

**Conversations on
 Genesis 1:1-2:4a**

Discuss this passage in light of the commentary below.

Idea! Listen to “Blessed We Are” from *Four Great Winds* at bit.ly/BlessedWeAre. How is this message similar to the Genesis message that God has given us “dominion” over the earth?

WHAT is important to know?

There is a multiplicity to God’s revelation in the world, which even (or especially) this opening prelude makes clear. The God of Scripture is just too big and mysterious and communal to allow a single subject (*‘elohim*) to drive a series of verbs (create, said, see) that thereby describe this deity as *simply* a single actor over against the creation this particular God brings about. The spirit or wind of this God is also an actor; the spirit “sweeps, hovers, and broods” over the stuff of this world in a way that hints at relationship—both inside and outside the Godhead this passage portrays. (*Richard Boyce*)

- ✧ In what ways does God’s creative spirit continue to work throughout the rest of the Bible?
- ✧ Why is the creation of humanity in God’s image (1:26–28) important for understanding humanity throughout the biblical story?
- ✧ What are implications of God creating all things “very good” (1:31) for the relation of humanity to the rest of creation?

WHERE is God in these words?

This text offers the theological question of the value of creation. Out of nothing, something was made (*creatio ex nihilo*). Why is this important? The Creator’s first pronouncement is that the creation is good. The goodness here is not an aesthetic or ethical proclamation about the nature of light; rather, goodness concerns the use to which it can be put for God’s intention. We do not learn what that purpose is in these verses, but God is pleased. The light is “good.” God names it. (*Melinda Quivik*)

- ✧ Why is it important to have a theological view of creation?
- ✧ In what ways does the theological affirmation of God’s good creation shape our understandings of the relation of all created things to God?
- ✧ What is the theological significance of both male and female being created in the image of God (1:27)?

God, you call each of us to be true disciples. Help us this week to keep our commitment we have placed before you. Give us the strength to follow in the way of your child, Jesus. Amen.

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

One significantly different understanding of the Trinity comes from Meister Eckhart, a fourteenth-century German mystic. He wrote that God the Father laughed, and the Son was born. Then the two of them laughed, and the Spirit was born. When all three laughed, the human being was born. For Eckhart, the mystery of the Trinity was surrounded by peals of golden laughter at the heart of the universe. What does your experience tell you about the Trinity? How would you describe the indescribable, incomprehensible mystery of the Trinity? Trust your spiritual heart to know the way. It is the only compass you need. (*Carole A. Crumley*)

- ✧ How does believing in God as Trinity affect your life?
- ✧ Some have suggested that the relationship of love among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is a model for human relationships—in what ways may this be possible in your life?

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

What confirms God’s special love for humans is that they are the only ones made in God’s image (1:26–27). This is one of the reasons God insists on Israel not making images of the God they worship. God’s image is already placed within humans; no other kind of representation is necessary. As God’s image bearers, male and female are given a responsibility: to have dominion over the created order (v. 28). Humans are given dominion, not domination; they are caregivers, not exploiters (cf. Ps. 72:8–14). We do unto creation as God has done unto us; we express love and care toward the world. Being image bearers of God is also at the heart of how we see other humans, which results in treating them with dignity, regardless of race, age, gender, social or economic status. (*Dave Bland*)

- ✧ In what ways may God be calling you to be a “caregiver” rather than an “exploiter” of God’s good creation?
- ✧ What are ways you can more clearly see others as being image bearers of God?