

GENESIS

Chapter 1

The Creation of the World

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. **2** The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. **3** And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. **4** And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. **6** And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” **7** And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. **8** And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. **9** 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. **10** God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. **11** And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. **12** The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. **13** And there was evening and there was morning, the third **14** And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, **15** and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. **16** And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. **17** And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, **18** to rule over the day and over 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, the fourth day. **20** 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.” **21** 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. And God saw that it was good. **22** And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” **23** And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. **24** And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. **25** And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. **26** Then 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 birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” **27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. **28** And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every

living thing that moves on the earth.” 29 And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. 31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

A few introductory items...

- “Genesis” is a Greek word meaning “origin.” Genesis is not intended to be a general history of the ancient world. The specific purpose of Genesis is to trace God’s saving activity. Genesis is the first chapter in the history of God’s magnificent rescue operation which we call His plan of salvation. (PBC)
- Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible which includes Genesis. They are referred to “the Torah.” “Torah is usually translated as “Law” and means “instruction,” “teaching.” It isn’t just “does” and “don’ts.” It also contains the love of God shown to His people and plan of salvation for all people. These five books are also commonly called the Pentateuch “the five fifths of the Law.” (PBC)
- Moses arranged his literary material in ten sections, each introduced by the formula: “This is the account of...” These ten “accounts” are mini-histories and illustrate how from the very beginning of time God been interested and active in establishing a family of believers. Nine of these ten “accounts” or histories are named after people, the very first is the “account of heaven and earth” (2:4). (PBC)

Here is a summary of the ten “accounts”: (PBC)

1. The account of heaven and earth (Genesis 2:4-4:26 explains what happened when evil invaded God’s perfect creation.
2. The account of Adam (5:1-6:8) traces the ancestry of the promised Messiah from Adam to Noah.
3. The account of Noah (6:9-9:29) gives us an awesome double message. While destroying all life outside the ark through a worldwide flood, the Lord graciously preserved the messianic line through Noah and his family.
4. The account of the sons of Noah (10:1-11:9) emphasizes the unity of the human race by tracing the distribution of Noah’s three sons into various nations and languages. The account concludes with the dispersion of Babel.
5. The account of Shem (11:10-26) gives us the forefathers of the Messiah, narrowing the Savior’s ancestry from the line of Shem to Terah, the father of Abraham.

These first five “accounts” trace the early history of God’s saving activity in the ancient world. The second set of five “accounts” trace God’s saving activity among the patriarchs.

6. The account of Terah (11:27-25:11) is one of the longest “accounts” covering almost a quarter of the book of Genesis. God called Abram out of culture where idolatry was practiced, and trained him to trust completely in God’s promise.
7. The account of Ishmael (25:12-18) is the shortest of Moses’ ten “accounts.”
8. The account of Isaac (25:35-29 carries the fulfillment of the Messiah promise through two generations that followed Abraham.
9. The account of Esau (36:1-37:1) again constitutes a side line.

10. The account of Jacob (37:2-50:26) is the last and longest of Moses ten “accounts.”

1:1-2:3 God’s creation of the world is presented in three stages; declaration of the creation of matter out of nothingness (1:1-2); the ordering of creation (days 1 and 2, 1:3-8); and the filling of creation (days 3 through 6, 1:9-31). Chemnitz: “On the first day He created the earth in order that on the third day He might...mold and prepare it for the use of man” (LTh 1:163). God fills creation in two steps: inanimate objects first (days 3 and 4, 1:9-19), then animate beings (days 5 and 6, 1:20-31). The account concludes with God’s rest on the seventh day (2:1-3). The text is written in prose, though several aspects, such as the repetition of the formula “God saw that it was good,” give the text a heightened rhetorical feel. (TLSB)

1:1 A summary statement introducing the six days of creative activity. The truth of this majestic verse was joyfully affirmed by poet (Ps 102:25) and prophet (Isa 40:21). (CSB)

Making the claim that Moses did in his day he would have faced the same challenges it meets today. Imagine yourself for the moment at the world’s greatest university in Moses’ day. The center of learning is located at the heart of a sophisticated society. Ancient Egypt had distinguished itself with previously unequalled achievements in arts and letters as well as the sciences. Moses, who was raised in Pharaoh’s court, benefited from the best Egypt could offer. Unlike most people, Moses enjoyed leisure time to learn the literature and arts of Egypt. Why, Moses could have gone on a picnic with his friends to the Great Pyramid. This structure, already a thousand years old in Moses’ day, is proof of expertise in mathematics and engineering that still astounds scientists some five thousand years later. The Egyptian builders worked within margins of error that compare favorably with the modern skyscrapers. In such an environment we could expect Moses to make his point with great care and skill. And Moses did just that as he wrote Genesis. (LL)

In the beginning God. The Bible always assumes, and never argues, God’s existence. Although everything else had a beginning, God has always been (Ps 90:2). (CSB)

In the beginning. Jn 1:1–10, which stresses the work of Christ in creation, opens with the same phrase. (CSB)

The ESV reflects the traditional translation of the opening phrase, which establishes the point in time at which the action occurs. (Some critical scholars translate the Hebrew text similarly to two Babylonian epics, the “Eua Elish” and the “Epic of Atra-Khasis.” Their translation allows denial of the important biblical teaching that God created the world out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) and argues instead that matter is eternal) The Bible affirms that God created the world (Ps. 90:2; Jer. 10:16) and that He created it out of nothing through Jesus Christ (Rom. 4:17; Heb 1:2). Tertullian: “By not mentioning (a source of material, (Scripture) has given us a clear proof that there was no such thing” (ANF 3:489). (TLSB)

The word order of this first sentence of the Bible seems perfectly normal in English, but Hebrew sentences normally begin with the verb. Here the word order is inverted, for the sake of emphasis. Moses wants to emphasize that there was a point of absolute beginning, when only God was in existence. (PBC)

God created. The Hebrew noun *Elohim* is plural but the verb is singular, a normal usage in the OT when reference is to the one true God. This use of the plural expresses intensification

rather than number and has been called the plural of majesty, or of potentiality. In the OT the Hebrew verb for “create” is used only of divine, never of human, activity. (CSB)

Hebrew “bara” is never used with a subject other than God in the OT. God alone has the power to create (bring into existence from nothing). Humans make (or “create”) things only by rearranging what God has created. That God alone is the Creator of all that exists affirms that He is the only true God. (TLSB)

This summarizes the entire text before the details are given. While it describes the work of the one God (all three persons), in light of the Gospel we may refer verse 1 especially to “God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

The Hebrew verb translated “created” is a very special one. In the Bible that verb (1) is used only of God’s activity, and (2) always expresses the origin of something extraordinary, absolutely unique. Sometimes God creates by using existing materials; when He created Adam, for example, He used the dust of the ground. But if the activity described in this opening verse took place at the beginning, when only God existed, it must have been a creation out of nothing. (PBC)

Moses began with Genesis and then followed with Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. All five books show his interest in mapping the family line of the people of Israel. So serious is Moses’ desire to trace the family tree that he takes us back to the beginning of all history. But more than the past was on Moses. Mind! The children of Israel had spent centuries in Egypt, a land that its own explanation of the world. Particularly important to Egyptians was portraying the sun, the stars, and the earthly elements as gods. By beginning Israel’s family tree with the statement that God created “the heaven and the earth,” Moses takes away their positions as gods. The original Hebrew word for create is used only with God as the subject and refers to His special, sovereign action. Only the true God, *Elohim*, is to receive credit for creating and controlling the universe. (LL)

the heavens and the earth. “All things” (Isa 44:24). That God created everything is also taught in Ecc 1:5; Jer 10:16; Jn 1:3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2. The positive, life-oriented teaching of v. 1 is beautifully summarized in Isa 45:18. (CSB)

The first “couple” did not arise by any natural process but came into being as a result of God’s direct and unique creative activity. In addition, these terms together refer to the world of God’s creation, the details of which follow. Throughout Chap.1, “heavens” refers to the sky and the cosmos beyond the boundaries of the earth, not to the abode of God. (TLSB)

God’s first act, the creation, is an act of grace. God acts freely to reflect His character, making the world “very good” (1:31). Even after the fall and the coming of sin, much of the goodness that God built into creation remains. Philosophers debate why evil exists, and people ask how a good God could allow bad things to happen. But it is not the existence of evil and suffering that requires an explanation; it is the existence of goodness and beauty and love that is most remarkable. A world without God cannot explain such things. The persistence of goodness reminds us of what we have lost, but it also offers us a glimpse of God’s grace and the everlasting glory to which God has called us through Christ. • “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me” (Ps 51:10). Amen. (TLSB)

1:2-8 Describes matter at the first moment of creation (v. 2) and then describes how God arranged the matter He created. First God separated light from darkness (vv. 3-5). Next, God

separated what is below the sky from what is above it (vv. 6-8). These arrangements established what we call “time” (expressed in the sequence of days and nights) and “space” (expressed in the separation of the waters above and below the sky). This work was the first two days of creation. Scripture does not explicitly state when God made the angels. Ancient rabbinic and Christian interpreters commonly held the angels were created during the first days, though their opinions and reasons varied widely. (TLSB)

1:2 earth. The focus of this account. (CSB)

Once again the order of the Hebrew sentences, which normally begins with the verb, is inverted. Moses wants to focus our attention on just one part of the universe – the earth, the home God has designed for the human race. (PBC)

without form and void. The phrase, which appears elsewhere only in Jer 4:23, gives structure to the rest of the chapter. God’s “separating” and “gathering” on days 1–3 gave form, and his “making” and “filling” on days 4–6 removed the emptiness. (CSB)

God’s initial creative act resulted in shapeless matter that God proceeded to arrange, or order, in several stages. (TLSB)

The piles of concrete block and sand and lumber a builder assembles at the construction site aren’t very pretty. Neither was the earth after God’s initial creative act. Moses lists four conditions which God was going to modify during that creation week. In subsequent discussion, these four conditions are referred to as deficiencies, this is not to be understood as suggesting that God’s original creation was not good. The following are the four conditions which were temporary and which God would modify during the creation week: (PBC)

- *Formlessness* (The universe was a shapeless blob of material); (PBC)
- *Emptiness* (The universe lacked the vegetation and the creatures God would later supply); (PBC)
- *Darkness* (This would be removed only when God announced: “let there be light!”); (PBC)
- *The deep* (A fluid mass covered everything). (PBC)

Christians confess that *God the Father Almighty* is the maker of heaven and earth. This is not to be understood as though the other persons of the Trinity had nothing to do with creating the universe. The Apostle John says concerning *God the Son*: “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:3). *God the Holy Spirit* was also active at creation. He is described as “hovering” over the waters. Moses uses this verb elsewhere to describe the action of a mother eagle hovering over her nest, providing for her young and protecting them. The life-giving Spirit of God was active at the creation, preserving what God had created, preparing the universe for what God had in mind. The work of creation, then, is a work in which all the members of the Trinity share. (PBC)

darkness ... the waters. Completes the picture of a world awaiting God’s light-giving, order-making and life-creating word. (CSB)

and.† Or “but.” The awesome picture of the original state of the visible creation is relieved by the majestic announcement that the mighty Spirit of God hovers over creation. The announcement anticipates God’s creative words that follow. (CSB)

Formlessness is pictured as a watery mixture; neither the sky nor the dry land has been distinguished. Israelites understood water as a formless material. (TLSB)

This would only be removed when God announced: “Let there be light!” The deep expresses the idea of a fluid mass covering everything. (PBC)

Deep. Wordplay: “without form” (Hebrew tohu) and “deep” (Hebrew tehom) sound similar. “Deep” not the everyday term for water or the oceans; suggests the vast inaccessible and formless depths of the seas. Image of the unidentified matter of creation as a limitless ocean is suggested by the formlessness of the underwater world, which was unknown, and, therefore, mysterious (cf. Job 38:16). Elsewhere, God’s power to control the depths of the sea is a sign of His supremacy over both creation (cf. Ps. 77:16; 135:6) and other gods (see the parting of the Red Sea in Ex. 15:5, 8; cf. Ps. 106:9; Is. 51:10; 63:13). (TLSB)

Spirit of God. He was active in creation, and his creative power continues today (see Job 33:4; Ps 104:30). (CSB)

hovering over. † Like a bird that provides for and protects its young (see Dt 32:11; Isa 31:5). (CSB)

Moses uses the verb “hover elsewhere to describe the action of a mother eagle hovering over her nest, providing for her young and protecting them. The life-giving Spirit of God was active at the creation, preserving what God had created , univese for what had in mind. (PBC)

The Spirit’s activity is pictured as a bird or butterfly fluttering over the waters. Basil the Great: “By the Spirit of God, he means the Holy Spirit” (NPNF2 8:62). Melanchthon: “The Father, by speaking, begets the Word who is the image of the eternal Father. And of the Holy Spirit it is expressly said, ‘And the Spirit...’” (Chemnitz, LTh 1:50). God was directly involved in not only the action of creating (bringing into existence out of nothing) but also in the work of bringing form and order to that which He had created. There is no place in the biblical view of creation for the abstract and impersonal process of evolution. The Bible affirms that the Father directly and intentionally called the order of the cosmos into being through the Son (Pr. 8:22-36; John 1:3; Heb. 1:2). (TLSB)

The verb hover is found elsewhere only in Deuteronomy 32:11, where it describes a bird hovering over its young, calling to mind the Spirit as a dove in Matthew 3:16. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

1:3 *God said.* Merely by speaking, God brought all things into being (Ps 33:6, 9; 148:5; Heb 11:3). (CSB)

Luther understands this to be a reference to the Jesus Christ. God speaks the creating Word, the eternal Logos. The powerful Word dispelled the darkness over the surface of the deep as God made all things out of nothing, beginning with light. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

Note well: In pagan religions of the ancient Near East, nature and the realm of the gods were blended together; material things, such as the sun and moon, or trees and stones, were thought to be divine. (In the Babylonian “Epic of Atra Khasis,” the material world was formed when the gods mixed the blood of a slain god with dirt. In the “Enuma Elish,” the material world was formed out of the body parts of a slain goddess. By these literary devices, ancient mythology

communicated the idea that matter itself was formed of the essence of divinity.) In contrast, the Bible makes clear that God is distinct from the material world. The cosmos is not divine, made up of elements of the gods. Rather, the one true God called the cosmos into being out of nothingness and arranged it by the power of His Word alone. God's Word is "performative" - it does not merely state something, but it accomplishes, or brings about that which it declares. (TLSB)

John 1:3-4: "3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men."

John 1:9: "The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world."

Let there be light. God's first creative word called forth light in the midst of the primeval darkness. Light is necessary for making God's creative works visible and life possible. In the OT it is also symbolic of life and blessing (see 2Sa 22:29; Job 3:20; 30:26; 33:30; Ps 49:19; 56:13; 97:11; 112:4; Isa 53:11; 58:8, 10; 59:9; 60:1, 3). Paul uses this word to illustrate God's re-creating work in sin-darkened hearts (2Co 4:6). (CSB)

Not a natural sunlight, but light called into being by God's Word to contrast the unbroken darkness that was the setting for God's initial creative act (v. 2). This anticipates the restored creation at the end of time, in which God's presence will enlighten all things, and there will no longer be a need for the sun or the moon (Rev. 21:23; 22:5). Jesus embodied the light of God's presence (John 8:12), and God shines this light in us to create faith in Him. For these reasons, lights (lamps or candles) are used in Christian worship to symbolize God's active faith-creating and faith-sustaining presence among His people. (TLSB)

The question has been asked: "How could there have been light on the first day if the sun and the stars weren't created until the fourth day?" The Hebrew language distinguishes between the substance of light (energy in the form of particles of waves, or a combination of the two) and the heavenly lightbearers, just as we distinguish between the light produced by a reading lamp and the lighting fixture itself. Light itself was created on the first day; the bodies which regulate light were not created until three days later. (PBC)

Moses' contemporaries would have caught the implication that the God of Israel, and not the Egyptian sun-god Re (Ray), created light. (LL)

1:4 Everything God created is good (see vv. 10, 12, 18, 21, 25); in fact, the conclusion declares it to be "very good" (v. 31). The creation, as fashioned and ordered by God, had no lingering traces of disorder and no dark and threatening forces arrayed against God or man. Even darkness and the deep were given benevolent functions in a world fashioned to bless and sustain life (see Ps 104:19-26; 127:2). (CSB)

God separated the light from the darkness. He did not destroy darkness, since he realized that like light, it would serve a salutary purpose. (PBC)

God judged that this first step to ordering His creation conformed to His will. In the same way, all that God creates is good (vv. 10, 12, 18, 21, 25), and the whole of His creation is summarized by the phrase "very good" (v. 31). (TLSB)

There is a rhythmic repetition and progression reminiscent of a liturgy. Note that all the plants and animals are created "according to their kinds," in direct contradiction to the theory of the

ever-changing, random (chaotic) evolution of species. Good looks upon all he has created and regards it as good, i.e., as emanating from his own innate goodness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

This adjective good means more than a lack of fear. It also presents the goodness of creation. (LL)

Psalm 106:1: “Praise the LORD. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever”

1:5 called. See vv. 8, 10. In ancient times, to name something or someone implied having dominion or ownership (see 17:5, 15; 41:45; 2Ki 23:34; 24:17; Da 1:7). Both day and night belong to the Lord (Ps 74:16). (CSB)

Hebrew idiom used to assign name. Literally, “God call to the light: day.” Though God allowed Adam to name the living things with which He filled creation (2:19-20), God Himself assigned names to the fundamental distinctions He made as He ordered His creation. (TLSB)

There was evening – The word here translated “was” is better translated “became,” “came on.” After a period of light, evening came. Evening set in, bringing the light period to an end. (PBC)

There was morning – Perhaps better: “Morning set in,” “morning followed,” bringing the period of darkness to a close. (PBC)

Turning the Day Around – Rev. Ted Schroeder – Thrivent Sept/Oct, 2002

The grandchildren visited last week. There are only two of them, just 5 and 8. How is it that their needs – the books that needed reading, the stomachs that needed meals – filled entire days? Even more, how could they fill them so completely that one grandfather found himself falling exhausted into bed each night? Was it simply because their demands were added to the demands of work and home? How does this happen? How can we get so busy with our obligations that we find ourselves ground down weary at the end of the day?

One of the reasons may be that we have forgotten about the Biblical rhythm of things. Even though the Sabbath was a time of rest at the end of the week, the days themselves were turned the other way.

Genesis sees God creating the days with the words “there was evening” and then “there was morning.” That sequence clearly placed a time of rest at the beginning of the day. Rather than falling exhausted into bed at the end of the day, the Biblical people moved into the day rested from a night’s sleep. Evening was the beginning. It may seem like a small thing, but it’s important.

Scientists tell us that it takes most of us about seven to 10 minutes to fall asleep. Certainly we can use those minutes at the end of the day to gather our regrets, add up our mistakes and fret our way into a weary sleep. Or we can use those before-sleep minutes to begin a new day, a day that ends with the fading of the sun and begins as the Spirit moves over us in the coming darkness, bringing comforting quiet and sleep. What a great

way to begin. As our eyes close instead of worrying over the past, we can begin the day with prayer and purpose.

The old day is gone, after all. The troubles of that day, the mistakes, even the sins – we have to let all that go. So the first step is to put the old day away with a prayer like Luther’s evening prayer: “I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have kept me this day from all harm and danger, and I pray that you would forgive me my sins, where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

And then, refreshed with the forgiveness that God has for us in Jesus Christ, we can begin to lean into the day that is to come. We can set out to do what we know we can do – and leave in God’s hands the things we know won’t be able to do. We can rest in the love that God has for us. And then, comforted, forgiven, reassured and renewed, we can go to sleep.

Then, when we rise, we are not staring at a stark new day, but – revitalized in body and spirit – we are ready to continue a day already placed in God’s hands and begun with God’s blessing.

Maybe it’s not a big thing. Maybe it’s only a matter of changing our point of view. But in this tactic world, we need all the help we can get.

Try it. Turn your day around. Make it evening and then morning – a new day. It might make all the difference in God’s world.

first day.† The first day was reckoned from evening to morning, according to the prevailing custom of the Jews. The six days of creation make up a period of time equal to Israel’s work week (Ex 20:9–11). (CSB)

Literally “day 1.” The first cycle of time, initiated by the distinction of light from darkness. “First” Literally, “one.” Moses used the cardinal number here instead of the ordinal form “first”; his time related words make it quite clear that we are to understand this day 1 as a normal 24 hour day, bounded by an evening and a morning. With six days to follow, it makes up a single week. “Day” Hebrew yom; not always used to designate a 24 hour day (e.g., refers to only the daylight portion of a 24-hour day in vv. 5, 16), but that is by far its most basic use. (TLSB)

1:6 God’s ordering activity changes. God introduced three fundamental distinctions in the physical world, as the Israelites understood it: sky, sea, and dry land. (TLSB)

expanse. The atmosphere, or “sky” (v. 8), as seen from the earth. “Hard as a mirror” (Job 37:18) and “like a canopy” (Isa 40:22) are among the many pictorial phrases used to describe it. (CSB)

Difficult term. Hebrew raqia; translated “Heaven” in verse 8, suggests a metal plate made flat though hammering. The point of the image is the function rather than the substance: the sky serves as a divider. The Israelites often used figurative terms to describe the cosmos as it appeared to them (cf. Is. 40:22, where the sky is described as a “curtain” and a “tent”). (TLSB)

Separate the waters from the waters. The expanse separates the waters that are above from the waters that are below (v. 7). This was the first step in organizing the spatial aspect of creation. (TLSB)

1:7 *God...separated.* World is described in terms of human experience. To the Israelites, a blue sky and falling rain indicated that there was water above the layer of the air. The seas and the water that emerges from the ground in springs and wells indicated that there was water below (cf. Ps. 24:2). The layer of air serves to divide these two sources of water. (TLSB)

And it was so. The only possible outcome, whether stated (vv. 9, 11, 15, 24, 30) or implied, to God's "Let there be." (CSB)

1:8 *heaven.* Not God's abode beyond the realm of creation, but the layer of air that separates the water above from the water below (v. 7). (TLSB)

Second day. The text now switches to the ordinal number "second" to refer to the ongoing sequence. (TLSB)

1:9-31 God fills what He has created (v. 1) and arranged (vv. 2-8). (TLSB)

1:9 *one place.* A picturesque way of referring to the "seas" (v. 10) that surround the dry ground on all sides and into which the waters of the lakes and rivers flow. The earth was "formed out of water" (2Pe 3:5) and "founded ... upon the seas" (Ps 24:2), and the waters are not to cross the boundaries set for them (Ps 104:7-9; Jer 5:22). (CSB)

Having separated the waters, God then began to fill the space beneath the sky by drawing the waters below the sky together into one place, allowing dry land to emerge. (TLSB)

1:10 *dry land* – It's interesting to note that the word translated "land" is the same word translated "earth" in verses 1 and 2. There the term referred to the entire earth; here it is clearly restricted to dry land. We're reminded once again how carefully Moses defines terms. (PBC)

1:11 *God said.* This phrase is used twice on the third day (vv. 9, 11) and three times (vv. 24, 26, 29) on the sixth day. These two days are climactic, as the following structure of ch. 1 reveals (see note on v. 2 regarding "formless and empty"): (CSB)

<i>Days of forming</i>	<i>Days of filling</i>
1. "light" (v. 3)	4. "lights" (v. 14)
2. "water under the expanse ... water above it" (v. 7)	5. "every living and moving thing with which the water teems ... every winged bird" (v. 21)
3a. "dry ground" (v. 9)	6a ₁ . "livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals" (v. 24)
	a ₂ . "man" (v. 26)
b. "vegetation" (v. 11)	b. "every green plant for food" (v. 30)

Both the horizontal and vertical relationships between the days demonstrate the literary beauty of the chapter and stress the orderliness and symmetry of God's creative activity. (CSB)

Let the earth sprout. Filling the space beneath the expanse with inanimate things continues from lesser to greater. Though today we think of plants as “living” (they grow and produce), Israelites thought plants lacked the unique force that qualifies a living creature. (TLSB)

yielding seed...trees. Text appears to distinguish two main types of vegetation, trees that produce fruit and other plants that propagate their seed without fruit. This is a general distinction, not an attempt to establish a complete scientific categorization of plants. (TLSB)

kinds. See vv. 12, 21, 24–25. Both creation and reproduction are orderly. (CSB)

Phrase here and in following passages indicates that chapter 1 talks not only about creation of specific individuals but of classes (or kinds) of things. God does not make one plant, but many plants of different kinds. This is also true of the animals referred to later in chapter 1. (TLSB)

1:12 *land brought forth.* Earth responds to God’s commands as He works to fill His creation. Throughout the Bible, God controls and directs the course of history and the forces of nature by His Word. (TLSB)

1:14 *let there be lights.* Sources of light above the expanse. Just as God gathered the waters into a consolidated place (the sea), God joined the light that He had previously created (vv. 3-5) to natural sources. These sources of light will now govern the cycles of time that He established until they are no longer needed at the end of time. (TLSB)

signs and seasons. In the ways mentioned here, not in any astrological or other such sense. (CSB)

Movement of stars helps us keep track of months, seasons, and years. Stars do not control humankind’s destiny or predict the future. (TLSB)

Days. Hebrew plural for “day,” but in the context it appears to refer to what we call a month (not otherwise mentioned here). It is unlikely that “days” here refers to a week because that period of time is not indicated by the movement of the sun, moon, or stars, but comes into being when God establishes every seventh day of rest (cf. 2:1-3). To sustain the argument that day 1 does not refer to a normal 24-hour day, one would have to show that all these other time-related terms are being used in some figurative, extended sense. This is not the case. Here the sun, moon, and stars, govern normal days, nights, months, seasons, and years. (TLSB)

1:16 *two great lights.* The words “sun” and “moon” seem to be avoided deliberately here, since both were used as proper names for the pagan deities associated with these heavenly bodies. They are light-givers to be appreciated, not powers to be feared, because the one true God made them (see Isa 40:26). Perhaps because of the emphasis on the greater light and lesser light, the stars seem to be mentioned almost as an afterthought. But Ps 136:9 indicates that the stars help the moon “govern the night.” (CSB)

Greater. Sun. Words “sun” and “moon” are likely omitted to exclude the possibility of understanding them as deities, as was common throughout the ancient Near East. (TLSB)

Lesser. Moon. (TLSB)

to rule. The great Creator-King assigns subordinate regulating roles to certain of his creatures (see vv. 26, 28). (CSB)

1:17–18 The three main functions of the heavenly bodies. (to give light on the earth – to govern the day and the night - to separate the light from the darkness) (CSB)

1:20 *living creatures*. Hebrew *nephesh chayyah* applies to animals and humans, but not to inanimate things (as understood by the Israelites) that fill creation: plants and sources of light in the skies. (TLSB)

1:21 *great sea creatures*. The Hebrew word underlying this phrase was used in Canaanite mythology to name a dreaded sea monster. He is often referred to figuratively in OT poetry as one of God’s most powerful opponents. He is pictured as national (Babylon, Jer 51:34; Egypt, Isa 51:9; Eze 29:3; 32:2) or cosmic (Job 7:12; Ps 74:13; Isa 27:1, though some take the latter as a reference to Egypt). In Genesis, however, the creatures of the sea are portrayed not as enemies to be feared but as part of God’s good creation to be appreciated. (CSB)

Hebrew *tannin*, used in mythology to refer to divine or semi-divine sea monsters. By contrast, the Bible uses this word to refer to snakes or serpents, sometimes to crocodiles, and sometimes, as here, to any of the mysterious and unknown animals that inhabit the depths of the seas. (TLSB)

winged bird. The term denotes anything that flies, including insects (see Dt 14:19–20). (CSB)

1:22 *Be fruitful and multiply*. God’s benediction on living things that inhabit the water and that fly in the air. By his blessing they flourish and fill both realms with life. God’s rule over his created realm promotes and blesses life. (CSB)

First explicit blessing in the Bible. As seen in v 3, God’s Word performs that which it speaks. By pronouncing a blessing, God granted the power of procreation to the animals He had created. The granting of procreative powers to provide for the ongoing welfare of His creation demonstrates God’s care. (TLSB)

1:24 *let the earth bring forth*. God’s previous activity had filled the sea and sky with living creatures. God then began to fill the landmass with living creatures and with three general types of land animals. (TLSB)

Livestock. Word commonly used for domesticated animals such as cattle or oxen but also for animals in general. (TLSB)

creeping things. May refer here specifically to reptiles, but is also at times used to refer to animals in general (9:3). (TLSB)

beasts. General term (literally, “living things”) may be used here as a kind of catchall for everything that does not fall into the other two categories, perhaps implying wild animals as opposed to the domesticated animals of the first group. (TLSB)

1:26 *us ... our ... our*. God speaks as the Creator-King, announcing his crowning work to the members of his heavenly court (see 3:22; 11:7; Isa 6:8; see also 1Ki 22:19–23; Job 15:8; Jer 23:18). (CSB)

While affirming the singularity of God, it is not unusual for the OT to use the plural when speaking of God and His activities. This anticipates the doctrine of the Holy Trinity (though some interpreters understand it to be grammatical device, a plural of majesty or an honorific plural, with no specific theological significance). Irenaeus of Lyons: “With Him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things, to whom also He speaks” (ANF 1:487-488). Tertullian: “If the number of the Trinity also offends you... with whom did He make man? And to whom did He make him like? (The answer must be), the Son on the one hand, who was one day to put on human nature; and the Spirit on the other, who was to sanctify man. With these did He then speak, in the Unity of the Trinity, as with His ministers and witnesses” (ANF 3:606-7). Luther: “Here both appear: ‘Let Us make’ and ‘He made,’ in the plural and in the singular; thereby Moses clearly and forcibly shows us that within and in the very Godhead and the Creating Essence there is one inseparable and eternal plurality” (AE 1:58). (TLSB)

In writing the creation account Moses consistently used language which would be in complete harmony with the information God would subsequently reveal to us about the plurality of persons in the Godhead. (PBC)

image ... likeness. No distinction should be made between “image” and “likeness,” which are synonyms in both the OT (5:1; 9:6) and the NT (1Co 11:7; Col 3:10; Jas 3:9). Since man is made in God’s image, every human being is worthy of honor and respect; he is neither to be murdered (9:6) nor cursed (Jas 3:9). “Image” includes such characteristics as “righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4:24) and “knowledge” (Col 3:10). Believers are to be “conformed to the likeness” of Christ (Ro 8:29) and will someday be “like him” (1Jn 3:2). (CSB)

Hebrew *tselem* means something more than mere physical resemblance. An image, in ancient Near Eastern thought, was that which manifested the presence of the gods within the material realm. Created in God’s image, Adam not only reflected God’s character but also was His representative in the world, His steward over all that He had made. “They had God’s Law written into their hearts, because they were created in God’s image” (FC Ep. VI 2). Gregory of Nyssa: “Painters transfer human forms to their pictures by means of certain colors...our Maker also, painting the portrait to resemble His own beauty, by addition of virtues, as it were with colors, shows in us His own sovereignty...purity, freedom from passion, blessedness, alienation from all evil, and all those attributes of the like kind which help to form in men the likeness of God” (NPNF2 5:391). Gregory of Nazianzus: “(God) will reason with us, and oppose us, and set before us those bitter accusers, our sin...the image (of God in us)...has been blurred and spoiled by wickedness” (NPNF2 7:250). (TLSB)

have dominion. Man is the climax of God’s creative activity, and God has “crowned him with glory and honor” and “made him ruler” over the rest of his creation (Ps 8:5–8). Since man was created in the image of the divine King, delegated sovereignty (kingship) was bestowed on him. (For redeemed man’s ultimate kingship see notes on Heb 2:5–9.) (CSB)

The order that God imposed upon His creation extends to the beings with which He filled it, whether in the air or in the sea or on land. As God’s steward and representative, Adam is placed over all that God has made, to rule over it as God Himself would rule it. Luther: “Man is a creature far superior to the rest of the living beings that live a physical life, especially since as yet his nature had not become depraved” (AE 1:56). (TLSB)

The first man and woman, equally created in the image of God, not only knew God to be good, but lived in complete conformity to the divine design, even participating in the creator's reign over his creation.

1:27 This highly significant verse is the first occurrence of poetry in the OT (which is about 40 percent poetry). (CSB)

Here and in the following chapters, some verses have been set as poetry, reflecting a literary judgment by the ESV editors based on the heightened rhetorical sense that the repetition in the passage suggests. (TLSB)

created. The word is used here three times to describe the central divine act of the sixth day. (CSB)

in our images, after our likeness – Because God is a spiritual being and no person or thing can equal him in any way, the likeness of the people to God is spiritual, not physical, and always “less than,” not “equal to.” In the most proper sense, being created in the image of God means that people were created without sin. But this image was lost in the fall into sin. In the broader sense, the image of God refers to humanity's rationality and will, and still remains in people, though the presence of original sin has also corrupted that likeness (Gen.9:6; Jas 3:9). through Christ people regain the likeness to God (Rm. 8:29) (Lutheran Bible Companion – Volume 2)

In trying to understand the concept of the image of God, it may be helpful to describe the effect the divine image had on the personality of Adam and Eve – on their intellect, emotions and will. Unlike the mental dullness and ignorance we bring with us into the world, Adam and Eve understood perfectly with their intellect what God wanted them to know. While they possessed the image of God their emotions were in tune with God's; they found their greatest happiness in God. And unlike the rebellious will of each of us brought into the world, their will was in complete harmony with God; what He wanted was what they wanted. Every impulse and desire of theirs was in tune with God's good will. Created in the image of God they were human replicas of what God is like. (PBC)

Like his Creator, a rational spirit, exercising dominion. Made in wisdom, holiness, and righteousness. (CB)

So rich in meaning is this short phrase that it is difficult to explain fully. Our imagination and intellect, our souls and spirituality, our place and position in creation – all are derived from the image of God (LL)

male and female. Alike they bear the image of God, and together they share in the divine benediction that follows. (CSB)

Moses gives a summary statement of the creation of mankind and details about it in chapter 2. Luther: “Moses puts the two sexes together and says that God created male and female in order to indicate that Eve, too, was made by God as a partaker of the divine image and of the divine similitude, likewise of the rule over everything. Thus even today the woman is the partaker of the future life, just as Peter says that they are joint heirs of the same grace (1 Peter 3:7). In the household the wife is a partner in the management and has a common interest in the children and the property, and yet there is a great difference between the sexes” (AE 1:69). (TLSB)

1:28 *God blessed them ... fill ... subdue ... have dominion.* † Man goes forth under this divine benediction—flourishing, filling the earth with his kind, and exercising dominion over the other earthly creatures (see v. 26; 2:15; Ps 8:6–8). Human culture, accordingly, is not anti-God (though fallen man often has turned his efforts into proud rebellion against God). As God’s representative in the creaturely realm, he is steward of God’s creatures. He is not to exploit, waste or despoil them, but to care for them and use them in the service of God and man. (CSB)

God extended to humankind the blessing of procreative power that He had given to animals. But here He added an additional element: Instructions to subdue the earth and have dominion over all the other beings that God has made. These additional instructions reflect the special role that humankind plays in God’s creation. (TLSB)

Sex and childbearing are blessed by God in holy wedlock. Cf. Ps.127-128. “Genesis 1:28 teaches that people were created to be fruitful, and that one sex should desire the other in a proper way. We are not speaking about lustful desire, which is sin, but about that appetite that was for the other in its perfection. They call this physical love. This love of one sex for the other is truly a divine ordinance” (Ap XXIII 7). (TLSB)

1:29–30 People and animals seem to be portrayed as originally vegetarian (see 9:3). – The physical well-being of every creature is assured by God’s provision of food (plants only; still no death). (CSB)

Because no mention is made of carnivores in Genesis 1, perhaps God did intend for us to order from a vegetarian menu. Nevertheless, sin changed the world’s metabolism. While we walk this sin-changed world, God does not eliminate meat from our diet or demand kosher eating habits so long as our food is recognized as coming from God’s bounty. (LL)

1:29 *I have given you.* God shows His care by providing food and allowing the man and woman to eat everything that is not categorized as a living being. In the more detailed account of Gn. 2, we learn that this general permission is restricted by the prohibition that they may not eat the fruit from one specific tree (2:16-17). (TLSB)

1:30 *everything...life.* “Living creatures” in verse 20. God extended the gift of food to everything that has the character of life. (TLSB)

1:31 *very good.* Creation is summarized by stating that it conformed to God’s intentions in the best possible way. Basil the Great: “All (creatures) bear the marks of the wisdom of the Creator” (NPNF2 8:104). Chemnitz: “The word *tob* refers to something which is beautiful or pleasant, which delights the eye of the beholder or the mind of one who considers it, as Gen. 3:6 says of Eve” LTh 1:190). As a result of the fall (chapter 3), the introduction of sin into the world, and our rejection of God and His will, we do not experience all of creation as “very good.” (TLSB)

All individual units of his creation were perfect, and together all formed a harmonious whole. Everything was perfectly suited for the role the Creator had assigned to it. (PBC)

For after all preceding statements to the effect that individual works were good comes this stronger statement to the effect that it was “very good,” making a total of seven times that the word good was used – seven being the mark of divine operation. (Leupold)

the sixth day. Perhaps to stress the finality and importance of this day, in the Hebrew text the definite article is first used here in regard to the creation days. (CSB)

1:2–31 God makes all things good. He takes great care to place man and woman in the garden to care for the things that He created. Sin has placed the things God created, including us, in bondage to death and decay. Yet Jesus' death and resurrection has restored the things of God's creation just as it has restored us (Rm 8:19–23). Indeed, God even used His creation to accomplish our salvation: a cross made of wood; the water of Baptism; the bread and wine of the Eucharist; the printed words on the page in, with, and under which He reveals His Word of life to us. • Lord, You have reclaimed all that is Your own, redeemed and restored all of Your creation to Yourself. Preserve me and Your creation, O Lord, by Your grace. Amen. (TLSB)