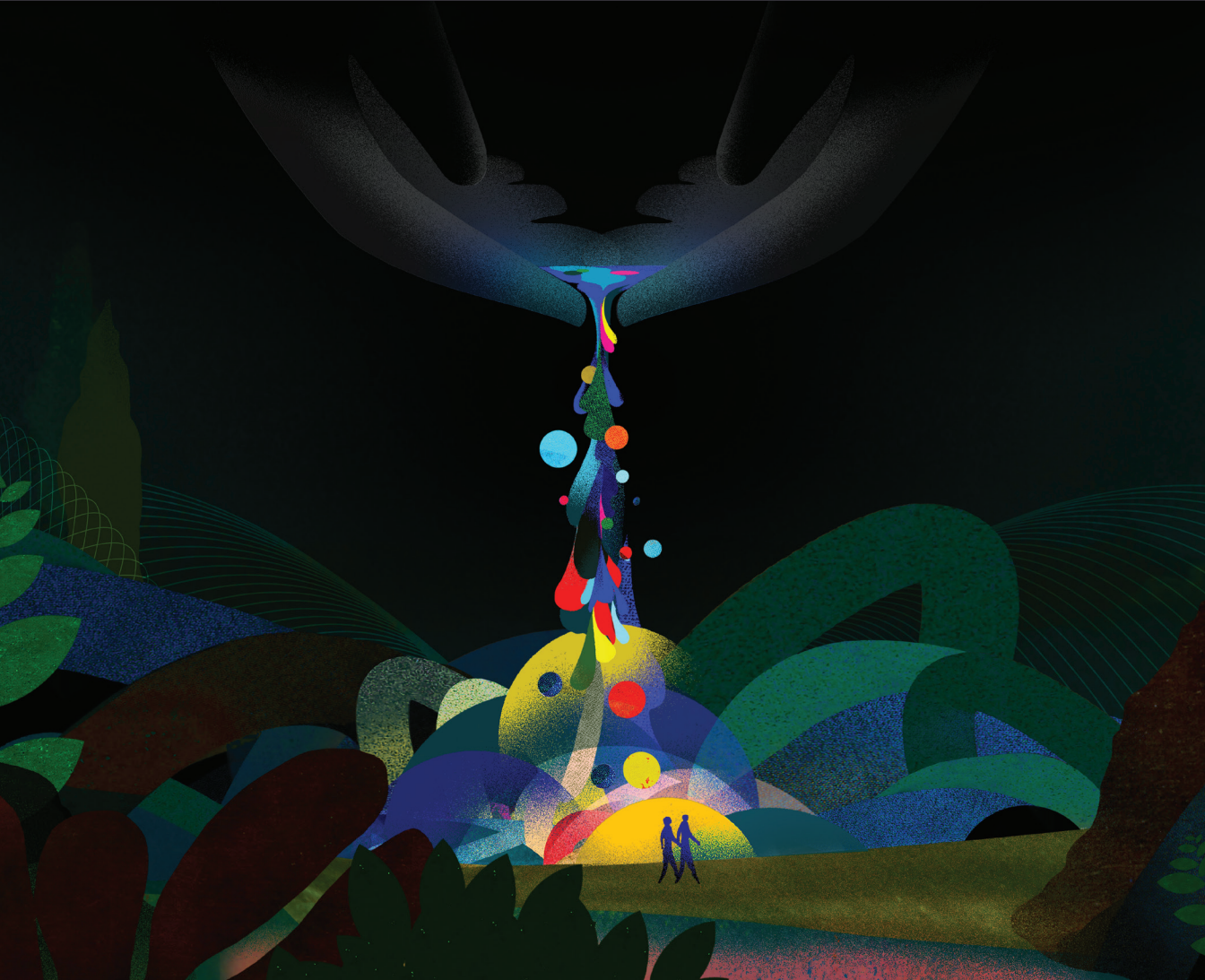




the **GOSPEL**PROJECT.

# FROM CREATION TO CHAOS

ADULTS / DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE / FALL 2021 / VOL. 1 / CSB



# IN THE BEGINNING

**+** **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

God created everything out of nothing, and all of creation reveals Him.

**+** **BACKGROUND PASSAGES:**

Genesis 1:1–2:3; Hebrews 11

**+** **SETTING:**

Before “In the beginning,” there was God. Before time and space was, there was the timeless, boundless, infinite Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The triune God—one God in three Persons, perfect in love, unity, and holiness—creates. All that we see, all the science we study, all the history we know and experience—everything owes its existence to the One who created everything out of nothing, and everything serves the purpose of bringing Him glory.

# DAY 1

## READ:

**Genesis 1:1–2:3**

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

**Genesis 1:1**

## NOTES



### ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #25: CREATION OUT OF NOTHING

The Bible teaches that God created the universe—everything both visible and invisible—out of nothing (sometimes expressed in the Latin phrase, “creation *ex nihilo*”). This means that before God created anything, nothing else existed except God Himself. God alone is eternal; every created thing has a beginning. Therefore, the eternal God rules over all of His creation and He alone is worthy of worship. Denial of this doctrine has implications for God’s sovereignty over and providence in creation. Because God created out of nothing, creation has meaning and purpose and points us to the Creator.

The word *prequel* was not a normal part of English parlance until the last twenty years. Why? Mainly because of movies, and more particularly because of the Star Wars films. As is well known by moviegoers, the first film in the Star Wars saga, which was released in 1977, began in the middle of a larger story, carrying the subtitle “Episode IV: A New Hope.” The film dropped the audience into a story with an assumed history to which they had no access other than the allusions made within the film itself.

The perspective of Star Wars fans in the late 1970s matches on some level with the experience of the ancient Hebrews (or, later on, Israelites). With their exodus from Egypt (Ex. 13–14), the Hebrews were reintroduced to the one true God, Yahweh, through a great act of redemption. Having some knowledge about God’s promises to their ancestors, the Hebrews rediscovered that they were in the middle of God’s story, with the Book of Genesis providing the background for this story of stories.

So, Genesis was the prequel of sorts that the Holy Spirit led Moses to compose in order to give the people of Israel their backstory, which is God’s story. The God who made promises to their ancestors—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—was the God who created the heavens and the earth. Therefore, Genesis 1:1 gave the formerly enslaved Hebrews the proper outlook on who this redeeming God is, namely, the maker of heaven and earth (cf. Gen. 2:4b).

Yahweh was not just another deity among the pantheon of gods the Hebrews heard about from their neighbors. He is the God, the Creator of the universe, the only God and the only Savior (Isa. 43:10–11), the God of gods and Lord of lords (Deut. 10:17).

**Why do we need to be reminded that the God who saved us is also the God who made the universe?**

# DAY 2

## READ:

Genesis 1:1–2:3

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Genesis 1:2–5

## NOTES

What is time? Augustine (354-430), a church father, famously quipped, “I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me.”<sup>1</sup> On the first day of creation, we see God begin to fashion time as a gift to His creatures. We often speak figuratively about “making time” or “taking time” when it comes to our schedules, but God actually made time in the most straightforward of terms. Just as we require space, we as finite creatures also need time in order to exist.

On Day 1, God gave order to what previously was unordered. He brought forth light amidst the darkness and used the light to distinguish between daytime and nighttime. But God did not do this as though He needed a watch. No, God is timeless (Ps. 90:2), and time is part of creation. God instead created time for His creatures’ sake, accenting His goodness in making a world for the benefit of others than Himself. We see this further demonstrated on Day 4 with His appointing the sun, moon, and stars to their roles for the sake of His creatures (1:14-19). Later, with His resting on Day 7, God even had His creatures in view when He blessed the Sabbath (2:2-3; Ex. 20:8-11). Time, then, is an especially important gift of God.

The next time you thank God for His good and perfect gifts, express your gratitude to the Father of lights for His gift of time (Jas. 1:17). Where—and when—would we be without time?

**What does God’s creation and the ordering of time reveal about Him?**

# DAY 3

## READ:

**Genesis 1:1-25**

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

**Genesis 1:24-25**

NOTES

“Save the Best for Last”—not only the title of the 1992 song performed by Vanessa Williams, this is also the message of Genesis 1 on some level.

In the Genesis creation narrative (1:1–2:3), we see God’s wisdom and goodness at work as He arranges the cosmos into a “good” home suitable for His variety of creatures. He is presented as a thoughtful and considerate host, as it were, who prepares to share a home with His guests whom He intends to welcome as permanent residents.

During Days 1–3, God formed particular creaturely realms (e.g., day/night, seas/sky, dry land), and during Days 4–6, He filled them with corresponding creaturely rulers (e.g., sun/moon/stars, sea creatures/birds, land animals). By focusing on the creation account only up to this point in Day 6, we can’t help but notice what—or rather who—remains absent. On Day 6, after creating the land animals, God would pause to contemplate the arrival of His chief creation and guest of honor: humankind (cf. Ps. 8:3-8).

The rest of creation was ordered with human beings in view; the party was planned with the guest of honor principally in mind. By their delayed entrance, the author’s unfolding of the six days of creation purposely led up to God’s crowning achievement: “Let us make man in our image...” (Gen. 1:26ff).

God saved the “best” for last.

**What are some ways we can affirm the goodness of all God’s creation and creatures?**

# DAY 4

## READ:

Hebrews 1

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Hebrews 1:1-3

NOTES

The human author of the Book of Hebrews wrote primarily to a Jewish audience, yet this Word of God, inspired by God's Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16-17), speaks to all who have ears to hear. And its message? Simply put, Jesus is better!

Jesus is better than the animal sacrifices to cover sin that were prescribed in the Old Testament (10:1-18). Jesus is better than the priests who offered those sacrifices (4:14-9:28). And here in Hebrews 1, we read that Jesus is better than the angels because, though He took on our humanity, He remains the divine Son of God, worthy of all worship (1:6).

When the Son took on flesh and entered the world through a human womb, He became the pinnacle of what God wanted to say to human beings, God's image bearers. Here was a human being who radiated what God is like—pure, holy, loving, and just—He is the image of God (Col. 1:15). The Creator of all entered into His creation like one of His creatures so we could know the Creator God in all of His glory.

But to know God in this way, that which separates us must be removed. Our sin has built a wall between us and our Creator, and had He not spoken to us through the prophets and now His Son, we would remain utterly adrift in the sea of our deserved judgment. But God loved the world, so He spoke and He sent (John 3:16). Jesus is God's message that saves.

**What has the coming of Jesus taught you about the Creator God?**

# DAY 5

## READ:

Hebrews 11

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

Hebrews 11:1-3

## NOTES

## VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"The body's eye did not recognize the God of all as creator; instead faith instructed us that God, who has always existed, created what did not exist. There is, after all, no example of this among human beings; yet though learning nothing of the kind from nature, we have in faith a teacher of the unexpected. Human beings, of course, make something out of something, whereas the God of all produced what exists out of nothing."<sup>2</sup>

-Theodoret of Cyr (c. 393-457)

How we understand creation and the beginnings of our universe is a matter of faith. None of us were there at the beginning of all things. None of us saw the surging waters, the formation of the land, the igniting of the stars, or the explosion of living creatures. None of us heard the silence broken by the Word of God speaking all these things into existence. But we must believe these things were so because God has told us so in His inspired Word (see Gen. 1; John 1:1-5).

The world offers various and competing views for the origins of the stuff we see. Some are purely natural; others are mythological—but all require faith, whether their adherents want to admit it or not. People frame and speak of their beliefs in a certain way so they may be found acceptable to the scientific establishment or to a specific religious group, sect, or cult. This could even be the case in the church, but first and foremost, our faith in the biblical understanding of creation leads to approval from God because we are taking Him at His word.

In general, people struggle to believe in what they cannot see, what they cannot test, what they cannot touch. It seems easier to shrink our world to what we think we know and what we can find out through our senses. But God places a premium on our faith—faith is the avenue through which God has chosen to save us. By nature, faith rests in what is not seen, that which is beyond our senses. By faith, God's people believe that everything we see came from nothing at the command of God. And those who believe His Word without seeing are blessed (John 20:29).

**What distinguishes a Christian's belief in "creation out of nothing" from being a blind faith?**



# GROUP

NOTES

## VOICES from THE CHURCH

“Nothing comes from the hand of God that is not intrinsically good. He is the good God who does all things for good.”<sup>3</sup>

-Barnabe Assohoto  
and Samuel Ngewa

### POINT 1: God created everything good (Gen. 1:1-5).

Genesis 1:1 is foundational for the biblical creation account and the whole of Scripture because it introduces us to the main character of the Bible— \_\_\_\_\_ .

**?** How should we read the Bible knowing that God is its main character?

God called His creation \_\_\_\_\_ as He brought \_\_\_\_\_ to it through His word.

**?** What are some ways you have seen the goodness of God’s creation?

### POINT 2: God created everything by design (Gen. 1:14-19).

God’s design in creation demonstrated God’s \_\_\_\_\_ toward humanity and His \_\_\_\_\_ as the one true God as He formed and filled the creation by His words.

Day 7: _____			
FILLING	Day 4:	Day 5:	Day 6:
	_____, _____, and _____	_____ and _____	_____ and _____
FORMING	Day 1:	Day 2:	Day 3:
	_____ and _____	_____ and _____	_____ and _____

**?** What are some ways human beings have twisted God’s good design in creation?



### POINT 3: God created everything for a purpose (Heb. 11:1-3).

#### ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #25: CREATION OUT OF NOTHING

NOTES

The Bible teaches that God created the universe—everything both visible and invisible—out of nothing. This means that before God created anything, nothing else existed except God Himself. God alone is \_\_\_\_\_; every created thing has a beginning. Therefore, the eternal God rules over all of His creation and He alone is worthy of worship. Denial of this doctrine has implications for God's sovereignty over and providence in creation. Because God created out of nothing, creation has \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and points us to the \_\_\_\_\_.



How should belief in the biblical account of creation affect the life of a Christian?

### MY RESPONSE

Because God created everything to reveal His glory, we seek to fulfill our purpose of making much of Jesus so that others might trust in Him and know and enjoy the Creator too.

- **HEAD:** How might you need to stand for the truth about God's creation in your home, community, and workplace?
- **HEART:** What are some ways your group/church can worship God and reflect and honor God's goodness through your use of His creation?
- **HANDS:** Who will you introduce to Jesus Christ, our Creator, Savior, and Lord?

#### VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'"<sup>4</sup>

—Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920)