

INTRO

- What inspires you—nature, music, literature etc. and why?
- If you could ask God one question about the cosmos, what would it be?

In this series, we want to understand the grand story the Bible is telling from beginning to end: God's Story. (see additional page for diagram)

READ & REFLECT

Genesis means *beginning* or *origin* and is the fitting place to start to understand God's Story.

GOD CREATES — Read 1:1-2

Genesis raises many questions for people; sometimes more questions than answers. But we need to remember: **the Bible is written for us but not to us.**

Qu: how does it both help and frustrate us to know the Bible is written for us not to us?

Genesis is written in the context of the Ancient Near East (ANE), the original audience was the Israelites, and is more poetic in writing style. In other words, Genesis 1 is written in and for a culture vastly different to ours. There are gaps in how God might have gone about the *process* of creating, but it is clear that God is the creator & origin of life.

GOD ORDERS — Read 1:3-25

Qu: how do you interpret the word 'day'? Do you think it makes a significant difference whether it's a literal 24hr day or not? Discuss.

The author's use of 'day' is hard to interpret BUT it isn't central to the actual purpose of the creation account. What's clear is that God not only creates but brings ORDER to creation by giving it FORM, FUNCTION, and then FILLS it. Notice how creation moves from "without form and void" to days 1-3 giving form and days 4-6 filling it. (see additional page for table)

GOD CALLS — Read 1:26-31

Qu: who is the "us" referring to? Why is the Trinity an essential part of Christianity's understanding of God?

The climax of creation is the 6th day: the creation of mankind. Notice 3 times v27 says God created mankind. God not only creates mankind, but gives us a unique calling as Image Bearers. All of creation worships God (ps19, ps148), but our human calling is to worship God *through* being his image-bearers in the full glory of what that means (we'll unpack this next week).

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, **it was very good.** (v31)

Qu: what is something that is "very good" for you? How does it make you feel to read that God takes delight, enjoyment and pleasure in his creation? In you?

GOD RESTS — Read 2:1-3

To say that God rested on the 7th day, meant that God was now taking up his place in his temple (the earth) and would engage with creation from there. The idea of the earth as a place for God to dwell with man is an important theme that runs throughout the Bible (Rev 21:3).

Almost all ancient mythologies and religions say salvation is about escaping earth and going to heaven. Christianity and the doctrine of creation show it's about heaven coming to earth, God dwelling with mankind. God. With. Us.

Qu: We wouldn't describe our world today as the perfection Gen 1 describes. But, why is it important for us to know this part of the Story, and God's intentions, before moving too quickly into what went wrong and how God's fixing things?

GOD'S STORY

RESPOND & PRAY

- in what way/s does this part of God's Story encourage and or challenge you?
- How will you apply this to your life?
- Pray for one another in light of the discussion.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

DIAGRAM: Overview of the Story of God in Scripture

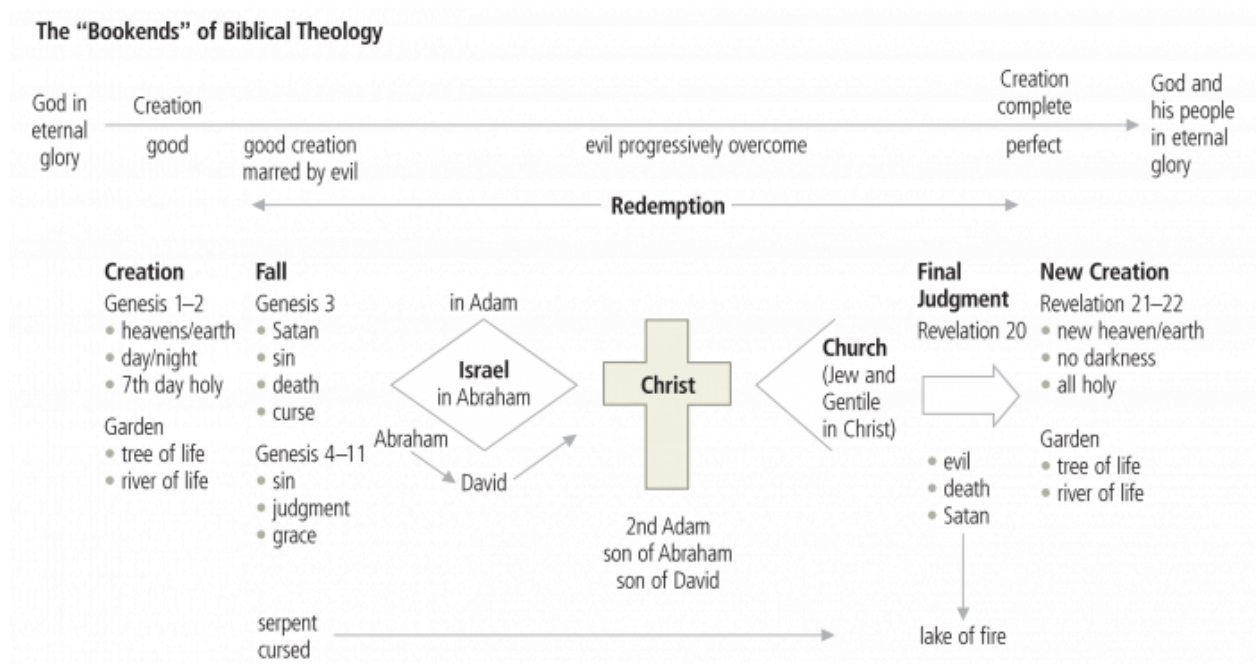


TABLE: 6 Days of Creation

Day 1-3: God FORMS creation	Day 4-6: God FILLS creation
Day 1: Light & Dark	Day 4: Lights of Day & Night
Day 2: Sea & Sky	Day 5: Fish & Birds
Day 3: Fertile Land	Day 6: Land Animals & Mankind
Day 7: Sabbath — Rest & Enjoyment	