



## **The Earth is the Lord's! (Week 1/3) God's Creation & Our Origin**

### **Small Group Discussion Questions**

**Connect** *Pray for one opportunity to share the Good News—or invite someone to Alpha—this week.*

#### **Warm-Up**

1. Do you have a favourite prequel (a book or a movie)? Why do you think 'origin stories' matter?
2. Have you ever thought much about your role (as a Christian) to care for creation? *Why or why not?*

#### **Read Genesis 1:1-25**

3. What are the opening words of the Bible? What is the significance of this?
4. *Who* created? *What* did God create? *How* did God create?
5. Is it the intent of the author for this to be a scientific account? *What questions does it actually answer?*
6. As God forms and fills the world, what assessment does he make? What does this mean?
7. In what way are these words our origin story? How does that give us incredible worth?
8. How do you like to enjoy creation? What in creation most fills you with awe?
9. How should our response of awe direct us to worship of the Creator? How have you experienced this?
10. In what ways do you think creation declares the glory of God?
11. How should the beauty and grandeur of creation fill us with humility? *Why are we dependent on God?*

#### **Read Genesis 1:26-31**

12. In whose *image* are we created? What does it mean to be created in the image of God?
13. If we are created in God's image, how do we uniquely represent him in the world?
14. In what practical ways should our role as representatives be reflected in our care for creation?
15. How does sin affect our image-bearing? In what way has that been restored in Jesus?
16. What is the relationship between being created in God's image and being his representatives?
17. How are you God's representative? Does that shape your care for God's creation?
18. What is humanity's purpose in creation as distinct from other creatures? What does it mean to 'rule'?

#### **Read Genesis 2:15-17**

19. What is humanity's purpose described as in these verses? What does it mean to 'work' and to 'care'?
20. How are you part of 'working' creation? How are you part of 'caring' for creation?

**Apply** *How can you practice delighting in and enjoying God's creation this week in praise of him?*

**Pray** *Almighty Lord, how beautiful is the work of your hands! Thank you that you have made us in your image and entrusted us to steward your world. Please help us to enjoy the beauty of your creation, be directed to you in praise, and wisely rule in dependence on you and in service of your purposes. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

# GOING DEEPER

## **The Earth is the Lord's! (Week 1/3) God's Creation & Our Origin**

Small Group Discussion Questions

### **On Your Frontline this Week**

*Who is someone you've had a conversation about faith or big issues of life? Pray about inviting them to Alpha.*




### **For Families**

- *Download:* some of the family resources to use at home: [stbartskids.org](http://stbartskids.org)

### **Listen, Watch, and Read**

- *Listen (sermon):* "Called to Full Humanity" by John Stott:  
[https://www.allsouls.org/Media/AllMedia.aspx?show\\_media=51875](https://www.allsouls.org/Media/AllMedia.aspx?show_media=51875)
- *Listen (sermon):* "The Creation" by Vaughan Roberts:  
<https://stebbes.org/sermons/the-creation/#sermons>
- *Listen (sermon):* "Dignity: Created in God's Image" by Vaughan Roberts:  
<https://stebbes.org/sermons/dignity-created-in-gods-image/#sermons>
- *Listen (sermon):* "Man created in God's image" by John Stott:  
[https://www.allsouls.org/Media/AllMedia.aspx?show\\_media=218867&show\\_file=232239](https://www.allsouls.org/Media/AllMedia.aspx?show_media=218867&show_file=232239)
- *Read (article):* "Care for Creation" by John Stott (for A Rocha Canada):  
[https://arocha.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/article\\_careforcreation-john-stott.pdf](https://arocha.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/article_careforcreation-john-stott.pdf)

### **Series Resources**

- *Read (book):* "Creation Care" by Douglas Moo & Jonathan Moo. 
- *Read (book):* "Creation Care" by John Stott. 
- *Read (book—suitable for reading age of Year 10 and up):* "A Christian's Guide to Planet Earth: why it matters & how to care for it" by Betsy Painter. 
- *Read (book—suitable for reading age of 8-12 and up):* "All Of Creation: Understanding God's Planet and How We Can Help" by Betsy Painter
- *Read (book—for children):* "God's Very Colourful Creation" by Tim Thornborough and Jennifer Davison.
- *Read (book—for children):* "Creation" by Devon and Jessica Provencher.

 [Available to borrow in the Church library](#)

# THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S: GOD'S WORLD & OUR ROLE

*Week 1/3 "God's Creation & Our Origin"*

*by the Rev'd Adam Lowe (21/09/2025)*

하나님의 창조와 우리의 다스림 | 上帝的创造与我们的统治 |  
Ciek də Nhialic ku Lɔŋ kĕë | கடவுளின் படைப்பும், நமது பங்கும்

*Bible Passage: Genesis 1 & 2*

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*Gracious Lord, thank you for the beauty of your creation, that you have made us in your image, and entrusted us to steward your world. Please help us to enjoy it, to praise you, and wisely rule for you. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

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In recent years — *in both film and books* — we've witnessed the resurgence of the prequel!  
You know, the book or the movie that comes later and fills in the backstory.

A **sequel** moves the story forward in time — showing us what comes next after the initial release...  
A **prequel** takes a step back — unpacking what has come before.

Star Wars probably popularised this idea, that's why there's so many debates if you should watch the episodes in release order, or chronological order, or some other order altogether. I'm in no way qualified or sufficiently vested to make any comment on that... *but the point is: a prequel is not only a great way to leverage a film franchise and to fill in some gaps in the story, but it's a way of communicating the ORIGIN story.*

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- It shows us how a hero, or a villain, or *even a whole world came to be*.
- If you want to understand who someone is.  
If *we* want to understand who we are, and our place in the world, of how we relate to both the Creator and all that he has created, then we've got to understand our origin story, too. / It goes way back. *In the beginning*.
- That's the ultimate origin story which *should shape* how we live as followers of Jesus today.
- So as we start our series on creation care, that's where we begin. //
- I know even the mere mention of caring for creation, or the problems in creation can evoke all sorts of responses!
- **Some might be sceptical.** THINKING: Urgh! Caring creation is some woke leftist agenda!

*Not something that serious Bible-believing Christians need to be concerned with.*

- **Some might be fearful.** WONDERING: I just feel so overwhelmed.  
What IS going to happen? What can we possibly do? What hope is there?
- **Some might be confident.** PROCLAIMING: We've got this. We can fix it. We can do it.
- **Some might be apathetic. Just not care.** REFLECTING: Of what concern is this to me?  
Jesus will sort it out when he returns. *And there's nothing we can do about it anyway. //*
- I wonder if you ever find yourself responding in any of those ways? I know I do.
- But over the next few weeks, as we consider:  
*God's Creation and Our Origin;*  
*New Creation and Our Future;*  
*Fallen Creation and Our Present;* we'll see that responding to the Good News of Jesus is Lord,  
*includes being serious about our place in a world which he rules, has redeemed, and will renew.*
- We should not be sceptical, fearful, self-reliant, or apathetic.
- We just need to be faithful.

So, as we begin with the beginning, we learn three key things about ourselves,  
in relation to God and what he has created: *We are:*

- Part of God's Creation;  
Made in God's Image; *and*  
Entrusted with God's Purpose.

## PART OF GOD'S CREATION | GENESIS 1:1-25

하나님의 창조의 일부 | 上帝创造的一部分 | Biäk dë Ciek dë Nhialic | கடவுளின் படைப்பின் ஒரு பகுதி.

First, we are **part of God's creation**. We are *creatures* not *gods*. Genesis 1, verse 1...

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**In the beginning** God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

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I'm not going to read the entirety of the chapter out, but you know how it goes...

- God — all three persons of the Trinity are involved —  
go on to create everything that we know—and don't know—in all of existence.  
Everything that is unseen *to us*: that's what heavenly realms is shorthand for.  
And everything that is seen to us: that is the earthly realm — the entirety of the universe.
- Light, sky, water, ground, vegetation, stars, every living creature, including us.

There's four fundamental things for us to really take notice of.

- God *alone* is the one who created. He's the Creator.  
Everything was *created by God out of nothing*.  
He did it, simply by the power of his word. //  
*And, all that he created was good. In fact, it was very good. // AMAZING!*

- *Nothing I make* is truly of my own doing.  
*Everything I do* uses building blocks that someone else has provided.  
*All that we produce takes work* — we can't just speak things into being.  
*My words can only describe reality, not create it.*  
*I have trouble just calling the kids to the table for dinner!*  
 And even the best things I've ever made are imperfect.

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I find it incredibly satisfying, I'm pretty chuffed,  
 when I'm able to successfully put together a piece of flat-packed furniture.  
 Have you ever had that feeling? You want to show someone else, even be a bit impressed. /  
 I love kind of inventing things. Sadly nothing impressive or artistic,  
 maybe even just inventing a solution to a problem. But it just pales in comparison to what God has done.

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*The word used for 'created' here is only ever used in the Old Testament in relation to God.*

- This is unique. / It's easy to get caught up in the mechanics of how creation came about, and miss that this was not an accident or an afterthought, but the intentional action, by the one whom has always existed and brought everything into being.
- And as we read this entire account of creation, we are not only meant to understand that God is the one behind it, that he solely is the one who brings things into being, order from chaos, but also we should delight in the scale and goodness of what he has made. / *Do you do that?*

- It's estimated that humans have discovered only about 9% of the species on our planet.  
 That we have mapped less than 20% of the ocean floors.  
 That there are around 2 trillion galaxies in the observable universe.  
 Perhaps one septillion stars—that's a one followed by 24 zeroes.
- And God gave us senses, sight, sound, touch, and taste: to enjoy it all.

Our response should be both **awe** and **humility**.

- **Awe - of course!** *How could we not be full of awe as we enjoy what God has made. /*
- When we read that God looked at what he created and said it was 'good', and 'very good' some might be tempted to think, well, that's quite the self-review.  
*But if anything it's an understatement! I cooked dinner last night and thought it was pretty good!*  
 But of course it means so much more than that.
- The word for 'good' doesn't just mean beautiful but carries as sense just as God intended.
- It's why when the psalmists refer to God's creation, they will often use words like: Manifold or many; great or expansive; full and flowing; high and abundant.
- As the psalmists look or glimpse upon what God has created, they burst into praise, not in worship of the creation, but of the one who is the power behind it all.
- That's actually part of the purpose of creation — to point us back to the Creator in praise.
- There's an inherent goodness in us enjoying what God has created, but it's even better when that directs us back to the one behind it all.

- *The heavens declare the glory of God. The skies proclaim the work of his hands.  
Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound.. Let all the trees sing...*
- The awe of what we see, hear, taste, and touch directs in praise to God **with humility**. //
- If you've ever stood under a clear sky at night and looked up,  
you know what it is to be full of awe and utterly humbled all at the same time.  
We're blown away by the scale and the beauty of the slither of what we observe.  
But we're also reminded that we're just a tiny part of that. // *It's why the psalmist reflected/*
- *When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set  
in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? //*
- There is no room for arrogance. / *God called creation good even before humans were made.*
- That doesn't mean we're the same as everything else in the created order.  
We have a very special role. And we'll get to that.
- But it means that whatever our approach to the world, it must only and always be in  
humble dependence on God and respect of it in accordance with his purposes.
- Understanding our origin story, means recognising that we're subordinate to God.
- **It's not only that we're not God.** *But we need God. /*
- If you want to understand your role in his world.  
A world that is to be enjoyed and delighted in.  
You can only begin to—as it has been intended—in *dependence on* and *in praise of* him.

## MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE | VERSES 26-31

하나님의 형상대로 지음받음 | 按照上帝的形象创造 | Lôi nê Ciek dē Nhialic | கடவுள் சாயலில் உண்டாக்கப்பட்டோம்

Second, we are **made in God's image**. Verse 26... Then God said...

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*"Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

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Notice what is on repeat: Let us make *mankind in our image*. / *In our likeness*.

So God created *mankind in his own image*. / *In the image of God* he created them.

- There is a connection between our image and our role to rule, we'll get to that,  
but first we see that being created in God's image makes us distinct amidst creation.  
*Being made in God's image is at the heart of the answer to the q of what it means to be human.*  
Humans were made last, distinct, as the very pinnacle of God's creation.
- That means, *we don't need to make ourselves worthy or worth something,*  
*Through effort, work, study, achievements, whatever b/c every human has intrinsic worth.*  
*Every person has value, not just the fittest, strongest, smartest, or richest. //*

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In the ancient world, kings would often erect stone statues of images of themselves throughout their realm as an extension and reminder of their rule. /

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- The Lord of the Universe doesn't set up statues to point back to him.  
He has imprinted humans with his very likeness to *represent him in the world*.
- We are to be living images in the likeness of God.
- Right now, because of sin, that image is broken. It's marred and messed up.  
But even in our broken state, we bear that image.
- There's a reason—as one commentator put it that there is: A 'save the whales' foundation set up by humans, but not a 'save the humans' foundation set up by whales. //
- That doesn't mean we get to trash creation, but it does mean we have a unique role.
- For we are created as God's representatives.

That has three implications.

- FIRST: *Because we're made in God's image:*  
**are to RELATE in dependence on him. We can know God personally. /**
- When some religious folk asked Jesus if they should pay taxes to Caesar they were trying to entrap him. It was a contentious issue. If Jesus said, no, don't pay it, he'd be arrested.  
If he said, do pay it, then they would say, ah, you're a sympathiser with Rome.  
So instead, *He took the coin and asked whose image is on it?*  
They answered him, 'Caesar's — so Jesus said, *give to Caesar what is Caesar's!* And continued...  
AND GIVE TO GOD what is God's! / The coin bears Caesar's image so it belongs to Caesar.  
But we bear God's image, therefore we belong to God. Our lives should reflect that.

- SECOND: *Because we're made in God's image:*  
**we are to RECOGNISE the dignity of others.** They're made in God's image, too!
- Sometimes how we express that is obvious.  
*Sometimes it's more complex as our neighbour is not always seen.*
- Sometimes the effect of the way that we live is not always immediately obvious.
- But we know that in the world today there is a radically unfair distribution of resources.  
We know that resource consumption in the West has a disproportionate effect on the rest of the world. / If we truly think that every person is created in God's image and has dignity, then we need to carefully consider our effect on the world as a responsibility.
- THIRD: *because we're made in God's image:* **we are to REPRESENT his interests.**
- That happens in a multitude of ways. Through our witness. Through our obedience.  
But also our approach to the world. *What does it say if Christians in one breath proclaim God is the creator, and then go on to treat his creation with contempt.* That makes no sense.
- The earth is not there to do with as we please,  
but to steward in a way that would please him.

## ENTRUSTED WITH GOD'S PURPOSE | VERSE 26ff

하나님의 목적을 위임받음 | 被托付上帝的旨意 | Geëm nè kě də Nhialic | நம்பி கொடுக்கப்பட்ட கடவுளின் நோக்கம்

Finally, we are **entrusted with God's purpose**. //

Genesis 1:26: Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may **rule over** the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Genesis 1:28: God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. **Rule over** the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Sometimes when people read the instruction to *RULE over* creation, they've taken it to mean that we can *do whatever* and *act however* we please.

- That we can take it, exploit it, and dominate it.
- But that's just not what is meant by rule here. It's a much richer concept.
- This is a delegated authority from God, to us, his image bearers.  
That should be expressed in dependence on him, and in accordance with his purposes.
- If a king rules with no regard for his people or with no care for the lands, they would make them a tyrant or a despot, making way for a wasteland.

- *Our responsibility is to express rule in a way that represents God.* //
- There's two equally and opposite unhelpful ways to approach that:
- At one end of the spectrum is to think that humans should be like park rangers.  
Completely hands off, that we are to leave no mark on creation, and make no changes.
- At the other end of the spectrum is to think that humans are unrestrained developers.  
Ripping, stripping, and extracting every resource conceivable for whatever we want.
- But in reality, the image of this delegated rule is more like a gardener.  
Pruning, cultivating, growing, nurturing, and making responsible use of creation.
- We're to be like a mirror of God's creative activity in the world.  
That as he *formed the various realms*: of sky, sea, and land.  
He also then *filled them* bringing life and purpose.

That role is brought to life in Genesis 2, verse 15:

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to **work** it and take **care** of it.

- It's amazing that we have two complementary, *not contradictory*, *accounts of creation in Gen*.  
Chapter 1 zooms out in many ways and gives us a big picture.  
Chapter 2 is much more focused on the creation and calling of humankind.
- God breathes life right into us.
- He makes a way for relationship with him and with others.



He plants a garden and provides for all that we need.

He even brings the animals that he created, and invites us to name them.

- This isn't an image of domination or suppression. God has put us in the hot seat to enable the flourishing of his creation.
- We have really messed that up at times. We continue to mess it up. BUT:  
We are to live into that responsibility as we await when Jesus returns.  
We are to take up that responsibility afresh as those who have been redeemed.
- To work it and care for it.  
Recognising that it all belongs to God.  
Reflecting the needs and dignity of all people.  
Bringing order out of chaos.  
Bringing life out of death.
- I love the ways that I get to witness that beautiful responsibility expressed.  
We get to express this in all sorts of ways with creativity: of work and care.
- Be it gardeners tending to a garden. Surgeons putting bones back into place.  
Being mindful of what we use and do not need. Cleaners bringing order to our mess.  
Artists painting. Accountants making spreadsheets. Musicians playing. Parents parenting.  
Telling others about the Creator of all.
- God has given us an extraordinary purpose to rule for him.  
To work and care for what he has created.

- We should enjoy it. Not worship it.  
We should learn more about it: with gratitude and praise to the one behind it.  
We should care for it because it ultimately belongs to him.
- As one Lionel Windsor put it:
- We can't save the world — that's Jesus' job. *But you can make a difference, because you can live as an heir of this world, rescued from death, renewed in God's image, ruling under God. //*

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*It's carnival of flowers time in our city.*

*It's so wonderful to see the beautiful fruit of the work of so many gardeners. And every year as the awards are given for the prize gardens, people don't just want to see the garden but they want to meet the gardeners! //*

*The best way to enjoy creation is to not just settle for what you see, but get to know the one behind it all.*

*The best way to know how to care for it is by taking up the purpose which the Creator has set from the start.*

*The one who is the beginning of our story. And the one who—In Chr0st—gives a future for the world.*

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- We are part of God's creation.  
We are made in God's image.  
We are entrusted with God's purpose.