

What Is the Point of **GENESIS 1-2?**



The Theology of the Creation Story

What Is Theology?

- The meaning of the word “theology” is sometimes unclear (and its usage criticized as “academic”), but “theology” is essentially “the study of the nature of God and religious belief” (i.e., doctrine).
- Rather than dismissing it, we ought to embrace a theological study of the Bible (Acts 2:42; 1 Tim 4:6, 16; 2 Tim 3:16–17).
- How do we discover the theology (or doctrine) of Scripture? We must (1) carefully observe the text, (2) identify patterns in the immediate context, (3) compare the themes with the rest of the Bible, and (4) organize (and apply) our findings (e.g., baptism).

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“Biblical theology ... is the attempt to state systematically the faith-affirmations of the Bible” (Purkiser, Taylor, and Taylor, *God, Man, and Salvation: A Biblical Theology*, 19).

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A Powerful and Personal God

- The “first” creation story highlights the eternity, strength, and wisdom of God (Elohim) as God creates, names, and orders the universe, especially humanity (Gen 1:1–2:3; Eccl 12:1, 13).
- The “second” creation story highlights the personal nature of God (Yahweh) and humanity and the privileges and expectations of our relationship with the Lord and with other people (Gen 2:4–25; Exod 3:13–17; 6:2–8; 20:1–17).
- In sum, Genesis 1–2 demonstrates that God is the powerful and personal Creator and that we must let his will govern our own.

Bearing the Divine Image

- God is the primary character in Gen 1–2, and people (i.e., Adam and Eve) are the secondary—though still important—characters.
- The fact that God creates man and woman in his own image and enlivens them with his own breath (spirit) places humanity in a unique position—a position of authority, privilege, and responsibility (Gen 1:26–30; 2:7–17; cf. 3:8–19).
- The union of Adam (man) and Eve (woman) is another illustration of the divine image and prefigures the spiritual union of Christ and the church (Gen 2:18–25; Eph 5:22–33).

Why Is Genesis 1–2 in the Bible?

- The creation story begins Scripture not (primarily) to describe the age of the earth but to unveil the nature and purpose of God.
- Since God is a powerful and personal Creator, Gen 1–2 anticipates that we will (1) recognize his authority, (2) rely on his wisdom and might, and (3) submit to his will (1 Pet 4:12–19; Rom 1:24–25).
- Since we bear the image of God, Gen 1–2 anticipates that we will (1) identify our failures, (2) conform to and exemplify the image of God (Christ), and (3) yearn for eternal, face-to-face communion with the Lord (Col 3:9–10; Eph 4:20–24; Rom 8:28–30; 1 Cor 15:49).

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