

AUGMENTED

THIRD EDITION

The New Oxford Annotated BIBLE

*New Revised Standard Version
with the Apocrypha*

AN ECUMENICAL STUDY BIBLE

1 In the beginning when God created^a the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God^b swept over the face of the waters. ³Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴And God 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. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶ And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹ And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, "Let there be lights in

a Or when God began to create or In the beginning God created b Or while the spirit of God or while a mighty wind

1.1-11.26: The primeval history. From creation to the birth of Abraham. This unit is composed of two principal layers, a Priestly source that also provides an editorial framework, and a non-Priestly narrative, identified by many scholars as belonging to J (the Yahwist).

1.1-2.3: Creation culminating in sabbath. This Priestly account of creation presents God as a divine ruler, creating the universe by decree in six days and resting on the seventh. **1.1:** Scholars differ on whether this verse is to be translated as an independent sentence summarizing what follows (e.g., "In the beginning God created") or as a temporal phrase describing what things were like when God started (e.g., "When God began to create . . . the earth was a formless void"; cf. 2.4-6). In either case, the text does not describe creation out of nothing (contrast 2 Macc 7.28). Instead, the story emphasizes how God creates order from a watery chaos. **2:** As elsewhere in the Bible, *the deep* (Heb "tehom") has no definite article ("the") attached to it in the Heb. Some see "tehom" here to be related to the Babylonian goddess Tiamat, a divinity representing oceanic chaos, whom the head god, Marduk, defeated in *Enuma Elish*, a major Babylonian creation story. Christian interpreters have tended to see the "Spirit" of the Trinity later in this verse. *Wind* fits the ancient context better (see 8.1). **3:** The first of eight acts of creation through decree. Like a divine king God pronounces his will and it is accomplished. **4-5:** These verses introduce two other themes crucial to this account: the goodness of creation and the idea that creation is accomplished through God's separating, ordering, and naming elements of the universe. The seven-day scheme of 1.1-2.3 requires the creation of light, day, and night at the outset. Since in some traditions the Jewish day began with sundown, the order is *evening* and *morning*. **6-8:** The *dome/Sky* made on the second day separates an upper ocean (Ps 148.4; see Gen 7.11) from a lower one. This creates a space in which subsequent creation can take place. **9-13:** Two creative acts: creation of dry land and command of that land to bring forth vegetation. *Earth* is a feminine noun in Heb. The text thus echoes other ancient mythologies and the life cycle in having a feminine earth bring forth the first life in the universe (cf. Job 1.21). God is only involved indirectly here, commanding the earth to *put forth*. **14-19:** There is a correspondence between days one to three and days four to six (1 || 4, 2 || 5, 3 || 6), which heightens the symmetry and order of God's creation. Here, God's creation of heavenly *lights* on the fourth day corresponds to creation of light, day, and night on the first. In a critical response to non-Israelite cultures who worshiped these heavenly bodies, the bodies are not named and are identified as mere timekeepers. **20-23:** See vv. 14-19n.

GENESIS 1.15–1.31

the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰ And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” ²¹So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. ²⁵God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and ev-

erything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make humankind^a in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth,^b and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

²⁷ So God created humankind^c in his image,
in the image of God he created them;^c
male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” ²⁹God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there

^a Heb *adam* ^b Syr: Heb *and over all the earth*
^c Heb *him*

Where the second day featured the dome separating upper and lower oceans, the fifth day features the creation of birds to fly *across the dome* and ocean creatures, including sea monsters (Ps 104.25–26). God’s blessing of the swarming creatures (1.22) anticipates a similar blessing that God will give humanity (1.28). **24–30:** See vv. 14–19n. Where the third day involved creation of land and plants in turn, this sixth day involves the creation of two types of plant-eating land-dwellers: animals and then humans. **24–25:** Again, earth is involved in bringing forth life (see 1.9–13n.). **26:** The plural *us, our* (3.22; 11.7) probably refers to the divine beings who compose God’s heavenly court (1 Kings 22.19; Job 1.6). *Image, likeness* is often interpreted to be a spiritual likeness between God and humanity. Another view is that this text builds on ancient concepts of the king physically resembling the god and thus bearing a bodily stamp of his authority to rule. Here this idea is democratized, as all of humanity appears godlike. This appearance equips humans for godlike rule over the fish, birds, and animals. **27–28:** The text stresses the creation of humanity as simultaneously male and female. This leads to the emphasis in the blessing of v. 28 and the book of Genesis as a whole on the multiplication of humanity in general (6.1; 9.1–7) and Israel in particular (17.2–6; 47.27). **29–30:** The text envisions an ancient mythological time before violence disturbs God’s perfect order (cf. 6.11). **31:** Where individual elements of creation were “good” (vv. 4, 10, etc.), the whole is *very good*, perfectly corresponding to God’s intention. **2.1–3:** This day is the point to which the whole

was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. ²And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. ³So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

In the day that the LORD^a God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; ⁶but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— ⁷then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground,^b and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. ⁸And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he

had formed. ⁹Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10 A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. ¹¹The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; ¹²and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. ¹³The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of

^a Heb YHWH, as in other places where “LORD” is spelled with capital letters (see also Exod 3.14–15 with notes). ^b Or *formed a man* (Heb *adam*) *of dust from the ground* (Heb *adamah*)

seven-day scheme has led. God does not command the sabbath, but does rest (Heb “shabat”) on the seventh day and bless it, weaving the seven-day rhythm into creation. The “creation” of institutions is found in other ancient creation stories as well.

2.4a: Probably not the conclusion of the Priestly creation story, but a separate superscription introducing the following material, as elsewhere in Genesis (e.g., 5.1; 6.9; 10.1).

2.4b–25: Creation in a garden. This tradition, often identified as J, is different from 1.1–2.3, as evidenced by the different style and order of events. Though distinct from the Priestly account of 1.1–2.3, it nevertheless reflects ancient temple imagery. **4b–6:** A description of how things were prior to creation (cf. 1.1–2) is common in ancient Near Eastern creation stories. **7:** The word play on Heb “*adam*” (human being; here translated “man” [cf. 1.26]) and “*adamah*” (arable land; here *ground*) introduces a motif characteristic of this tradition: the relation of humankind to the soil from which it was *formed*. Human nature is not a duality of body and soul; rather God’s *breath* animates the *dust* and it becomes a single *living being* (Ps 104.29; Job 34.14–15). **8–9:** *Eden* means “delight.” This divine garden recalls the “garden of God/the LORD” mentioned elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (13.10; Ezek 28.13–16; 31.8–9; Isa 58.3; Joel 2.3), and such sacred gardens are known in other ancient Near Eastern temple traditions. In addition, ancient Near Eastern art and texts feature a prominent focus on trees, often associated with feminine powers of fertility. Usually such trees symbolize life, as in the *tree of life* here (3.22; see Prov 3.18; Rev 22.2,14,19). But this story focuses more on the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, symbolizing wisdom (2 Sam 14.17; 1 Kings 3.9). See 12.6–8n. **10–14:** This section, along with the preceding one describing the “stream” rising up to water the ground (2.6), may draw on the ancient tradition that a temple is built on a primal mountain of creation from which the waters of the earth flow. The rivers mentioned here combine world rivers like the *Tigris* and *Euphrates* (both in Mesopotamia) with the local *Gihon* that flowed from Mount Zion in Jerusalem (Ps 46.4; Isa 7.6; Zech 14.8), although *Cush* is generally either Ethiopia or in Arabia. *Pishon* is unknown; *Havilah* is probably in Arabia. **16–17:** The speech

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among the people. ²⁴So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demons, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them. ²⁵And great crowds followed him

Matthew is concerned with a geographical designation and John's are identical. 18-22: Mk 1.16-20;

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