

# CREATION

*A Thematic Bible Study*

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## STUDY ONE

*The Creator and the Act of Creation*

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*"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."  
Genesis 1:1 (ESV)*

### Introduction

The creation of the universe is one of the most majestic and foundational themes in all of Scripture. It is not merely the opening chapter of Genesis — it is a theme that echoes from the first verse of the Bible to the last, woven throughout the Psalms, the Prophets, the Wisdom literature, the Gospels, and the Epistles. To understand creation as the Bible presents it is to understand something profound about who God is, what He made, and why it matters.

This first study draws primarily from Genesis 1–2, Proverbs 8, John 1, Colossians 1, Psalm 33, Psalm 104, and Hebrews 11. Together these passages give us a rich and complete picture of God as the sole, sovereign Creator — and of the order, purpose, and glory embedded in what He made.

We approach these texts with the understanding that they are to be taken as literal, historical accounts unless the language itself clearly indicates otherwise. Genesis 1 and 2 describe real events in real sequence.

## Before the Beginning — The Pre-Existent God

Before a single atom existed, God was. This is the most foundational assertion of Scripture. Creation did not produce God; God produced creation. The opening words of Genesis do not explain where God came from — they simply declare that He acted.

**Genesis 1:1 (NKJV)** *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

**John 1:1–3 (ESV)** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

**Psalm 90:2 (NKJV)** *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*

John 1:1 deliberately echoes Genesis 1:1 with the phrase 'In the beginning.' But where Genesis shows us God acting, John shows us who God is in that moment — specifically, that the Word (the Son) was already present, already God, and already the agent of all that would be made. This is not a contradiction of Genesis but a New Testament illumination of it.

The phrase 'without him was not any thing made that was made' (John 1:3, KJV) is absolute. There is no created thing that exists apart from Christ's agency. This includes the angels, the stars, the earth, time itself.

Psalm 90:2 presses the point further. God is not simply the first being in a sequence of events. He is 'from everlasting to everlasting' — eternal in both directions. He existed before time and will exist after it. Creation is His act; eternity is His nature.

Key Insight: The Bible never argues for God's existence. It assumes it. Genesis begins not with a proof but with a proclamation — and everything that follows flows from that proclamation.

## The Six Days — What God Actually Made

Genesis 1 presents creation as an ordered sequence of six literal days, each marked by the refrain 'and there was evening and there was morning.' The structure is not poetic embellishment — it is a precise account of what was made and when.

### Day 1 — Light (Genesis 1:3–5)

**Genesis 1:3–5 (NLT)** *Then God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light 'day' and the darkness 'night.' And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.*

The first act of creation is the calling forth of light — yet the sun and moon are not created until Day 4. This is significant. Light exists independently of the sun. God Himself is the source. This anticipates the closing vision of Revelation 22:5, where there is no night because the Lord God is the light.

The separation of light from darkness is also an act of order and purpose. God names them — 'Day' and 'Night' — which in Hebrew thinking implies sovereignty and ownership. To name something is to define its nature and purpose.

### Day 2 — The Expanse / Firmament (Genesis 1:6–8)

**Genesis 1:6–8 (NASB)** *Then God said, 'Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. God called the expanse heaven.*

God divides the waters — creating an expanse (Hebrew: *raqia*, a stretched-out dome or vault) that separates the waters above from those below. The 'waters above' likely refer to atmospheric water that would later fall as rain. The 'waters below' become the seas. This establishes the basic structure of the atmosphere and hydrosphere.

Notably, the phrase 'and God saw that it was good' is absent from Day 2. Some scholars suggest this is because the separation of the waters is not yet complete until Day 3 when the dry land appears and the seas are gathered.

### Day 3 — Dry Land and Vegetation (Genesis 1:9–13)

**Genesis  
1:9–11  
(ESV)**

*And God said, 'Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. And God said, 'Let the earth sprout vegetation...'*

Day 3 carries a double creative act — the gathering of the seas and the emergence of the land, and then the bringing forth of vegetation. This is the first appearance of living things. Plants are created to reproduce 'after their kind' — a phrase that appears ten times in Genesis 1, establishing the principle of fixed biological kinds that reproduce within their own category.

### Day 4 — Sun, Moon, and Stars (Genesis 1:14–19)

**Genesis  
1:14–16  
(NKJV)**

*Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years.' ... God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also.*

The sun, moon, and stars are created on Day 4 — not Day 1. Their purpose is explicitly given: to mark time ('signs, seasons, days and years') and to govern the rhythms of the earth. They are servants of creation's order, not its source. The Hebrew deliberately avoids the words 'sun' and 'moon' — using instead 'the greater light' and 'the lesser light' — likely to prevent any association with the sun-god and moon-god worship prevalent among surrounding nations.

The brief phrase 'He made the stars also' is remarkable in its understatement. The billions of galaxies and hundreds of billions of stars are mentioned in passing, subordinate to the lights that govern earth's days. This reflects Scripture's consistent perspective: creation exists in relation to God and to man — not the other way around.

### Day 5 — Sea Creatures and Birds (Genesis 1:20–23)

**Genesis  
1:20–21  
(ESV)**

*And God said, 'Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.' So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind.*

On Day 5, life fills the sea and sky. The word translated 'great sea creatures' (Hebrew: tanninim) is elsewhere translated as 'sea monsters' or 'great dragons.' These are real, large creatures — not mythological. Genesis does not sanitise the world God made. The creatures of the deep are His creation, acknowledged without fear.

## Day 6 — Land Animals and Man (Genesis 1:24–31)

**Genesis  
1:26–27  
(NKJV)**

*Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

The creation of man stands apart from everything else in several ways. First, God deliberates — 'Let Us make man.' This plural is significant. It is not a royal plural (a convention unknown in Hebrew). It reflects the internal counsel of the triune God. Second, man is made 'in the image of God' (imago Dei) — a designation given to nothing else in all of creation. Third, the creation of man is immediately paired with purpose: dominion over the earth and its creatures.

Genesis 2 fills in the details of Day 6 — how man was formed from the dust of the ground, how God breathed life into him, how the garden was planted, how the woman was made from Adam's rib. These are not a second, contradictory creation account. Genesis 1 gives the overview; Genesis 2 zooms into the sixth day with particular attention to man.

### ◆ SECTION 3 ◆

## Creation by the Word — The Spoken Universe

One of the most striking features of Genesis 1 is how God creates: He speaks. Eight times the phrase 'And God said' appears. The universe is not assembled; it is commanded into existence.

**Psalm 33:6,  
9 (ESV)**

*By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host... For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.*

**Hebrews  
11:3 (NKJV)**

*By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.*

Psalm 33:6 and 33:9 are a powerful compression of Genesis 1: He spoke — it came to be. He commanded — it stood firm. Creation ex nihilo (out of nothing) is not a later theological invention. It is embedded in the text from the start. Hebrews 11:3 makes it explicit: the visible world was not made from pre-existing visible material. It was called into existence from nothing by the word of God.

The word of God is not metaphorical in creation. It is the actual mechanism. When God speaks, reality is constituted. This is why the Word (John 1) being the agent of creation is entirely consistent — the Son is the eternal Word through whom all things were spoken into being.

#### ◆ SECTION 4 ◆

### Wisdom Present at Creation — Proverbs 8

Proverbs 8 contains one of the most remarkable and beautiful passages in the Old Testament — Wisdom speaking in the first person and describing her presence at the very moment of creation.

**Proverbs  
8:22–31  
(ESV)**

*The LORD possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth... When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep... then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.*

This passage in Proverbs has been understood in two complementary ways. First, Wisdom is personified as a divine attribute of God — His own wisdom that was present and active in the design of creation. Second, the New Testament strongly associates this personified Wisdom with Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:24, 30; Colossians 2:3). The description in verse 30 — 'beside him, like a master workman' — closely parallels John 1:3 ('all things were made through him').

What this passage adds to the picture is a sense of delight. Creation was not a reluctant or mechanical act. God's Wisdom — present at creation — was 'rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man' (v. 30–31). Creation is an overflow of God's goodness and joy.

The geographical details are also noteworthy: the 'circle on the face of the deep' (v. 27) likely describes the spherical horizon of the earth over the ocean. The 'fountains of the deep' (v. 28) appear again in Genesis 7:11 in connection with the flood. Proverbs 8 is not abstract theology — it contains specific, physical descriptions of the structure of the world God made.

## ◆ SECTION 5 ◆

### Christ as Creator — Colossians 1 and John 1

The New Testament is unambiguous: Jesus Christ is not merely a participant in creation, He is its originator and sustainer.

**Colossians 1:15–17 (ESV)** *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

**John 1:10 (NKJV)** *He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.*

Colossians 1:16 makes three distinct claims about Christ and creation: (1) all things were created through him — He is the agent; (2) all things were created for him — He is the goal; (3) he is before all things and in him all things hold together — He is the sustainer. Creation does not merely belong to the past. It is held in existence moment by moment by Christ.

The phrase 'firstborn of all creation' (v. 15) does not mean that Christ Himself was created. 'Firstborn' (prototokos) in the Hebrew-Greek world means the one who holds the pre-eminent position, the heir. Jacob is called 'firstborn' even though Esau was physically born first (Jer. 31:9). The very next verse (v. 16) makes clear that Christ is the creator of all things — which would be nonsensical if He were Himself a created being.

John 1:10 adds a poignant note. The world that Christ made did not recognise Him when He entered it. The Creator became a creature — and was rejected by His own creation. This is the great paradox of the Incarnation, made all the more weighty by understanding what creation says about who He is.

## The Glory of Creation — Psalm 104

Psalm 104 is an extended meditation on creation that tracks closely with the days of Genesis 1. It is worship, not merely description. The psalmist looks at the created order and sees God in every part of it.

**Psalm  
104:1–5  
(NASB)**

*Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great; You are clothed with splendor and majesty, covering Yourself with light as with a cloak, stretching out heaven like a tent curtain. He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters; He makes the clouds His chariot; He walks upon the wings of the wind... He established the earth upon its foundations, so that it will not totter forever and ever.*

**Psalm  
104:24  
(ESV)**

*O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.*

Psalm 104 moves through the sky (vv. 1–4), the earth and sea (vv. 5–9), water sources and vegetation (vv. 10–18), seasons and cycles (vv. 19–23), the sea and its creatures (vv. 24–26), and the dependence of all life on God's breath (vv. 27–30). It is a creation theology in poetic form.

Verse 30 is theologically dense: 'When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.' The Spirit of God is the life-giving power in creation (cf. Genesis 1:2 — 'the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters'). Creation is Trinitarian throughout: the Father commands, the Son speaks and constitutes, the Spirit animates and sustains.

## The Seventh Day — Rest and the Meaning of the Sabbath

**Genesis  
2:1–3 (ESV)**

*Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.*

The seventh day is unlike the other six. There is no creative command, no 'and there was evening and there was morning.' God rests — not because He was tired, but because creation

was complete. The rest of God is the declaration of completion: nothing more needs to be added.

The Sabbath is therefore not primarily about human rest — it is first a statement about the completeness and goodness of what God made. When Israel is commanded to observe the Sabbath in Exodus 20:11, the reason given is explicitly creation: 'For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day.' The Sabbath is a weekly memorial to creation.

### ◆ REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION ◆

1. Genesis 1 shows God creating by speaking. What does this tell us about the relationship between God's word and reality? How does this connect to how Scripture functions in our lives today?
2. John 1 and Colossians 1 both identify Christ as the creator and sustainer of all things. Why do you think this truth was emphasized in letters written to early churches facing false teaching?
3. Proverbs 8:30–31 describes Wisdom rejoicing and delighting in the world God made. What does it mean for your view of creation that it was made with joy and delight, not reluctance?
4. Man is the only creature made 'in the image of God.' How does this shape how we should treat other human beings, regardless of culture, condition, or circumstance?
5. The seventh day has no 'evening and morning.' Some theologians suggest God's rest is still ongoing — that we live in the seventh day. How does the Sabbath as a creation memorial change how you think about rest?

### Memory Verse

*"By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible."*

**Hebrews 11:3 (NKJV)**

## Looking Ahead — Study Two

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The second study takes us into Job 38–41, where God speaks directly to Job out of the whirlwind and describes the wonders of creation in breathtaking detail — the foundations of the earth, the storehouses of snow and hail, the constellations, the weather systems, and the great animals Behemoth and Leviathan. Alongside Job, we will draw on Isaiah 40, Psalm 19, and Romans 1 to see what creation declares about its Creator.