



LifeStone

AMPLIFY CHRIST

VOLUME 4

Always Present

*God has always existed and fills
heaven and earth*

All-Knowing

*God knows everything about humanity
and knows the future exhaustively*

All-Powerful

*God can do what no one else can,
and there is no one like Him*

Attributes of God



AMPLIFY CHRIST

VOLUME 4

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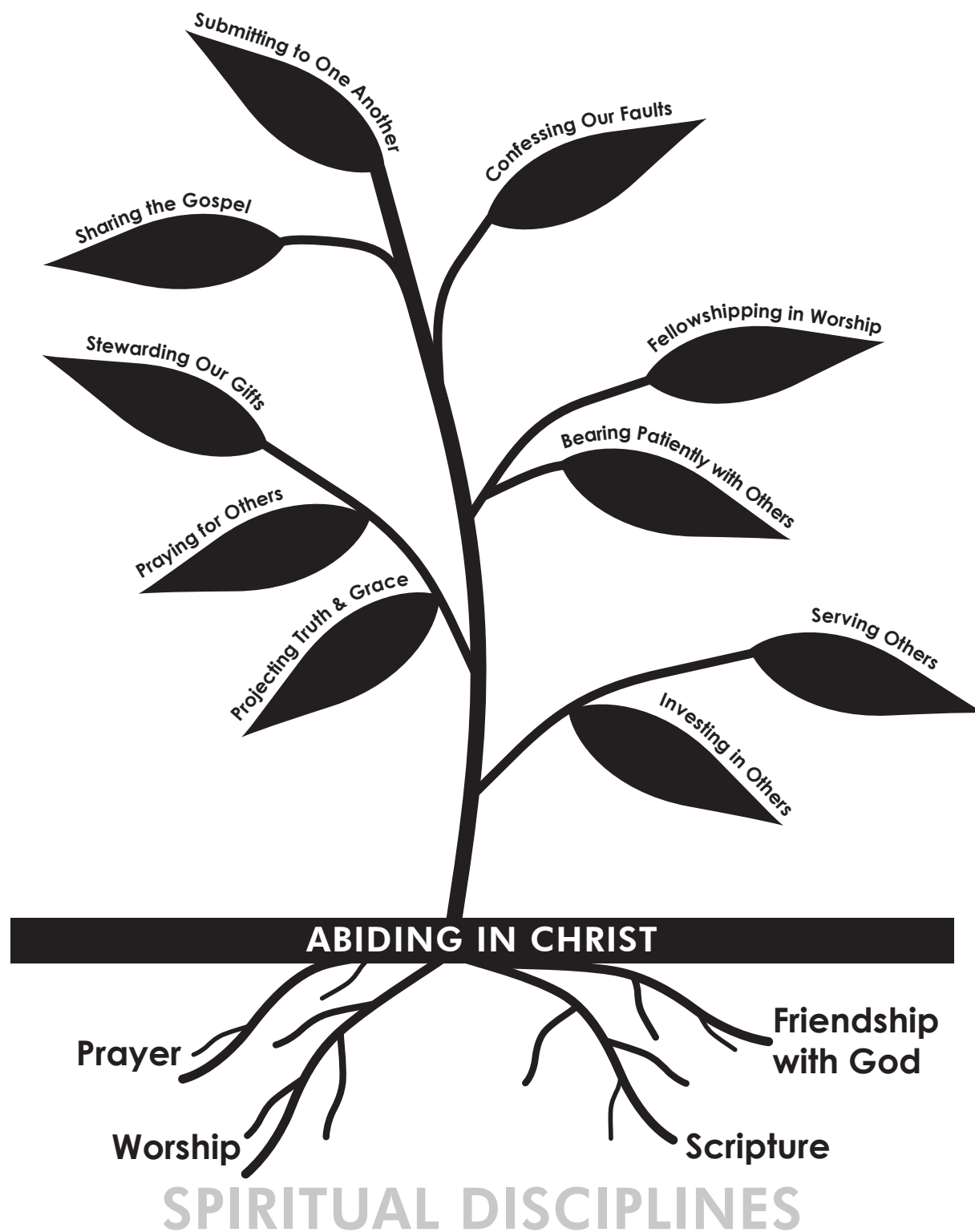
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OUR MISSION

LifeStone exists to empower **DISCIPLES** to make **DISCIPLES**. We seek to fulfill our mission by publishing Bible study and **DISCIPLESHIP** curriculum as well as offering real-life application training. We equip **DISCIPLES** as they journey through the various stages of life. As **DISCIPLES** grow in Christ, we continue to partner with them and their churches through training and other resources to empower **DISCIPLES** to make **DISCIPLES**.

DISCIPLE MAKING



FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND EDITOR IN CHIEF

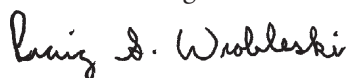
Dear Almighty Father,

Thank You for Your unconditional grace and mercy bestowed on LifeStone Ministries for 120 years. We are humbled by Your Son, the Master-Servant, who became the Living Stone rejected by men. You love us and build us up to be spiritual storehouses. We pray for Your strength and courage to be the living stones in our culture. We pray for perseverance to sacrifice ourselves to live wholly in subjection to Jesus Christ. May we glorify You in all our words and deeds as we strive to grow Your flock to spiritual maturity. We pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit as we engage Your flock.

Lord, we pray that this exposition of Your Word meets 2 Timothy 3:16. May the lessons contained in this labor of love emulate profitable teaching, graceful correction, and righteous training. We pray for all those who will be receiving instruction from these lessons. We pray for the teachers to approach this inspirational work with humility and meekness. May Your holy character and love for us leap from the pages and bring us all to our knees in thanksgiving.

Our glorious King, may we build the confidence and convictions of Christian leaders in our homes, churches, and missional fields to fulfill the Great Commission. Let us be renewed with strength and peace to empower Christian disciples to make disciples.

Under truth and grace,



Craig S. Wroblewski, M.Div., D.Min.
President & CEO
LifeStone Ministries

Dear Christ follower,

Our mission at LifeStone Ministries is to empower Christians to make disciples. We desire to partner with churches in this discipleship process. We have created a discipleship tool to help churches fulfill their calling. This new publication—*Amplify Christ*, as we call it—features a simple yet comprehensive five-step Bible study method that focuses on robust Bible learning and biblical application in a world that is often hostile to Christ's teaching.

Amplify Christ is not just another Bible curriculum. Discipleship requires a significant level of commitment from both teacher and student. Our discipleship tool likewise requires serious commitment. Leaders will need to inspire a group of people—maybe as few as one or two—to commit to spiritual formation and discipleship by investing their time and being willing to share their successes and failures. Group members can expect to read the lesson each week for an hour. Above all, group members will need to be honest with and encourage one another every week.

We have published this new discipleship tool and now prayerfully entrust it to you. We pray with all our hearts that the Holy Spirit will use it mightily to transform your lives and the lives of your group members, churches, and communities.

Sincerely,



James M. Leonard, Ph.D.
Editor in Chief
LifeStone Ministries

HOW TO USE AMPLIFY CHRIST

Christian discipleship is a matter of following the Master's footprints. The first disciples did just that—they followed Jesus from place to place, shared the same meals, slept at the same campsites, celebrated the same special occasions, and met the same people. In all these experiences, Jesus taught them verbally and through His actions. The disciples saw Jesus react to different people in different situations. They examined His work habits, observed His demeanor, and scrutinized how He practiced what He preached.

Even though we moderns can't follow Jesus physically, we are nonetheless called to be like Him in word and deed, conformed to His image. This is our calling, and we dare not ignore it. The only way we can know how to follow in Jesus' footprints is to learn about Him in the Bible. In the New Testament, eyewitnesses and other early disciples detail Jesus' life, ministry, and teaching. Similarly, the Old Testament helps us understand God's intentions for us through stories, worship materials, prophetic messages, and the Mosaic Law. God has given us His precious Scriptures to know how we should live. For this reason, disciples should have an intense thirst and hunger for God's Word.

Modern-day disciples, however, sometimes get discouraged about reading the Bible because of its antiquity and foreign culture. Sometimes they get so enthralled by the Bible's antiquity and alien culture that they fail to apply its teaching. Modern-day disciples may segment a familiar verse from its context and fail to understand its intended meaning, and sometimes they fail to integrate Scripture into theology.

For all these reasons, our new discipleship tool emphasizes five key elements for Scripture study. We hope *Amplify Christ* helps you become more like Christ.

THE METHOD

FIVE KEY ELEMENTS

1. **Amplify the Background.** Because the Bible was written long ago in a culture different from ours, we investigate rigorously to bridge the gap separating us moderns from the biblical writers. We present to our readers those backgrounds that help them understand the biblical passage.
2. **Amplify the Text.** One of the legacy features of our publications is the exposition of the text. We focus on the original author's intended message to his original audience, addressing the question, What was the author conveying to them back then? We hone in on the verse-by-verse details to explain the passage's big picture.
3. **Amplify the Context.** Many Christians see Scripture as piecemeal. We want disciples to see how individual stories and texts are connected to the whole biblical story. We read the text as sentences within a paragraph and paragraphs within a larger text unit. This is basic exegesis. But our readers should also understand how the entirety of a book fits into the whole of Scripture and the larger biblical history. We write to show how each text interconnects to form a majestic and awe-inspiring picture of God's plan.
4. **Amplify the Faith.** Christians need to allow Scripture to inform their thinking and basic Christian doctrine. We believe that God inspired His Word and that we should accept it as the rule of our lives as we seek to follow the Spirit's guidance. To this end, we spell out how the biblical text informs Bible doctrines and how we should think.
5. **Amplify Your Life.** Our goal is not to create a bunch of smart, brainiac Christians. Yes, we want Christians to be competent readers of the Bible, but this is not enough. We do everything we can to help disciples apply the text to their lives so that they grow in Christ's likeness. We think deeply about the text, explicitly seeking ways to articulate the principles of the ancient text to us today and to the specific individual. We are most urgent about the Christian formation of Christ followers.

TIMELINE

Unknown	Adam and Eve
Unknown	Noah
Unknown	Tower of Babel
2166-1991 B.C.	Life of Abraham
1916-1806 B.C.	Life of Joseph
1876-1446 B.C.	Israelites in Egypt
1446 B.C.	Exodus
1446 B.C.	Law at Sinai
1446-1406 B.C.	Wilderness wandering
1406-1399 B.C.	Joshua leads the conquest
1360-1075 B.C.	Judges Period
1051-931 B.C.	United monarchy
1011-971 B.C.	David reigns
959 B.C.	Solomon builds the temple
931-586 B.C.	Divided monarchy
722 B.C.	Assyria conquers Israel
605 B.C.	Babylon conquers Assyria
586 B.C.	Babylon conquers Judah/temple destroyed
539 B.C.	Persia conquers Babylon
538 B.C.	Exiles return to Judah
515 B.C.	Temple rebuilt
458 B.C.	Ezra returns to Israel from Babylon
445 B.C.	Nehemiah rebuilds the wall
331 B.C.	Greece conquers Persia
175-164 B.C.	Seleucid rule over Israel by Antiochus IV Epiphanes
63 B.C.	Rome captures Jerusalem
7 to 4 B.C.	Birth of Jesus
A.D. 26-30	Jesus' ministry
A.D. 30	Jesus' death and resurrection
A.D. 45-56	Paul's missionary journeys
A.D. 70	Rome destroys the temple

IMPORTANT DATES

God Has Always Existed

Written by James Frohlich

READ AND TAKE NOTE

Read **Genesis 1:1-13**. Look for:

- God as the subject of active verbs
- the number and length of God's speeches

FIND IT

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus

Who: God

What: the Creation of the world

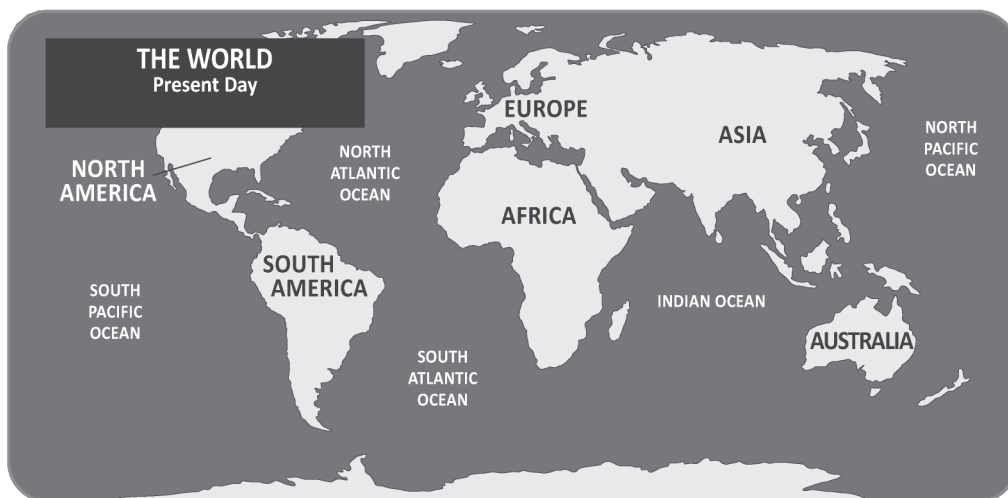
When: unknown

Where: heaven and earth

Why: to show God's superiority over all things

How: by God speaking the world into existence

Spiritual Formation: Disciples should follow God because He is their Creator.





AMPLIFY THE BACKGROUND

Moses likely wrote Genesis during the forty years of wilderness wandering that began in 1446 B.C. In his day, discussions about Creation did not revolve around whether evolution caused all that mankind saw in the world—after all, modern theories of the earth’s origin would not arise for over three thousand years. Rather, different myths ascribed the creation of the universe to various gods. Those myths were the anti-God influence of Moses’ day, and he wrote to combat them more than to answer modern cosmological questions. Some of the myths that Moses confronted are those of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

EGYPTIAN CREATION MYTHS

The Egyptians had several creation myths. The different myths related to various major cities and gods. Although these myths come from a variety of sources, time periods, and places throughout Egypt, together they parallel Genesis 1 in several important aspects, such as formlessness, darkness, wind, and deep waters at the beginning of Creation. Other important parallels include wind moving over the waters and Creation by speech. Due to these many similarities, Moses may have been directly refuting the Egyptian creation stories in his writing. Why would Moses do that? When he wrote, the Israelites had just come out of Egypt and would have been familiar with both the gods of Egypt and the Egyptian creation myths. After being in Egyptian bondage, they could have been tempted

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to think that the Egyptian gods were stronger than the Lord. It is as if Moses were saying that the Egyptian gods did not create the world—the one true God did!

THOUGHTS

Egyptian Myths and Similarities with Genesis 1

- Creation starting with darkness, wind, and deep waters
- wind moving over the waters, stirring up life
- supernatural light in the waters at the birth of a god
- Creation by direct speech
- separation of waters to form waters above the earth
- waters separated to reveal dry land
- mankind made in the likeness of a god
- rest after Creation

BABYLONIAN CREATION MYTH

The major Babylonian creation myth was *Enuma Elish*. In this story, the god Marduk destroyed the sea goddess Tiamat and created the universe from her body. Her carcass became the waters above and below the earth. That provides a similarity to Genesis 1:6-7. The differences, however, are many. In the Babylonian account, humans were created to do the work that the gods did not want to do. Also, the waters do not strive against God in Genesis 1 as in the Babylonian myth. Rather, the waters offer no resistance to His commands.

THOUGHTS

Babylonian Myth and Similarities with Genesis 1

- waters above and below the earth
- heavenly bodies mark seasons and years
- rest after Creation

The similarities between Genesis 1 and the ancient creation accounts let us know that Moses wrote partly to combat the cultural assumption that the gods created the physical world. The differences let us know that the one true God of Israel is superior to the false gods of Egypt and Mesopotamia and indeed everywhere else.

AMPLIFY THE TEXT

In this edition of *Amplify Christ*, we will consider some of the attributes of God. One of those attributes is God is always present (sometimes called “omni-

presence”). He is both present everywhere and present at all times throughout history. There has never been a time when God did not exist, and there will never be a time when God does not exist. He has no beginning point or birth and no endpoint. God has eternally existed in the three Persons of the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

GOD CREATES (Genesis 1:1-2)

Genesis 1 presents God existing before the creation of the world and anything in it. We are not told what God did before that; we are simply told that He started everything at the beginning by creating heaven and earth. Creating is the first action God performs in Genesis 1. That sets the stage for what follows. In this chapter, God either performs the action of a finite verb, commands a created entity to act, or a created entity acts in obedience to God’s expressed will. In other words, God completely controls the situation in Genesis 1. He performs all the actions or commands His created entities to act.

THOUGHTS

In Genesis 1, God performs the following actions:

- created
- saw
- called
- set
- said
- separated
- made
- blessed

Why is it significant that God either performs or commands the actions of finite verbs in Genesis 1? Every verb of action declares God as the Creator. Most of the time, the text explicitly lists God as the subject of a verb, rather than using a pronoun. Instead of the text saying, “He created,” it explicitly says, “God created” or notes that God performed some other action.

Only the Creator deserves the worship and praise of humanity. With a constant refrain of God’s actions, Moses let his audience know that God, not the gods, created the world. Therefore, all allegiance is due to Him, not the false gods. Although the Israelites were subject to Egypt for a time, the Egyptian gods did not overthrow the one true God. Rather, He is the true Creator and Ruler, as demonstrated by His defeat of the Egyptian gods during the ten plagues (cf. Exodus 12:12).

THOUGHTS

God is explicitly listed as the subject of thirty-one action verbs in Genesis 1; He is the implied subject in only four instances.

After its initial creation, the earth was formless and empty. The phrase “formless and empty” occurs only one other time in the Old Testament, referring to an inhospitable desert that is unproductive and therefore uninhabitable (Jeremiah 4:23; cf. vss. 24-26). A similar phrase occurs in Isaiah 34:11, referring to a wasteland uninhabited by humans and fit only for wild animals. In its beginning stage, the earth was empty, unproductive, and not a fit environment for life as

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we know it. God corrected that problem by forming the earth and filling it with vegetation and living creatures.

Before those creative acts, however, the Spirit was moving over the waters. Rather than using a finite verb, the text records that action with a participle, vividly picturing the Spirit moving about while preparing the earth for life. That may not seem significant, but the Spirit's initial work over the waters sends a strong monotheistic message. God alone, from beginning to end, brought about the created world. No other gods contributed to the process.

GOD SPEAKS (Genesis 1:3-13)

In this initial, premature environment of creation, God spoke for the first time in recorded Scripture. That is the second action verb that God performed. He uttered a simple command, only two words in Hebrew—"Let there be light." Immediately, there was light. From the very beginning, creation listened to His voice. Would mankind, which He would soon create, do the same?

Verse 4 records the third and fourth verbs that God performed. He both saw and separated. After creating the light, God saw that it was good. In Genesis 1, God seeing is always followed immediately by God calling something He made "good." The work of His good creation was truly glorious to behold.

God then separated the light from the darkness. Separation splits two things that were initially connected. God would again separate two entities on day 2, splitting the waters above and below to create the sky.

After separating light from darkness, God called the light "day" and the darkness "night." Calling is the fifth different action God performed in Genesis 1. This verb is slightly different from the previous verb "to say." When the text uses "God said," it immediately follows with direct speech. Here, no direct speech is recorded. The text simply reports that God called the light "day" and the darkness "night;" it does not record Him saying the words "day" or "night."

Now that light and darkness had been separated, there could be an evening and a morning. Day 1 of Creation concluded here. But day 1 hints at a pattern. If the passage of evening to morning marked one day, or the first day, then there would likely be additional days. Indeed, as one continues to read Genesis 1, one immediately notices the pattern of different days of Creation. That pattern continues into the sixth day at the end of the chapter. The seventh day breaks the pattern as the text never records the phrase, "There was evening, and there was morning, the seventh day."

The second day of Creation begins like the rest of the days in chapter 1, with a command by God recorded in direct speech. If you were to look ahead at the beginning of each of the remaining Creation days in chapter 1, you would notice that they all begin with "and God said." That is another pattern. But notice something else. That phrase is followed by direct speech so that every day begins with a command by God. Every day has at least one speech, except the seventh day. Yet again, the seventh day breaks a pattern, indicating that it is the climax of the Creation week.

But there is something different about the speech on day 2 when compared with that of day 1. The speech on day 2 is much longer than the two-word speech on day 1. That demonstrates a further pattern. As the Creation week progresses, the speeches become longer, more numerous, or more complex. At

first glance, it might seem that days 4 and 5 do not follow this pattern, so those days will be discussed further.

Day 4 records one speech containing twenty Hebrew words, while days 3 and 5 record two speeches. Day 3's first speech contains eight Hebrew words, and the second contains fourteen. Day 5's speeches contain eleven and eight Hebrew words, respectively. Although the total number of words used on days 4 and 5 is less than that of day 3, both days 4 and 5 show further complexity over the previous days. Day 4's single speech is longer than either of the speeches on day 3. Further, the speech on day 4 contains two explicit purpose statements, while none of the previous days contain any. The first purpose is that the created luminaries would be for signs, seasons, days, and years (vs. 14). The second is that the created luminaries would be for lighting the expanse or firmament in order to shed light on the earth (vs. 15).

In addition, although the two speeches on day 5 contain less combined words than those of day 3, day 5 uses a special introduction for its second speech. All the previous speeches in Genesis 1 begin the same way—"and God said." Day 5's second speech begins with "and God blessed them" (vs. 22). This difference indicates a heightening in the pattern. The heightening continues into day 6, which contains four speeches (including one introduced by "and God blessed them") and a purpose statement (vs. 29).

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THOUGHTS

In Genesis 1, the speeches show a heightening pattern as the Creation week progresses. This is indicated by the number of speeches used each day, an increase in words used in the speeches, the use of purpose statements, and the introduction of speeches by using a blessing.

Day	Speeches	Hebrew Words	Complexity
1	1	2	
2	1	9	
3	2	8, 14	
4	1	20	two purpose statements
5	2	11, 8	blessing
6	4	9, 14, 13, 30	blessing, one purpose statement
7	0	0	

One might wonder, *What is the point of the patterns and progressions?* They point toward the seventh day, which breaks the pattern. On the seventh day, God rested from the work He accomplished on the previous days. The patterns and progressions also indicate that God was saving the best for last. His last act of Creation is human beings. Humans are the crown of God's creation.

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Returning to day 2, we notice that after God's command to create an expanse by separating the waters, there is a narrative that records that this happened (vss. 6-7). The immediate recording of what God commanded is similar to day 1. God commanded the light to appear, and the narrative records that light appeared (vs. 3). This pattern continues throughout the Creation week. Sometimes God's speech is followed by a lengthy narrative recording that God's command took place. At other times, God's command is followed by the statement "and it was so." Every speech in Genesis 1 is followed by an indication that what God commanded took place, except for the two blessings (cf. vss. 22, 28). That may be because the blessings are for God's creation to be fruitful and multiply. The normal means for procreation would not be instantaneous as when God commanded His creative acts to take place. The reader has to wait and see whether God's creation would obey Him by producing offspring, filling the earth, and, in the case of mankind, exercising dominion over the earth.

Day 2 records the sixth different verb that God performed in Genesis 1. After commanding the waters to separate so that the expanse could appear, the narrative records that God made the expanse (vs. 7). He also separated the waters—using the same verb as verse 4. When the waters separated, part went above the expanse, and the rest went below the expanse. God then called the expanse "heaven," or "sky," using the same verb as verse 5.

The separation of the waters above and below recalls the creation myths. In the Babylonian myth *Enuma Elish*, the god Marduk made the waters above and below from the carcass of the water monster Tiamat. God, however, did not battle with the sea in Genesis 1. Instead, He spoke, made the expanse, and separated the waters. No battle was necessary, for nothing could oppose Him.

On day 3, God commanded the waters below the expanse to gather together and the dry land to appear. God called the dry land "earth" and the waters "seas." In His second speech on day 3, God commanded that the earth sprout vegetation and fruit trees and that these would produce according to their kind.

In the one speech on day 4, God commanded lights to appear and to separate the day from the night. Since God created the day and night on the first day, days 1 and 4 are connected. On day 4, God created the lights to rule over what He created on day 1. Similarly, days 2 and 3 correspond to days 5 and 6. On day 2, God created the expanse, or sky, and the waters above and below. On day 5, God made water creatures and birds that filled the waters below and the sky. On day 3, God made the dry land and vegetation. On day 6, God created land animals and humans. They were to fill the earth, and humanity was supposed to rule over the rest of creation. The days of Creation recount how God both formed the earth and filled it so that the earth would be a proper habitation where life could exist. Through His speech, God brought life to the world and set up humanity to rule over the earth as the pinnacle of creation.

As the Creation week progressed, the created beings became more complex and could accomplish more activity. Unlike the previously created beings, God made humans in His image. He gave them the ability to reproduce and commanded them to subdue the earth. Creating humans as the pinnacle of creation is very different from the creation myths at the time. In some of the Egyptian myths, humans were created by accident, and in the major Mesopotamian creation myth, the gods made humans to serve them and meet their needs. The Bible's account is much different; it gives dignity to humanity.

AMPLIFY THE CONTEXT

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PLACE IN THE BIBLE

Genesis 1 is likely the most well-known account of Creation in the Bible, but it is far from the Bible's only account. Every major genre of the Old Testament discusses creation, including narrative, poetry, wisdom, and prophetic texts. Not every Creation account or genre can be surveyed, so we will only discuss Genesis 1 and 2 and a few of the many creation poems. Genesis 1's popularity probably derives from the fact that it is the first of the Creation accounts in the Bible. Another account of Creation can be found in Genesis 2:4-25. That account fills in more information from day 6, giving a fuller report of the creation of humanity and Adam's naming of the animals.

In distinction from Genesis 1, Job 26:7-13 records God fighting against the sea at Creation. He dispelled the water monster Rahab, who represented the forces of chaos and pierced the fleeing serpent (vss. 12-13), likely a reference to the sea monster Leviathan. Similarly, the Lord shattered the heads of Leviathan in conjunction with Creation in Psalm 74:12-17. Psalm 89:5-12 again shows the Lord fighting against the waters of chaos and its monsters in a Creation context.

In agreement with Genesis 1, other poems depict no battle with the sea or the forces of chaos at Creation. In Psalm 104, the waters retreat at the sound of God's thunderous voice (vs. 7). The water monster Leviathan is just one of innumerable creatures that swim in the sea. Leviathan is no more than a bath toy, playing in the waters of the ocean (cf. vss. 25-26). In Psalm 77, the waters, God's would-be adversary, are no adversary at all. This time the waters do not even wait to hear God's voice; instead, they flee at the mere sight of God (vs. 16). God used weapons in Psalm 77, but He did not use them against the sea or any sea monsters that represent chaos (cf. vss. 17-18).

PLACE IN THE STORY OF SALVATION

Creation is the beginning chapter of God's story of redemption. God created the world, and the created world obeyed His voice. But the pinnacle of God's creation, humanity, rebelled against Him, bringing the world into the chaos of sin and its effects. The creation itself began to unravel. All creatures were now subject to death, and the creation groaned to be released from bondage (Romans 8:20-22). In reply, God began a re-creation effort by choosing one man (Abraham) and his family by whom He would bless the world (cf. Genesis 12:1-3). Jesus, one of Abraham's descendants, would set all things right by His sacrifice in the place of God's rebellious children. Through Christ's death and resurrection, God is renewing creation and His children who believe in Him.

PLACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Since God eternally exists in three distinct Persons, all three Persons of the Trinity were present at Creation and were involved in Creation. We have noted that the Spirit (the Holy Spirit) moved over the waters in preparation for God's creative work. The Son was with God from the very beginning (cf. John 1:1-2). The Son created all things (vs. 3), and all things exist to bring Him glory (cf. Colossians 1:16).

NOTES

AMPLIFY THE FAITH

One might wonder why some verses depict God as doing battle with the sea at Creation while others do not. The answer likely resides in the context and purpose of each passage. The psalms that depict the sea as hostile are of a particular type. They are lament psalms. These psalms are cries to God to deliver the psalmist or the nation from some particular plight. These psalms are prayers while the psalmist is in the middle of a trial. The raging seas become a metaphor for the trial the psalmist is facing. Since God subdued the raging seas at Creation, He can act similarly to deliver His people from the trial that currently besets them.

By contrast, psalms in which the sea offers no resistance to God are often designated as praise psalms. These psalms extol the Lord for showing Himself mighty on behalf of His people by delivering them from difficult situations. These psalms are hymns of praise after the psalmist comes out of a trial. The docile seas represent God's superiority over all potential foes. It is almost as though the psalmist were saying, "Why would any foe even try to do battle with God or His people?"

THOUGHTS

The raging seas signify the troubles of God's people. The docile seas signify God's unrivaled power that can bring an end to His people's troubles.

Unlike the gods of the nations, there was no doubt that the Lord would triumph over the waters of chaos. When He spoke, all resistance ended. Although the Bible and the ancient creation myths have plenty of differences, one thing they hold in common is that the Creator deserves worship and obedience. If that held for the false gods of Egypt and Mesopotamia, how much more for the true God, who actually did create the world through the sound of His voice?

When the first humans sinned, they acted inconsistently with their nature as created beings. Everything in creation followed God's commands, except the pinnacle of His creation. Mankind rebelled, bringing punishment. Sin's effects reversed creation. Sin led to death, whereas creation led to life. Sin is ultimately irrational because it causes us to act inconsistently with our nature as created beings.

AMPLIFY YOUR LIFE

DISOBEDIENCE

Are there any areas in which you are not acknowledging God as the Creator? Is there some part of your life that you are trying to hide from Him? Not only is that irrational, but it also does not work. Adam and Eve tried to avoid God after their sin in the garden, but God still found them. Jonah tried to avoid

God as well, but God still met him through a storm on the Mediterranean Sea. Do you think it would turn out any differently for you?

NOTES

TRUST

Many Christians face difficult circumstances. These circumstances could be financial, relational, spiritual, or medical. In all difficulties, God calls us to look to Him. He who spoke the world into existence and calmed the raging seas can deliver you from any troubles that you face. The Creation account of Genesis 1 calls God's people to trust in Him, rather than any false god, for their refuge. He is the one true God who not only created the world but also delivered His people time and again. He preserved Noah through the Flood. He brought Abraham through famine, war, and childlessness. He preserved Joseph in prison and used him to feed the rest of his family. And He can do the same for you. Whatever the difficulty is that you are facing, look to Him.

By nature of being the Creator, the Lord is both near and far from His creation. He is far in the sense that He is separate from all created beings. He is completely different from anything He made. He is more different from humanity than humanity is different from the animals God created. Yet God is also near. He providentially cares for His creation and made humanity in His image. He is not so distinct from humans as not to care for them. He is committed to humanity, the height of His creation. He is so committed to them that He sent His Son to become like them so that He might redeem them and bring them back to Himself.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If a Christian friend was struggling with doubting God, how could you use Genesis 1 to encourage him or her?

2. Have you ever gone through a time when you doubted God? What was the cause of your doubt? What was the outcome?

3. Does thinking about God as the Creator make Him seem near to you or far from you? Why is that the case?

4. Would you consider your life chaotic or tranquil right now? How could your circumstances encourage you to reflect on God the Creator?

5. Is there an area in your life in which you are not acknowledging God as your Creator? What could you do to change that?

