story. Now we see God being directly involved in creation (although He already has been) as His Spirit is in the presence of the earth itself. Following will be God speaking things into existence and the Spirit working. This word "Spirit" in Hebrew is very interesting as well. It is translated "ruach", which is to say "breath", "spirit" or "wind". So literally this is the "breath of God" or the "Spirit" of God. It is the Holy Spirit we see right from the beginning being involved in creation itself. Psalm 33:6 also tells us this. We also see the Spirit hovering or moving above the waters. The word used to describe "waters" here basically means "water" or some type of liquid like water. It is more likely that God created water here but that is all there is at this time. It is also interesting to think about if the darkness was over the deep, or the "waters", and the Spirit was over the waters, perhaps the Spirit and darkness were covering the earth and therefore existing together. Another theory could be that darkness was over the surface of the earth but the Spirit was above the surface over the waters, meaning that the waters weren't necessarily on the earth, just above the surface. As we will see, God made a vault between the waters on the earth and the waters above "clouds, atmosphere, etc), and He called it "sky". Therefore, it could mean that the waters weren't necessarily on the earth in oceans yet but were simply around the earth, letting the Spirit be above them. In this scenario, we have the Spirit over the darkness. This is all speculation of course and it is hard to

say for sure, but what we do know is that God was involved in every step of creation and He created all things.

## **Day 1 Light and Dark- Genesis 1:3-5**

### **Light and Dark**

So in this passage we have the creation of light and separation of light and dark. But a question can arise out of this thought and that is, "Was darkness created?". We have no specific mention of God creating darkness and then light or vice versa. Darkness just seems to be there and light comes into existence later. We have to realize we are looking at this from a human standpoint. Darkness is commonly defined as the absence of light. When we think about it, this is true. One can neither add darkness nor take away darkness. If you want to make a room brighter, which means taking away darkness, you add more light. If you want to make a room darker, which means you want to add darkness, you take away light. Light is something we can add more of and take away but darkness cannot be manipulated in that way. Darkness is dependent on light and it is simply the absence of light. From this view, we can say that darkness already existed and light then came into existence by God's power.

Another question can arise from this and that is, "If darkness has always existed, does that mean that God existed in darkness?". It would seem that way but it is actually not the case. We have to keep in mind that God is creating this 3D universe as we know it today. God already existed beforehand in most likely another dimension or "world" we do not understand. He is outside of our limited three-dimensional world and that is how He could create this universe. With this in mind, before creation there was not even space in a three-dimensional world as we discussed in the last article. There was absolutely nothing. God created space and since there was no light at the point of the creation of this space, the result is darkness. God did not have to dwell in this darkness because He was outside of the world He was creating. So the answer to the question would be no because God existed outside of this dark world He created.

### **God Speaks**

So God speaks and says, "Let there be light" and then light appears. First I want to make note of God speaking. This is the first action of God we see in the Genesis account. Now you may say. "Well wait a minute, God already created the heavens and the earth, that was His first action". Well, in our English translations, it would appear that way, but in the ancient Hebrew text, like we talked about last time, it did not start with God creating the heavens and the earth. It started by stating that "When God began to create", way back then. This is the first present action God does and it is so fascinating. We already have the existence of God and last time we learned about the Spirit of God can be seen as the Holy Spirit. We also know God is triune in nature, He

is three in one, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Well we have this father figure creating everything and then we have God's Spirit so that's all good. But what about the Son? Where is He at? To answer that question, we need to go to the New Testament.

John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Ok, all fine and dandy. Then down in verse 14 we see that "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us". So if the Son was and is the word, and God spoke creation into existence, we see the Son right here in Genesis 1. The words of God reflect the Son and His image and now we have this Trinity of God right here in the first few verses of the Bible.

## **What About the Light?**

This is also something that is so fascinating. There is no mention of God doing any "work" to make this light appear. All He has to do is speak and it appears. So now we have light, God spoke and light came into existence. So this always begs the question, "What is this light?". The sun wasn't created until the fourth day of creation so what substance made this light on the first day? Many have speculated on this question but there is only one clear answer in my mind and that is God Himself. God is light as we see in many passages like 1 John 1:15. Therefore, since God is light, there is no reason to believe that He could not have provided light the first three days of creation. (After all He is God and can do as He pleases). It was this light, the light of God, that is able to make life possible as we see in the following verses. It is also interesting to note that Jesus, who is light (John 8:12), provides eternal life, the best life of all. So it is God at this point providing light to His new creation because He is light. The apostle Paul also references God's words in 2 Corinthians 4:6. There Paul is talking about the "light" that shines in our hearts through Christ and he correlates this light to the light that came out of darkness here in Genesis 1. So we can see that even in the beginning, there are things that happen that symbolize or represent things later to come.

So we have all these beautiful images and symbols of what light is. But what did the Hebrew authors think about the light? Well, scientifically, visible light as we know it is made of photons, which is how we see. But to an ancient Israelite, light is not a thing. God calls the light something right here. He calls the light "day" and the darkness "night" in verse 5. Why would God give names to light and dark? Well, right here God is organizing time. God is organizing and setting in sequence the order in which time runs and it is by day and night.

God saw that the light was "good". God calls everything "good" in His creation except for two things, darkness and the expanse between the water which we'll get to later. God never calls the darkness "good", only the light He calls "good". Then we see something very interesting happen. God separates the light from the darkness. With all the bad things associated with darkness (sin, evil, death, etc) you would think that God would have eliminated the darkness completely, but He didn't. Instead, after He makes light appear, He separates the two or divides light and dark and gives names for them. The light -"day" and the darkness- "night". What we need to keep



in mind at this point is that there is no mention of evil here. There is no association between evil and darkness at this point, only the fact that God never calls the dark "good". The darkness is still as important as the light and it is not until sin enters the picture that evil becomes associated with darkness.

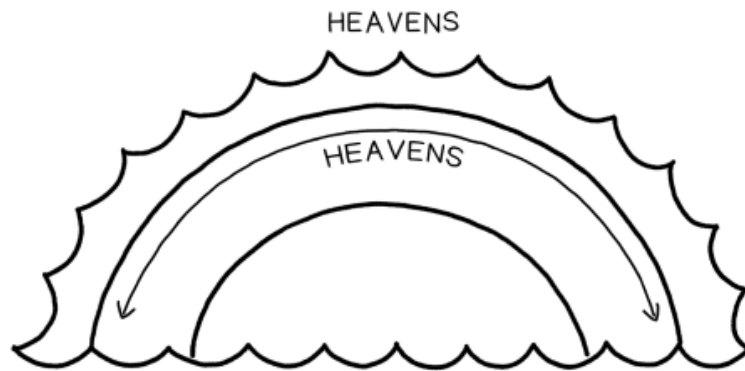
## **Day & Night, Evening & Morning**

There is also a lot of controversy about these words "evening" and "morning" and whether they refer to 24 hour time periods or indefinite periods of time. We can determine the times by looking at the Hebrew meanings of these words. The Hebrew word for evening is "erev" meaning evening or night. The Hebrew word for morning is "boqer" meaning morning or day. Both words can be translated literally and the order in which they occur in the Bible is crucial. The Bible tells us that "there was evening and morning". This means that God was creating during the "day" and then there was evening or night, then morning or the next day. What we see as the pattern for the rest of creation is this evening and morning pattern. In other words, we see God creating and working and then there is evening and morning. We see no mention of God creating during the evening or night. We get this picture of God creating and bringing life into existence and then evening comes and the action doesn't pick up until the morning of the next day. It is hard to say for sure whether these days were literal 24 hour days or not. What we do know, is that there was a cycle being used as a time separator and determiner. God wanted us to know that He created all things and that space, time, matter, light, and dark came into existence on the first day.

## Day 2 The Sky Dome- Genesis 1:6-8

### Vault? Firmament? Expanse?

The word for “vault” here is translated “raqia” in Hebrew which means “to hammer out” or “expanse”. The King James Version uses the word “firmament” which adds to the confusion. The ESV translates this word “expanse” most accurately to its original definition. Let’s think for a moment about ancient cosmology. The ancient Hebrews had a basic and interesting view of the universe and what they thought it looked like. The Hebrews believed that a solid dome was around the earth and this is what they thought they were looking at when they looked at the stars and such. They thought the stars were in the dome. To them, it was a big dome all around earth and inside this dome was the space above them where the birds fly. While modern science and astronomers don’t view earth and the universe as such today, it is still important for us to realize what their views of cosmology were. With all that being said, we can see that God created an expanse or literally “sky” and God actually calls the expanse “sky” or “heaven” (“shamayim” in Hebrew) at the beginning of verse eight. This is what we call sky today. It is the space in which the birds and some airplanes fly and this is a hyperlink to when God fills this space with His creation of birds on day five.



## Literary Design of Day 2

<b>Day 2 - Part 1</b> <sup>6</sup> and God said, "Let there be a <b>dome</b> in the middle of the waters, and let it <b>separate the waters</b> <u>from the waters.</u> "	<b>B</b> <u>God commands the chaos</u> <u>waters to be split</u>
<b>Day 2 - Part 2</b> <sup>7</sup> and God made the <b>dome</b> , and he <b>separated</b> the <u>waters below the dome</u> from <u>the waters above the dome</u> ; and it was so. <sup>8</sup> God called the <b>dome</b> "skies".	<b>B'</b> <u>Fulfillment of God's</u> <u>command to split</u> <u>the waters</u>

The design of Day 2 is meant to draw the reader's attention to the command and fulfillment of God's ordering. In the first part, God commands the waters to be split vertically. In the second part, the waters are split leaving a space in the middle God calls "skies".

## What About the Water?

So we have this sky or space above us but what about the waters above? We can say that the water under the expanse is the water we have on earth. Verse nine of Genesis 1 tells us that when dry land appears, the water under the sky is gathered to one place called "seas", indicating it was under the sky on the surface of earth at this point. But what about the water above? This can most simply be recognized as clouds and water in the atmosphere. Rain falls from the sky so we know that there is water above us in the form of clouds. There are also other theories about what this water could have been. Some say it could have been a water vapor canopy that covered the whole earth. Others say this water could be described as a reservoir in Godspace. The most reasonable explanation for this "water above" would be clouds but one cannot say with absolute certainty. What we do know is that God separated the water on the surface of earth from the water in the atmosphere. The area in between God calls "sky" and it is the same language we use today when we consider and talk about the sky.

## **“And It Was So”**

These words appear for the first time on the second day. After God makes the separation, we see the words, “And it was so” indicative of completeness and the power of God. The Hebrew authors were big on emphasizing certain words and phrases in their literature. Since they didn’t write in all capital letters or underline and highlight words or phrases for emphasis they used another literature writing component to stress certain ideas called repetition. They would repeat whatever thought they were trying to emphasize and this got across to the readers as being important. So it should do the same for us. These words appear often, everyday in fact except for the fifth day (Genesis 1:7, 9, 11, 15, 24, 30). This is another biblical theme that will carry on even through Jesus and today. That is, God saying or doing something and that being the way it is. Some will look at judgment as being the “negative” side of this argument. It is true that God will judge all of us (Ecclesiastes 12:14), but this should not be the only absolute thing we think about. We should think about how God will never leave us (Deuteronomy 31:8), or how God will forgive our sins (1 John 1:9), or that we will have eternal life if we believe and follow Jesus Christ (John 3:16). These are all promises of God and they are all so. If we stay faithful to God , all of these will remain true because God has said so. The promises and power of God is depicted right here in the beginning, that whatever God says is so.

After this, we see the same pattern as before from day one with the cycle of “evening and morning” and the conclusion of day 2.

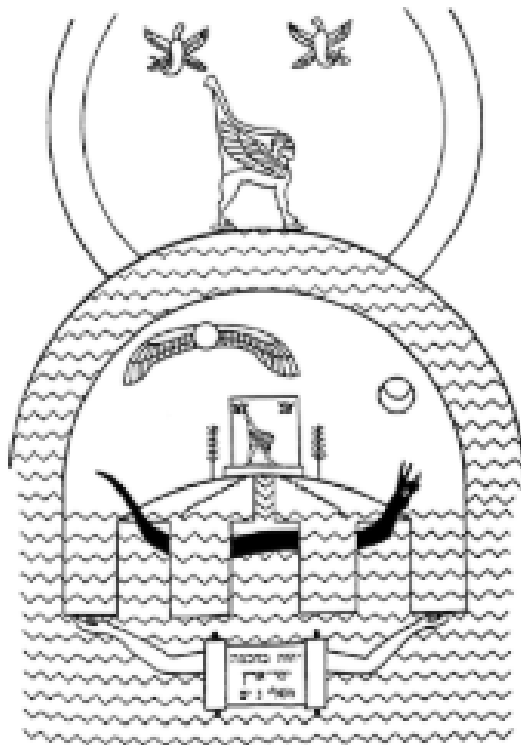
## Day 3 The Dry Land and Seas

The dry land on day three becomes an example of God's ordering and taming the chaotic waters. There are different ways throughout the Bible dry land is mentioned but they point back to this point when the waters receded and land appeared.

- Edge of the land- Psalm 19:4
- Four Corners- Isaiah 11:2

In ancient cosmology, the dry land was seen as a circle or disc that sits above the waters supported by pillars which God provides.

- Psalm 24:1-2 The land is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it. For he has founded it **upon the seas and established it upon the rivers**.
- Proverbs 8:27-29 When he established the heavens, I [Wisdom] was there, when he inscribed a horizon on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when the springs of the deep became fixed, when he set for the **sea its boundary** so that the water would not **transgress his command**, when he marked out the **foundations** of the land



In this image, we have a drawing of an ancient cosmological interpretation. The land sits on four pillars underneath the sea which are supported by God's command.

## Literary Design of Day 3

### Day 3: God Orders the Land

<sup>9</sup> And God said,  
"Let the waters below the skies  
be gathered into one place (מקום אחד),  
and let the dry ground be seen";  
and it was so.

<sup>10</sup> And God called the dry ground land,  
and the gathering of the waters he called seas.  
God saw that it was good. .

<sup>11</sup> And God said,  
"Let the land sprout vegetation,  
vegetative plants that produce seed,  
fruit trees  
that make fruit according to its kind  
which has its seed inside it

upon the land";  
and it was so.

<sup>12</sup> And the land brought out  
vegetative plants  
that produce seed according to its kind,  
and trees  
that make fruit  
which has its seed in it,  
according to its kind;  
and God saw that it was good. .

<sup>13</sup> And there was evening  
and there was morning,  
a third day. .

God gathers the water into one place, thus ordering the chaotic waters. This allows for dry land to appear.

Vv.11-12 includes a bonus creation that includes fruit trees and edible plants. The word "seed" is repeated here to reflect the "seed" of humanity and the food for humanity on day 6. We see God speaking and the land bringing forth, through God's command the vegetation.

## Land & Sea

Now we have water above the sky and water below the sky. God now focuses on the water under the sky. First we see God telling the water to be gathered to one place and then to let dry ground appear and it happens. Again, we see God speaking creation into existence and it happens. Now about this dry land. Many will argue that this is evidence of plate tectonics in the Bible and this was how land was formed. Others will say God just made land appear without scientific reasoning. Whichever case you believe, we can see that it is God creating all that we see today and the honor and glory belongs to Him. God also gives names to these two different types of places. He calls the dry ground "land" and the waters "seas". What's interesting to notice is that God says to let the water (singular) be gathered to one place, land appears, then He calls the gathered waters (plural) "seas" (plural). So what does this all mean? Was all the water one big ocean before land? Do we have oceans because of the land? Well, if we look at a map today we can see that all the water in the "oceans" are connected and continuous and not completely interrupted by land. If the water was divided, we would see land either all the way

across the earth or land from the North to the South pole but we simply don't see that. The water is one continuous body of water. Therefore, the most probable explanation is that when land appeared, this created divisions in the water which created "pockets" or "seas" (as God called them) of water on the surface but the water was not completely separated from itself. Nonetheless, we see God creating land to fill with animals and humans and as we're going to discover next, plants.

## **Grass, Plants, and Trees**

After God saw the land and seas to be "good" He said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." Many of us when we read this we think of every plant we see. Trees, flowers, grass, and every plant we see. However, this is not necessarily the case. What we see is seed-bearing plants and trees with fruit each according to their kinds being created. In other words, this is grass, edible plants, and fruit trees being created for food for the animals and humans God will create later. We also see that God says for the land to produce the vegetation. Although there is no specific mention of God making the plants, we see that it is only through His power all of this is happening. It is truly God creating and speaking creation into existence.

## **Contradiction Between Genesis 1 & 2?**

There is also a supposed contradiction out there that says that if God created plants here, why does it say in Genesis 2:4-5 that no plant had sprung? How did the animals survive if this was the case? This can confuse many, however, there is a very simple and clear explanation for this alleged contradiction. Let's look at the Hebrew words and meaning for clarity. Let's start in Genesis 1:11-13. We see vegetation appear, this includes grass, herbs, and fruit trees. In other words, edible plants for the animals (and humans) to eat. When we look in Genesis chapter 2, which begins to tell the garden story, we see that no "plant of the field" nor "herb of the field" had shown up yet. This "of the field" context is extremely important. In Hebrew, "plant of the field" is translated "siah hassadeh" and "herb of the field" is translated "eseb hassadeh". If we return to our main text in Genesis 1, we see the terms, "deshe" (grass), "eseb mazria zera" (herbs yielding seeds), and "ets pariy" (trees bearing fruit). The vegetation described in Genesis 1 are not the same as in Genesis 2. God also gives a reason as to why these plants in chapter 2 have not been seen yet in Genesis 2:5, "for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground". God had not sent rain and man had not been created to work and till the ground for these plants and herbs of the field to spring up. To conclude, the plants in Genesis 2 were of the field and did not appear until man was created and the vegetation in Genesis 1 was grass, edible plants, and fruit trees.

# Days 4-6 Inhabitants of the Skies, Sea, and Land

## Day 4 Rulers in the Sky

### Literary Design of Day 4

And God said,

" Let there be **lights** in the expanse of the skies  
to **separate** the **day** from the **night** ,  
and let them be for signs and for festivals and for days and years;

15 and let them be for **lights** in the dome of the skies  
to give **light** on the land"; and it was so.

16 And God made the two great **lights** ,  
the great **light** to **rule** the **day** ,  
and the small **light** to **rule** the **night** ;  
and also the stars.

17 And God placed them in the dome of the skies  
to give **light** on the land,

18 and to **rule** the **day** and the **night** ,  
and to **separate** the **light** from the darkness ;  
and God saw that it was good .

19 And there was evening  
and there was morning,  
a fourth day .

- The two great lights in the sky have several purposes:
  - Separate day and night
  - Act as signs for days and years
  - Give light during day and night
  - Rule day and night
- We see several repeated words on this day, most significantly the word *light*. This reflects the purposes of Day 1 when God separated light and darkness. Now on Day 4, God is establishing two lights to rule on his behalf and to separate day and night.



A	1:14a And God said, "Let the lights be in the skies for dividing between the day and between the night, 1:14b and let them be for signs and for festival times and for days and for years.
	B 1:15 And let them be for lights in the dome of the skies, to give light upon the land."
	C 1:16a And God made the two great lamps, the great light for ruling over the day
	C' 1:16b and the little lamp for ruling over the night and also the stars.
	B 1:17 And he set them in the dome of the skies, to give light upon the land,
A	1:18a and to rule over the day and over the night 1:18b and to divide between the light and between the darkness."

- In Psalm 148:1-3, the sun, moon, and stars are considered the "heavenly hosts". They are depicted as servants of God who are aligned with the spiritual beings in realm and task. The stars are signs of spiritual beings and those that inhabit the throne room of God. There are warnings throughout the Hebrew Bible not to worship the sun, moon, or stars. Though they act as God's servants and were delegated authority on Day 4, they are not to be worshipped as gods, as the only one true God made them.

When many look at this passage, the obvious interpretation of what is being created is the sun, moon, and stars. Although we don't see an exact wording of the "sun" and "moon" being created, the descriptions of "greater light" and "lesser light" and their jobs match perfectly with the sun and moon. There is no other celestial body that fits the descriptions of these two lights more perfect than the sun and moon. The light that governs the day is the sun and the light that governs the night is the moon. But when we look at their descriptions and the order they come in, it seems that these objects in the sky serve a far greater purpose than just giving out light. Let's explore the hidden meaning behind these celestial bodies.

## Separation

Our passage starts out by saying, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night". This is crucial. God is now filling the "sky" that He created earlier with bodies that have specific functions. The first function we see is that these lights are to separate the day and the night. Now the separation of day and night should sound familiar because the separation of day and night already happened back on day one. So how can there be two separations of day and night? Let's go back to day one. In Genesis 1:4 it says, "God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness." In the article about day one, we discussed how this light was most likely God since God is light. On day one, God separated the

light from the darkness, indeed separating Himself from the darkness. God is the one doing the separation in day one. Now on day four, we have these God-made objects doing the separating. What does this mean? This means that God has now delegated some of his authority. Instead of God doing the separating of day and night, He has now made celestial objects to perform that function. God still has supreme authority, but he has given some of the roles over to other beings and His creation. This is what we see happening here. The sun and moon are now going to be separating the light and dark. This is also God filling the light and dark with His creation. The sun is now going to “fill” the day and the moon is now going to “fill” the night along with the stars. So the first function we see of these lights being created is to separate the light and darkness.

## **Signs, Seasons, and Sacred Times**

The next function we see of these two lights is that they were meant to “serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years”. This verse is critically important when dealing with the sun and moon because even outside of biblical literature, we see this to be true. We can look at ancient cultures outside of the Bible and still see they used the sun, moon, and even the stars for different purposes. The position of the sun in the sky meant different times of year. The stars were used as an early navigation system for sailors and travelers. These celestial bodies have had significant importance throughout ancient history and we see the beginning and the establishment of their importance right here. We can also see from the verse that these lights will be used for the purpose of marking sacred times, day, and years. The idea that these lights will serve as somewhat of a calendar is a realistic interpretation of this passage. However, these lights are not just going to mark days and times and years. There is a much deeper meaning behind these words and these lights.

## **A Greater Reality**

There are many translations of this verse as well. The NIV says, “serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years”. The ESV says, “And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years”. In one translation, we have their purpose being to mark sacred times, days, and years. In the other, we have the lights serving as signs and for seasons and for days and for years. In my personal opinion, I believe translations that have these lights serving as signs and for seasons, days, translate the verse more clearly in the sense that they bring the deeper meaning closer to light. Here’s what I mean. The word “signs” in Hebrew is used to mean the same as what a symbol means to us today. The American flag is a symbol for the United States. The cross is a symbol of what Jesus went through and what it means for us. Symbols are used to point to a bigger reality. They are used as pointers to point to something greater that it is representing. The lights in this verse are doing the same thing. The sun and moon are pointers to a greater reality, which is God Himself. Remember, the first function of these lights were to separate day and night, something God was doing before He gave authority for these lights to

do. God created these lights and plus, God is light. These lights are pointing to something greater, they are a sign or symbol of a greater reality which in this case is God.

## **Light For The Earth**

So far, we have discovered these lights in the sky have many functions and purposes. They are to separate day and night and they are to be signs of things here on earth but also signs that point to a greater reality of God who is behind all of this. The third function we see of these lights is actually what most of us think the purpose of the sun and moon is and that is give light. God says they are to be lights in the sky and give light to the earth. As we now know, scientifically, the sun feeds plants through photosynthesis and gives us light to see electromagnetic waves in the visible light spectrum. The sun does many things, as well as the moon, and the three purposes we see of the sun and moon is to separate light and dark, serve as signs, and give light.

## **Govern? Rule?**

However, there is a fourth purpose hidden in plain sight in the passage we are studying. Let's look at verses 17 and 18 of Genesis 1. "God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness." Here we see a small of summary of what God has just created. God made these lights to give light to the earth, to govern the day, and separate light and dark. Oddly enough, this is the exact opposite order in which the narrative mentioned them first. Starting in verse 14 it says these lights will:

- Separate day and night
- Serve as signs, seasons, day, and years
- Give light

Then starting in verse 17, we see the opposite order:

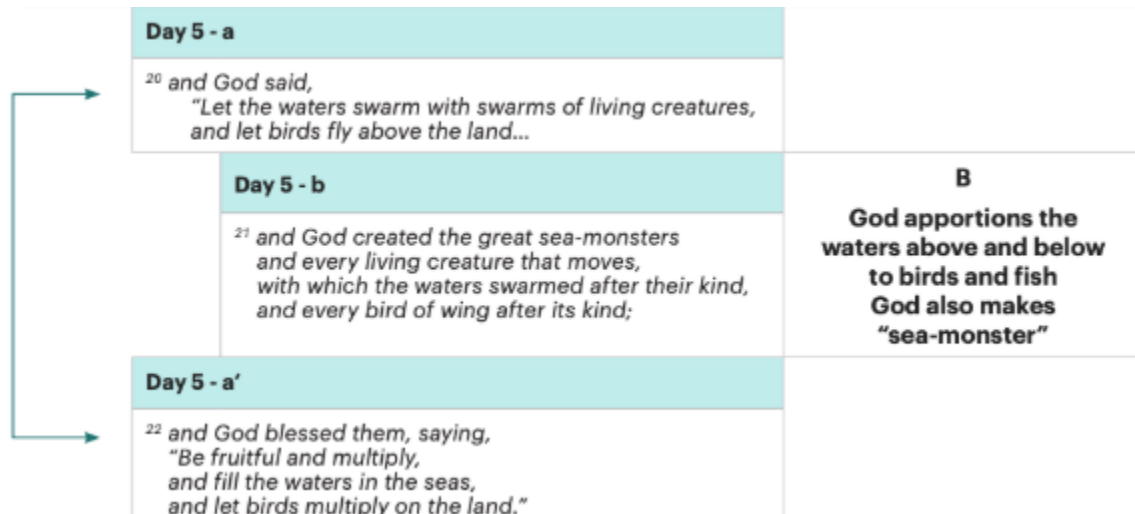
- Give light
- Governs the day and night
- Separate light and dark

Now you may be wondering, if it's the same order, why does verse 18 say "govern" the day and night and not "serve as signs, seasons, etc"? How are they the same thing? Well, they can mean the same thing but the word "govern" has a little bit deeper meaning than just to serve as signs in the sky. Let's explore. Some translations may have the word "rule" here instead of "govern". To translate it, "rule", makes the meaning a little more clear. The Hebrew word used here is "memshalah" which can mean to rule or have dominion. So is this verse saying that the sun and moon have power and dominion over the day and night? In one sense, they do but again they are always pointing to God. If you think about it? What makes it daylight or daytime? The sun giving light. What makes it nighttime? Well, the sun is not shining on the part of the earth that you are

on but the moon is out. This is what defines day and night. In the beginning, God was separating the day and night, but now He has given His creation, a celestial body the power and authority to "rule" the day and night and separate them. Are the sun and moon living beings? No, we have no evidence of Scripture that God gave these bodies life. However, God has given some of His authority over to His creation, the sun and moon, to do a specific task. In this case, the task is to rule the day and night in the sense that they are what defines day and night by their light. They are to give light to the earth, serve as signs and separate light from dark.

## Day 5 Sea Monsters and Sky Fliers

### Literary Design of Day 5



- Both the beginning and end of Day 5 contain the inhabitants to fill the sea and sky: swarms of living creatures and birds, respectively. Verse 20 contains God's command and verse 22 is the blessing of being fruitful and *filling* the realm they were made for.
- Verse 21 is the verse of excitement. It contains the fulfillment of the command. The birds get one line at the end but it is the "sea-monsters" that may surprise a modern reader.

### Sea-Monsters or Whales?

There is a bit of question surrounding the "great creatures of the sea" or "great sea creatures" in some translations. What exactly are or were these creatures? It seems to be that whatever these creatures are they are different from the other living things in the water which God creates. As we can see from the passage it says, "So God created the great creatures of the sea **and** every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it". These great sea creatures seem to be different from the other living things that live in the water because they are called out specifically by name. So what are they? Well let's look at the original Hebrew language to find out. The Hebrew word used here is "tannin" and it is used to describe a sea-monster, serpent, or a large water beast.

- Psalm 74- sea monster
- Job 26- serpent

The Hebrew Bible also depicts the sea itself as a chaotic sea dragon.

So does this mean that there are real sea-monsters that God created? It absolutely could, or more likely it refers to the great beasts of the sea as symbols of the chaotic watery realm that God is ordering. The “great sea creatures” could refer to large aquatic fish and even prehistoric aquatic dinosaurs that we know God created as well but the word’s use throughout the Hebrew Bible tells us what God is doing here. God is ordering chaos, not eliminating it. This is useful when we see the dragon images later on as symbols of chaos and destruction. God will have victory in the end, but here in creation he creates and tames the chaotic sea-beasts in their watery realm.

## **Species or Kind?**

Now that we have a clarity on what is meant by the “great sea creatures” we can now move on to another big debate in creation. The big debate among many people is what this word “kind” means and what it meant when it was written. Context is always the key when looking at words and their meaning. Just like in English, words can have many different meanings depending on when and how they are used. Ancient Hebrew is the same way. Let’s look at how the Hebrew word for “kind” (*min*) is used in this passage.

Here’s our passage again, “So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind”. Notice how the word is used here. God uses the word after each type of animal is described. He creates the living things in the water according to their “kinds” and winged birds according to their “kinds”. It would be different if God had said that He made fish and birds according to their “kinds” and combined them. That might give the indication that fish and birds are related somehow. However, God doesn’t do that and He is very clear and distinguishes them from one another. From an evolutionary standpoint, the statement made about all species originated from one ancestor is simply not biblical. God made birds and sea creatures according to their kinds. Take fish for example. There are many different kinds of fish, catfish, bluegill, and great white sharks. All considered fish. Although you would not call a catfish a shark, you would both say they are both fish that live in water. God here is making different fish but they are all still fish. He is also making different birds but they are all birds. We will discuss this more in depth when we get to day 6 of creation.

## **Flightless Birds**

A question that often arises from this passage surrounds flightless birds. Were flightless birds like penguins and ostriches created on this day? Was it only birds that fly created on this day? There is a theory out there that some birds have lost their ability to fly over time. They say that genetic mutations and other environmental factors can lead to this kind of change in birds. That is one theory. However, there is another theory that can come out of looking at the word “bird” in Hebrew. The word for “bird” used here is “owph” in Hebrew. It can mean “covered with feathers”

or “covering with wings” and is used to describe birds or fowl. A dominant characteristic in birds is their ability to fly but that does not mean all birds were created to fly and therefore all should. This could just be a case where God made His wonderful creation the way He wanted, and that includes flightless birds that are wonderful in many ways.

## **Be Fruitful**

The last segment in our passage is a command God gives to the water creatures and birds. It says, “God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.” This again is God giving some of His supreme power to His creation. God could create and reproduce the living things He wants to when He wants to. Instead He gives a command to the living things He has created to do that for themselves. He tells them to increase in number and fill the water and the earth. Their purpose is to live and increase and continue the beautiful creation God started. This cycle and purpose can be seen even in birds and sea creatures.

## Day 6 Land Creatures and Humanity (Part 1)

### Literary Design of Day 6: Part 1

24 And God said,  
“ Let the land bring out living creatures  
according to their kind,  
Cattle  
and creeping things  
and beasts of the land  
according to their kind”;  
and it was so.

25 And God made  
the beasts of the land  
according to their kind,  
and the cattle  
according to their kind,  
and the creepers of the ground  
according to its kind;  
and God saw that it was good.

- God commands and then *makes* living creatures that come from and inhabit the land.
- We see three categories of creatures
  - Cattle- domesticated animals
  - Beasts of the land- land animals
  - Creeping things- insects

### Wild Animals, Livestock, Creatures on the Ground

The first thing we should notice is that there are three distinct variations in the animals God creates and he specifies them by name. First the livestock, then creatures that move along the ground, and then the wild animals. What is the difference between these three? Is there any difference? Let's look at the original Hebrew for a better understanding of these words and phrases.

The first animal we see being referenced to is the livestock. Today we think of these animals as cows, pigs, sheep, chickens, etc. However, the Hebrew translation gives it a little more meaning than our own limitation on the word today. The word “livestock” used here is translated *behemah* and can mean “beast” or “cattle” or any large animal. This is a little bit different from how we use livestock today. The next phrase we see is “creatures that move along the ground” or



“creeping things”. The phrase in Hebrew is *remes* and can refer to creeping or moving things along the ground or even a “reptile” as Strong suggests. This probably includes insects, reptiles, amphibians of all kinds. The third and final phrase we see is “wild animals” or “beasts” in some translations. It is the Hebrew word *chay* and it can mean a variety of things. It can refer to animals or to anything that is living or alive. It is pretty broad in its definition because it has a lot of uses.

Although these definitions don't give a crystal clear idea of which animals were being created when, we can get a general idea. God and the biblical authors used the word “livestock” probably to refer to what most humans would consider livestock throughout history. Cattle, sheep, pigs, animals used in farming are probably most described here. The “creeping things” or “creatures that move along the ground” are most likely smaller animals, the reptiles and insects and such. The “wild animals” or “beasts” probably refers to all other animals. These would be your lions, giraffes, and elephants, the larger more wild animals. Although we cannot say with absolute certainty which ones does God mean, we can know that God made all animals according to their kinds.

## **“Kind”**

One of the most debatable words in creation and evolutionary debates is this word “kind” and its meaning. God said that He made every “living creature according to their ‘kinds’”. So what does this mean exactly? What does God mean by their “kind”. A little word study and open-mindedness can lead us to the answer.

Last time, we discussed the word “kind” and the Hebrew word *min* and its meaning. There is a lot of debate over whether God created every single species that has ever existed on this day or if God allowed for His creation to take its own course. The definition of this Hebrew word *min* means “to portion” or “sort”. This doesn't sound like a lot of help but it actually can be when we look at the context and take into account genetics.

The most reasonable explanation is that not every single species that has ever been was created on this day. This is most likely basic family types of animals created on this day. Where did the other species come from? They come from a phenomenon called microevolution.

## **Evolution in Creation?**

Microevolution is not the same as macroevolution. Macroevolution, in a basic sense, is the idea that all species came from one common ancestor. Microevolution can be described as variances in genetics within a kind. This is why we have many species of cows, for example. It may sound a bit odd, even wrong to say that there is evolution in a God created world. However, God allows for microevolution to take place through genetics (which He created). We are not

talking about reptiles coming from birds or humans from monkeys type of evolution. Rather we are discussing small genetic changes in the genomes within a kind. This also describes how we have so many different species today after the great flood Noah. Noah took two of every "kind" with him on the ark. There is no possible way that he could have fit two of every single species of every single kind of animal with him on the ark. There were two of every kind, so after the flood, they could reproduce and mutations and genetic changes over time led to new species within the kind.

Darwin's theory of one common ancestor or evolutionary theories involving kinds coming from other kinds are simply not biblical. However, small changes in the kind's genomes over time can easily and biblically explain all the species we have and enjoy today.

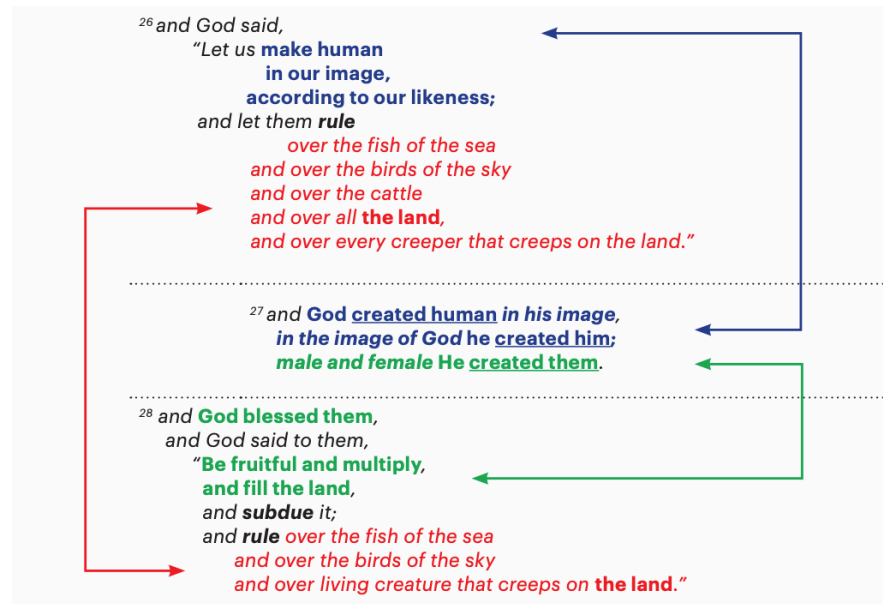
## **The Land or God?**

There is a small detail in the text that can raise some legitimacy questions of the creation account. In verse 24 of Genesis 1 it says that God says, "Let the land produce living creatures" then in the next verse it says, "God made...". So which is it? Did God make the animals or did the land? This discrepancy can be explained by looking at another account of creation.

The only other time we see the land doing something was back on day 3 when the land produced vegetation. Did God not create plants then? Of course He did, but God allowed His current creation to produce other creations through His divine power. In this case, however, we have the specific detail that God made these living creatures. So why mention the land? When the detailed account of human creation is discussed in chapter 2 of Genesis, we learn that God used the dust or land to create the flesh of man. For the animals, it is most likely the same thing. Most likely God used the ground, or land, to create the living creatures but God's hand is of course directly involved. He just used His already created creation to create new living creatures and in this case, the animals.

## Day 6 Land Creatures and Humanity (Part 2)

### Literary Design of Day 6: Part 2



- Day 6 consists of three parts
  - God's command of making and delegating rule over to the humans
  - The creation of humanity
    - Made in image
    - Male and Female
  - Blessing and vocation of humanity

#### Parallelism of Genesis 1:27

Line 1	God created	human	in his image
Line 2	He created	him	in the image of God
Line 3	He created	them	male and female

## **An Overview or Detail?**

If we just read this section, everything seems to make sense. God makes mankind or humans, He gives them dominion, and creation is complete. The problem lies within Genesis chapter 2. When we read Genesis 2, we read a sentence like verse 7, "Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." Wait, you may ask, wasn't man already created on day 6? Why is there another creation of man here? This can cause a lot of confusion but there is a simple answer. Genesis 1 is an overview of the big picture of creation. Genesis 2 is like a zoom-in on day 6 and describes "how" God created man. Specifically, it is a zoom-in on verse 27 of Genesis 1. Genesis 2 is not a recap but the reality of the poetically written chapter 1.

## **"Us" and "Our"?**

We see in verse 26 that God says, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness,...". The most common question from this statement is what is the "us" and "our"? Why does God use plural language to talk about Himself? The most simple answer to this question is that these plural words are describing the Trinity. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that make up the one God. God is 3 different beings that are also one. It can be confusing to think about but it is an excellent study as well. This phrase is God literally talking to the three parts that make up Him. The Father, Son, and Spirit are all present here. I think it is on purpose that God makes sure to mention that all of Him are present and take part in the creation of humans. In no other aspect of creation do we see God making mention of His divine nature like He does when He creates humans. This is just another aspect of why the creation of humans is so special in the creation account. Some scholars might point out that God may be talking in reference to the divine council, spiritual beings that serve God in his royal "courtroom" in heaven. While this is possible, it is my personal opinion He is still referring to Himself.

## **Image, Likeness, Created**

The first line that we see in this passage is a powerful one to say the least. Here, God speaks and says, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness...". I want to focus on what it truly means to be made in God's triune image and in His likeness. It is in these words that we find true meaning for what it means to be human. The two words we see are "image" and "likeness". The words in Hebrew mean almost the exact same thing as our English words do. So let's think about this for just a moment. God creates humans and He creates them, He creates us in His image and in His likeness. We were created to reflect God. We were made in His likeness, we were made to resemble God. What a powerful idea to think about. None of the other creations have this said about them. The animals weren't made in His image, the plants weren't made in His image. The creation of the whole earth doesn't even mention it. Yet when it comes to making humans, us, God says we were made as a reflection of Him.

But what does it really mean to be made in His image? One way we can look at it, is that we were made to have God's character and reflect His attributes. Our love, our compassion, our faithfulness is like that of God's. However, when sin entered the picture not long after our creation, the image we were created in was stained. We are still created in His image, but we have done things that have tainted and stained that image of our Creator.

## To Rule or Not To Rule?

While reflecting the attributes of God is one way of looking at being made in His image, it is not the only way to look at it. Another way of defining what it means to be made in God's image is looking at what comes after the first mention of God's image in verse 26. If we look at verses 26 and 27, we see God talking in verse 26 and then God creating mankind in verse 27. However, there is a really really big detail in the middle of these statements. God actually gives us a reason for Him creating us in His image. Verse 26 says,

**"26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.""**

The prime reason we were made in the image of the Creator was because we were made to rule. The word "rule" here is translated *radah* in Hebrew which means "to rule" or "to have dominion". Now, this can easily be confused with ruling harshly and ruthlessly but this is not the type of ruling that is intended here. This same word for "rule" mentioned here is also used in Ezekiel 34:4 which shows that brutality and harshness is the wrong way to use our *radah* authority. Our main job, our original purpose was to rule on God's behalf here on earth. It is interesting to note what it is specifically we were supposed to rule over. Fish, birds, livestock, wild animals, and creatures along the ground are all under our rule given to us by God. What is not mentioned for us to rule over are each other. God does not say here that we have authority to rule over other humans and to rule over one another. We have been given the authority to rule on His behalf over everything on earth except, humans. This is such an important part of our creation and one that we don't follow which leads to death.

But this isn't the first time we've seen this idea of ruling or having dominion. When we discussed day 4 of creation and the creation of the sun and moon, there was a mention of governing day and night. These celestial bodies have a specific function and so do we. One of their primary functions was to "rule" or govern the day and night. They are governing the heavenly realms. When God created us humans, He gave us the task of ruling over the earth. To have dominion and rule on God's behalf here on the earth He created. When comparing the celestial bodies to us, we both have the same function just in different places. One is to rule the heavenly realms, the sky and space, and the other is to rule the earth. Both are creations of God and both are ruling on God's behalf just in different places.

In verse 27 we have an overview of the creation of humans. This verse stresses the idea of being made in the image of God and mentions something very important. There are two different “versions” so to speak of these humans God creates. Male and female. Both are humans but there is a distinction between them that God makes when He creates them. This most certainly an overview of their creation. Chapter 2 of Genesis goes more in-depth of how these two humans were created.

## Responsibilities of Humans

After the creation of mankind God gives them specific tasks. Verse 28 says, **“God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”** This first thing we must realize is that God blesses us. Although God blessed the water creatures and birds when He created them and told them to “Be fruitful and increase in number” (v.22) as well, we were given another responsibility to rule the earth which we discussed earlier. God blesses us and says that we should be fruitful and increase in number. Reproduction is one of the biggest tasks we were divinely given by God. We are then told to fill the earth with ourselves and subdue it. This word “subdue” is interesting here. The Hebrew word is *kabash* and means “to subject” or “bring into bondage”. Why such harsh language for the task of humans? Are we supposed to enslave the earth under our power? Well, I believe it is these kinds of questions that confuse us in the first place. When it comes to slavery or ruling, we have this negative image of what those powers are. We have these images of ruthless, destructive leaders who wreak havoc everywhere and leave death and destruction in their path. These are the images that come into our minds when we think of subduing or ruling over something. But remember, whose image were we made in? We were made in God’s image. Is God this ruthless leader? Certainly not. He is a loving Creator who is the Author of life. Therefore, since this is the image in which we were created in and for, our rule should reflect loving and caring attributes. Sin has ruined the ideas of ruling and subduing and humans have twisted the idea of what it truly means to rule. Yes, we were made to rule the earth and subdue it, but with love and care for life, not destruction and power.

## The Original Diets

Verses 29 and 30 say, **“29 Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground-everything that has the breath of life in it-I give every green plant for food.”**

It is interesting to note here what kinds of creation were given for food for other parts of creation. For humans, the food supply was seed-bearing plants, and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. For the beasts and animals, every green plant is food. You might say here, “Where is

the meat in the diet?" This is the key feature that I want to point out. There is no meat in any of the original diets for humans or animals. Why does God not put meat in the diet? Well for the hamburgers and chicken that us humans love, an animal has to die. For humans to eat meat, an animal has to die and so we get this image of no death in Eden, much like it will be in the end. Likewise, if we look at the animal world, it is a ferocious world. There is constant fighting, surviving, and death in the animal world. What we see here in the garden is no death or killing of each other in the animal world since they were given plants to eat, not each other. So, in both worlds, we get this peaceful image of animals and humans coexisting together. There is no killing and no death, just a peaceful coexistence of God's creation.

## Everything Is VERY Good

The last sentence of Genesis 1 says this, **"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning-the sixth day."** This is the conclusion of the creation account in Genesis and it may be one of the most important statements in the whole account. We see this grand image of God looking over His creation, seeing the beauty and the perfectness of His creation and it was all VERY good. This is a bit different than the other times God says His creation is good because the word "very" does not appear anywhere except right here. One thing has been added to the creation since the last time everything was "good" and that one thing is humans. When humans are created, it is then that God looks at His creation and it is "very" good. The phrase for "very good" in Hebrew is *"Tov Me'od"* which can be translated as "exceedingly good" or "pleasant". The thought that should be provoked here is all the God has created has been good up to this point. Now, with the creation of humans, it is that much better. The creation of humans has so many different layers of meaning not only in our eyes but in God's as well.

## Conclusion

Now we have come to the conclusion of the Genesis 1 creation account and what a journey it has been. The Genesis 1 account ends with **"And there was evening, and there was morning-the sixth day."** This ends the account and the sixth day that is packed with so much information. The six day creation summary account ends here but it is only the beginning of the story. I hope you have learned as much as I have and have enjoyed learning all about the wonderful creation God has made. Let us never forget the lessons learned even in this account and how wonderfully in God's image we were made.

# Day 7 The Sabbath Rest

## Pattern of 7

There is a significant pattern of 7's in Genesis 1 that culminate in the final day (day 7) of creation. Each line of the seventh day poem consists of seven Hebrew words showing completeness and fullness of what God had done.

Other patterns of SEVEN in Genesis 1 [from Umberto Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I, From Adam to Noah (Genesis 1-6), p. 13]

- There are SEVEN WORDS in Genesis 1:1, and FOUR-TEEN WORDS in Gen 1:2
- There are SEVEN PARAGRAPHS in Gen 1:1-2:3 marked by "evening and morning"
- The concluding SEVENTH paragraph in Gen 2:1-3 begins three lines which have SEVEN WORDS each: 2:2-3a

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>And-he-finished</i>	God	on-the-day	the-seventh	his-work	which	He-made
and-he-ceased	On the day	the-seventh	from-all	his-work	which	He-made
and-he-blessed	God	the	day	the-seventh	and-he-sanctified	it



## Resting on the Seventh Day

Two key “rest” words associated with Sabbath in the Hebrew Bible	
<i>shabat</i> — Gen 2:1-2	<i>nuakh</i> — Exod 20:11
Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. On the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He <b>rested (Heb. <i>shabat</i>)</b> on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.	For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and <b>rested (Heb. <i>nuakh</i>)</b> on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the <b>sabbath (Heb. <i>shabbat</i>)</b> day and made it holy.

***shabat*** = “to cease from”: God ceases from his work because “it is finished” (Gn 2:1).

Compare Josh 5:12 “The manna **ceased** (*shabat*) on that day...”

***nuakh*** = “to take up residence”

- Exodus 10:14 “the Locusts came up over the land of Egypt **and rested** in all the land.”
- By using these two words through the Hebrew Bible, we elicit images of God ceasing from work at the end of Genesis 1 but also filling and taking up residence in His own creation and more specifically in the garden. Yahweh will do this also in the tabernacle and temple and eventually in believers in the New Testament. The idea stems from what God did in the very beginning, resting and dwelling in His own creation.
- This day is the only day that has no concluding “morning and evening” statement which suggests that the seventh day sabbath rest continues forever and was meant to. It shows that God’s ultimate purpose for creation was not to ruthlessly be the sole authoritarian in the universe but to delegate authority and dwell with His creation forever, not simply “rule over it”.

# Image of God and Humanity's Vocation

## What is the Image of God?

We first find this phrase "image of God" in Genesis 1. Genesis 1:26-27 says, **"Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us."** First we must notice that the pronoun "us" is used here. This most likely refers to the triune identity of God. This can be a conversation for a later time. We also notice that God is creating human beings, he is creating us. But there is a model after which we are made. Genesis says we are made in God's image, to be like Him or in His likeness. This word "image" means like an image in a picture or a resemblance of something. It is used to represent something else, so that when someone looks upon the image, they think of what that image is representing. This is what the image of God means: to represent God here on earth and to be like Him. We are to be the resemblance and likeness of God. Not that we are God, but that we are to be his representatives on this earth, all humans male and female (Gen 1:27).

The writer of Psalm 8 was really trying to meditate on what it meant to be made in God's image. The writer looked at the night sky and all of its splendor and thought, **"what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them? Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority"** (Psalm 8:4-6). Compared to the universe and all of God's creation, we humans seem finite and useless. Yet the writer says that we were made lower than God himself but we were given glory and honor because He made us in his image. He gave us responsibility and the will to rule which we will discuss next week. We humans, though small compared to the rest of the universe, were given something special, our identity in God.

## 4 Links to the Image

Essential Link: The son bears essential resemblance to the father so humanity as a whole bears resemblance to its Creator God

Functional Link: Humanity's role and duty within the creation narrative

Status Link: Dominion and authority over creatures. Not made as servants as in other pagan religions but put in positions to reflect God's rule on earth.

Gender Link: God's nature is expressed through male and female genders, each with their own unique characteristics reflecting one God.

So in conclusion, to be made in the image means that we have been created as a representation of Yahweh himself. We have been created just as he wanted us so that we should reflect His character and being. This is a great honor as the Psalmist concluded and the greatest in the universe.

## Image of God: 3 Commands in our Vocation

The first two commands come in Genesis 1. After the humans are created, God gives them two commands or responsibilities for representing God. The first comes in Genesis 1:26 which says, **“They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”** The humans were given a royal role on earth as rulers over the animals. It is interesting to notice that the animals were created before the humans on day 6, but God elevates the humans to this position of authority. What we see here is God handing over some of his power to rule to the humans he has just created. They were to be the earth rulers, just as the lights in the sky were meant to “rule”. Being part of God’s representatives is ruling with divine authority here on earth.

The other command we see in this chapter in verse 28. **“Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.””** The second command is to procreate and reproduce ourselves so that all humans can reign and rule the earth together. This creates a beautiful royal picture of humans sharing the divine royalty that God established to the first humans. Everyone shares in helping keep order on the earth. The problem of course comes with the fall in the garden. However, these are the first two commands humans are given to represent God. Rule the earth on God’s behalf and reproduce.

The third command comes later in the biblical story. Since being made in God’s image means that we resemble God and we are an image of God Himself, it makes sense that a command is given that humans should not make an image or an idol of Yahweh or any other God because we ourselves are his image. In Exodus 20:4 God says, **“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.”** Although humans eventually fail at this command as well, the concept behind the idea is impeccable. God did not want his image bearers to make an image of Him because they were to be His image. If humans were to create another image, they would be rejecting their own role as bearing His image, and that is exactly what we did.

We were meant to be his perfect image bearing people, but we ultimately failed. With each new human failing to be God’s image there had to be one human to fix that problem and restore humanity to its Creator. Eventually there was a human that was the perfect image of God, that we could never be. His name is Jesus.

# Jesus: The True Image of God

When it comes to being images of God, we all fail to act as we represent God. Thankfully a human came along that restores us to what we were meant to be, his name is Jesus.

2 Corinthians 4:4 tells us that Jesus is the image of God.

In Psalm 8, humans are mentioned as being made lower than the angels but we were given a crown and glory to represent Yahweh here on earth. Since humanity failed at doing so, Jesus came along and became that human. Hebrews 2:9 says, **“What we do see is Jesus, who for a little while was given a position “a little lower than the angels”; and because he suffered death for us, he is now “crowned with glory and honor.”**” Jesus came to earth as a human, which is why he was in a position that was lower than the angels. Then, Jesus died on the cross to restore humanity and because he was resurrected and now sits at the right hand of God, he was crowned with glory and honor. He suffered to gain what we humans rejected: to rule as God’s representatives.

2 Timothy 2:12 gives us a promise of hope through suffering. **“If we endure hardship, we will reign with him.”** Pauls wants Timothy to know that if we should remain faithful through trials and suffer because of His name, we will be restored to a position of authority. More than that, we will reign alongside Jesus our Savior.

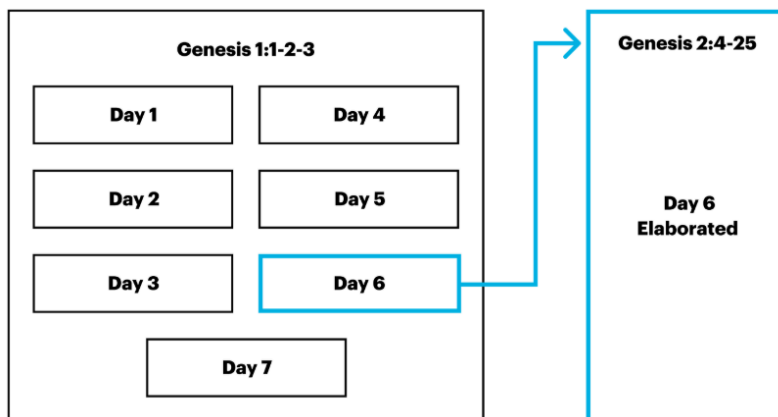
Colossians 3:10 says, **“And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”** When we accept Christ as our savior, we put on a new self. The old sinful ways leave us and the Spirit makes us new. This new self is always being worked on to become more and more like Yahweh. Paul says that we are being renewed in knowledge so that we can become more like the image of God we were created to be. Jesus brings us from the broken path to the new path that leads to being renewed in God’s image. He does that because Jesus is the perfect image.

1 Corinthians 15:49 reveals, **“Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.”** We were created just like Adam and Eve. However, because of Jesus, we are also being renewed to be the image of Jesus who is in heaven. Humanity had no hope before, but Jesus saves us and restores us to become the image bearers we were created to be. Praise Yahweh!

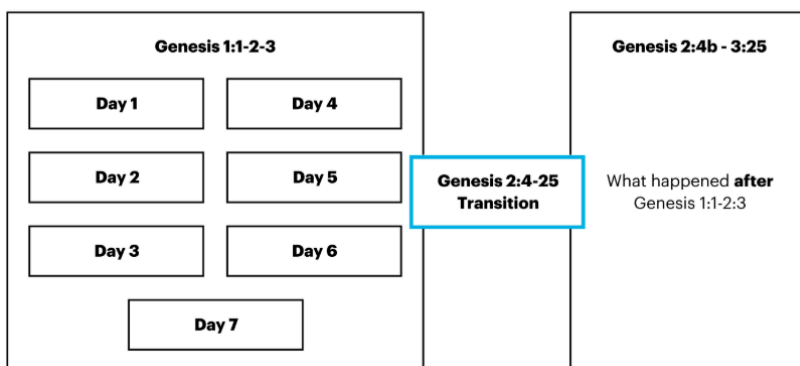
# What is Genesis 2? A Recap or Sequel?

When it comes to Genesis 2, many have debated its function in the Genesis narrative. Traditionally, it has been understood as a zoom in on day 6 and it gives more detail to what happened on day 6. Later biblical scholarship started looking at this chapter more and determined it may not be a recap of day 6 but a sort of sequel to the Genesis 1 poem. So which is it?

## Recap

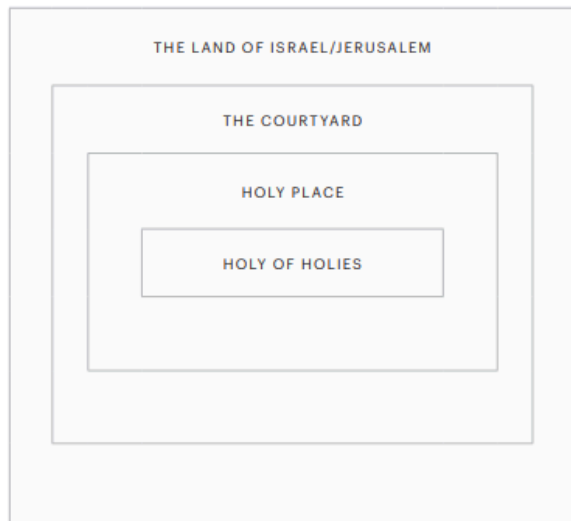
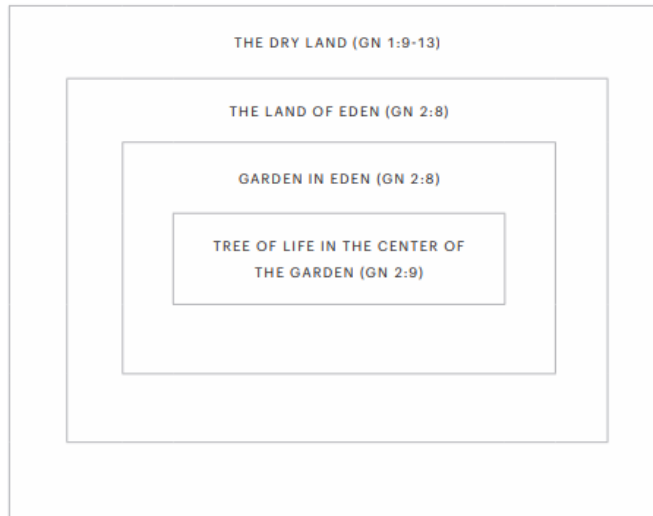


## Sequel

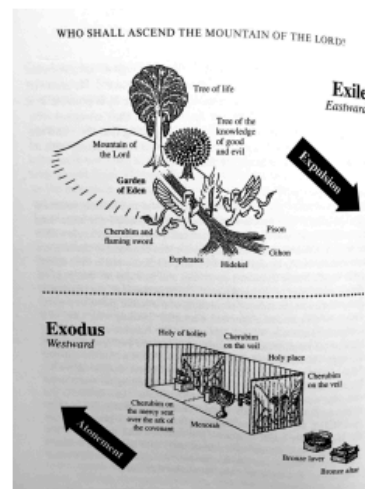


These two views each have issues both textually and contextually with them. A simpler view may be that Genesis 1 is an ideal of the ordered cosmos and Genesis 2 then helps the reader grasp a reality of humanity and the garden setting. This is not simply a recap or more detailed account of day 6, but it tells the narrative of humanity's role in the garden and helps set up themes that will develop later in the story. Genesis 1 tells us that God made humanity in his image. Genesis 2 tells us of the first two humans, Adam and Eve who live out the ideal cosmic reign of humanity in a garden.

# The Garden in Eden



Tabernacle/Temple	Cosmic Geography In Genesis 1:1-2:3	Cosmic Geography in Genesis 2:4-3:24
Holy of holies	Heaven	Cosmic Mountain // The middle of the garden
Holy place <i>menorah // tree cherubim // animals priests // humans</i>	The land fruit trees <i>animals 'adam</i>	The garden in Eden
Courtyard <i>bronze sea [1 Kgs 8:23]</i>	The waters	The land outside the garden



The topography of the Eden narrative sets us up for the rest of the biblical story. It represents the tabernacle in the wilderness and later the temple in Jerusalem. The biblical ideal for being in God's presence is being in the center. In the garden, this was represented by the tree of life. In the temple, it was represented by the holy of holies. The biblical story is then telling a narrative of humanity's restoration back to the garden ideal where God directly dwells in the presence of his earthly rulers.

## Eden as a Mountain

Genesis 2:10

Now, a river went out from Eden to water the garden; and from there it separated and became four heads

- Eden is high enough in elevation from the surrounding lands that water, one river, is able to flow from it as it waters the garden in Eden and separates out.

Ezekiel 28:13-14

You were in Eden, the garden of God ... you were on the holy mountain of God.

- Ezekiel records Eden as being a holy mountain where God's presence dwelt.

# Humanity: Man and Woman

## Problem: A Lone Human and No Help-Counterpart

18a and Yahweh God said,  
"It is not good for **the human** to be **alone** (לִבְדּוּ)  
18b I will make a **help-counterpart for him**

### Yahweh Acts

A 19a **and Yahweh formed** from the ground  
**every living creature of the field**  
**and every bird of the skies**

### Animals Brought But No Counterpart

B 19b **and he brought them to the human** to see what he would **call it** ,  
and everything which the human would **call it** a living being,  
that was its name."

### Human Names

A' 20a and the human **called** the names  
of every **beast**  
**and bird of the skies**  
**and every living creature of the field**

## Problem Not Solved: No Help-Counterpart

20b **but for the human there was not found a help-counterpart**

### Yahweh Acts

A 21 and Yahweh caused to fall a deep sleep on the human and he slept  
and he took one from his sides  
and he closed the **flesh** of its place

### Woman Brought And Counterpart!

B 22 and Yahweh **built** the side which he took from the human into **woman** ,  
**and he brought her to the human**

### Human Names

A' 23 and the human said  
This time, bone from my bones, and **flesh** from my **flesh** .  
This one will be **called** (יְקָרָא) **woman** for from **man** this one was taken

## Problem Solved: Lone Human is Now Two

24 For this reason,  
a **man** will leave his father and his mother,  
and he will cling to his **woman** ,  
and they will become **one flesh** .  
25a and the **two of them** were naked,  
25b **the human** and his **woman** ,  
and they were not ashamed."

In this scene, the problem is that the one human, Adam, is alone. So Yahweh acts by bringing animals to him, though the human names them, there was none found that could be like him. So God acts again, this time taking from his side and creating another human from the first human. The problem is solved through the one human leaving of previous relationships to create another, a relationship unified by their identities. It is also interesting to note that Eve was built from Adam's side, not necessarily his rib. These architectural words give the sense that woman was created from man's half. She was placed "in front of" Adam, signifying a mirror image, or equality. There is no superior or inferior language being used in this account.



## Scientific Adam vs Biblical Adam

As we look at Genesis 1, the last thing God does on day 6 is create humans. He creates humanity, literally, (man) in His own image. He creates male and female and gives them the command to multiply, have children, and rule the land. Then in Genesis 2, we see an account that describes Adam being made from the dust, Eve is made from Adam's rib and then they are placed in the garden. The text would seem to indicate they are the only ones in the garden. Here are where groups of beliefs separate.

1. Adam and Eve were the first humans. No other humans on Earth
2. Adam and Eve were NOT the first humans. There were humans outside the garden but they were created by God and put in the garden.
3. Adam and Eve were figurative and mythical, not real people.

With these views, I'm sure there are many more in between but these are the ones I wanted to highlight. The first has been traditionally accepted. This would mean that evolutionary science would be off if Adam and Eve were created out of dust by God, then humans could not have evolved from apes.

The second view leaves a little more wiggle room. It still validates the miracle of Adam and Eve being created and still says there were other humans on the earth. This would mean that there were other humans on the earth, outside of the garden. But Adam and Eve were still created separately and put in the garden and we still descend from them genealogically. This view holds that there would have to be interbreeding going on. This allows for evolution to still stay existent as well as Adam and Eve still being created and everything happening in the garden as Scripture dictates.

There are still some bumps with this view because one might point to Genesis 1:26 as proof that humans were created on day 6, with no indication of evolutionary process. Other biblical authors like Paul also seem to believe that Adam was the first human. This is all based on the interpretation of Genesis 1-2.

However you look at these passages and scientific evidence, one thing remains true about humans. Humanity was created in God's image (1:26) and again that is the point of the text. Humans were created to rule and we failed, and so we needed a Savior to save us, which points us to Jesus.

## Creation and Humanity: New Testament's Use of Genesis 1 & 2

Within the synoptic gospels, (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) there remains similar usage of Genesis 1 and 2. In Matthew and Mark, marriage and divorce are discussed in reference to Genesis 2:24. When we look at the use of Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:24, both Matthew and Mark record the same account when Jesus is questioned by the Pharisees about divorce. They ask him if it is lawful. Jesus quotes Gen 1:27 to say that marriage is between man and woman, and then combines it with Gen 2:24 to say that marriage is the unification as one unit. God instituted this harmonious relationship and so they should not separate.

The beginning of the gospel of John reveals the work and role of Jesus the Messiah in creation itself. John 1:1-5 **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."** We later learn in this opening chapter that Jesus is the Word. He was distinct, yet part of God in the beginning working through creation just as the commands of God were in Genesis 1. The themes of John convey the same themes as Genesis 1, portraying God's light as overcoming darkness. This work of creation is then tied to the work of the cross as the light of mankind is put to death. Only to be resurrected to bring new life just as he did in Genesis 1, bringing life to the wild and waste cosmos.

The letters of the New Testament also hold truths about the first chapters of Genesis. Romans 1:20 says that God's power and nature are revealed through creation itself. Christ is seen as the sustainer of creation in Colossians 1:16 and Hebrews confirms the cosmos formed by God and His command. In 1 Corinthians 11, the issue Paul is dealing with is head coverings in public worship. He says that men should not cover their heads because he is the glory of God and woman is the glory of man because woman was made from man. However, Paul says "in the Lord" they are not independent of each other showing the unity that was formed between man and woman in the garden. They are both created by God and both are under the authority of the Creator.

# Tragedy in the Garden

## Literary Structure

### Naked and Unashamed

2:25 And the **two** of them were **naked** (ערום), the human and his **woman**, and they were not **ashamed**.

3:1a Now the snake was more **shrewd** (ערום) than any beast of the field which Yahweh God had made.

### The Dialogue

#### The Snake

- a 3:1b And it [the snake] said to the woman ,  
b "Indeed, **has God said** ,  
c 'You **shall not eat from any tree of the garden** '?"

#### The Woman

- a 2 and the woman said to the snake ,  
b " **From the fruit** of the **trees of the garden** **we may eat** ;  
3 but **from the fruit** of **the tree** which is in the middle **of the garden** ,  
**God has said** ,  
c 'You **shall not eat from it** or touch it, or **you will die** :"

#### The Snake

- a 4 and the snake said to the woman ,  
" **You surely will not die** !  
b 5 For **God knows**  
c that in the day **you eat from it** **your eyes will be opened** ,  
and you will be like **elohim, knowers of good and bad** !"

### The Act

- a 6 and the woman saw that **the tree was good for eating** ,  
b and that it was desirable to **the eyes** ,  
and that the tree was desirable **to make one wise** ,  
c and **she took** from its fruit and **she ate** ;  
c' and **she gave** also to her husband with her, and **he ate** .  
b' 7a and the eyes of both of them were opened ,

### Naked and Ashamed

- 7b and **they knew** that they were **naked** (ערום) ;  
a' and they sewed **leaves of a fig tree** together and made themselves loin coverings.

## The Snake

Let's start at the beginning, with the serpent. Who or what is this serpent? For starters, Genesis says that the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals. This puts the "shrewdness" level if you will a little above the animals God had just made in Genesis 1. It also means that the serpent is a creation of God Himself. There is nothing that persuades us to think that this serpent was some being not created by God and so we can assume that it is one of God's creations. This serpent is also the first creation that tries to create chaos and disrupt God's good world. Up to this point, everything has been called "good" and even "very good". This creature, however, is not depicted this way.

The Hebrew word for "serpent" here is *nachash* and it means "serpent" or "snake". There is no indication at all that this is an allegory or a symbol for something else. The narrative describes the serpent as just that, an actual living, breathing creature that apparently can speak. This can make people a little skeptical, but I look at it the same way I do as reading that Adam and Eve could hear God walking in the garden a little later in the story. The garden was a much different world than we live in now, so a lot of this would not make any sense to us in the context of today's living. But it is the Bible, and so we must believe that creating a talking creature wouldn't be too hard for God. So who is this serpent? The evidence points to it being the satan who we call the devil, the leader of the spiritual rebels who wants us to rebel too. In Revelation 20:2, we get this information, "He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan". The dragon, serpent, devil, and satan are all words describing the same rebel. The "ancient rebel" should be a [hyperlink back to this story in Genesis 3](#). This is a character who wreaks havoc on God's world, but ultimately loses the war.

## The Rebellion or Fall

What we should focus on in the story is what happens next. This serpent asks only the woman a very important question. "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" This question invokes doubt into the mind of the one being asked and it is one of the devil's many strategies to get us away from God. Doubting God and His word is one of the many ways the devil gets into our head and this is his first attempt at making the humans rebel. Eve then comes back with a response that seems good at first glance but a closer look reveals that doubt has crept in and sin is crouching at the door.

Her response to this doubt-provoking question is this, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" Here Eve quotes God from when He gave them instructions on the tree of which not to eat. This invites the reader to go back in the narrative to God's instructions to recall what God had said. So let's do that. The instructions came from one chapter before in Genesis 2. Genesis 2:15-17 is where the instruction takes place. It says, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the

Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.'" God told man that he must not take from the tree of knowledge of good and evil because if they do, they will certainly die. It seems as though this is a pretty clear instruction, as it should be. But here is something interesting. In the following verses, God forms woman from man. This means that Eve was not around yet when this instruction took place. Eve had not been created. And who does the serpent go after with this doubting question? The one who wasn't around to hear the instruction, Eve. Now Eve had to have knowledge of the command or she wouldn't have been able to quote it. However, she did not quote it exactly. She says that God said, "and you must not touch it". Nowhere in Scripture do we see God saying never to touch it. The divine command is only not to eat of the tree.

We can also add that Eve said that God said they must not eat from the tree in the middle of the garden. Well according to Genesis 2:9, there are two trees in the middle of the garden, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

The serpent's first response to the woman's response is to immediately deflect the words of Yahweh. God said, "for when you eat from it you will certainly die." For us as the readers of this narrative, we should immediately know this is not right. The serpent has made a false statement. God said they would die and then the serpent comes back with a response that is the complete opposite of that statement, as he says they will not die. Now the woman has a choice to make. Do I believe in God, who has made everything and given me immortality, or do I believe in this serpent who seems pretty smart too. The decision gets harder when the serpent adds in the next line.

Here, the devil acts as if he knows more than these humans by stating what God "knows". God has never said these words to the humans as far as Scripture is concerned and this adds to the drama. The devil seems to be trying to make God the bad guy here. The devil spins God into this being that is hiding something from His creation, since He has never told His creation this statement. The phrase "for God knows" indicates that the serpent is trying to make the Creator the secretive being by not letting His creation eat of this tree, while all along it is the serpent himself who is the deceiver. So "the satan" tells the humans that when they eat of it, their eyes will be opened and they will be like God knowing good and evil. Here's another trick to this statement, the humans are already like God. They have already been made in the image of God (Gen 1:27), and were given the divine command to rule the earth. They are already like God. In this instance, the devil tries to lure them into thinking they don't have something when in fact they really do. It is just another strategy the devil uses to get us to fall even today. There are times when we think we don't have forgiveness or that we're not good enough for God. The devil doesn't want us to remember we were made in His image and that Jesus is our Savior. It is a strategy he has used since the beginning and we must be aware of it to stay alert and focused on our journey of faith.

So the devil, speaking falsely on behalf of God, says that God knows when they eat from the tree, their eyes will be opened and they will be like God, knowing good and bad when they eat of the tree. We have talked about the idea of humans already being like God, being made in the image and given the divine role to rule. However, the devil presents another opportunity here to be like God in the fact that they will know good and bad. Up to this point, everything has been good. God pronounces everything "good" in His creation and even at the end He pronounces it "very good". This is the first time we see the word "bad" appear in the Bible. It is the Hebrew word "rah" and it literally means "bad" or "unpleasant". So the serpent paints this picture of eating of the fruit and becoming like God in the fact of knowing the difference between good and bad and having the power to define what is good and bad. Something else that is interesting to note is when the serpent says "you will be like God" in our English Bibles, it doesn't exactly say that in Hebrew. What it does say in Hebrew is that they would be "as gods...". The word for "god" here is plural and it points to the meaning being that they will be like "gods" or "spiritual beings". The serpent is, again, trying to point the humans to a false statement on behalf of God and to a greater reality to which they already have. The serpent paints this illusion in their minds that if they don't eat of the fruit, they have nothing and are nothing. When in reality, they have everything if they don't eat it.

"When the woman saw that the fruit was good for food and pleasing to the eye", let's stop right there. The first thing that should be noted is that Eve saw the fruit. Sight is a very important aspect of our lives and in this case it is detrimental. She saw that the fruit was good for food. This is false alarm number one. The tree of knowing good and bad was not meant to be eaten and this was a command from God Himself. This is not to say that it probably did indeed look like good fruit to eat (hence the "pleasing to the eye" phrase), however, the command was clear. Also, in this new light that the serpent just presented on how it would elevate the humans' status, it would look all the more better. The fruit was also "desirable for gaining wisdom". This is false alarm number two. The serpent just finished making the case of how eating this fruit would open their eyes and they would be like God and they would know good and bad. Eve was not wrong to conclude that the fruit was desirable for gaining wisdom. The wisdom that would be gained would not be God's wisdom but rather her own wisdom. The temptation to define good and bad for herself and to rule with her own wisdom got the best of her. She decided that the fruit would gain her wisdom instead of trusting in God's wisdom.

We then see that Eve "took some and ate it". This is where the separation between God and man happens, right here in this moment. The moment she eats the fruit, the world becomes broken and the serpent has his first victory. Not only did she eat it but she also handed some to her husband, Adam.

Adam, the only silent character through this whole dialogue. He has not said a word to his wife or to the serpent but has remained silent. The story even makes a point to say that he has been here the whole time. He was with her when the serpent was talking to her. He was with her when she was contemplating the decision to take the fruit. He was right there when she took the fruit

and ate it, yet he remained silent. Not only has he not said a word, but when the fruit is handed to him he eats it as well. They both give in, and they both have sinned.

The next verse is profound as well. Genesis 6:7 says, "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves." The phrase "their eyes were opened" is a phrase of sorrow and despair as used in this case. Their eyes have been opened to the wisdom of the world and of their own minds. It is a wisdom that causes separation and shame as we will see. The fact that they realized they were naked should make a link to a phrase in Genesis chapter 2. The last statement right before this story begins is "Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame." They had no shame before. Now that they are choosing to live by their own wisdom, they feel that nakedness is a shame and so they make coverings for themselves. This shows that they were already starting to separate themselves from each other. The first sin causes separation immediately between them and God and now between each other. They feel shame and vulnerability by being naked in front of each other so they have to find some way to hide their shame and hide from each other and it only spirals down from here.

The next event that spirals this story further and further down the road to disaster is verses 8-10. "Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." Adam and Eve hear God as He is walking in the garden and they repeat the same mistake they made to each other, they decide to hide from God. Not only have they hid from themselves but now they have hid from God. Now separation from God is made clear in the narrative. Adam then responds to God's calling by making an excuse as to why he was hiding. Adam says that he was afraid because he was naked. Adam now uses the one vulnerability he has, nakedness, to use as an excuse to hide from God.

Adam says that he was "afraid because I was naked". Let's recall the command for a moment that God gave to the man. The command from God was that the day they ate of the tree, they would die. That was the command. The serpent then tries to twist that command as if God never said those words. Perhaps, Adam is now afraid because He remembers the command from God and thinks his life is now over. It is interesting to speculate that perhaps Adam wasn't afraid because he was naked, but rather he was afraid because he *realized* he was naked and realized the consequences of his actions. Separation from God and each other was and still is the first colossal, detrimental effect of ruling by our own wisdom.

## Immediate Questions

As soon as Adam and Eve realize they are naked, the narrative shifts to Yahweh coming onto the scene. Yahweh speaks 7 times in this section, mirroring the seven days of creation.

1. And Yahweh Elohim called to the human and he said to him, “**Where** are you?”
2. And he said, “**Who** told you that you are naked?”
3. And Yahweh Elohim said to the woman, “**What** is this you have done?”
4. And Yahweh Elohim said to the snake ...
5. And to the woman, he said ...
6. And to the man, he said ...
7. And Yahweh Elohim said, “Look, the human has become like one of us ...”

Yahweh asks three questions to the human, “Where”, “Who”, and “What”, become three essential questions that allow for the humans to take responsibility but fail. Yahweh then makes three successive statements to the snake, woman, and man.



# Curses of the Fall

## The Snake Is Cursed

- 14 and Yahweh God said to the snake ,  
" Because you have done this thing ,  
you are cursed more than every beast and more than every living creature of the field  
on your belly you will go,  
and dust you will eat .  
all the days of your life .

## Consequences For The Woman

- 15 And I will set hostility  
a between you and the woman ,  
a' and between your seed and her seed ,  
b he will he will strike your head your head  
b' and you will strike his heel."
- 
- 16 and to the woman he said ,  
a "I will greatly multiply your grief and your conception ,  
a' in grief you will birth children ,  
b and your desire will be for your husband,  
b' and he will rule over you."

## Consequences For The Man

- 17 and to human he said ,  
" Because you have listened to the voice of your wife ,  
  
and you ate from the tree about which I commanded you, saying,  
' You will not eat from it.'  
cursed is the ground on account of you;  
in grief you will eat from it  
all the days of your life .
- 
- a 18 thorns and thistles it shall sprout for you;  
b and you will eat the plants of the field;  
a' 19 by the sweat of your face  
b' you will eat bread,
- 
- a until you return to the ground  
b for from it you were taken;  
b' for you are dust  
a' and to dust you will return.

As God was speaking to each character in this story because of what they had done, God says something that will spark the journey of the Bible. In Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Here, God is talking to the serpent and He says that an offspring will come from the woman who will crush the serpent's head and that the serpent will strike his heel. The crushing blow is to the head of the serpent who is now the villain in the story. So as readers of the Hebrew Bible as we journey through the narrative, we are on the lookout for this seed of the woman. We are awaiting this human who can crush the head of the villain so we can have the victory.

## Curse for Serpent

Notice the snake was the only creature cursed in this scenario. The ground is cursed and the serpent is cursed but not the two humans. Repeated words such as "eat" are repeated to reflect the tragedy of the eating of the tree that led to failure. The serpent will eat dust and the human will return to dust.

## Consequence for Woman

For the woman, many see this as a consequence of labor pains but that is not what the Hebrew word suggests. The Hebrew word for "pain" here is 'etseb and is best defined as hurtful or grief. This implies more emotional grief and pain than physical pain from labor. This will define the toil and hardship of pregnancy and the many sorrows that would follow from women laboring through childbearing. Let us remember that through this pain there will be a seed of the woman (Jesus) that will finally vindicate and eradicate all pain and suffering when the restoration of all things has come.

Given the second part of Genesis 3:16 in its context, we can see how this verse has led to many misinterpretations and misapplication. Here is our view.

**Your desire [negative] will be for your husband,  
but he will rule [negative] over you.**

The consequence is focused on the woman here. She will desire something different than her husband, thus her desire would be for her husband to agree and make his will her will. This will be followed by a negative outcome as we see in the biblical narrative to follow, the husband will try to rule or have power over the woman to make her submit.

- Abraham and Sarai (Gen 12:10-20; 16:1-16)
- Isaac and Rebekah (Gen 27:1-46)
- Jacob and Rachel (Gen 29:1-43)

## Consequence for Man

The consequences for Adam, come in succession

- V.17b- The land will be cursed because of his actions. The land will produce thorns and thistles instead of ripe and lively vegetation that is edible.
- V.18- Instead of eating the beautiful fruit trees of eden with no toil to do so, humanity will not work tirelessly to eat vegetation of the field. This vegetation of the field was originally designed to feed the creatures of day 6. Now humanity's diet is reduced to that of the creatures they are supposed to be ruling over.
- V.19- Humanity will now work tirelessly to produce food to eat and the ground will be resistant to yield the crop. It is a job that is necessary for survival, especially in ancient cultures, and one that highlights the condition of the human. The human who is made of land will struggle with the land and the human body will eventually go back into the land.

# Exile Out of Eden

## Eve's Name and a Divine Mercy

20 and the human **called** the name of his woman "Hawwah",  
"for she is the mother of all **living (חַיִּים)**"

21 and God made for human and his wife, garments of skin,  
and he clothed them.

- The Hebrew for "woman" is *Hawwah* which means "mother of all life". However, its semitic roots also link to the word for "snake" exemplifying the deception of the woman by the snake.
- The word for "skin" is also a wordplay on the word *ezer*. This means the garments of animal skin become an inverse of who the woman (*ezer*) was supposed to be. Instead of being one who helps deliver her other half, man, she deceived him and so they both became aware of their nakedness.
- This act of God providing garments for them, just as he provided woman for man, tree for eating, land for subduing, is seen as an act of mercy.

22 And Yahweh God said,

"Look, the human has become like one of us, **knowing good and bad**,  
and now so that he won't send out his hand and take also from **the tree of life (חַיִּים)**,  
and eat and **live (חַיִּים)** forever ..."

23 and Yahweh God **sent him out** from the garden  
to work the ground from which he was taken

24a and he **banished** the human

24b and he made to dwell at the **east of the garden of Eden**  
cherubim and the flame of the whirling sword to guard way to **the tree of life (חַיִּים)**.

- God created the human and placed him in the garden. > The human is banished from the garden.
- God causes the tree of life and knowing good and bad to grow. > Humans are cut off from them.
- Before the garden there was no human to work the ground. > The human works the ground outside Eden.
- Humanity was made mortal so that by obeying God they could remain in the garden and receive the gift of immortality > Now they are cut off and sent into the land of mortality.
- Humanity was directed to guard/keep the garden. > Humanity is now guarded/kept from the garden.

# Outside Eden: Genesis 4

## Literary Design

Scenes		Overview
<b>A:</b> 4:1-2: Birth Scene 1		"and the human knew his wife Eve, and she <b>conceived</b> and she gave birth..." Two sons born: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cain + <b>wordplay on son's name</b></li><li>• Abel (= "vapor")</li></ul>
<b>B:</b> 4:3-16: Narrative Panel 1		Cain <b>murders</b> his brother Abel <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• v. 3-7: The sacrifices and Cain's test</li><li>• v. 8-11: Cain murders his brother and dialogue with Yahweh</li><li>• v. 12-16: God's punishment and his mercy on Cain</li></ul> God's mercy: <b>7x</b> blood vengeance declared for Cain
<b>A:</b> 4:17-18: Birth Scene 2		"And Cain knew his wife and she <b>conceived</b> and gave birth to Enoch..." <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Builds a city named after his son</li></ul>
<b>B:</b> 4:19-24: Narrative Panel 2		Lemek <b>murders</b> a young man <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• v. 19: Lemek's two wives</li><li>• v. 20-22: Lemek's three sons</li><li>• v. 23-24: Lemek's murderous poem</li></ul> Lemek declares <b>77x</b> blood vengeance on himself
<b>A:</b> 4:25-26: Birth Scene 3		"And the human <b>knew</b> again his wife and she gave birth to a son..." Two sons born: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seth + <b>wordplay on son's name</b></li><li>• Enosh (= "humanity")</li></ul>

The literary design of Genesis 4 focuses on three birth scenes, separated by two narratives about the descendants of Adam and Eve. Both narratives centralize the idea of murder and how life outside the garden is mortal and fleeting. This emphasizes the mortality of humanity outside the garden and shows the effects of the exile. Both narratives also have the theme of 7 within them, declaring vengeance on those who murder them in cycles of 7.

The two birth scenes are interesting when we look at Eve's words. In Cain's birth, she says "I have created a human with God. More likely, this translation is saying "I have created a human just like Yahweh creates." It is a sign of her arrogance and "wisdom" that resulted from eating from the tree. She believes she has the same creative power and wisdom as God. When Seth is born, she says "God appointed me another offspring". Now her words reflect the idea that it is God who decides and gives life to offspring who will take the place of the one she believed she created.

# Cain and Abel

## Cain and Abel's Offering

- a 2b and **Abel** was a shepherd of flocks,  
b but **Cain** was a tiller of the ground,  
c 3 and it came from the end of days  
b' and **Cain**  
brought from the fruit of the ground  
an offering to Yahweh.  
a' 4 and **Abel**  
also he brought from the firstborn of his flock  
and from their fat portions,

- a and Yahweh gazed  
b upon **Abel** and for his offering;  
b' 5 but upon **Cain** and upon his offering  
a' he did not gaze.

- a and there was **heat-anger** to Cain,  
b and his **face fell** ,  
6 and Yahweh said to Cain,  
a' Why is there **heat-anger** to you?  
b' and why has your **face fallen** ?  
a 7 If you **do good** ,  
b won't there be lifting up ,  
a' and if you **do not do good** ,  
b' **at the door, sin is a croucher** ,  
c' and its desire is for you,  
c' but you can **rule** it."

Abel- shepherd of the flock  
Cain- gardener

Farming was often associated with cities and agricultural wealth. Shepherding took place in the wilderness or desert outside of the cities. Thus Cain becomes associated with cities and Abel becomes the original symbol of those favored by God who were shepherds (Abraham, Moses, David, etc).

## The Two Offerings

Cain's offering is simply described as fruit from the ground. This could consist of vegetables or grain that he gathered to bring an offering before Yahweh.

Abel's offering is described two-fold. Abel's offering is from the firstborn, showing it was valuable and his offering was the fat portions, the most delicious part.

Yahweh doesn't reject Cain's offering but simply does not look upon it with favor. This means that Yahweh knows the intent of the offering. There was sacrifice in Abel's offering. He gave up the best of the best and gave it to God instead of saving it for himself. Cain's offering, though an acceptable offering, was not given with the greatest intention of offering the best he had.

