

God of Creation (First lesson from Genesis 1-2)

When I see your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and stars that you set in place, What is man that you are mindful of him? (Psalm 8:4-5)

What is the biblical creation history? The basic creation story is found in Genesis 1 and 2. While the triune nature of God is not explicit in the Genesis account, God does reveal an “us” within the Godhead (Gen 1:26). The Spirit (a mighty wind) is active in creation (Gen 1:2). Jesus the third person of the Holy Trinity was present (Let there be light - There was light) as attested in The Word became Flesh (Jn 1:1–3; Col 1:15–17).

Genesis 1: In the six days of creation, God formed light, the universe, and the earth (day 1); the sky and the atmosphere (day 2); dry land and all plant life (day 3); the stars and heavenly bodies, including the sun and moon (day 4); birds and water creatures (day 5); and all the land animals and man (day 6). Mankind is special above all other creatures because he bears the image of God and has the responsibility to steward and subdue the earth. All of creation was completed in six days in all its vast array and wondrous beauty. God announced that His creation was “very good”.

Genesis 2 takes a closer look at the creation of man. This passage is not a second creation account, nor is it contradictory to Genesis 1. Genesis 2 focuses God’s unique work concerning man. God formed man from the dust of the earth. After forming man’s body, God breathed life—a soul—into him. The fact that God chose to form man this way shows His great care in this process. God next placed the first man, Adam, in a special place, the Garden of Eden. Eden was beautiful and bountiful. Adam had almost everything he needed, including food and productive work. However, God was not done with man.

Creation vs. evolution: Charles Darwin was the first to develop a natural source for the process of evolution. He once identified himself as a Christian, but, as a result of some tragedies that took place in his life, he later renounced the Christian faith and the existence of God. Evolution is incompatible with both the Bible and faith in God. The creation vs. evolution debate is often done by scientists who are often atheists or agnostics. Sometimes scientists who believe in God and bible also debate on evolution as science is not against faith. However, the vast majority of evolutionary scientists hold that life evolved entirely without any intervention of a higher being. Modern theories of evolution are almost entirely a naturalistic science.β

The Bible tells us, “***The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God'***” (Psalm 14:1; 53:1). According to the Bible, anyone who denies the existence of God is a fool. Foolishness does not imply a lack of intelligence. By necessity, evolutionary scientists are brilliant intellectually. Foolishness indicates an inability to properly apply knowledge. Proverbs 1:7 tells us, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom

and discipline.” The Bible is clear: God is the Creator. Any interpretation of science that attempts to remove God from involvement with origins is incompatible with Scripture.

Heavens (Genesis 1:1): It refers to both physical and spiritual heavens. In many ancient cultures, people used the term heaven to describe three different “realms”—the sky, outer space, and then a spiritual heaven. The word “heaven” is used in at least three different senses in the Old Testament: 1. The sky. The place of clouds and birds. (Job 35:5 “Look to the heavens and see. Behold the clouds ...”) 2. Outer space. The place of planets and stars. (Deut 4:19 “... when you lift your eyes to the heavens, and you see the Sun and Moon and the stars ...”) 3. The place from which God lives and has his throne. (1 Kings 8:30 “Hear in heaven, your dwelling place ...”)

The passage in Genesis 1:1 is not referring to heaven in the sense of the dwelling place of God or the resting place of immortal souls. It refers to what we can see in the sky i.e. the dwelling place of the sun, the stars, the moon, the blue sky, etc. This verse is not talking about multiple heavens, it is referring to the separation between the earth and what’s above the earth

God saw that everything was good: This phrase occurs seven times in Genesis 1 (1:4,10,12,18,21, 25,31) What does that phrase mean? It means that God was delighted with his work. His created realities “light, water, sea, plants and trees” gave him pleasure. He rejoices in his works because his works reveal his glory, wisdom and power. In the book of psalms, we find many psalms of praise, praising God and his work. The psalmist praises God whole heartedly along with the nature.

What does mean to say that God saw everything and it was good? The simple reason for God’s happiness was goodness, harmony and a beautiful order in his creation. How long God was happy? Until he created the human beings. After he created the human beings, he was unhappy because they went against his command. What was his command? He commanded not to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of the good and evil but they ate from the forbidden tree and their disobedience displeased God. God has given us common sense, knowledge and wisdom to choose the good and avoid evil by using our free will. But what happens? Most of the time we choose the wrong ones like our first parents and mess up our life.

The world in which we are living was not the world of our forefathers. Their world was a world of peace, mutual respect, deeply loving the nature. Yes, they truly respected and loved the harmony and order in human beings and in the nature as designed by God. Unfortunately that is not our case and that is the reason we find more and more complex problems. Our generation wants to mess up with every societal and natural order. Instead of seeing the inherent goodness in each creation and praising God, current culture wants to go against God’s will. For example: God designed marriage between male and female. Now we find same sex marriage. This is a clear rupture with God’s creation, intention and will. Unlike before we often hear of global warming, earthquakes and natural calamities. The reason is that we fail to see God in nature. For our selfishness and gratification, we want to go against the nature. The world belongs not only to us, human beings but also birds,

animals and trees. Before us, there were hundreds of generations who have lived and beatified this earth and given to us. What is our contribution? After us, there will be thousands of generations going to come. That means we are supposed to be responsible human beings like seeing the image and goodness of God in human beings and His creation.

1:26-27 Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness. God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. When God creates human beings, His wording changes from the impersonal “let there be” to the deliberate and intimate expression, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” God’s plan for humans included giving them responsibilities on the earth: “And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth” (Genesis 1:26).

Resemblance of God: Human beings—both men and women—are made in God’s image. We did not evolve from other lower forms of life. We were created directly by God to represent Him on the earth and have dominion over every other creation in His name. Having God’s image means we are fashioned to resemble and represent God on the earth. Our likeness with God is not a physical resemblance. Instead, God’s likeness denotes our capacity to rule over creation and be in relationship with God and other humans and to exercise reason, intelligence, speech, moral consciousness, creativity, rationality, and choice. Since the beginning of time, God has desired to bless us and enjoy close fellowship with us, and for this reason He made us like Himself. We were made like Him so that we could be in relationship with Him—the one and only triune God.

Mentally, we have been created as rational agents. In other words, we can reason and choose. This is a reflection of God’s intellect and freedom. **Morally**, we have been created in righteousness and perfect innocence, a reflection of God’s holiness. **Socially**, we have been created for fellowship. In Eden, humanity’s primary relationship was with God and God made the first woman because “it is not good for the man to be alone” (Gen 2:18).

Part of being made in God’s image is that Adam had the capacity to make free choices. Although they were given a righteous nature, Adam and Eve made an evil choice to rebel against their Creator. In so doing, they marred the image of God within themselves, and passed that damaged likeness on to all their descendants (Romans 5:12). Today, we still bear the image of God (James 3:9), but we also bear the scars of sin. Mentally, morally, socially, and physically, we show the effects of sin. But the good news is that we have redemption in Jesus Christ who redeems us from our fallen nature (Eph 2:8-9). Through Christ, we are made new creations in the likeness of God (2 Cor 5:17).

2:3 God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation. Most versions of the Bible state that God “rested” on the seventh day of creation, but this does not mean that He was tired or needed to refresh Himself through rest (Psalm 121:4). It was only a “rest” in the sense that it was a cessation of work. God was not fatigued from creating the heavens and the earth, but rather had

finished creating. All He had created was declared “very good,” and therefore creation was complete (Genesis 1:31—2:1)

The fourth of the ten commandments is “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Ex 20:8). The Israelites under the Mosaic Law were to keep in mind that no work could be done on the seventh day of the week. The word Sabbath comes from a Hebrew word meaning “day of rest.”

To keep it holy: It means “consecrate,” “set apart,” or “sanctify.” The Israelites were to make a distinction between the seventh day and the rest of the week. The Sabbath was different. It was to be dedicated to the Lord. The priests were to double the daily sacrifices on the Sabbath (Numbers 28:9–10), marking the day with increased sacred activity. The rest of the Israelites were to mark the day with decreased activity—no work at all—in honor of the Lord. The penalty for desecrating the Sabbath with work was death (Exodus 31:14; Numbers 15:32–36).

Keeping of the Sabbath was a sign of the covenant between Israel and the Lord: “You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come” (Exodus 31:13). As Israel kept the Sabbath set apart, they were reminded that they were also being set apart: “So you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy”. Believers today, being under the New Covenant, are not bound to keep the sign of the Old Covenant.

The book of Hebrews identifies the Lord Jesus as the ultimate Sabbath rest (Hebrews 4:9–11). Jesus is “Lord of the Sabbath” (Matthew 12:8). As God incarnate, He decides the true meaning of the Sabbath because He created it. When the Pharisees criticized Him for healing on the Sabbath, Jesus reminded them that even they would not hesitate to pull a sheep out of a pit on the Sabbath. Because He came to seek and save His sheep He could break the Sabbath rules. He told the Pharisees that people are more important than sheep and the salvation He provided was more important than rules. By saying, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27), Jesus was restating the principle that the Sabbath rest was instituted to relieve man of his labors. There is no other Sabbath rest besides Jesus. He alone satisfies the requirements of the Law, and He alone provides the sacrifice that atones for sin. He is God’s plan for us to cease from the labor of our own works.

2:7 The LORD God formed the man out of the dust of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being: ‘Man was created from dust’ makes him unique among all of God’s creation. To create the sun, mountains, animal life, etc., God simply spoke. We read, “Then God said” over and over in Genesis 1. Human life, however, included the “dust of the earth” and the very breath of God. Thus man is a unique combination of earthly, natural material and life-giving power from God Himself. Such a mode of creation highlights the importance and value of human life.

The use of dust suggests a certain lowliness. God did not use gold or granite to make man. He used dust, a humble substance. God could have chosen to create humans in any way He desired. However, Scripture records the particular way He did create—using both natural

material (dust) and supernatural power to give humans a unique place in the cosmos. The recipe of dust of the earth + God's breath emphasizes the supernatural power of God and the fragile nature of humanity. Human life is completely dependent upon God, and, as a result, humans are called to worship the Lord and to serve Him only.

You are dust and unto dust you shall return: God's declaration to Adam that "unto dust you shall return" is final and gave Adam a continual awareness that one day he would die physically. The curse of death that came to Adam was imparted to all humans who have lived since. Because of Adam, sin entered the world (Rom 5:12), all were condemned because of sin, and death came to all humanity (1 Cor 15:22). All people are sinners (Rom 5:19) and will one day die and face judgment before God (Heb 9:27). The reality that "to dust you shall return" is for everyone. For those who trust in Christ, though, the curse of death will be overcome (Eph 2:1-10). Rather than fear death, believers have the assurance of eternity.

Peter urges believers to remember that "we are pilgrims and sojourners" (1 Peter 2:11). The certainty that "to dust you shall return" should humble us to seek and follow God. Our time on earth is short compared to eternity. Paul calls our bodies "earthly tents" in 2 Cor 5:1. This world is not our permanent home, and our bodies are destined to return to dust. On earth we groan and are burdened. Yet resurrection and eternity with God in a heavenly dwelling are promised to those who belong to Christ (2 Cor 5:4). We cannot be so entangled in the affairs of this world that we miss out on what matters eternally.

James also reminds believers, "What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes" (James 4:14). We are called to be Christ's ambassadors, sharing the gospel with others and urging them to be reconciled with God. In light of the brevity of life, we should take account of how we live. Instead of living for ourselves, we should live for God and do good (James 4:16-17). "To dust you shall return" should impact how we live and what our lives are about.

As pioneer missionary C. T. Studd penned, "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, / Only what's done for Christ will last." God's declaration to Adam that "to dust you shall return" still rings true everyday and for every one of us. We all come from dust, and we will all return back to it. What happens in between matters. We should live our lives for His glory, in obedience to Him and telling others of the hope we have in Christ so that many may turn to Him before it is too late.

2: 9 The Tree of Life in the middle of the garden and the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

Trees in the spiritual world: Trees are held sacred in many cultures and both ancient and modern, influencing spiritual life. People feel peace and serenity when they sit under a tree or walk through a forest. Buddhism has connections to the Bodhi tree where Buddha was known to have reached enlightenment as he sat and meditated.

Why did God put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden?

God put the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden to give Adam and Eve a choice to obey Him or disobey Him. Adam and Eve were free to do anything they wanted, except eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If God had not given Adam and Eve the choice, they would have essentially been robots, simply doing what they were programmed to do. God created Adam and Eve to be “free” beings, able to make decisions, able to choose between good and evil. In order for Adam and Eve to truly be free, they had to have a choice. Adam and Eve’s act of disobedience opened Adam’s and Eve’s eyes to evil. For the first time, they knew what it was to be evil, to feel shame, and to want to hide from God. Their sin of disobeying God brought corruption into their lives and into the world. God did not want Adam and Eve to sin.

God knew ahead of time what the results of sin would be. God knew that Adam and Eve would sin and would thereby bring evil, suffering, and death into the world. Why, then, did God allow Satan to tempt Adam and Eve? God allowed Satan to tempt Adam and Eve to force them to make the choice. Adam and Eve chose, of their own free will, to disobey God and eat the forbidden fruit. The results—evil, sin, suffering, sickness, and death—have plagued the world ever since. Adam and Eve’s decision results in every person being born with a sin nature, a tendency to sin. Adam and Eve’s decision is what ultimately required Jesus Christ to die on the cross and shed His blood on our behalf. Through faith in Christ, we can be free from sin’s consequences, and ultimately free from sin itself.

Why was it wrong for Adam and Eve to know good and evil (Genesis 3:22)? Knowledge in itself is not wrong. So what was so bad about man “knowing good and evil”? It is vital to know the context of God’s statement. God had already told Adam not to eat from this tree. Adam was already aware that doing so was wrong, and he knew the consequences, yet he chose to join Eve in eating the fruit. When they ate, they were not simply aware of evil; they experienced evil, to the extent that they became evil—sinners by nature.

Man knew what was good: he was created in goodness and was surrounded by it (Genesis 1:31). He had been given everything God wanted him to have, including authority over all the rest of God’s creation. Adam had everything he needed for a fulfilling life. It should have been enough that God had warned Adam against disobedience. God did not want Adam and Eve to “know” evil in the sense of participating in it. The sin of Adam and Eve was not in attaining knowledge but in rejecting God’s will in favor of their own.

Because of their sin, Adam and Eve received dire consequences. First, Eve was told, “I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you” (Gen 3:16). Second, Adam was told, “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life” (Gen 3:17). Third, for both Adam and Eve, “You are dust, and to dust you will return” (Gen 3:19). They had been told they would “die” if they ate from the tree (Gen 2:17). This consequence did not happen immediately, but Adam and Eve did both physically die, a pattern followed by all other humans. Fourth, they were expelled from the Garden of Eden: “So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken” (Gen 3:23).

Adam and Eve began life in ideal conditions: an idyllic garden, plentiful food, a harmonious relationship with one another, and close fellowship with God. Due to sin, they lost their garden, were required to work to produce food, experienced interpersonal conflicts, and damaged their fellowship with God. These consequences of Adam's sin still affect us today. The apostle Paul spoke about the last Adam (Jesus) who came to restore our broken relationship with God (1 Cor 15:45). Paul also noted, "Since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man" (1 Cor 15:21). Adam was responsible for sin's entrance into humanity. Jesus Christ was responsible for providing the way for resurrection. After sin entered humanity, Jesus became the perfect substitute to allow every person the opportunity to believe and receive eternal life ([John 3:16](#)).

What is the meaning of tree of life? The tree of life appears in both the opening and closing chapters of the Bible (Genesis 2-3 and Revelation 22). In the book of Genesis, God places the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the Garden of Eden. The tree of life stands as a symbol of God's life-giving presence and the fullness of eternal life available in God.

Agreement among Bible scholars suggests that the tree of life with its central placement in the garden was to serve as a symbol to Adam and Eve of their life in fellowship with God and their dependence on him. In the center of the garden, human life was distinguished from that of the animals. Adam and Eve were much more than mere biological beings; they were spiritual beings who would discover their deepest fulfillment in fellowship with God. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they were expelled from the garden. Scripture explains the reason for their expulsion: God did not want them to run the risk of eating from the tree of life and living forever in a state of disobedience. "Then the LORD God said, "Look, the human beings have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!" (Genesis 3:22)

Tree of life images: The menorah and other adornments of the tabernacle and temple possess tree of life imagery, symbolic of God's Holy presence. The doors and walls of Solomon's temple contain images of trees and cherubim that recall the Garden of Eden and God's sacred presence with humanity (1 Kings 6:23-35).

Tree of Life in the New Testament: Tree of life images are present at the beginning of the Bible, in the middle, and at the end in the book of Revelation, which contains the only New Testament references to the tree. "Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches. To everyone who is victorious, I will give fruit from the tree of life in the paradise of God." (Revelation 2:7, 22:2, 19).

In Revelation, the tree of life represents the restoration of the life-giving presence of God. Access to the tree had been cut off in Genesis 3:24 when God stationed mighty cherubim and a flaming sword to block the way to the tree of life. But here in Revelation, the way to the tree is open again for all who have been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ.

“Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life.” (Revelation 22:14) Restored access to the tree of life was made possible by “the second Adam” (1 Corinthians 15:44–49), Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for the sins of all humanity. Those who seek forgiveness of sin through the shed blood of Jesus Christ are given access to the tree of life (eternal life), but those who remain in disobedience will be denied. The tree of life provides continuous, everlasting life to all who partake of it, for it signifies the eternal life of God made available to redeemed humanity.

It is not good for a man to be alone: Genesis 2:7 describes how God formed Adam from the dust of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life, bringing Adam to life. After Adam was created, God placed Him in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:15). God had designed that Adam would cultivate and care for the garden. To this point, Adam was still the only human in existence, and God’s creative work was not yet complete. God acknowledges the incompleteness of the work. He states that it was not good for the man to be alone (Gen 2:18). So God put Adam to sleep and performed a surgery of sorts, removing one of his ribs and then healing the wound (Gen 2:21). From that rib God fashioned the first woman (Gen 2:22). When God brought her to Adam, Adam recognized her value. Adam understood that she was from him and that they were uniquely joined (Gen 2:23). While equal in value, they were distinct in design. God had completed His creative work, with woman as the final creation. God had designed the man and woman to be equal and yet very different. In a sense they were opposites, and both were needed to fulfill His design.

Rib: After creating Adam, God guided him to the discovery that he was alone in the world. Unlike the animals, the man had no counterpart, no equal companion: “For Adam no suitable helper was found” (Gen 2:20). Once Adam was aware of his need, God took steps to remedy the problem. He created the woman. How God created the woman is significant. In Gen 2:21–22, after causing Adam to fall into a deep sleep, God took a rib out of the man and used it to form the woman. So Adam and Eve were of the same substance and were connected physically. she was made from the same “stuff” and was a bearer of God’s image and likeness, just as Adam was. The woman made of Adam’s rib was designed to be a companion and “suitable helper” for Adam. Eve, formed from a physical part of Adam, was truly his complement, an integral part of who he was. As such, she was a perfect companion. All people are from Adam, including Eve. When God brought the woman to the man, Adam said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man” (Gen 2:23).

The fact that God pulled a rib out of Adam and not some other piece of his body shows God’s wisdom, planning, and foresight. Ribs regrow. All bones in the human body are able to mend themselves, but rib bone is unique in that it can regenerate. Given the rib’s ability to regenerate, we know that God did not permanently wound Adam when He took a rib from his side to make Eve. Adam did not live the rest of his life with a defect or a weak spot in his skeletal thorax. Because of God’s wonderful design, Adam lived out the rest of his days with the same number of ribs that he had been created with. God’s use of one of Adam’s ribs to make Eve is a reminder that woman was created to be “beside” man. Together, the man and

woman complement one another in marriage, and in Christ they are “heirs together of the grace of life”

Rib, a symbol of equality: Eve was taken from Adam’s rib because she was his equal and God intended for her to stand beside him– not below him, not behind him and not above him. Adam and Eve were literally to be “of one flesh” and to be unified in all things. It is true that God did not give them the same responsibilities, but he did make them equal partners with talents, gifts and abilities to help each other fulfill those individual responsibilities. This symbolism of Eve being taken from Adam’s rib is beautiful and bears testimony of the beautiful truth that God intended from the VERY beginning for men and women to be equal partners, working side by side in all things and supporting each other in the divine work that God has for them to do. How different the world would be (how different most marriages and relationships would be) if each man and each woman understood and believed this sacred truth !