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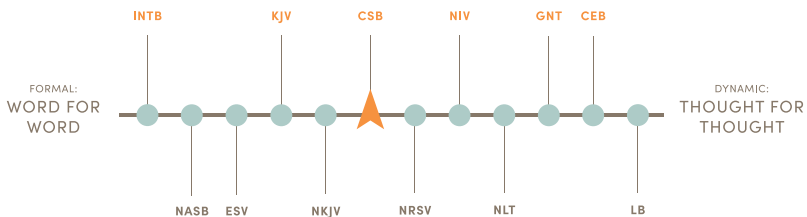
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BIBLE TRANSLATION CONTINUUM



INTB	Interlinear Bible	NKJV	New King James Version	NLT	New Living Translation
NASB	New American Standard	▲ CSB	Christian Standard Bible	GNT	Good News Translation
ESV	English Standard Version	NRSV	New Revised Standard Version	CEB	Common English Bible
KJV	King James Version	NIV	New International Version	LB	Living Bible

orange indicates translation
from ancient language

TEEN study BIBLE

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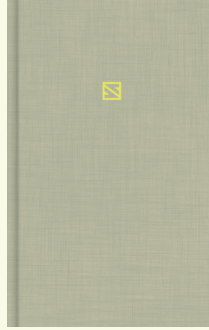
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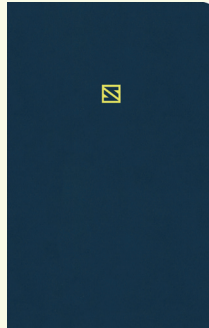
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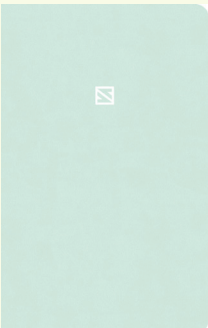


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HOW TO USE THE CSB TEEN STUDY BIBLE

6
GENESIS
→ DEVOTIONALS

Spitting Image

READ GENESIS 1

So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female.
— Genesis 1:27

DISCOVER

God made everything, and everything he made was good. The word for “good” can mean pleasant, excellent, appropriate, agreeable. God’s world is good and his creatures are good. However, he further when he created humans: we too are good, but we’re also image.

You’ve used the word “image” before, haven’t you? An image is a representation of something. For instance, when you take a picture of a friend, the photo is an image of that friend, but it’s a picture, a representation of your friend. Photographers want to make sure the image they’re capturing is what they want to see. Photographers want to make sure the image they’re capturing is what they want to see. Photographers want to make sure the image they’re capturing is what they want to see.

You may have heard the phrase “spitting image,” which means two people who look alike. It’s as if you’re outside and see your shadow. The shadow is just like you.

When we live as we’re called, aligned with our biblical identity, we are the image of God—we’re not him, but others see him in us. Those are the people we want to be like. It’s not all on us. God will give us what we need to know that your created purpose is to remind others of God? Why?

DELIGHT

- Have you ever been told you look like someone else? What does that remind others of that person?
- Do you think it’s our physical features that reveal God to others? Why not?
- What do we learn about God’s creation from verse 27? How is it reflected in both men and women?

DISPLAY

Regardless of how you feel today, your identity is set: you were created in the image of God. So were your best friend and the quiet kid in math class who you know. We’re called to reflect him in how we live, in our words and the actions we take toward others.

So, go look in the mirror and say, “I am created in the image of God. So do you treat yourself like it? And do you treat other people as if they were created in the image of God? Because they are too.”

Be honest with the Lord about any struggle you may have with reflecting who he is in your life. Ask him to help you live your life around as his image today, tomorrow, and beyond.

18
→ ARTICLES

Did People Really Live for Hundreds of Years in the Genesis Story?

Biblical genealogies must be understood in the context of the ancient Near East. Typically, genealogies expressed more than family descent. They reflected political and socioreligious realities among people groups. For example, “Salmata fathered Bethlehem” (1 Ch 2:51) describes the founder of the village Bethlehem. Therefore the genealogies were fluid, showing differences due to changing political and social realities.

A special problem is the long life spans in Genesis 5:1–32. In that passage, for example, Adam is said to have lived to be 930 years old.

The Sumerian King List presents a list of the reigns of kings and includes a reference to a great flood. The King List claims fantastic numbers, the longest reign at seventy-two thousand years. After the flood, the reign years diminish. Despite its fantastic numbers, however, the King List includes historical individuals, not just legendary ones.

Both Genesis and the Sumerian King List remember a time in the ancient past when people lived for long periods. The life spans before Noah’s flood were longer and afterward gradually decreased. The long lives of the patriarchs, such as Adam and Noah, shrink to moderate figures when compared to the Sumerian King List. A significant difference is that Adam’s genealogy is not for political purposes but instead shows that the descending ages of humanity were due to a moral factor when God judged a corrupt humanity (Gen 6:1–8).

Although the years are reliable, this genealogy cannot be used to reconstruct the age of the earth. Genesis does not present genealogies for establishing absolute chronology (see 1 Kgs 6:1). Also, Genesis 5 does not possess a complete list. Genesis 5 and 11 exhibit non-name genealogies that consist of stereotypical patterns. The two genealogies are also linear, meaning that they include only one descendant per generation (segmented genealogies have more; see Gen 10:1–32). Since genealogies may telescope generations, and since Genesis 5 is highly stylized, it is likely an “open” (selective) genealogy that spans many generations.

[Taken from “Are the Biblical Genealogies Reliable?” by Kenneth A. Mathews]

LEARN
→ LEARN
→ LEARN
→ LEARN

MATTHEW 18:21–35

Why is it important to realize we can never repay our personal debt to God? How does our inability to repay increase our amazement at God’s mercy and forgiveness?

The truth of the matter is that the debt we owe God is a price too high to pay. We foolishly think we can repay our debt to God by our good works or by clean consciences, but those things will never overcome our massive debt. The only way to repay is what makes God so remarkable—he forgives our debt clean because of his extended forgiveness to those who trust in him.

LIVE
→ LIVE
→ LIVE
→ LIVE

EXODUS 13–14

Why do you think a love for God naturally leads to a desire to make God known to others?

Treasuring Jesus for his work on the cross will inevitably lead to a love for God. A desire to see them come to know God in a saving way. It is what fuels our desire to share with others the good news of what he has done for them, too, may come to praise him in his glory.

LOVE
→ LOVE
→ LOVE
→ LOVE

MATTHEW 21:33–46

What can we learn from this parable about belonging to God’s people?

We faithfully rely on our religious devotion or our sincerity to escape the wrath of God. We must rely only on Jesus, the cornerstone of our faith, who incorporates us into his people. Belonging to God’s people is both a privilege and a responsibility, just as it was in Jesus’s day.

→ LEARN, LIVE, LOVE CALLOUTS



THE CSB TEEN

STUDY BIBLE



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BIBLES

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INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

WHO WROTE IT?

Technically, Genesis is anonymous, but it is one of the five books (Genesis–Deuteronomy; the Pentateuch) associated with Moses by both Old Testament and New Testament writers.

WHEN WAS IT WRITTEN?

Moses, who lived in the 1400s BC, wrote Genesis, even though the events he recorded occurred long before his time and the book itself saw later editorial updates.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The book of Genesis is the book of beginnings in the Bible. The God who created human beings and punished disobedience with death began his great plan of redemption with his covenant with Abraham and his descendants. Accordingly, Genesis ties together creation and human history, then largely narrowing its focus to the lives of Israel's famous patriarchs.

Chapters 1–11 contain a selective history of the entire human race; chapters 12–50 tell the story of the direct ancestors of the Israelites. Within those two broad divisions, chapters 1–2 deal with creation, while chapter 3 tells of the entrance of sin into the world. Chapters 6–9 detail the great flood and the preservation of Noah and his family, after which God scattered people over the face of the earth (chaps. 10–11). God's plan for redemption centered in Abraham (12:1–3) and continued through Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, whose lives and works are narrated in chapters 12–50.

Through Genesis we understand where we came from, how we got in the fallen state we are in, and the beginnings of God's plan of salvation on our behalf. Learning the true story of where humanity came from and what God's purpose is for them allows us to see why every person has value, meaning, and dignity as someone made in God's image and living in God's world. Just as vitally, we see that the world was not always fallen but was made "good" and became corrupted by sin. Only by knowing the true story of what went wrong with the world can we understand why the gospel is the true story of how the world can be set right again.

WHERE SHOULD I LOOK

FOR CHRIST?

- Look for Christ, the eternal Word of God, as Creator; by the Son and for the Son and through the Son, all things exist and hold together (Gn 1:3; Jn 1:1-3; Col 1:16).
- Consider how the first Adam, who represents all of humanity and is appointed to rule over the earth, sets the stage for Christ, the last Adam, who represents a new humanity who will reign with him forever (Gn 1:26-28; 2:7; see Rm 5:14; 1Co 15:45-49).
- Look ahead to Christ as the promised “offspring” of Eve, the one who will defeat Satan and remove the curse (Gn 3:15; Heb 2:14-15; 1Jn 3:8).
- Consider how the near sacrifice of Isaac, Abraham’s only beloved son, anticipates the atoning death and actual sacrifice of Christ, God’s one and only Son and the true offspring of Abraham (Gn 22:1-18; Jn 3:16; Rm 8:32).
- Consider the similarities between Joseph’s story and Christ’s story: each of them is indwelt by God’s Spirit and given authority (Gn 41:37-38; Lk 4:16-21); each of them seeks to save his family and kinsmen (Gn 45:4-7; Mt 1:21; 15:24); and each of them extend forgiveness to those who sinned against them (Gn 50:15-21; Lk 23:34).
- Look for Christ in Jacob’s promise to Judah that the king’s scepter would not depart from his clan (Gn 49:10; see Mt 1:1-16).



THE CREATION

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.^a

²Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. ³Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” There was an evening, and there was a morning: one day.

⁶Then God said, “Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water.” ⁷So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸God called the expanse “sky.”^b Evening came and then morning: the second day.

⁹Then God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land “earth,” and the gathering of the water he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, “Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing

LEARN > LEARN > LEARN > LEARN

GENESIS 1:1-15

What does God's creation of all things tell us about his sovereignty over all things?

Considering God's power and creation of the universe, we see that he is in control of all aspects of creation—from the smallest particle to the millions of living creatures on our planet. The conclusion we should draw is that if God is in control over all things—big and small—then he is even in control over the things in our lives that are beyond our control. Not only that but knowing that God is good and sovereign should humble us, comfort our hearts, and give us the peace to go through life trusting in his wisdom to work all things for our ultimate good.

fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.” And it was so. ¹²The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it

^a1:1 Or *created the universe* ^b1:8 Or “heavens.”

WHERE DO WE FIT INTO THE STORY (1:1-11:32)? *Primeval history* is a term used to refer to accounts of the earliest events in history. The Bible begins with this kind of history to demonstrate its relevance for everyone who ever lived. The first eleven chapters of Genesis thus provide a primeval history by covering the creation of the universe, the fall into sin, the great flood, the tower of Babylon, and the distribution of the human race. Accordingly, these first eleven chapters embrace all the facets of human history that led up to and necessitated the call of Abraham to covenant service to the Lord (see Gn 12:1-4). The events recorded here explain, in part, why the world is the way it is and why God's purposes for the family of Abraham are significant not only for the people of Israel but also for everyone in the world.

FOR WHOM DID GOD CREATE THE WORLD (1:1-2:25)? As this passage shows, in accord with the entirety of the Bible, God freely created the world to display his own glory and, in so doing, crafted a good world that was abundantly and uniquely furnished for human occupation and flourishing. In short, God created both for humanity's good and

for the glory of his name (see Ps 8:1-9). **1:1** This opening verse of the Bible, seven words in the Hebrew, establishes seven key truths upon which the rest of the Bible is based: (1) God exists. The essential first step in pleasing God is acknowledging his existence (Heb 11:6); (2) God existed before there was a universe and will exist after the universe perishes (Heb 1:10-12); (3) God is the main character in the Bible. He is the subject of the first verb in the Bible (in fact, he is the subject of more verbs than any other character) and performs a wider variety of activities than any other being in the Bible; (4) As Creator, God has done what no human could ever do; in its active form the Hebrew verb *bara'*, meaning “to create,” never has a human subject. Thus *bara'* signifies a work that is uniquely God's; (5) God is mysterious; though this particular Hebrew word for God (*elohim*) is plural, the verb form of which “God” is the subject is singular. This is perhaps a subtle allusion to God's Trinitarian nature: he is three divine persons in one divine essence; (6) God is the Creator of heaven and earth. He does not just modify preexisting matter but calls matter into

being out of nothing (Ps 33:6,9; Heb 11:3); (7) God is not dependent on the universe, but the universe is totally dependent on God (Heb 1:3). **1:2** The sense of verse 2 is that God created the earth **formless and empty** as an unfinished and unfilled state. **Watery depths**, a single word in Hebrew, suggests an original state of creation that was shapeless as liquid water. The Hebrew verb translated **was hovering**, used also in Dt 32:11, suggests that the Spirit of God was watching over his creation just as a bird watches over its young. **1:4-25** Another basic truth of the Bible is that **God saw**; this means he is fully aware of his creation. The term **good**, used seven times in this chapter to evaluate God's creative work, can be used to express both high quality and moral excellence. The physical universe is a good place because God made it. God found satisfaction in his labor. This is the first instance where **God separated** the twin realms of light and darkness, day and night. God's second act of separation was to divide atmospheric water from terrestrial water (v. 7). Thus, he began the process of giving form to the material world. The clause **it was so**, found six times in this chapter,

Spitting Image

READ GENESIS 1

So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female.

— Genesis 1:27

DISCOVER

God made everything, and everything he made was good. The original Hebrew word for “good” can mean pleasant, excellent, appropriate, agreeable, and valuable. God’s world is good and his creatures are good. However, he went one step further when he created humans: we too are good, but we’re also made in his image.

You’ve used the word “image” before, haven’t you? An image is a representation of something. For instance, when you take a picture of a friend, the image isn’t literally that friend, but it is a picture, a representation of your friend that others can see. Photographers want to make sure the image they’re capturing is well lit; artists want to be certain that the image they’re creating comes alive on the canvas.

You may have heard the phrase “spitting image,” which means that someone has taken on characteristics that remind others of the original. The Hebrew word for image means “shade.” It’s as if you’re outside and see your shadow. The shadow isn’t you—it just looks like you.

When we live as we’re called, aligned with our biblical identity, we are like the shadow of God—we’re not him, but others see him in us. Those are big shoes to fill, for sure, but it’s not all on us. God will give us what we need. Isn’t it good to know that your created purpose is to remind others of God? What an honor!

DELIGHT

- Have you ever been told you look like someone else? What is it about you that reminds others of that person?
- Do you think it’s our physical features that reveal God to others? Why or why not?
- What do we learn about God’s creation from verse 27? How can God be reflected in both men and women?

DISPLAY

Regardless of how you feel today, your identity is set: you were made in God’s image. So was I. So were your best friend and the quiet kid in math class and the whiny toddler you know. We’re called to reflect him in how we live, what we say, and the actions we take toward others.

So, go look in the mirror and say, “I am created in the image of God.” You are. But do you treat yourself like it? And do you treat other people as though they are created in the image of God? Because they are too.

Be honest with the Lord about any struggle you may have when it comes to reflecting who he is in your life. Ask him to help you live your identity and walk around as his image today, tomorrow, and beyond.

Do I Have to Choose Between the Bible and Science?

Both the Scriptures and science have a story to tell. From the creeds and systematic theology that result from study of Scripture, we have the metanarrative (grand, all-encompassing story) of God as Creator who prepared and sustains a pleasant world for humans. Both that world and its inhabitants have come under a curse due to sin, the Bible teaches, but history will end in the triumphant return of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The current metanarrative of science is the story of the Big Bang, drawing on evidence from physics that suggests that about 13.7 billion years ago space and time appeared instantaneously from nothing in an infinitely small and infinitely hot singularity. As the universe expanded and cooled, there appeared atoms, stars, galaxies, planets, life, and finally humans.

The many approaches that biblical and scientific scholars have used to relate the Scripture story and the science story can be collected into two overarching approaches: concordism and non-concordism.

CONCORDISM: THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF SCIENCE

Concordism is derived from the word “concord,” which means harmony or agreement between persons, groups, or things. Scholars who favor concordism believe that exegesis (interpretation) of the Scriptures reveals a message that is in harmony with correct understandings of modern science. This means that any time the Bible addresses a science-related issue, it does so with full accuracy. Concordism is sometimes expressed in terms of the two books of God (nature and Scripture), which will be in harmony when both are properly interpreted.

There are many types of concordism, with a major dividing issue being the meaning of the Hebrew word for “day” (*yom*) in Genesis (1:3,8,13,19,23,31; 2:2). One group, known as creation science or young earth creationism (YEC), interprets *yom* in Genesis to mean a literal twenty-four-hour day. This stance is closely tied to “evening” and “morning” being referenced alongside each use of “day” in the opening creation narrative. Another group, known as creationism or old-earth creationism (OEC), adopts a different understanding of the word *yom*, which leads them to conclude that in the Genesis creation accounts it refers to a period of time longer than twenty-four hours. According to the OEC approach, each creation day was a long period of time that involved many acts of creation by God.

NON-CONCORDISM: THE BIBLE SPEAKS TO SCIENCE (BUT NOT OF SCIENCE)

The non-concordist model does not see a harmony between the biblical testimony and the well-supported conclusions of science. Non-concordists believe this lack of harmony is due to the fact that in Scripture God never sought to speak in terms of literally correct science but instead chose to speak in accordance with ancient non-scientific ways of describing nature.

according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.¹³ Evening came and then morning: the third day.

¹⁴Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for seasons^a and for days and years.¹⁵ They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth." And it was so.¹⁶ God made the two great lights — the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night — as well as the stars.¹⁷ God placed them in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth,¹⁸ to rule the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.¹⁹ Evening came and then morning: the fourth day.

²⁰Then God said, "Let the water swarm with^b living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky."²¹ So

God created the large sea-creatures and every living creature that moves and swarms in the water, according to their kinds. He also created every winged creature according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.²² God blessed them: "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth."²³ Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.

²⁴Then God said, "Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so.²⁵ So God made the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that crawl on the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man^c in^d our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the

^a **1:14** Or for the appointed times ^b **1:20** Lit with swarms of ^c **1:26** Or human beings; Hb 'adam, also in v. 27
^d **1:26** Or as

emphasizes God's absolute power over creation. Sky (v. 8) can refer to the earth's atmospheric envelope (v. 20), outer space (v. 15), or "heaven," the spiritual realm where God lives (Ps 11:4). Verse 9 presents God's third and final act of

separation: the creation of oceans and continents.

1:26–28 The two Hebrew words translated as **image** and **likeness** are often understood as having the same meaning. What exactly is the "image" of God? Since the Bible

teaches that God is Spirit (Jn 4:24), many commentators believe it refers to the non-material aspects of a person—our moral sensibilities, intellectual abilities, will, and emotions. Based on God's commands in Gn 1:28, others have suggested

According to a Christian non-concordist approach, the Bible's failure to speak with scientific accuracy is taken as the expected result of God speaking in a comprehensible manner to people living prior to the scientific revolution. (Non-concordists who are not Christians would likely say that the Bible tried but failed to speak accurately about scientific topics and thus see this as proof that the Bible does not have a divine author.)

The *framework view* of Genesis 1–2 is a non-concordist approach that proposes that the days of Genesis are literary devices used to convey important truths about purpose and ultimate origin. In this view, God's creative activity as recounted in Genesis is arranged in a topical, non-sequential manner and does not intend to make any claims about the age of the universe. The six creation days form a symmetrically arranged, topical account of creation, set in two triads with similar activities in each triad.

SUMMARY

Each of the above models of relating Scripture and science are held by devout Christians. Some scholars even hold views that draw on multiple models. This side of eternity, we will probably never acquire enough knowledge to know indisputably the best way to relate these two great ways of knowing (Scripture and science). As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:12, "For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror, but then face to face. Now [we] know in part, but then [we] will know fully, as [we are] fully known." □

sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl^a on the earth.”

²⁷ So God created man
in his own image;
he created him in the image
of God;
he created them male and female.

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.” ²⁹ God also said, “Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you,³⁰ for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth — everything having the breath of life in it — I have given^b every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

2 So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. ² On the seventh^c day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested^d on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³ God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.

MAN AND WOMAN IN THE GARDEN

⁴ These are the records of the heavens and the earth, concerning their creation. At the time^e that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵ no shrub of the field had yet grown on the land,^f and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not made it rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground. ⁶ But mist would come up from the earth and water all the ground. ⁷ Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.

^a 1:26 Or scurry ^b 1:30 I have given added for clarity ^c 2:2 Sam, LXX, Syr read sixth ^d 2:2 Or ceased, also in v. 3 ^e 2:4 Lit creation on the day ^f 2:5 Or earth

that it consists of the role humans are to play on earth—their rulership over the planet and its resources, and secondarily the physical, mental, and spiritual abilities that enable them to fulfill that role.

The creation of humanity is the crowning event of chap. 1, as shown by the fact that **created** (Hb *bara*) is repeated three times in verse 27. The term **man** (Hb *adam*) is used elsewhere in the OT to refer to humanity in general, not just males (7:21); all people, both male and female, are created in the **image of God** (see Jms 3:9). It should not be concluded that God is both male and female. The Bible uniformly affirms that God is asexual, with no corresponding female consort. Although humans are created in the “image” and “likeness” of God (the terms are essentially synonyms; see 5:3), it does not follow that God has a body. “Image” or “likeness” often refers to a physical representation of something that may be non-material.

In this the longest of the five blessings found in the account of creation (v. 28), **God** gave humanity five different commands. Implicit in the first three commands is God’s blessing on the institutions of marriage and the family. The final two commands, to **subdue** the earth and **rule** the animal kingdom, express God’s blessing on the use of the planet’s renewable and nonrenewable natural resources.

1:31–2:3 This (1:31) is the seventh, final, and most elaborate use of the word **good** in the account of the seven days of creation in that it adds **very** to “good.” Then, 2:1 serves as a complement to 1:1. Together, the two set the first six days of creation apart from the sacred seventh day. The first use of the number seven in the Bible is in 2:2, a number that will play an especially significant role in the religious and social life of ancient Israel (4:15; 7:2–4,10; 21:28–31; 29:18–20). On the seventh day God rested, thus setting an example for people—who are made in his image—to follow (Ex 20:8–11; Dt 5:12–14). Though God rested **from all his work that he had done**, this is not to say that God has abandoned the universe. In the NT, Jesus affirmed that God is still at work in the world, even on the Sabbath (Jn 5:16–17). Also, God’s “rest” does not imply that he was tired. It literally means “cease” and implies only that his creative work was complete.

2:4–2:25 Many have asked over the centuries why there are two accounts of the creation story. These two accounts of creation (1:1–2:3 and 2:4–25) should be seen as complementary rather than contradictory. They are designed in respective ways to demonstrate the all-wise and all-powerful sovereignty of God (first account) and his special creation of humanity to rule

for him over all other created things (second account).

Though the creation stories are fundamentally theological and not scientific, nothing in them is contradicted by modern scientific understanding. Genesis insists that all the forms of life were created “according to their kinds” (1:11–12,21,24–25); that is, they did not evolve across species lines. Most importantly, the man and the woman were created as “the image of God” (1:26). In other words, humanity was created to represent God on the earth and to rule over all things in his name (1:26–28). God’s purpose was to bless humanity and to enjoy relationship with them.

2:4 The Hebrew word *toledoth*, translated here as **records**, is used eleven times in the book of Genesis to introduce new units of material (5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10,27; 25:12,19; 36:1,9; 37:2). Here it introduces a detailed elaboration of some key aspects of the creation account that opens the book of Genesis (1:1–2:3). Special emphasis is placed on the events of day six. Verse 4 includes the first use of God’s personal name, rendered in English as the **LORD**, the most commonly used noun in the OT. The Hebrew spelling is transliterated as “YHWH,” hence, “Yahweh.”

2:7 The Hebrew verb translated here as **formed** is used elsewhere in the Bible to describe the potter’s profession (Jr 18:4; Lm 4:2);

Familiar Stories

READ GENESIS 2:15–25

This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

— *Genesis 2:24–25*

DISCOVER

Think about your favorite stories—movies you’ve watched again and again, books good enough to reread, or shows you’ve binged on repeat. The details of these stories often become so familiar to us that they slip into the background. Depending on how long you’ve been a Christian or in church, some Bible stories can start to feel that way too. Although Scripture doesn’t change, it is always relevant and working in our lives (Jn 17:17; 2Tm 3:16–17; Heb 4:12).

So, even when the stories become familiar, they still matter. God created humanity with a specific design: to have emotions, intellect, will, and the capacity for relationships. Despite what culture says, God uniquely and purposefully designed men and women to accomplish his plan for the world. Even though we often want to think we know best, God’s design and plan are perfect—they need no tweaks from us. And part of God’s plan for humanity includes marriage between one man and one woman for life.

Though Scripture doesn’t talk about dating, dating isn’t meaningless. The people you date are also created in the image of God, and you need to treat them with respect and care. Who you date matters too. The right person will lead you closer to God, but the wrong one will lead you further away.

DELIGHT

- Have you ever allowed Scripture to become so familiar that the stories seem to not matter as much? How can you guard yourself against this happening in the future?
- Why is it important for us to know and follow God’s design for dating and marriage?
- What is the most difficult part of living out God’s design for dating and marriage in a culture that often calls it intolerant or ignorant?

DISPLAY

Dating in God’s way might be a struggle for you, but that doesn’t mean it’s impossible. Struggle doesn’t have to lead to sin. You might struggle with desires to engage in sexual activity, the temptation to view pornography, same-sex attraction, or staying faithful to the person you’re dating. Think about the following ways you can set yourself up to not fall into sin in your dating relationships.

- Make time to study God’s Word and pray.
- Be involved in your student ministry and/or Christian groups at school.
- Find a more mature believer who can mentor you in your faith.
- If you have trauma related to these struggles, seek a counselor who can help you process and heal.

Praise God for designing men and women differently and with specific purposes. Pray that God would help you live out his design for your life when it comes to your dating relationships. Ask God to give you the wisdom to seek help when you struggle.

⁸The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he placed the man he had formed. ⁹The LORD God caused to grow out of the ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the tree of life in the middle of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰A river went^a out from Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became the source of four rivers.^b ¹¹The name of the first is Pishon, which flows through the entire land of Havilah,^c where there is gold. ¹²Gold from that land is pure;^d bdellium^e and onyx^f are also there. ¹³The name of the second river is Gihon, which flows through the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴The name of the third river is Tigris,

which runs east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden,¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die."¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him."¹⁹ The LORD God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.

^a 2:10 Or goes ^b 2:10 Lit became four heads ^c 2:11 Or of the Havilah ^d 2:12 Lit good ^e 2:12 A yellowish, transparent gum resin ^f 2:12 Identity of this precious stone uncertain

God acts here as the divine potter, skillfully fashioning man out of the dust from the ground. But the Bible makes it very clear that people are more than just material beings. It was only when God breathed into the man's nostrils the breath of life that Adam became alive. When God breathed into him, Adam and all later humans became a unique mix of the physical and the spiritual. The Hebrew phrase translated as living being is used elsewhere in Genesis to describe other types of living beings (1:20,24,30; 9:12,15–16). Nevertheless, humans are considered to be in a class by themselves since they alone are made in God's image.

2:8–14 The location of Eden is unknown; suggestions include

Armenia, Iraq, Africa, and Arabia. The Hebrew word *eden* literally means "pleasantness." The location of the Pishon river is unknown. A land known as Havilah existed in the region of the Arabian peninsula at a later point in time (1Sm 15:7), but the pre-flood land may have represented a different locale. The locations of the Gihon River and Cush are unknown. A later Cush was located in the region of modern Ethiopia and Sudan (Est 1:1). The Tigris and Euphrates rivers, as well as Assyria, probably correspond to geographical features associated with modern Iraq.

2:15–17 As a being created in God's image, Adam, like God, was to be a worker. Without the taint of sin, work was an undiluted blessing.

The verb translated here as "work" literally means "serve." Adam's second task in the garden was to watch over it. The verb is used elsewhere to refer to the action of God toward his people (Ps 121:3–4) or the work of a military guard (Sg 5:7). The only limit God placed on Adam was eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which apparently imparted divine wisdom (3:22). Eating the forbidden fruit represented Adam's rejection of God as the source of divine wisdom and his choice to pursue wisdom apart from God. The penalty for disobedience was stated especially forcefully in the original language, with a two-verb construction, "dying you shall die" (you will certainly die). Although Adam and Eve did not die

WHY IS MARRIAGE ONLY BETWEEN ONE MAN AND ONE WOMAN?

In the process of creation, God repeatedly declared his creation good (Gn 1:4,10,12,18,21,25,31). Without human companionship, however, creation was incomplete (Gn 2:18). If man was alone there could be no procreation and, more importantly, no possibility for intimate relationship between human persons. And so God created woman to complement the man and thus complete the good design he had for humanity.

Accordingly, God established marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Since then, our fallen state has created all kinds of distortions in God's design for marriage, including the moral confusion of our day. Furthermore, we must understand that while God made man and woman as equals, he also created them to be different from one another. Men and women are not interchangeable; they are complementary. In marriage they become one flesh (Gn 2:24), one functioning unit, especially in procreation.

In our culture it is vital to remind ourselves that in addition to the joy of husband and wife, sexual intercourse is designed for procreation. Marriage, sex, and children go together. The family, which is central to God's design for his kingdom, is made possible through the procreative act that brings together one man and one woman and defines the one-flesh unity of marriage. "Reproductive technologies" aside, only a man and a woman, complementing one another, can create another human person.

²⁰The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man^a no helper was found corresponding to him. ²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. ²²Then the LORD God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³And the man said:

This one, at last, is bone of my bone
and flesh of my flesh;
this one will be called “woman,”
for she was taken from man.

²⁴This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. ²⁵Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

THE TEMPTATION AND THE FALL

3 Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You can’t eat from any tree in the garden?’”

²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. ³But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, ‘You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.’”

⁴“No! You will certainly not die,” the serpent said to the woman. ⁵“In fact, God knows that when^b you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So

LIVE → LIVE → LIVE → LIVE

GENESIS 3:1-21

What does this story teach us about how our sin affects not only our relationship with God, but also with others?

Our sin is always, first and foremost, against God. There is no sin that isn’t against God. Sin rebels against his commands, designs, and purposes for us. But our sin affects our relationships with people, too. Adam and Eve’s sin fractured their relationship with each other and with the rest of creation. Your sinful choices aren’t just between you and God. Much like a boat, sin leaves a wake of consequences behind that lasts longer and is much wider than the initial sin. These unintended consequences of sin should make us pause all the more each time we are faced with the decision to disobey God’s Word.

she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

SIN’S CONSEQUENCES

⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the

^a2:20 Or for Adam ^b3:5 Lit on the day

physically on the day they ate the fruit, they died spiritually.

WHAT WENT WRONG WITH THE WORLD (3:1-11:32)? The privilege of humanity’s dominion also carried responsibility and limitation. Being placed in the garden to “work it and watch over it” represented human responsibility (2:15). The tree in the midst of the garden from which humans should not eat represented those areas of dominion reserved to Yahweh alone. The man and woman, however, disobeyed God and ate of the tree. They “died” with respect to their covenant privileges (2:17) and suffered the indictment and judgment of their Sovereign. This entailed suffering and sorrow and eventual physical death. God had created man and woman to enjoy fellowship with himself and with each other. Their disobedience alienated them from God and each other.

The pattern of sin and its consequences set in the garden is replayed throughout Genesis in the accounts of Cain (4:1-5:32), the generation of the flood (6:1-9:29), the tower of Babylon (11:1-9), and the men of Sodom (see 18:1-19:38). The fall means that we humans are predisposed to sin. Though God punishes sin, sin does not thwart God’s ultimate, gracious purpose for his human creation. Embedded in the curse was the gleam of a promise that the offspring of the woman would someday lead the human race to triumph. **3:1-8** Though we know the serpent was an instrument of Satan (Rm 16:20; Rv 12:9; 20:2), it was just a created being. Its description as cunning suggests it offered a wisdom not based on the fear of God. The woman’s claim that God said, **You must not . . . touch the tree, or you will die**, goes beyond

anything recorded in God’s instructions to Adam. Therefore, it seems that Adam had given his wife an additional command beyond what God said, or else Eve herself exaggerated the command as Satan tempted her to view God as selfish and overly restrictive. The serpent boldly contradicted what she had reported to be God’s command (v. 4). He then skillfully lied (Jn 8:44) by distorting God’s word (cp. Mt 4:6), implying that God had prohibited people from eating the fruit only to keep them from becoming as knowledgeable as he (Gn 3:5). Further, even though Adam was with Eve at the time, he did nothing to intervene against the serpent’s deceptive efforts and his wife’s initial act of defiance. As the serpent had indicated, **the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew**, but instead of producing godlike power, the knowledge brought only

INTRODUCTION TO JOHN

WHO WROTE IT?

Technically anonymous, but early Christian tradition assigned this Gospel to John.

WHEN WAS IT WRITTEN?

About AD 85–95

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

From this Gospel we learn much about God as Father. Contemporary believers are indebted to John for their habit of referring to God simply as “the Father.” The Father is active (5:17), bringing blessing on those he has created. He is love (3:16; see 1Jn 4:8–10). We know love because we see it in the cross; it is sacrificial giving, not for deserving people but for undeserving sinners. He is a great God whose will is done in bringing about our salvation (6:44). The Gospel throughout focuses on Jesus Christ. It is clear that God in Christ has revealed himself (1:1–18). God is active in Christ, the Savior of the world, bringing about the salvation he has planned (4:42).

John’s Gospel tells us more about the Holy Spirit than do the other Evangelists. The Spirit was active from the start of Jesus’s ministry (1:32), but the Spirit’s full work was to begin at the consummation of Jesus’s own ministry (7:37–39). The Spirit brings life (3:1–8), a life of the highest quality (10:10), and leads believers in the way of truth (16:13). In response to the work of God in their lives, Christians are to be characterized by love (13:34–35).

The purpose of John’s Gospel is not a question for speculation. It contains the most clearly stated purpose statement in all of Scripture: “That you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (20:31).

WHERE SHOULD I LOOK

FOR CHRIST?

- See the title “Word” as referring to who Christ is apart from the incarnation, namely, the Creator of all things (Gn 1:1; Jn 1:1–3,14).
- Find the gospel in the story of the bronze serpent, an event that points to how Jesus would be lifted up so that others might believe and be saved (Nm 21:4–9; Jn 3:14–16).
- Observe how Christ speaks of his authority at the time of the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked (Dn 7:13–14; 12:2–3; Jn 5:24–30).
- See how Jesus identifies himself with God, the “I AM,” by saying he existed before Abraham (Gn 22:14–17; Ex 3:14; Jn 8:58).
- Consider what Christ’s claim to be the good shepherd says about his identity (Ps 23:1; Jn 10:11).
- See how Old Testament expectations for the resurrection are realized because of Jesus (Is 26:29; Ezk 37:1–14; Jn 11:25).
- Observe how Jesus claimed to be the true Israel and source of spiritual life (Is 5:1–7; Jn 15:1–4).
- Consider what Christ’s prayers for the unity of disciples says about the importance of the church (17:9–11).
- Contemplate the significance of the words “It is finished” in relation to the finality of Christ’s work (Jn 19:30; Heb 10:14).
- See how Jesus commended those who believe in him through the apostolic word (Jn 20:29).



PROLOGUE

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.² He was with God in the beginning.³ All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created.⁴ In him was life,^a and that life was the light of men.⁵ That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome^b it.

⁶There was a man sent from God whose name was John.⁷ He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him.^c ⁸He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.^o

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was created through him, and yet the world did not recognize him.¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.¹² But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be^e children of God, to those who believe in his name,¹³ who were born, not of

LIVE → LIVE → LIVE → LIVE

JOHN 1:14-18

How can the principle of incarnation encourage us to share the love of Christ with others?

There's no greater way to show our neighbors that God has not forsaken them than to be present with them. "Take up residence." The principle of incarnation means we love people enough to bear with them, to be patient as we show them the love of Christ. We are open about God's ongoing work in our lives, and we offer the Savior to the people around us—that he might work in their lives too.

natural descent,^f or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man,^g but of God.

¹⁴The Word became flesh and dwelt^h among us. We observed his glory, the glory

^a1:3-4 Other punctuation is possible: . . . *not one thing was created. What was created in him was life* ^b1:5 Or *grasp, or comprehend, or overtake*; Jn 12:35 ^c1:7 Or *it (the light)* ^o1:9 Or *The true light who comes into the world gives light to everyone, or The true light enlightens everyone coming into the world.* ^e1:12 Or *become* ^f1:13 Lit *blood* ^g1:13 Or *not of human lineage, or of human capacity, or of human volition* ^h1:14 Or *and dwelt in a tent; lit and tabernacled*

WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT JESUS IS THE WORD MADE FLESH? (1:1-51)

No other book in the Bible has a prologue as overtly theological as does John. First, John made a clear and decisive statement regarding the nature of Jesus: "the Word was God" and that "Word became flesh." John wanted it known that Jesus Christ was fully God in human form. Christ was both "Word" and "flesh," not one to the exclusion of the other, and thus was the perfect and only God-man. Christ made his "dwelling" with us, a word associated with "tent" or "tabernacle," intimating the literalness of God's coming to humanity. This word usage should not be lost on the reader, for the tabernacle of the OT was an earthly building filled with the glory of God (Ex 40:34-35).

In using the "Word" [Gk *logos*], John was using a term familiar to both Jews and Greeks, though each attributed a different meaning to the term. For the Greek mind the "Word" referred to the rational principle that supervised or governed the universe. To the Jew, "Word" was a reference to God. John stated that Jesus was with God "in the beginning" and that through Christ "all things were created." Jesus is therefore seen as co-eternal with God and as the Creator. John then

discussed the purpose of the Word becoming flesh, namely that Christ brought life, a life that serves as the "light" for all people. The life Christ offers is beyond that of mere human life; it is life eternal with God. Therefore, Jesus brought the light of truth and the life of salvation.

John the Baptist fulfilled his role the forerunner of the Messiah. But what exactly was his role? First, it was to fulfill prophecy (Is 40:3), for God had said one would come to prepare the way. Second, John came to call people to repentance. Third, he drew people's attention toward the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, whom he describes as "the Lamb of God" (Jn 1:29). Along with his preaching, John baptized people in the Jordan River. His baptism was "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Lk 3:3). It looked forward to the coming of the Messiah and served to prepare the people for the coming of the kingdom of God.

1:1 In the beginning was the Word echoes Gn 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." John located Jesus's existence in eternity past with God. **The Word was God:** Not only did Jesus exist before creation, he is also the same God who created the heavens and the earth. "The Word" conveys

the notion of divine self-expression or speech (Ps 19:1-4). God's Word is effective. He speaks, and things come into being (Gn 1:3, 9; Is 55:11-12).

1:4-5 The references to *life . . . light, and darkness* continue to draw on Genesis themes (see Gn 1:3-5, 14-18, 20-31; 2:7; 3:20). Light symbolism is also found in later OT messianic passages (Is 9:2; 42:6-7; 49:6; 60:1-5; Mal 4:2; cp. Lk 1:78-79).

1:6 Unlike Jesus, John the Baptist was merely a man, but like Jesus he had a particular mission to perform.

1:10-11 His own people did not receive him refers to the Jewish people, the recipients of God's covenants, the law, and promises of a Messiah (Rm 9:4). Jesus's rejection by the Jews despite convincing proofs of his messiahship (esp. the "signs") is a major subject in the first half of John's Gospel (see 12:37).

1:12-13 Born, not of natural descent, . . . but of God makes clear that true children of God come into being through faith in Messiah, not physical birth or ethnic descent (8:41-47; cp. 3:16). This opens the way for Gentiles to become God's children (10:16; 11:51-52).

1:14 Dwelt among us literally means "pitched his tent," an allusion to

Human and Divine

READ JOHN 1:1–18

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

— *John 1:14*

DISCOVER

We know it's true that Jesus is fully God and fully human. The Bible shows us places where Jesus wept, ate, and grew tired. The Bible also tells us that Jesus is God himself. He has power over nature and the ability to forgive sin. He has always existed and will exist forever.

If Jesus were only God and not human, there would be a few problems. He would not be able to identify with our temptation to sin. He would not be able to stand in our place as a sacrifice for our sins. He would not be able to understand what we're going through. If Jesus were only a man, there would be some other problems. He wouldn't be able to be completely perfect and sinless. He wouldn't be able to save us because only God can save. He wouldn't be worthy of our worship.

Jesus fully understands our experiences as human beings. He's also able to fully save us from our sin. It's an incredible reality that Jesus would come to this earth and take on human flesh. He is one person with two natures—human and divine. This is a truth we can cling to at the core of our faith as Christians.

DELIGHT

- Who is “the Word” in this passage?
- Who was with God in the beginning?
- What is most meaningful to you about Jesus becoming human?

DISPLAY

Today's passage tells us that Jesus came and dwelt among us. He lived among people and made his home with them. Making your home with people means getting up close with them. Spend some time reflecting and journaling about how Jesus has gotten close to you in your life. Has he brought hope and healing to part of your life? Has he confronted you with areas of sin you needed to deal with? Reflect on some areas he may be currently working on in your life and how he may want you to take some next steps.

Isn't it great how God sent Jesus into this world? Use your time of prayer to thank God for the realities of Jesus being both fully God and fully man. First, praise him for the beauty of his divinity. Next, thank him for the aspects of his humanity that mean the most to you. Close your time by asking God to help you show others a clear picture of who Jesus is.

as the one and only Son^a from the Father, full of grace and truth.¹⁵ (John testified concerning him and exclaimed, "This was the one of whom I said, "The one coming after me ranks ahead of me, because he existed before me.")¹⁶ Indeed, we have all received grace upon^b grace from his fullness,¹⁷ for the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father's side^c — he has revealed him.

JOHN THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY

¹⁹This was John's testimony when the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him, "Who are you?"

²⁰He didn't deny it but confessed, "I am not the Messiah."

²¹"What then?" they asked him. "Are you Elijah?"

"I am not," he said.

"Are you the Prophet?"

"No," he answered.

²²"Who are you, then?" they asked. "We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What can you tell us about yourself?"

²³He said, "I am a voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord — just as Isaiah the prophet said."

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.²⁵ So they asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you aren't the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet?"

²⁶"I baptize with^o water," John answered them. "Someone stands among you, but you don't know him.²⁷ He is the one coming after me,^e whose sandal strap I'm not worthy to untie."²⁸ All this happened in Bethany^f across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

THE LAMB OF GOD

²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!³⁰ This is the one I told you about: 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me, because he existed before me.'³¹ I didn't know him, but I came baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel."³² And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and he rested on him.³³ I didn't know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The one you see the Spirit descending and resting on — he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'³⁴ I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."⁶

³⁵The next day, John was standing with two of his disciples.³⁶ When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

^a1:14 Son is implied from the reference to the Father and from Gk usage. ^b1:16 Or in place of ^c1:18 Other mss read *The one and only Son, who is at the Father's side* ^d1:26 Or in, also in vv. 31,33 ^e1:27 Other mss add *who came before me* ^f1:28 Other mss read in Bethabara ^g1:34 Other mss read *is the Chosen One of God*

God's dwelling among the Israelites in the tabernacle (Ex 25:8–9; 33:7). The references to God's glory hark back to OT passages that describe the manifestation of God's presence and glory in theophanies (appearances of God), the tabernacle, or the temple (Ex 33:22; Nm 14:10; Dt 5:22). The Greek word *monogenēs* underlying one and only Son from the Father means "one of a kind," as in the case of Isaac, who is called Abraham's "one of a kind" son in Gn 22:2,12,16 (in contrast to Ishmael, Heb 11:17). Full of grace and truth recalls "faithful love [Hb *chesed*] and truth [Hb *emet*]" in Ex 34:6 (cp. Ex 33:18–19), where the expression refers to God's covenant faithfulness to his people Israel. **1:17** The contrast between the law and grace and truth is not that the law was bad and Jesus is good; rather, both the giving of the law and the coming of Jesus Christ mark stages in God's reaching out to humanity. Jesus, however, marks the final, definitive revelation of God's grace and truth. **1:18** No one has ever seen God—not even Moses (Ex 33:18–23). God is

spirit (4:24), and humans are sinful, preferring darkness to light (3:19). Thus humans are unable to see God in his fullness. But Jesus Christ, the one and only Son, who is himself God (cp. 1:1), has revealed God the Father (see 14:9).

1:19–21 John denied being the Messiah (vv. 8,15; 3:28), Elijah, or the Prophet. "The Messiah" refers to the coming greater Son of David, predicted in the OT (2Sm 7:11–16; Hs 3:5). Elijah, who never died (2Kg 2:11), was expected to return in the end time (Mal 4:5) to "restore everything" (Mt 17:11; Lk 1:17). John the Baptist resembled Elijah in his rugged lifestyle (Mt 3:4; 2Kg 1:8) but denied being Elijah. Moses predicted the coming of "a prophet" in Dt 18:15,18 (see Ac 3:22; 7:37), who was expected in Jesus's time (Jn 6:14; 7:40); John denied being this prophet as well (though he was a prophet; see 10:40–41; Mt 11:11–14).

1:22–23 John was a voice . . . crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord in keeping with Isaiah's words (Is 40:3; see Mt 3:3; Mk 1:3; Lk 3:4).

Isaiah's vision in Is 40–55 drew heavily on exodus typology and envisioned a new exodus of God's people in which God's glory would be revealed and his people delivered.

1:24–27 To untie and remove another's sandal was the task of a slave. John the Baptist does not fully answer their question until the next day, in vv. 32–34. The purpose of his baptism was to prepare people for the Messiah.

1:29 On the next day, see note at 2:1–2. John the Baptist's references to Jesus as the Lamb of God may echo the lamb led to the slaughter mentioned in Is 53:7. Takes away the sin of the world refers to Jesus's sacrificial, substitutionary death, which appeased God's wrath against sin and sinners (1Jn 2:2; 4:10).

1:31 By I didn't know him, John probably meant that he did not know Jesus was the Messiah until he saw the sign from God mentioned in vv. 32–33.

1:32–34 In the OT, the Spirit came upon people to enable them to accomplish specific tasks. Isaiah

What Is the Incarnation and Why Is It So Important?

The incarnation of the Son of God is at the heart of the Christian faith. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” in the person of Jesus Christ (Jn 1:14). Christ’s first coming is essential for the reconciliation of God and humanity and for Jesus’s ongoing mediation on our behalf.

Christians hold to the true incarnation of the *Logos*, the Word (Jn 1:1,14,18), the Second Person of the Godhead. The Son of God, having been sent by the Father, truly assumed the whole of human nature. In this event, the Second Person of the Trinity invaded time and space, embracing humanity to himself. Therefore, any form of docetic theology—claiming that Christ only appeared to be human—must firmly be rejected (1Jn 4:2–3).

The humanity of Jesus is like that of Adam and Eve prior to the fall: it is a sinless humanity (2Co 5:21; Heb 4:15). The human nature that the Son took to himself was not tainted by sin. The most genuine expression of humanity—what it means to be human—is manifested in Jesus Christ.

There is a necessary distinction between the two natures of Jesus Christ and his person. He is a single person who possesses both divine and human natures. A “nature” assumes the powers and qualities that constitute a being (i.e., what makes something what it is), while a “person” is the self-conscious, self-asserting, and acting subject (i.e., who someone is in relation to something else). This distinction is embedded in Scripture, particularly in the NT (see Php 2:5–8), and it was codified in the five great Christological councils (Nicaea in AD 325; Constantinople in AD 381; Ephesus in AD 431; Chalcedon in AD 451; Constantinople in AD 553). This human nature, possessing its full integrity, is united to the divine nature, possessing its full integrity, both wedded in the one person, Jesus Christ. The result is a person who is both fully divine and truly human.

In the incarnation, there is no qualification or diminution of either Christ’s deity or his humanity. Each nature retains its own integrity and genuineness. Whatever constitutes God as God, the Son is this in all its fullness (Col 2:9–10). Further, whatever constitutes man as man, Jesus of Nazareth is this in all its fullness. Sin is not needed for humans to be human. It is in Jesus that we see humanity perfectly expressed as God intended. Whereas fallen and sinful humanity lives on a subhuman plane, this is not true of Jesus.

There is a genuine hypostatic union in which the divine nature and the human nature come together and are present in the one person, Jesus Christ. This union is real, supernatural, personal, inseparable, and permanent (see 1Tm 2:5). There is today in heaven a God-man who is “at the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb 1:3) and who “always lives to intercede for [us]” (Heb 7:25). The divine and human have been united truly in the one Lord Jesus Christ.

The whole of Christ’s work is to be attributed to his whole person and not to one or the other nature exclusively. It is required that Christ be both God and man. As man, he identifies with humanity, enabling him to die in our place. As God, he is not an innocent third party; rather, through him God was “reconciling the world to himself” (2Co 5:19). Only a God-man is able to reconcile humans to God. Jesus Christ is that God-man, the Second Person of the triune God, who took to himself a human nature for this work of redemption. □

³⁷The two disciples heard him say this and followed Jesus. ³⁸When Jesus turned and noticed them following him, he asked them, "What are you looking for?"

They said to him, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

³⁹"Come and you'll see," he replied. So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.^a

⁴⁰Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard John and followed him. ⁴¹He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah"^b (which is translated "the Christ"), ⁴²and he brought Simon to Jesus.

When Jesus saw him, he said, "You are Simon, son of John.^c You will be called Cephas" (which is translated "Peter"^d).

PHILIP AND NATHANAEAL

⁴³The next day Jesus^e decided to leave for Galilee. He found Philip and told him, "Follow me."

⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the law

(and so did the prophets): Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth."

⁴⁶"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Nathanael asked him.

"Come and see," Philip answered.

⁴⁷Then Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said about him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."

⁴⁸"How do you know me?" Nathanael asked.

"Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you," Jesus answered.

⁴⁹"Rabbi," Nathanael replied, "You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel!"

⁵⁰Jesus responded to him, "Do you believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this."⁵¹Then he said, "Truly I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

THE FIRST SIGN: TURNING WATER INTO WINE

2 On the third day a wedding took place in Cana of Galilee. Jesus's mother was there, ²and Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding as well. ³When the

^a **1:39** Lit *about the tenth hour* ^b **1:41** Both Hb *Messiah* and Gk *Christos* mean "anointed one" ^c **1:42** Other mss read "Simon, son of Jonah" ^d **1:42** Both Aramaic *Cephas* and Gk *Petros* mean "rock" ^e **1:43** Lit *he*

predicted that the Messiah would be full of the Spirit at all times (Is 11:2; 61:1; see Lk 4:18; see note at 5:31-47).

1:38 "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher") is one of six words that John translated from the Aramaic for his readers. The others are *Messiah* (Christ, v. 41; 4:25); *Cephas* (Peter, v. 42); *Siloam* (Sent, 9:7); *Thomas* (Didymus, "Twin," 11:16; 20:24; 21:2); and "Place of the Skull" (*Golgotha*, 19:17).

1:40 Andrew was one of the two; the other disciple is not named. He was probably John, the son of Zebedee.

1:42 Cephas is an Aramaic word meaning "rock" (see note at v. 38; see Mt 16:16-18). In OT times, God frequently changed people's names to indicate their special calling.

1:43 Jesus's calling of his disciples (follow me) differed from customary practice. Usually it was a disciple who took the initiative to follow a rabbi (15:16).

1:44 Most likely, Andrew and Peter grew up in Bethsaida and later moved to Capernaum (Mk 1:21-29), located only a few miles west. Similarly, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, grew up in Nazareth (Jn 1:45), and later moved to Capernaum (Mt 4:13).

1:45 Nathanael is also mentioned in 21:2. Nathanael may be the personal name of Bartholomew (*Bartholomaios* = son of Tholomaios), who is linked with Philip in all three Synoptic lists (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:14). Philip's reference to the one Moses wrote about in the law may allude to predictions of a coming prophet in Dt 18:15,18 (see note at Jn 1:19-21). The expression "the Law and the Prophets" commonly referred to the OT in its entirety (Mt 5:17; 7:12).

1:46 Nathanael, who hailed from the small village of Cana in Galilee (21:2; see 2:1-11), used something of a double standard when he displayed prejudice toward insignificant Nazareth. Nazareth was a small town of no more than two thousand people.

1:47 Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit. Note that Jacob/Israel was characterized by deceit.

1:48 Jesus displayed supernatural knowledge (I saw you), identifying himself as Messiah.

1:51 Truly I tell you translates Hebrew *amen, amen*, a solemn affirmation emphasizing the authoritative nature of Jesus's pronouncement. The phrase appears twenty-five times in John's Gospel.

Heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending recalls the story of Jacob in Gn 28:12-15. The expression Son of Man harks back to the mysterious figure of "one like a son of man" in Dn 7:13-14.

WHAT WAS JESUS'S EARTHLY MINISTRY LIKE? (2:1-11:57)

Jesus's first miracle was at a wedding at Cana of Galilee where he turned water into wine. A wedding feast during this period of history might last as long as a week, with poor hospitality treated as a serious offense, and this celebration had run out of wine. The symbolism of this event should not be lost on the reader, for the water used for purification was replaced by wine, that which would come to symbolize the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ did indeed supplant the Jewish ceremonial system in regard to the predicament of sin in light of a holy God.

John points to seven miraculous signs during Jesus's earthly ministry (turning water into wine, healing the nobleman's son, healing the man at Bethesda, feeding the five thousand, walking on the water, healing the blind man, and the raising of Lazarus). Each of them, like turning water into wine at Cana,

wine ran out, Jesus's mother told him, "They don't have any wine."

⁴"What has this concern of yours to do with me, ^Awoman?" Jesus asked. "My hour has not yet come."

⁵"Do whatever he tells you," his mother told the servants.

⁶Now six stone water jars had been set there for Jewish purification. Each contained twenty or thirty gallons.⁸

^A2:4 Or "What does that have to do with you and me; lit "What to me and to you; Mt 8:29; Mk 1:24; 5:7; Lk 8:28
⁸2:6 Lit two or three measures

reveals who Jesus was and why he came. Interspersed between and alongside these signs are pockets of Jesus's teaching, much of which is unique to the Fourth Gospel. Jesus's teaching often came through his conflicts with religious leaders as well, and much of what he told the crowds served to drive them away (see 6:60,66). However, Jesus was singularly focused on his mission: to give himself for the sake of the world.

2:1-2 Third day is probably counted from Jesus's encounter with Nathanael. **Cana of Galilee** was later the site of Jesus's third sign ("the second sign" performed in Cana,

4:54). Jewish weddings were community events, a time of special focus not just on bride and groom but also on their extended families. **Jesus's mother** may have been a friend of the family, helping behind the scenes. Jesus's **disciples** probably included the five mentioned in 1:35-51.

2:4 Jesus's use of **woman** to address his mother established a polite but firm distance between them, as did his question: **What has this concern of yours to do with me?** On **Jesus's hour has not yet come**, see 7:6,8,30; 8:20. John portrays Jesus as the "elusive Christ" via Jesus's pattern of occasional withdrawal

(7:6-9; 10:40-41; 11:56-57), his realism about people's true motives (2:23-25), and his ability to elude his opponents when charged with blasphemy (7:44; 8:59; 10:39). Jesus remained elusive until his time finally arrived (12:23,27; 13:1; 16:32; 17:1).

2:6 The number of jars (**six**) may indicate incompleteness since seven represented fullness. Since **each contained twenty or thirty gallons**, this added up to as much as one hundred eighty gallons. The **Jewish purification** ritual may have involved the washing of the guests' hands and certain utensils used at the wedding.

COMPARISON OF THE GOSPELS

EVENT OR POINT OF COMPARISON	IN SYNOPTIC GOSPELS?	IN GOSPEL OF JOHN?	SCRIPTURE REFERENCE
Wedding at Cana	No	Yes	Jn 2:1-11
Encounter with Nicodemus	No	Yes	Jn 3:1-14
Encounter with Woman at the Well	No	Yes	Jn 4:1-45
Washing of the Disciples' Feet	No	Yes	Jn 13:1-17
Last Supper	Yes	No	Lk 22:7-23
Jesus's Final Priestly Prayer	No	Yes	Jn 17:1-26
Extensive Prologue to the Gospel	No	Yes	Jn 1:1-18
Concluding Epilogue to the Gospel	No	Yes	Jn 21:1-25
Birth Narratives	Yes	No	Lk 2:1-20
Jesus's Use of Parables	Yes	No	Mt 13:1-52
Casting Out Demons	Yes	No	Mk 1:21-28
Jesus with Tax Collectors	Yes	No	Lk 5:27-32
Jesus Heals Lepers	Yes	No	Lk 17:11-17
Jesus with Children	Yes	No	Mk 10:13-16
Sermon on the Mount	Yes	No	Mt 5:1-7:29
Olivet Discourse	Yes	No	Mt 24:1-51
Emphasis on Miracles	Yes	No	Mt 8:1-9:8
Emphasis on Interpretation of Miracles/ Signs	No	Yes	Jn 5:1-47
Jesus's Teaching on Hell	Yes	No	Mt 23:1-39
Temptation of Jesus	Yes	No	Mt 4:1-11
"I AM" Sayings	No	Yes	Jn 14:6

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