



the **GOSPEL**PROJECT.

FROM CREATION TO CHAOS

ADULTS / DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE / FALL 2021 / VOL. 1 / LARGE PRINT



GOD'S WORD TO YOU

A SUMMARY OF THE BIBLE

In the beginning, the all-powerful, personal God created the universe. This God created human beings in His image to live joyfully in His presence, in humble submission to His gracious authority. But all of us have rebelled against God and, in consequence, must suffer the punishment of our rebellion: physical death and the wrath of God.

Thankfully, God initiated a rescue plan, which began with His choosing the nation of Israel to display His glory in a fallen world. The Bible describes how God acted mightily on Israel's behalf, rescuing His people from slavery and then giving them His holy law. But God's people—like all of us—failed to rightly reflect the glory of God.

Then in the fullness of time, in the person of Jesus Christ, God Himself came to renew the world and restore His people. Jesus perfectly obeyed the law given to Israel. Though innocent, He suffered the consequences of human rebellion by His death on a cross. But three days later, God raised Him from the dead.

Now the church of Jesus Christ has been commissioned by God to take the news of Christ's work to the world. Empowered by God's Spirit, the church calls all people everywhere to repent of sin and to trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness. Repentance and faith restores our relationship with God and results in a life of ongoing transformation.

The Bible promises that Jesus Christ will return to this earth as the conquering King. Only those who live in repentant faith in Christ will escape God's judgment and live joyfully in God's presence for all eternity. God's message is the same to all of us: repent and believe, before it is too late. Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe with your heart that God raised Him from the dead, and you will be saved.

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THE EDITOR

When I was a pastor, the hardest part of writing sermons was always the end—the application. Explaining the meaning of the passage was life-giving and, in a sense, easy. But when it came to explaining what to do in light of it, I struggled. I offered practical guidance on all kinds of different issues, but it always rang hollow to me. Eventually the reality hit me: I was feeding my people the Scriptures, but I was failing to testify to Jesus as I did. I was preaching moralism, telling people to live better lives in their own power. I wanted them to change their behavior rather than be changed by the gospel.

I know I'm not alone in my experience. Many of us grew up hearing the Bible taught this way, and many of us have taught it that way. And this is why I love being part of *The Gospel Project*. I am grateful for God's kindness to allow me to be part of a resource that is helping people to place the gospel where it belongs—at the center of all we do.

Because if we are followers of Jesus, that's what we're called to be about. We're called to be people who are here for good news with good news to share with the whole world. And that begins not outside in the world but within the church. We need the gospel just as much as those who do not yet know Jesus. We need to be changed by it and to continue to be changed by it.

So whether you're reading this as a brand new Christian, an established believer, or someone still trying to figure out what you believe about Jesus, know that this is my hope for you: that as you study the Bible personally and in community, you will see how it all testifies to Jesus, week after week.

For His glory,

Brian Dembowczyk

Managing Editor of *The Gospel Project*

The Gospel Project®
Adult Daily Discipleship Guide
Large Print
Volume 10, Number 1 Fall 2021

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Printed in the United States
of America

The Gospel Project®: Adult Daily Discipleship Guide Large Print (ISSN 2325-3266; Item 005567148) is published quarterly by Lifeway Christian Resources, One Lifeway Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234, Ben Mandrell, President. © 2021 Lifeway Christian Resources.

For ordering or inquiries, visit lifeway.com, or write Lifeway Resources Customer Service, One Lifeway Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0113. For bulk shipments mailed quarterly to one address, email orderentry@lifeway.com, fax 615.251.5933, or write to the above address.

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ALL AGES STUDY PLAN

VOL 1: From Creation to Chaos

(Genesis) Fall 2021

Unit 1: The Heavens Declare the Glory of God (Gen. 1–2; Pss. 8; 96)

Unit 2: Let Us Make a Name for Ourselves (Gen. 3–11)

Unit 3: I Will Make Your Name Great (Gen. 11–50)

VOL 2: From Captivity to the Wilderness

(Exodus–Deuteronomy) Winter 2021–22

Unit 4: Out of Egypt I Called My Son (Ex. 1–15)

Unit 5: To Dwell in the House of the Lord (Ex. 16–40; Lev.)

Unit 6: Be Holy, Because I Am Holy (Num. 13–14; 20–21)

VOL 3: From Conquest to a Kingdom

(Joshua–1 Samuel) Spring 2022

Unit 7: Lord, Teach Me Your Statutes (Josh. 1; 3–4)

Unit 8: Fear the Lord and Worship Him (Josh. 2; 6–11; 23–24)

Unit 9: There Is No Fear of God Before Their Eyes (Judg.; Ruth; 1 Sam. 1–6)

VOL 4: From Unity to Division

(1 Samuel–1 Kings) Summer 2022

Unit 10: Because of Your Hardened Heart (1 Sam. 8–15)

Unit 11: Create a Clean Heart for Me (1 Sam. 16–17; 2 Sam. 6–7; 11–12)

Unit 12: If You Walk Before Me with a Heart of Integrity (1 Kings 1–12)

VOL 5: From Exile to Rebellion

(1 Kings–The Prophets) Fall 2022

Unit 13: What Comes Out of the Mouth Comes from the Heart (1 Kings 12–18; 2 Kings 1–5; Isa. 44)

Unit 14: Seek the Lord, All You Humble of the Earth (2 Chron. 24; Isa. 22; 25; 30; Zeph.)

Unit 15: He Has Made Every Nationality (Jonah; Nah.; 2 Chron. 36)

VOL 6: From Captivity to Restoration

(The Prophets, Ezra, Nehemiah)
Winter 2022–23

Unit 16: The Lord Keeps His Eye on Those Who Fear Him (Jer. 29–30; Dan.)

Unit 17: Take Refuge in the Lord (Ezra 1–6; Zech. 13–14)

Unit 18: For Look, the Day Is Coming (Esth.; Neh.; Mal.)

VOL 7: From Heaven to Earth

(The Gospels) Spring 2023

Unit 19: Here Is the Lamb of God
(John 1–2; Luke 2; Mark 1; Matt. 4)

Unit 20: God’s Love Was Revealed
Among Us in This Way (John 3–4)

Unit 21: Without Faith It Is Impossible to
Please God (Luke 4–5)

VOL 8: From Wonder to Rejection

(The Gospels) Summer 2023

Unit 22: The Works That I Do in My
Father’s Name Testify About Me
(Mark 4; 8; Luke 5; Matt. 9; John 10)

Unit 23: The Kingdom of God Is in Your
Midst (Matt. 5–7; 13; 24; Luke 15; 17)

Unit 24: God’s Glory in the Face of Jesus
Christ (Luke 13; John 11)

VOL 9: From Death to Resurrection

(The Gospels) Fall 2023

Unit 25: Jerusalem, Jerusalem, Who
Kills the Prophets (Matt. 21–25; Mark 1;
John 6; 14)

Unit 26: The Hour Has Come
(John 12; Matt. 26)

Unit 27: The King of the Jews
(Luke 22–23; Matt. 27–28)

VOL 10: From Many People to One People

(The Gospels, Acts) Winter 2023-24

Unit 28: I Am with You Always (Luke 24;
John 20–21; Matt. 28)

Unit 29: You Will Be My Witnesses
(Acts 1–2)

Unit 30: Every Day the Lord Added to
Their Number (Acts 2–5)

VOL 11: From One Nation to All Nations

(Acts and Epistles) Spring 2024

Unit 31: Every Knee Will Bow
(Acts 5–8; Phil. 2)

Unit 32: The Power and the Wisdom of
God (Acts 9–12; 1 Cor. 1; 12)

Unit 33: A Prisoner of Christ Jesus
(Acts 9; 13–14; Philem.)

VOL 12: From This World to the World to Come

(Acts, Epistles, Revelation) Summer 2024

Unit 34: Ambassadors for Christ
(Acts 15–19; 2 Cor. 5; Eph. 4)

Unit 35: That I May Gain Christ
(Acts 20–28; Phil. 3)

Unit 36: A New Heaven and a New Earth
(Rev. 4–5; 19–22)

HOW TO USE THE DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Central to your personal and group experience with The Gospel Project for Adults is the Daily Discipleship Guide. Here's how to make the most of your time with it:

BEGIN WITH PERSONAL TIME IN THE WORD

We recommend beginning your week with the daily devotions. These devotions lay a foundation for what will be explored and discussed in your group time as you build healthy rhythms of personal discipleship.



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. 13–46), 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?

STUDY THE BIBLE WITH YOUR BIBLE

Reading and studying the Bible is absolutely life-changing, and we believe the best way to study the Bible is to use the Bible you own. Whether you read from the CSB, ESV, NIV, KJV, or many other translations, the Daily Discipleship Guide helps you engage with the session not only with our book but your Book.



GET BACK TO BASICS

As you read and study, we recommend using the tool found in your Daily Discipleship Guide called the Seven Arrows of Bible Study. The Seven Arrows guides both novice and experienced students of the Word through the basic mechanics of Bible study by asking a few key questions of any passage (see page 10 for more information).

DISCUSS AND APPLY IN COMMUNITY

Each session concludes with a two-page discussion guide. This guide includes the key points of the session along with interactive questions and activities designed to address the needs of a variety of learning styles. Mark up the discussion guide, make notes, fill in the blanks, do the activities, write out questions and thoughts—make it yours!

7 ARROWS OF BIBLE READING

by Matt Rogers

There is often a vast disconnect between the awareness of the need for disciple-making and practical tools that actually aid in this work. Three factors are essential: Scripture, relationships, and time. Discipleship happens when the life-changing truth of Scripture is infused into genuine relationships over an extended period of time.

Our desire was to create a simple, reproducible strategy that would facilitate this process. This led us to develop a simple strategy for small clusters (2-3 people) to meet together regularly and talk about the Scriptures and apply them to their lives.

The seven arrows of Bible reading were an attempt at developing a tool for proper hermeneutics to power these relationships. We did not want our people to simply talk about the Bible. We wanted them to understand the Bible and know how to apply it to their lives. Each cluster would read a predetermined passage of Scripture and discuss it using these seven arrows.

The diagram consists of seven questions arranged vertically, connected by arrows. From top to bottom: 1. A circular arrow pointing right, followed by the question 'What does this passage say?'. 2. A horizontal arrow pointing left, followed by 'What did this passage mean to its original audience?'. 3. A vertical arrow pointing up, followed by 'What does this passage tell us about God?'. 4. A vertical arrow pointing down, followed by 'What does this passage tell us about man?'. 5. A horizontal arrow pointing right, followed by 'What does this passage demand of me?'. 6. A horizontal double-headed arrow, followed by 'How does this passage change the way I relate to people?'. 7. A circular arrow pointing right, followed by 'How does this passage prompt me to pray?'.

10



7 ARROWS OF BIBLE READING

by Matt Rogers

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What does this passage say?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What does this passage tell us about man?



What does this passage demand of me?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?

ARROW 1: The goal was for the clusters to start by summarizing the main point of the passage as succinctly as possible, ideally in one sentence.

ARROW 2: Next, the clusters sought to discern authorial intent for the passage by asking what it meant to its original audience. Since a text of Scripture can never mean what it never meant, it is necessary to begin by discerning what the text meant. Often this may require the clusters to consult other study tools or cross-reference other biblical texts to arrive at the meaning of the text.

ARROW 3: Thirdly, we asked what the text tells us about the nature and character of God and specifically His work through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

ARROW 4: Fourthly, the text was analyzed to see what it tells us about humanity. Bryan Chappell refers to this as the “fallen condition focus” of the text. What does the text reveal about sin and humankind’s need for the gospel?

ARROW 5: Then we moved the clusters to application. Since we had rooted the clusters in the meaning of the text, they were now positioned to rightly apply it’s meaning to their lives.

ARROW 6: From there we wanted our clusters to apply the Scripture to their relationships with others. Ideally, they would discuss how the text shaped both how they related to other believers and how they lived on mission in the world.

ARROW 7: Finally, the clusters rooted their prayers in the Scriptures. Hopefully, the previous six arrows kindled the flames of passionate prayer in the lives of the clusters—both for their own sanctification and for their mission to the lost.

With this model, we touched on three important areas for discipleship:

Scripture—Disciple-making was rooted in a rightful understanding of Scripture and not in simply doing life together, unpacking another sermon, or dependance on classroom instruction.

Simplicity—Disciple-making was simple enough for everyone to get involved. All believers could take these principles, a Bible, and a relationship with a young Christian and get to work.

Stickiness—Disciple-making through understanding and applying Scripture was etched in the minds of our young church. They could use these same arrows not only to guide their cluster discussions but also their personal Bible study, small group leadership, and comprehension of sermons.

These arrows have proven to be a unique tool in our disciple-making toolbox that the Lord is using to call and build faithful and fruitful followers of Jesus.

Matt Rogers is the teaching pastor at The Church at Cherrydale in Greenville, South Carolina. His church developed the Seven Arrows tool to help people read and understand Scripture within their small groups. The concept has gone on to form the basis of a 52-week devotional for teens from Lifeway Students, the Seven Arrows Bible from B&H, and is now featured in The Gospel Project for Adults and Students.

UNIT 1

+

THE HEAVENS

DECLARE

THE GLORY

OF GOD

“Let There Be Light”

by Jen Oshman

We followed the guide through the natural doorway carved into the side of the mountain. The tunnel was barely taller than we were, the air noticeably chillier than where we had been standing a moment ago. A drip, drip, drip echoed in the distance, and we breathed in that distinct after-the-rain smell. With each step we descended farther into a labyrinth of limestone.

Uneasy whispers arose and we all zipped up our jackets and pulled on our hoods. We could see our breath. After several minutes of walking with care so as not to scratch our heads or our sides, the tiny tunnel finally fanned out. We then took in the grandeur of hundreds of stalactites and stalagmites reaching out for one other like the fingers in Michelangelo’s “The Creation of Adam.” Lights permanently installed on the cave ceiling above shone on the emerald green water below. With eyes wide and mouths agape, we beheld this underground treasure.

And then the lights went out. Our guide had just murmured something about how we should get ready for it to be dark, but we didn’t fully comprehend his words in time. We weren’t prepared for a darkness that was total and complete. My husband, children, and I all reached out to feel each other. People nervously laughed and little ones tried not to cry. The dark just feels sinister, uncertain. It makes you shiver and wonder what’s out there. When the switch was finally flipped back on, a collective sigh of relief echoed off our stone surroundings. With the flood of light came a flood of comfort and gratitude.

LIGHT OVERCAME DARKNESS

In the beginning, before God fashioned the heavens and the earth, darkness was over the deep. Was it dark like that cave? Or was it much darker? Light was absent. It simply did not exist until God said, “Let there be light.” On the first day of creation, light overcame the darkness, as it always would from then on.

On the first day
of creation,
light overcame
the darkness,
as it always would
from then on.

Our Creator God continued, speaking everything into existence: the Himalayas and the Yellow Sea, aloe vera and giant sequoias, the stars Sirius and Betelgeuse and Pollux, the whale shark and the lesser goldfinch, the heifer, the Komodo dragon, and the red-eyed tree frog. Just like my family in the cave, we now take in God's wondrous works with eyes wide and mouths agape. The heavens declare God's glory and the earth resounds with His praise.

On the sixth day, God breathed life into the very first humans, and the Bible tells us He made them—and He made you and me—in His image. All 7.8 billion people currently on the planet and every person who has lived before us and everyone who will come after us bears God's image. Just think about that. Every man, woman,

and child of every color and country, of every ability and age, of every tribe and tongue, no matter his or her wealth or circumstances or skills or setbacks bears the image of the one true God. To bear His image is to be like Him. Not in every way, of course, as we are not God and we are sinners, but we resemble Him. In some fashion, by nature, we all point each other to Him, and we all receive His gracious care.

God's care for us is stunning, beyond comprehension. Indeed, at our earth's birth God brought forth light, but He didn't stop there. Jesus, the Creator of light itself, said, "I am the light of the world" (John 9:5). The Maker of light is Himself light.

"For God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). At our re-birth, God brought forth light into our hearts. Darkness was over us. But God—our Creator, our light-maker, our redeemer—came down to rescue you and me.

The Maker of light is Himself light.

Show them the light, for without Jesus we are all lost and have no hope.

CALLED OUT OF DARKNESS AND INTO THE LIGHT

How very good of our God not to leave us in the cold and complete darkness. While we were yet sinners, Jesus died for us, trading our sin for His righteousness (Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:21). Though we deserve darkness, death, and hell, we are instead given light, life, and eternity with our good God and Savior. How kind and merciful of Him to come. He has called us out of darkness and into His marvelous light so that we might proclaim His excellencies (1 Pet. 2:9).

If you are in the light—in Christ—praise God above and proclaim Him. Shine in the darkness for others. By God's grace and His power, reveal to others the treasure that is hidden from their view. Show them the light, for without Jesus we are all lost and have no hope. There is nothing you or I or anyone else can do to conjure up the light on our own. It must be given to us, and once we have it, we must share it wherever darkness remains.

That cold, dark cave that my family visited falls woefully short of the darkness that yet persists in this world and the darkness that awaits in the next for those who don't know Christ Jesus as Lord. But

the cave stands as a physical symbol of a spiritual truth. We were once in the dark, but now we are in the light. We who have been redeemed were once lost, but now we are found. We were once blind, but now we see. God's matchless beauty, goodness, and majesty has been revealed to us through the light of creation, the Light of the world, and the light that we redeemed image bears bring with us wherever we go.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus calls us to let our light shine before men in such a way that they may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven (Matt. 5:16). For God's glory and for the good of all people, may you and I shine like the bright lights in that dark cave, pointing to the eternal, glorious, and immeasurable treasure found in Jesus.

We are made in God's image. In Christ, we are children of light. Let's shine.



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.

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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” (Confessions XI.14).¹ 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."²

-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

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: _____, _____, and _____	Day 5: _____ and _____	Day 6: _____ and _____
	FORMING	Day 1: _____ and _____	Day 2: _____ and _____

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

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."³

-Barnabe Asshoto and Samuel Ngewa

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!’”⁴

—Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920)