

LEAD! A.6 Father's Kingdom

In Which We See God Creating His World, and Our Place In It

The overriding theme of our journey has been exploring what it means to be "baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Having dealt (however superficially) with the [ontological](#) aspects of that "name", we now focus on the [narrative](#) aspects. In particular, we will focus on the arc of "[creation corruption and redemption](#)" found throughout scripture (and literature), as manifested through the persons of the Trinity. Starting with the Father, and Creation...

Adoration

[Psalm 100](#)

Bible

[Genesis 1](#)

This passage -- and the [Bible](#) -- begin with one of the most famous (and most profound) sayings of all time:

In the [beginning](#) [God created](#) the [heaven](#) and the [earth](#).

Right away, the writer asserts several essential truths:

- The universe (space and time) had a beginning
- There is a God
- God existed before the universe
- God is omniscient, having created everything -- both what we directly experience (earth) and what we only observe from afar (heaven)

The first thing we learn is that the [pre-existent](#) God created the earth. But the second thing we notice is that God initially created it at least partially unfinished:

And the earth was [without form](#), and [void](#); and [darkness](#) [was] upon the face of the [deep](#).

Creation is explicitly a process. And, intriguingly, there is also a strong [Trinitarian](#) element at work:

And the [Spirit](#) of God [moved](#) upon the face of the [waters](#).

Which is reinforced by His speaking:

And God [said](#), Let there [be light](#): and there was light.

Which we Christians see a reference to the [Word](#) of God (Christ, the [Light of the World](#)),

the remaining member of the Trinity -- and all this while still in the first three verses!

At any rate, God is pretty pleased with the result of His speaking:

And God saw the light, that [it was] [good](#):

That sentiment ("It was good") is repeated throughout this chapter. The word "[good](#)" has many different [meanings](#) and possible [interpretations](#), but one useful way to think about it is as "fit for a given purpose." The light God named and [called into existence](#) is "good" because it fulfilled the purpose(s) He had for it.

One of which was simply timekeeping:

and God [divided](#) the light from the [darkness](#). And God called the light [Day](#), and the darkness he called [Night](#).

It is intriguing that God doesn't explicitly create darkness, but merely recognizes it as the [absence of light](#).

And the [evening](#) and the morning were the first [day](#).

The exact interpretation of the word "day" (and indeed of the entire creation story) is a matter of [great controversy](#), even among [evangelicals](#). We will not dwell on that here (but see "Explore More" for some helpful resources); for our purpose, the key point is that God is taking an orderly, methodical approach to creation.

Which brings us to the second day:

And God said, Let there be a [firmament](#) in the midst of the [waters](#), and let it divide the waters from the waters.

And God [made](#) the firmament, and divided the waters which [were] under the firmament from the waters which [were] above the firmament: and it was so.

And God called the firmament [Heaven](#). And the evening and the morning were the second day.

Firmament is [another controversial](#) term, but the focus here is on "heaven" -- presumably in an [astronomical vs. theological](#) sense. In these early stages of creation, God doesn't mere add things "[ex nihilo](#)", He also differentiates things that He previously created -- as He does in day 3:

And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be [gathered together](#) unto one place, and let the [dry](#) [land] [appear](#): and it was so.

And God called the dry [land] [Earth](#); and the gathering together of the waters called he [Seas](#): and God saw that [it was] good.

Though He also goes beyond inorganic separation to organic cultivation:

And God said, Let the earth bring forth [grass](#), the [herb](#) yielding [seed](#), [and] the

[fruit tree](#) yielding fruit after his [kind](#), whose seed [is] in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

And the earth brought forth grass, [and] herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed [was] in itself, after his kind: and God saw that [it was] good.

And the evening and the morning were the third day.

Already we're learning a few things about what God considers good. First, He likes to differentiate and name things that were previously homogenized, and second, He enjoys creating [self-replicating](#) organisms that reproduce after their own kind; we will see both these behaviors again when we come to the church!

After that brief foray into biology, we return to physics -- in this case, astronomy:

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to [divide](#) the day from the night; and let them be for [signs](#), and for [seasons](#), and for [days](#), and [years](#):

And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

Again, there is an emphasis on timekeeping -- we moderns tend to forget how essential the sun, moon, and stars were for helping our ancestors keep order!

In addition, there is the concept of rulership and dominion:

And 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.

And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

In fact, we see the sun and moon acting together to take over God's activity from [verse 4](#):

And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that [it was] good.

And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

After the fourth day, it is back to biology -- this time, animals. Starting with air and water:

And God said, Let the waters [bring forth abundantly](#) the [moving creature](#) that hath life, and [fowl](#) [that] may [fly](#) above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

And God created great [whales](#), and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every [winged](#) fowl after his kind: and God saw that [it was] good.

Like the plants, they were created to reproduce after their kind. But this time, they are actually **told** to do so:

And God [blessed](#) them, saying, Be [fruitful](#), and [multiply](#), and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

Now, finally we get to [the 6th day](#), which is focused on land animals:

And God said, Let the earth [bring forth](#) the living creature after his kind, [cattle](#), and [creeping thing](#), and [beast](#) of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that [it was] good.

Including, in some sense, us:

And God said, Let us make [man](#) in our [image](#), after our [likeness](#): and let them have [dominion](#) over the [fish](#) of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

Clearly, man is very different than the other animals. He is:

- made in the image and likeness of God
- granted dominion over the other animals

Yet, for whatever reason, God created him (er, us) on the same day as cattle and "creeping things". Perhaps to remind us that despite our exalted status, we are still in their league (at least as compared to God Himself).

So God created man in his [own] image, in the image of God [created](#) he him; [male](#) and [female](#) created he them.

It is worth noting that God -- though we use the masculine pronoun -- does not have a [gender](#) per se. We call Him Father (and "Him") because of how He relates to us. In Himself, though, He encompasses everything we consider male and female, both of which are just partial reflections of His transcendent nature.

And in fact, only as the two come together as one can they act in His image to fill (and rule over) the earth:

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and [replenish](#) the earth, and [subdue](#) it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Though that dominion was apparently constrained to a vegetarian diet:

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which [is] upon

the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which [is] the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for [meat](#).

And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein [there is] life, [I have given] every green herb for meat: and it was so.

While many of us wouldn't trust humans (even unfallen ones!) with running the world, God appears **exceedingly** happy with the result of His labors:

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, [it was] [very](#) good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Alas, this blissful state won't last. But that's a story for another day...

Conversation

1. Why do you think God enjoys naming things He creates?
2. In what ways do we share in God's creative nature?
3. What does Genesis tell us about what God considers "good"?
4. What does God's purpose in creation imply about His purpose for our lives? Our church?
5. Which aspects of humanity do you think reflect the image of God?
6. Why would God considered His creation **very** good?

Decision

- **Repentance:** Where are you failing to manifest the image of God in your life?
- **Action:** How can you help express God's dominion over creation?
- **Worship:** Write a poem, song, or eulogy expressing gratitude to God as Father and Creator

Explore More

- [creation – International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Three Views on Creation and Evolution – Google Book Search](#)
- [Creationism – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)
- [Man: The image of God](#)
- [What is the Adamic covenant?](#)
- [Chapter 6 The Edenic Covenant \(The Covenantal Structure of the Bible\)](#)
- [YouTube – Cat Stevens – Morning Has Broken – Live 1973](#)

For Next Week

Read [Genesis 3](#). What bounds does God set on our dominion over creation? Why don't we accept them? What is the price?