

**Q** Is God the Creator?

**A** Yes, God created all things. He worked for six days and rested on the seventh day, and creation was complete.

**Q** How did God create all things?

**A** God spoke all things into existence and saw that it was good.

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"And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good." **GENESIS 1:31a**

"For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through Him and for Him."

**COLOSSIANS 1:16**

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## THEOLOGY: THE HEART OF THE MATTER

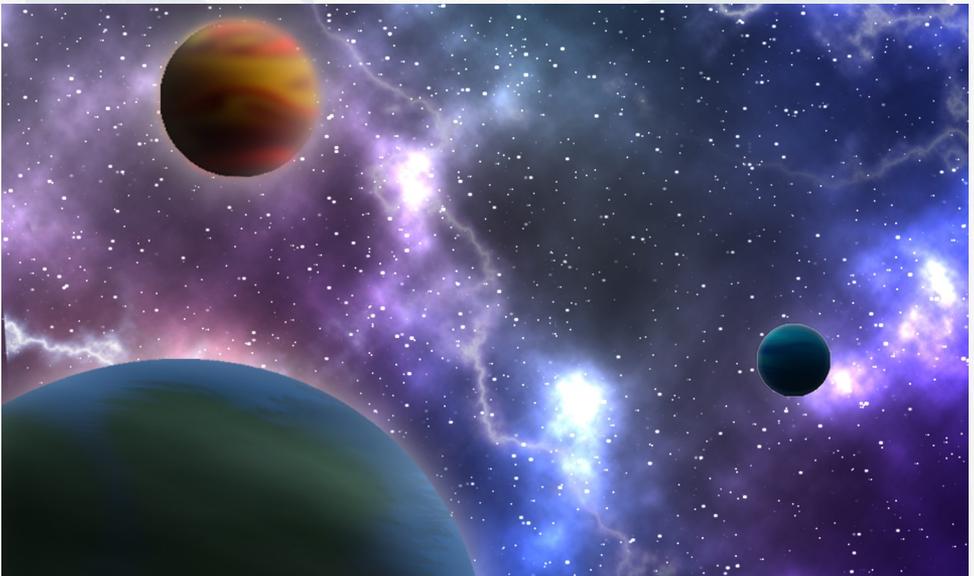
The Bible begins with, "*God created the heavens and the earth*" (**Genesis 1:1**). There was a time when nothing of the material world existed ... nothing! We look around and see rocks, soil, plants and animals; we question, how did they get there? Modern science suggests that somehow the universe and its order came from the randomness of nothing. However, the Bible tells us God created everything; He is transcendent, above and beyond all that He created. The Bible declares that God reasoned and said, "*Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness*" (**Genesis 1:26**). So, man was created in God's image, with creative abilities and responsibilities, similar to the Creator's likeness. Man's unique abilities display his significance apart from everything else that was created. The Book of Genesis summarizes all of God's creation as very good. A right understanding and dependence on Creator God draws His creatures to worship in awe of Him alone.

## APPLICATION: WHY DOES IT MATTER?

**The Pattern of Work—** In creation, God established a pattern of work for mankind to follow. Our work is a good thing. When men and women use the gifts God has given them to engage in the world He made, it honors Him. From the beginning, when God gave Adam a job in the Garden of Eden, work was to be done as an act of worship. When God's people work hard in their daily jobs, God is glorified.

**The Pattern of Rest—** We honor God when, having worked hard, we leave our work to rest. Rest is more than being tired at the end of a long week. It involves providing physical rest for your body. It also includes spiritual refreshment. In addition, rest will include the pleasures of leisure, recreation, and relationship as a break from the routine of your week. We worship God in our rest when we thankfully and joyfully enjoy His gifts.

**So What?—** *"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men"* (Colossians 3:23). What God has created you to do, work at it with a heart of worship. But do not worship your work, rather, rest in it as a precious gift of God.



"God shows us beauty and order in His creation."

- *What does this image show us about God's creation?*
- *What attributes of God can be described from this picture?*

## FURTHER STUDY

**R. C. Sproul**, *The Essential Truths of the Christian Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1992), 58-59.

We know (with logical certitude) that if anything exists now, then there must be something that did not have a beginning. Now the question becomes what or who.

Many serious scholars believe that the answer to the what is found within the universe itself. They argue (as Carl Sagan does) that there is no need to go above and beyond the universe to find something that had no beginning from which everything else comes. That is, we need not assume something like "God" who is transcendent to the universe. The universe or something in it can do the job quite well itself.

There is a subtle error lurking in the above scenario. It has to do with the meaning of the term transcendent. In philosophy and theology, the idea of transcendence means that God is "above and beyond" the universe in the sense that He is a higher order of being than other beings. We commonly refer to God as the supreme Being.

What makes the supreme Being different from a human being? Notice that both concepts share a common word, being. When we say that God is the supreme Being, we are saying that He is a being who differs in kind from other ordinary beings. What precisely is that difference? He is called supreme because He has no beginning. He is supreme because all other beings owe their existence to Him, and He owes His existence to none other than Himself. He is the eternal Creator. Everything else is the work of His creation.

What is clear is that if something exists now, then there must be a supreme Being from which all other beings come. The first assertion of the Bible is "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This text is foundational to all Christian thought. It is not only a religious statement, it is a rationally necessary concept.

## FURTHER STUDY (CONT.)

**Wayne Gruden**, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 89-90.

Out of all the creatures God made, only one creature, man, is said to be made "in the image of God". What does this mean? We may use the following definition: The fact that man is in the image of God means that man is like God and represents God.

When God says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26), the meaning is that God plans to make a creature similar to himself. Both the Hebrew word for "image" (tselem) and the Hebrew word for "likeness" (demut) refer to something that is similar but not identical to the thing it represents or is an "image" of. The word image can also be used of something that represents something else.

When we realize that the Hebrew words for "image" and "likeness" simply informed the original readers that man was like God, and would in many ways represent God, much of the controversy over the meaning of "image of God" is seen to be a search for too narrow and too specific a meaning. When Scripture reports that God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26), it simply would have meant to the original readers, "Let us make man to be like us and to represent us."

## FURTHER STUDY (CONT.)

Because “image” and “likeness” had these meanings, Scripture does not need to say something like, “The fact that man is in the image of God means that man is like God in the following ways: intellectual ability, moral purity, spiritual nature, dominion over the earth, creativity, ability to make ethical choices, and immortality” (or some similar statement). Such an explanation is unnecessary, not only because the terms had clear meanings, but also because no such list could do justice to the subject: The text only needs to affirm that man is like God, and the rest of the scripture fills in more detail to explain this. In fact, as we read the rest of Scripture, we realize that a full understanding of man’s likeness to God would require a full understanding of who God is in his being and in his actions and a full understanding of who man is and what he does. The more we know about God and man the more similarities we will recognize and the more fully we will understand what Scripture means when it says that man is in the image of God. The expression refers to every way in which man is like God.

## FURTHER STUDY (CONT.)

**J.I Packer**, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1993) 21, 22.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). He did it by fiat, without any preexisting material; his resolve that things should exist ("Let there be...") called them into being and formed them in order with an existence that depended on his will yet was distinct from his own. Father, Son and Holy Spirit were involved together. The act of creation is mystery to us; there is more in it than we understand. We cannot create by fiat, and we do not know how God could. To say that he created "out of nothing" is to confess the mystery, not explain it. In particular, we cannot conceive how dependent existence can be distinct existence, nor how angels and human beings in their dependent existence can be not robots but creatures capable of free decisions for which they are morally accountable to their Maker. Yet Scripture everywhere teaches us that this is the way it is.

As the world order is not self-created, so it is not self-sustaining, as God is. The stability of the universe depends on constant divine upholding; this is a specific ministry of the divine Son (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3), and without it every creature of every kind, ourselves included, would cease to be. As Paul told the Athenians, "he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else...In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:25, 28).

Knowing that God created the world around us, and ourselves as a part of it, is basic to true religion. God is to be praised as Creator, by reason of the marvelous order, variety, and beauty of his works. Godliness starts here, with God the sovereign Creator as the first focus of our thoughts.