

Genesis 1 — “In the Beginning God Created the Heaven and the Earth”

Come, Follow Me 2026 — January 12–18

Parallel Accounts: Moses 2 | Abraham 4 | Temple

Overview

Genesis 1 is the opening movement of the entire biblical story, and it answers what Hugh Nibley called the “Terrible Questions”: **Who is God? Who are we? Why are we here?** It was never meant to answer the questions we moderns instinctively bring to it — *how, when*, by what mechanism. Read on its own terms, the chapter is doing three things at once:

1. **Theologically**, it declares one sovereign God who creates by speech, without struggle, and who crowns creation with human beings made in His own image — a quiet but devastating polemic against every rival creation story in the ancient Near East.
2. **Literarily**, it is a masterpiece of structure — a poem built on separations, parallels, and sevens, whose very architecture teaches that creation means *bringing order and function out of chaos*.
3. **Personally**, it is a template. The God who organized *tohu wa-bohu* — the formless and empty — is still doing that work in individual lives. As the Come Follow Me manual puts it: “*One thing the creation story teaches us is that God can, over time, make something magnificent out of something unorganized. That’s helpful to remember when life seems chaotic.*”

Those three registers — theological, literary, personal — run through everything below. The guide draws on Elohim’s account as illuminated by **Follow Him** (Dr. Joshua Sears), **Bradshaw’s *In God’s Image and Likeness 1***, the **BYU Studies** article by Avram R. Shannon, **Don’t Miss This** (Emily Belle Freeman & David Butler), **Unshaken** (Jared Halverson), **The Scriptures Are Real** (Kerry Muhlestein with Brad Wilcox and David Ridges), **Temple Symbols & Covenants** (Bryce Dunford), **Gospel Talktrine** (Mark Holt with Brian Cox), **Jordan Peterson’s Biblical Series**, **Scripture Central**, and the **Come Follow Me** manual. A guide to what each source uniquely contributes is at the end.

How to Study This Chapter — Four Accounts, One Creation

Dr. Joshua Sears (Follow Him, Episode 2) recommends a layered reading:

1. **Start with Genesis** — the text that has been with us longest, common ground with Jews and all Christians.
2. **Then Moses 2** — Joseph Smith’s inspired expansion, recast as first-person revelation (“And I, God...”).

3. **Then Abraham 4** — the council account, where “the Gods organized and formed” the heavens and the earth.
4. **Compare.** The four accounts (including the temple) are like the four Gospels — different testimonies of the same events, each preserved because it teaches something the others don’t.

Bradshaw sharpens what each Restoration account actually adds (*IGIL* 1, pp. 83–85):

- **Moses 2** leaves the structure of Genesis intact but changes the *voice*: a prologue affirms the account came from the Lord directly to Moses; “I, God” throughout makes it firsthand; and it is made explicit that all things were created “**by mine Only Begotten**” — indeed, man is created *in the image of the Only Begotten*, which is equated with God’s own image (compare Ether 3:15, where Christ tells the brother of Jared that all men were created after the body of His spirit).
- **Abraham 4**, produced after Joseph Smith’s further revelation and his Hebrew study, renders plural *Elohim* as “the Gods,” “created” as “**organized**,” and *tohu wa-bohu* as “empty and desolate” — describing the earth’s condition *after* it was organized, not some pre-creation nothingness. “Day” becomes “time,” explicitly untethered from 24-hour days by the reckoning of Kolob (Abraham 3:2–4; 5:13). Abraham’s account contains **twelve distinct “labors” of the Gods**; the temple account redistributes those same labors differently among the days while keeping their order — suggesting, Bradshaw notes, that *which* labor lands on *which* day may not be doctrinally significant.
- **Abraham also resolves the old puzzle of Genesis 1 vs. Genesis 2.** In Abraham’s telling, the seven “times” describe the physical preparation of the earth to support life — the Gods “organized the earth *to bring forth*” and “prepared the waters *that they might bring forth*” — and the Genesis 2 material then follows naturally as the account of life actually being *placed* on the prepared earth. Two chapters, one plan: preparation, then planting.

One more tool for reading all four: Bradshaw’s concept of “**phenomenal language**” — wording that represents things as they appear to an observer standing on the earth’s surface, not as they would appear from a divine or scientific vantage point. Some verses speak from God’s perspective, others from ours, and seeming inconsistencies often dissolve once you ask *whose eyes* a given verse is looking through.

| See: Follow Him Episode 2 — Dr. Joshua Sears (PDF)

Five Frameworks Before the Verse-by-Verse

1. Accommodation — God Speaks Our Language

God teaches within His audience’s existing framework rather than correcting every misconception first. As Sears puts it: “When God speaks to us, He’s got to... speak from our framework so that we can understand” — the principle of D&C 1:24, revelation given “after the manner of their language.” The

ancient Israelites held a cosmology very different from ours, and God used *their* cosmology as the vehicle for the doctrines He actually cared about: who He is, who we are, what we're for.

2. Ancient Israelite Cosmology — The World Genesis Assumes

The Israelites pictured a flat earth surrounded on every side by **primordial waters**, covered by a solid dome (*raqia*, the "firmament") that held back the waters above, with pillars below holding the earth over more waters. Sun, moon, and stars moved beneath the dome. This isn't ignorance — it's exactly what careful observation without telescopes yields. The earth looks flat; the sky looks like a dome; rain falls from above.

3. Creation Is Organization, Not *Ex Nihilo*

Hebrew *bara* means to shape, fashion, organize, designate — always with God as subject. Joseph Smith taught it in the King Follett Discourse: "*The word create came from the word baurau which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize.*" Modern Hebrew scholarship agrees, and D&C 93:29–33 supplies the doctrine: elements are eternal. Jared Halverson (Unshaken) presses the point with Joseph Smith's ship-building analogy — organizing existing materials into a functioning whole is *more* impressive than conjuring from nothing; it takes knowledge, planning, and skill. Creation *ex nihilo* would actually have been the easy way.

4. Creation Is About Function, Not Just Matter

Gospel Talktrine's Brian Cox supplies the ancient hermeneutic that makes the whole chapter click: to the ancient Near Eastern mind, **something exists when it has a function**. A temple building on a hill that has never been dedicated, with no ordinances happening inside, doesn't yet *exist* as a temple. So Genesis 1 is a story of God establishing *zones* (light/dark, waters above/below, sea/land) and then assigning each zone its *function and ruler* — and the human question the story answers is not "where did matter come from?" but "**what is my function, and what is my relationship to everything else?**" We ask how; they asked what for. Both are real questions, but Genesis is answering theirs.

5. Separation Is the Engine — *Hibdil*

The driving verb of Genesis 1 is *hibdil*, "to separate." Creation proceeds by dividing things and putting them in their proper places: light from darkness, waters from waters, sea from land, day from night, kinds from kinds. Bradshaw (quoting Leo Strauss) traces the cascade with fractal elegance: *from the principle of separation, light; via something which separates, heaven; to something which is separated, earth and sea; to things which are productive of separated things, trees; then things which can separate themselves from their courses, animals; and finally a being which can separate itself from its way — the right way*. Humanity is creation's culmination precisely because we alone can *choose* our separations.

Three witnesses converge on why this matters devotionally:

- **Leviticus 10:10–11** commands priests to “put difference between holy and unholy” using this same verb — making righteous distinctions is *participating in divine, creative behavior*.
- **Gospel Talktrine**: the root idea of *kadosh* (holy) is separation — the Sabbath is holy because it is set apart; a covenant people is “peculiar” because it is set apart; and even our word *rational* comes from a root meaning “to divide” — one who separates the things that ought to be separated.
- **Bradshaw** (quoting Griffith-Jones): light is what makes all subsequent distinctions *visible* — which is why scripture links light with judgment and discernment. “Light makes it possible to discern differences. To discern differences brings light.”

And one framing from outside the tradition: **Jordan Peterson** reads the whole chapter psychologically — chaos (*tohu wa-bohu*) is unrealized, formless potential, and what God does at cosmic scale (speaking habitable order out of chaos) is what consciousness does at human scale every time we take a formless situation and give it livable form. His claim that “every single human being... has something divine in them that needs to be regarded with respect” — which he calls the cornerstone of Western law — is his reading of *the image of God*, arrived at from psychology rather than faith.

Finally, hold the **Don’t Miss This / Unshaken** frame over all of it: Creation is about **WHO and WHY, not HOW**. Turn to science for method, religion for meaning; science for process, religion for purpose (Halverson). We need not choose.

Verse-by-Verse Commentary

Verses 1-2: Setting the Stage

KJV: “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*”

Moses 2:1–2 adds “And I, the Lord God” and “my Only Begotten” — Jesus Christ is the Creator acting under the Father’s direction.

Abraham 4:1–2 uses “the Gods” and “organized and formed” — the language of organization, not *ex nihilo*.

Hebrew Deep Dive

“**In the beginning**” — *Bereshit* (בְּרֵאשִׁית). The Hebrew lacks the definite article — “in *a* beginning.” The New Jewish Publication Society renders verses 1–2 as a temporal clause: “*When God began to create heaven and earth...*” — the stage-setting for action that begins at verse 3. Something was already there when God began to organize it. Bradshaw adds a Christological layer: Moses 2:1 has the Father declare “I am the Beginning,” and the *Targum Yerushalmi* connects *bereshit* to the Wisdom tradition (“In wisdom the Lord created”) — Moses’ account reads “Beginning” as the Father creating all things *by* His Only Begotten, the living Word of His power (*IGIL* 1, p. 93). One rabbinic wordplay noted on Gospel Talktrine

parses *bereshit* as “He, the Great Architect, created six” — the six zones about to be organized and filled.

“**God**” — *Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים). Grammatically plural, used with singular verbs. Talmage read the plural as “excellence or intensity”; Joseph Smith, after his Hebrew study, read it as the council — “the Gods” of Abraham 4. Halverson hears something more in it: *Elohim* carries both masculine and feminine resonance — “a whisper of Heavenly Mother” embedded in the very name by which creation is narrated. Don’t Miss This makes the same point from verse 27: the image of God is male *and* female together. See God the Father.

“**Created**” — *Bara* (בָּרָא). Used ~50 times in the Old Testament, always with God as subject: to shape, organize, designate. See Framework 3 above — and note the alliteration Bradshaw flags between *bara* (create) and *barak* (bless): in the Hebrew ear, creation and blessing are intertwined from the first verse (*IGIL* 1, p. 109).

“**Without form, and void**” — *Tohu wa-bohu* (תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ). A rhyming pair naming the twin problems the chapter will solve: *tohu* — unstructured, wild, desert-like; *bohu* — empty, unpopulated. Days 1–3 cure *tohu* by organizing environments; Days 4–6 cure *bohu* by populating them. Kerry Muhlestein (The Scriptures Are Real) supplies the ancient register: water was chaos — life-giving and destructive at once, shapeless and dangerous — and creation meant bringing order to it. Not nothingness, but **undifferentiated matter waiting to be shaped and filled**.

“**The deep**” — *Tehom* (תְהוֹם). The primordial watery chaos. Jordan Peterson draws out the philology: *tehom* is cognate with *Tiamat*, the Mesopotamian salt-water dragon of the *Enuma Elish*, from whose slain body Marduk builds the world after a cosmic battle. Genesis 1 takes that inherited material and deletes the battle: **no rival, no struggle, only speech**. Peterson then turns the image inward: everyone knows *tohu wa-bohu* from the inside — it is what a life feels like when a trusted structure collapses (a betrayal, a diagnosis) and “all of that certainty collapses right back into the potential from which it emerged.” The mythological “journey to the underworld” is a return visit to the waters of verse 2 — and the promise of the chapter is that the Spirit of God still hovers over them.

“**The Spirit of God moved**” — *Ruach Elohim merachefet*. *Ruach*: spirit, wind, breath. *Merachefet*: to hover or brood — the verb used in Deuteronomy 32:11 of an eagle hovering attentively over its young (Bradshaw, *IGIL* 1, p. 84), which is why Abraham 4:2 translates it “brooding.” *The Message* (quoted on Don’t Miss This) catches it: “God’s spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss.” Not forceful — attentive, warming, protective. God’s first posture toward chaos is a mother bird’s.

Come Follow Me Connection

Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are Creators — and “Their creative work with us is not finished.” When your life is *tohu wa-bohu*, the Spirit still broods over the face of your personal deep.

Verses 3-5: Day 1 — Light and Darkness

“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.”

The pattern: God speaks → it happens → God evaluates (“good”) → God names. Every creative act follows it. Against the *Enuma Elish*, where creation requires deicide, Genesis’s polemic is the pattern itself: **our God doesn’t fight; He speaks.**

Light before the sun. Light appears on Day 1; luminaries on Day 4. In the ancient frame, light and its *sources* were separate things — but the tradition heard more. Bradshaw finds Nibley’s reading most compelling: the light of Day 1 was **the light of God’s own presence** — “All this time the Gods had been dwelling in light and glory, but the earth was dark... Wherever light comes into darkness, ‘there is light.’” President John Taylor: God “caused light to shine upon [the earth] before the sun appeared... for God is light, and in him there is no darkness.” Rabbinic tradition says God “cloaked himself in it as a cloak,” that this primordial light was stored away after the seventh day for the righteous in the Messianic Age, and that a corresponding light filled the Holy of Holies (*IGIL* 1, pp. 99–100). Gospel Talktrine’s Brian Cox — a professional photographer who calls light “my subject” — reads the Midrash the same way: **light was not created; light is God’s tool.** Creation, in Nibley’s formula, is *matter plus light* — dead matter (*tohu*) becomes something when God’s light touches it, the same pattern repeated when dust (*adamah*) plus the breath of life becomes a living soul. And the trajectory continues in us: “He that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24). Halverson compresses it to five words: **“Let there be light = Let there be Jesus.”** The Word is the Light (John 1:1–5; D&C 88:7–13); creation begins and ends with the Light of the Creator.

“God divided” — the first *hibdil*. Creation begins with a distinction — and per Griffith-Jones (in Bradshaw), light is precisely what makes all later distinctions *discernible*. Judgment, discernment, and light belong together from verse 4 onward, in Genesis as in John.

Naming as covenant act. When God names — Day, Night — He assigns identity and function. Bryce Dunford (Temple Symbols & Covenants, Ep 7) links this directly to the temple: God’s naming acts in creation are the pattern behind the new name, identity transformed by covenant. “You cannot enter Heaven as ‘John Doe, the accountant.’ You enter Heaven as ‘John, the Son of Christ, the Covenant Keeper.’” The sacrament renews the naming weekly: “willing to take upon them the name of Thy Son.”

Tov — What “Good” Reveals About God

Don’t Miss This makes *tov* the word of the week, and rightly: good, beautiful, beneficial, precious, delightful. The deep insight is *when* God says it. Emily Belle Freeman: “*It is my nature to wait until the process is completed to evaluate whether my work is good... but not God. He saw the goodness in every step of the progression. He spoke it out loud on day one.*” God evaluates *stages*, and the evaluations are genuine — “God never expected results of day six on day two” (Brad Wilcox, *The Scriptures Are Real*, with the painter’s analogy: you don’t judge a half-finished canvas as a failed painting; intermediate stages must look right

for their stage). Gospel Talktrine adds that *tov* carries the sense of *complete* — each day's declaration is God signing off a finished phase. Freeman's application lands the whole thing: *"If he were to whisper down from heaven tonight... he would tell you: you are already good."*

Cross-references: John 1:1–5; D&C 88:7–13.

Verses 6-8: Day 2 — The Firmament

"Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters."

"Firmament" — *Raqia* (רָקִיעַ), from a root meaning "to beat out," as metal into a plate — Shannon's "beaten dome." Rain enters through "windows of heaven" (*arubot hashamayim*) — the literal picture behind Malachi 3:10's promised blessing and behind the Flood, where "the windows of heaven were opened" and "the fountains of the great deep were broken up" (Genesis 7:11): water in from above and below, creation's separations running in reverse.

The firmament as veil. Gospel Talktrine reads the *raqia* through its horizon-symbol: stand on a shore and the horizon separates the waters below from the waters above. The rabbis describe the firmament as both *thin* — heaven is right here — and *thick* — you cannot cross it alone; it is "a 500-year journey." What bridges it? In one midrash, the Tree of Life — itself a 500-year journey from end to end — spans the gap, and the Tree of Life is Christ. And where does the horizon break? At the mountain — the temple, "where there is vision": you climb, you see past the veil-line, you take your bearings, and you come back down to your same problems with an eternal perspective. As the atmosphere shields the earth from radiation it could not survive, the veil shields us from glory we could not yet bear.

Day 2 is the only day not called "good." Some Jewish commentators: because the separation of waters wasn't complete until Day 3 exposed the dry land. The work of a day may be real and necessary and still not yet pronounceable — a comfort for anyone mid-process.

Verses 9-13: Day 3 — Dry Land and Vegetation

"Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear... Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind."

Two creative acts — separating land from sea, then vegetation — completing the *environments* (light/dark, sky/sea, land) that Days 4–6 will populate.

The primeval hill and the temple. Bradshaw: in many ancient cosmologies creation begins with the first land rising from the waters, and in Israel the holiest spot on earth — the Foundation Stone in the Jerusalem temple — was held to be "the first solid material to emerge from the waters of Creation," the

very point from which God effected creation (*IG/L* 1, p. 105). This is why temples sit on high ground: **every temple recapitulates Day 3**, order rising out of chaos. Halverson extends the geography: the fallen world is “east of Eden,” so returning means going west, going *up*, moving room by room toward the presence of God — the endowment as a walk back through creation to the garden. See Garden of eden.

“**After his kind**” — *lemino*. Repeated five times (vv. 11, 12, 21, 24, 25): order *within* categories; creation is not random. The CFM manual notes the basic principle of genetics sits in all three accounts in this one phrase.

The forming–filling architecture (Sears):

Forming (Days 1–3)	Filling (Days 4–6)
Day 1: Light & Dark	Day 4: Sun, Moon, Stars
Day 2: Sky & Sea	Day 5: Birds & Fish
Day 3: Land & Plants	Day 6: Animals & Humans

Gospel Talktrine reads the same two triads as **zones, then rulers**: first each domain is established, then each domain receives its governor — which some rabbis in the Midrash read as a first (spiritual/organizational) creation paired with a second (physical/functional) one, an idea Latter-day Saints will recognize from Moses 3:5. Note also the “double portion” symmetry: Day 3 ends with *seeds and fruit*; Day 6 ends with *man and woman* — the comparison drawn purely by structure, no simile needed. That is how Hebrew parallelism argues.

Verses 14-19: Day 4 — Sun, Moon, and Stars

“*Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven... and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.*”

Function, not divinity. The luminaries receive *jobs* — divide, mark, govern — and pointedly no names. In the ancient world the sun and moon *were* gods (Ra; Sin; Hebrew *shemesh* itself shadowed by the sun-god). Genesis calls them “the greater light” and “the lesser light” — created employees, not deities. Gospel Talktrine hears each such line as a “mic drop”: “*I’m not even going to name them. I created everything around you, and I created what you can’t even see.*” This is the most counter-cultural sentence an ancient Near Eastern audience could have heard.

“**The Gods watched those things which they had ordered until they obeyed**” (Abraham 4:18). A stunning addition: creative elements given instruction and *agency*, watched over until compliant. Halverson reframes “obey” through *shamar* — not servile submission but “being led to a place of safety”: God as

caretaker watching His creation toward flourishing, not a stern authority with folded arms. Don't Miss This applies it as a rule for the whole Old Testament: when a verse troubles you, “**assume the best**” about God's character.

Awe as data. Elder Maxwell's “Creator's Cosmos” (cited on Unshaken) presented Hubble photographs as an introduction *to the Speaker behind every revelation*. Science supplies the mechanics; faith names the Person behind them, and the right response to both together is wonder.

Cross-references: Abraham 3:2–4 (Kolob and divine reckoning); D&C 88:42–47.

Verses 20-23: Day 5 — Sea Creatures and Birds

“*Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life...*”

Second use of *bara* (v. 21): living creatures — *nephesh chayyah*, “living souls” — are a genuinely new category requiring the divine verb.

“**Great whales**” — *tanninim gedolim*. The great sea-monsters — the same family as Leviathan, Rahab, Tiamat, the chaos dragons of the neighbors' myths. Genesis mentions, almost in passing, that God *created* them. The monsters other nations feared and worshipped are, here, His pets: “there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein” (Psalm 104:26; see also Job 41). Another quiet polemic — the second front of the same argument Day 4 made against astral deities.

Verses 24-25: Day 6a — Land Animals

Three categories: wild beasts, *behemah* (domesticated animals), and *remes* (creeping things — a category that matters to the priestly authors who also wrote Leviticus's clean/unclean distinctions; the taxonomy of Genesis 1 and the holiness code of Leviticus are the same mind at work).

Verses 26-28: Day 6b — The Creation of Humanity

“*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*”

Everything has been building to this. The word-count of the narrative itself swells toward it (see structure section below).

“Let Us Make Man” — The Divine Council

The shift from “Let there be...” to “**Let us make...**” marks a different kind of act: deliberate, counseled, personal. Abraham 4:26 makes the council explicit: “the Gods took counsel among themselves.” Bradshaw shows the council was always in the Hebrew Bible, just obscured by translation — Psalm 82:1’s “congregation of the mighty” is the “council of God”; Psalm 25:14’s “secret” is *sod*, “council” (*IGIL* 1, p. 93). Brigham Young named the quorum: “the earth was organized by three distinct characters, namely, Elohim, Jehovah, and Michael” — that is, God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the premortal Adam. Joseph Smith: “The head God called together the Gods and sat in grand council to bring forth the world.”

Faulconer draws the philosophical moral: “Human creation is not a simple act of God’s *fiat*... God creates humanity in response to others, rather than as a mere act of self-will. **Even in the beginning there is already relation; there is no absolute beginning, not even in the beginning.**” Our God has never once acted alone; relationship precedes the world.

Vivian McConkie Adams fills in the council scene from the Restoration side: “a highly organized meeting, undoubtedly a conference with many sessions” — the morning stars a rehearsed choir, the shout of the sons of God an organized acclamation like the hosanna shout. The question on the agenda was not *what is the plan?* but *who will implement it?* Christ was chosen to atone; Michael to fall; and Eve — “a companion worthy of and corresponding to” Michael — to be the mother of all living. Bruce R. McConkie taught that “Christ and Mary, Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, and a host of mighty men and equally glorious women” were among the noble and great ones who participated in the creation itself.

“In Our Image, After Our Likeness”

Verse 27 uses *bara* three times in two lines — an emphatic tripling for the supreme creative act. Latter-day Saints read “image” physically, and Shannon’s scholarship backs the instinct: the ancient Israelites did not hold the later creedal doctrine of a God “wholly other” than His creations. Adams goes further on Abraham 4:27: the Hebrew behind *image* means “to be cut out of, to be formed literally in the form of” — better translated *form*. “It means to be an exact reproduction of... they were in the exact image and form of the Father and of the Heavenly Mother” (compare Moses 6:22 — “Adam... the son of God, with whom God, himself, conversed”). Don’t Miss This draws the doctrinal line: God is not an abstraction or a vapor; God has a body, and humanity — male and female — is created in that literal image.

Dunford (Temple Symbols, Ep 5) converts the doctrine to covenant: creation in God’s image is God *marking and claiming* the body as His instrument — the first anointing. Temple anointing repeats the pattern person by person (“anointed to *become*”), and the depth of the mark is renewed or eroded by daily choices — what we watch, think about, yearn for. Every body is a temple; Genesis 1:26–28 is the dedication of the first ones.

Peterson, from entirely outside the covenant frame, arrives at the same cliff-edge: the *imago Dei* — “that every single human being, regardless of their peculiarities and strangenesses and sins... has something

divine in them that needs to be regarded with respect" — is "a magnificent, remarkable, crazy idea," and the load-bearing wall of equality before the law. "We dispense with that idea at our serious peril."

"Male and Female Created He Them"

In Genesis 1, male and female are created **simultaneously**; both are *adam*; both bear the image.

Shannon: "Females are not a derivative form of males but are an independent part of Creation."

Bradshaw's philology secures it: Hebrew *'adam* is sex-neutral, like "humankind" — it never appears in the feminine or plural, and in Genesis 1 both genders exist within the single *adam*; the everyday word for a man, *'ish*, doesn't even enter the text until the woman, *'ishah*, is separated out in Genesis 2 (*IGIL* 1, p. 112). President Kimball: *man* here means "a complete man, which is husband and wife."

The Hebrew titles given the woman dismantle every subordinationist reading:

- **Ezer** — "help." David Ridges (The Scriptures Are Real) runs the concordance: in essentially every other Old Testament use, *ezer* refers to **God** as helper (Moses named his son Eli-ezer, "my God is help"). The root carries "to surround, to protect." Eve's title is divine-caliber help — mutual empowerment, not assistance from below.
- **K'negdo** — "corresponding to, facing, opposite": an equal standing face-to-face, as Halverson notes — "in front of, opposite... EQUAL, not servant." Adams: Michael's name means "one who is like unto God," and Eve was chosen precisely because she corresponded to *him*. Don't Miss This offers the airplane image: a complementary opposite, left wing and right — "it would not be good for a left wing to be left alone."
- **Tzela** ("rib") — Halverson: the word means "side," with resonances of *strength* and *protection* — the same root describes protective *wings* (compare Exodus 19:4). The image is not a spare bone but the structure that encloses the heart. Gospel Talktrine preserves the rabbinic picture of the original *adam* as a single two-sided being ("Siamese twin" in the old sources) whom God separates and then reunites — separation *for the sake of* a chosen union; and adds the optics metaphor: one eye sees flat; two eyes, set slightly apart, see depth. Marriage is binocular vision.
- Adams on *ish/ishah*: once married and choosing together, the text's terms shift — *ish*, "man of wisdom"; *ishah*, "woman of wisdom."

Bradshaw notes one more structural signal (*IGIL* 1, p. 87): the order of creation is strictly *hierarchical* — until the very last act. The separation of the woman from the man is presented differently from everything before it: same kind, same bone, same flesh, commanded not to separate but to be "one" in "a perfect unity that approaches identity." The hierarchy of creation *terminates* in an equal pair. Only then — with both created — does God say "very good."

Don't Miss This traces the word *ishah* through salvation history — Eve at the beginning; Mary at the annunciation; the woman at the well, first to hear "I am he"; Mary Magdalene, first witness of the resurrection. Women stand at every hinge of the story. And Halverson names the wound directly: "The Fall more than anything has wreaked havoc on the world's view of women. That needs to change."

Cross-references: Moses 2:26–27; Moses 6:9; Abraham 4:27.

See: adam and eve by their own experience · Our glorious mother eve

”Have Dominion” — *Radah*

Stewardship, not license. Shannon: “The dominion described in Genesis is not an absolute or unrighteous dominion... The earth is not here for humans to despoil.” The garden verbs of Genesis 2 define it — *avad* (till, serve, *worship*) and *shamar* (keep, watch, *protect*): humanity as caretaking presence. Gospel Talktrine adds the *mechanism*: God gave us dominion not by strength or appetite but by giving us **more light and truth** — dominion through intelligence, which means dominion on God’s pattern (persuasion, not compulsion; compare D&C 121:39–46). The earth is ours the way a stewardship is ours: “with judgment, not to excess” (D&C 59:20).

Verses 29–31: Provision, Evaluation, and Rest

“And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.”

“**Very good**” — *tov me’od*. Individual creations are *good*; the completed whole — with the human pair as its crown — is *very good*. Note what changed between “good” and “very good”: relationship. The parts were good; the parts *in relation* are very good.

Rest is not collapse — it is enthronement. Gospel Talktrine: in the ancient world, a god “resting” meant taking the throne — creation finished, *governing* begins. God’s creative labors end; His work (“my work and my glory,” Moses 1:39) continues, and He seats us as under-governors within it. Don’t Miss This adds the gift-structure: “God says I will give, give, give, give — so that you can rest.” Humanity arrives on the eve of the Sabbath, born into a finished world, first full day a day of rest in God’s presence — grace before works, rest before labor. Halverson’s confession makes it personal: “I’m a perfectionist and an amateur — that’s a difficult combination.” Sometimes completion, not perfection, is the goal; rest is a spiritual necessity, not a reward for finally deserving it.

The Structure of Genesis 1 — A Literary Masterpiece

The chapter’s architecture is itself an argument: order, symmetry, sevens.

The framework: Day 1↔4 (light → luminaries), Day 2↔5 (sky/sea → birds/fish), Day 3↔6 (land/plants → animals/humans), and Day 7 standing alone.

The heptads — the number 7 as divine signature (Bradshaw, *IGIL* 1, p. 90):

- First sentence: **7 words** in Hebrew; second sentence: **14**

- The account spans **56 verses** (7×8)
- *Elohim* appears **35 times** (7×5); *eret* **21** (7×3); *shamayim* **21** (7×3); *to* **7**
- The seventh paragraph corresponds to the seventh day

Word-count escalation (*IGIL* 1, p. 90): Days 1–2 get ~31–38 words each; Days 3–5 roughly double; Day 6 — humanity — gets 149. The prose itself crescendos toward the image of God.

The unpaired Sabbath (*IGIL* 1, p. 91): every day has a partner except the seventh. The sages’ answer: “The community of Israel, lo, that is your mate.” And the Hebrew of “keep it holy” (*kiddushin*) shares its root with the word for *marriage* — to keep the Sabbath is to be wedded to it.

The priestly connection: the same verb of separation (*hibdil*) that structures creation structures the priest’s duty to “put difference between holy and unholy” (Leviticus 10:10). Order, categories, Sabbath — Genesis 1 and Leviticus are one liturgical imagination. The temple doesn’t merely *echo* the creation account; the creation account was always a temple text.

Comparing the Four Creation Accounts

Feature	Genesis 1	Moses 2	Abraham 4	Temple
Narrator	Third person	God to Moses (first person)	“The Gods” (council)	Dramatized
Creator	”God” (Elohim)	“I, the Lord God”	"The Gods”	Multiple agents
Key verb	”Created”	"Created”	"Organized,” “formed”	—
Time unit	”Day”	"Day”	"Time” (Kolob reckoning)	—
Humanity	Male & female together	Male & female together	Male & female together	Sequence
Unique addition	Literary structure	Only Begotten as co- creator; firsthand voice	Divine council; twelve labors; “watched until they obeyed”	Covenantal participation

Sears: four versions are “different testimonies, like the Gospels.” Bradshaw’s observation that the temple redistributes Abraham’s twelve labors across different days — same order, different day-assignments — is quietly liberating: the *sequence* of creation matters; the day-boundaries may not.

Elohim, Yahweh, LORD, and Jehovah

Name	Hebrew	Usage	Meaning
Elohim	אֱלֹהִים	Genesis 1 (exclusively)	“God” — plural form; power, might; the council
Yahweh (YHWH)	יהוה	Genesis 2 onward (Yahweh Elohim)	The personal, covenant name
LORD (caps)	—	KJV convention for YHWH	The unspoken divine name
Jehovah	—	English rendering of YHWH	In LDS usage, the premortal Christ

Genesis 1: only *Elohim* — the cosmic Creator. Genesis 2: *Yahweh Elohim* — the covenant God who walks in the garden. The name-shift is one key marker scholars use to distinguish the two accounts; Abraham’s council reading and the preparation-then-placement structure (above) show the two accounts were never rivals.

Source Guide — What Each Voice Uniquely Adds

- **Follow Him / Dr. Joshua Sears** — the layered four-account reading method; accommodation; ancient cosmology; the forming-filling structure. The scholarly backbone. → Episode 2 PDF
- **Bradshaw, *In God’s Image and Likeness 1*** — the encyclopedic layer: what Moses and Abraham each add; phenomenal language; heptads and word-counts; the Strauss separation cascade; primeval hill; ‘adam philology; hierarchy terminating in the equal pair; light of Day 1 as God’s presence. → full-text extraction (Moses 2 commentary from p. 82)
- **Don’t Miss This (Freeman & Butler)** — the devotional heart: *tov* and God’s celebration of process (“you are already good”); creation as WHO/WHY; “assume the best”; *ishah* at the hinges of salvation history; Sabbath as gift.
- **Unshaken (Jared Halverson)** — faith/science integration (method vs. meaning); Hebrew depth (*ezer*, *tzela*, *k’negdo*); “let there be light = let there be Jesus”; Heavenly Mother’s whisper in *Elohim*; temple as return to Eden.
- **The Scriptures Are Real (Muhlestein, Wilcox, Ridges)** — ancient Near Eastern context (water-chaos, *tohu/bohu*); the painter analogy for staged goodness; the *ezer* concordance work.
- **Temple Symbols & Covenants (Bryce Dunford)** — naming and anointing as the covenant reading of Days 1 and 6; the body as consecrated instrument. → Ep 5 · Ep 7
- **Gospel Talktrine (Holt & Cox)** — the function-first ancient hermeneutic; light as God’s tool (matter + light); zones-then-rulers; firmament as veil/horizon with the Tree-of-Life bridge; rest as enthronement; dominion

via light and truth; *kadosh* as separation. → S01E03

- **Jordan Peterson (Biblical Series II)** — the outside witness: Tiamat philology; chaos/order as the permanent human situation; *imago Dei* as the foundation of Western law and individual dignity. → Lecture II
 - **BYU Studies / Avram Shannon** — the beaten dome; polemics against astral worship; women as independent creation. → article note
 - **Vivian McConkie Adams** — the Grand Council as organized conference; *image* = exact form; Eve chosen as corresponding equal. → Our glorious mother eve
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Personal Application & Discussion Questions

1. **When has God brought order out of chaos in your life?** The *tohu wa-bohu* principle is not just cosmic; the Spirit still broods over personal deeps.
 2. **What does it mean that you are created in the image of God** — physically, male and female, marked and claimed as His?
 3. **How does “accommodation” change the way you read scripture?** If God speaks within our framework, what might we be misreading today that further light will clarify?
 4. **What is your stewardship?** *Avad* (serve/worship) and *shamar* (protect/preserve) — how are you exercising dominion on God’s pattern?
 5. **Which Hebrew word changed the chapter for you** — *bara*, *tohu wa-bohu*, *hibdil*, *tov*, *ezer k’negdo*?
 6. **Read Genesis 1, Moses 2, and Abraham 4 side by side.** What does each uniquely contribute, and why might that difference have been preserved?
 7. **What is the significance of the simultaneous creation of male and female** — a hierarchy of creation that terminates in an equal pair?
 8. **Can you say “it is good” about work in process** — including yourself? What would change if you evaluated stages the way God does?
 9. **What does the Sabbath mean to you** — rest as enthronement and gift rather than exhaustion or reward?
 10. **Where do you see Heavenly Mother in Genesis 1?** What does the masculine-and-feminine resonance of *Elohim* suggest?
 11. **What distinctions is your life asking you to make?** If holiness is right separation (*hibdil*, *kadosh*), what needs dividing — and what, like Adam and Eve, needs joining?
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Key Quotes

“Let us not try to wrest the scriptures in an attempt to explain away what we cannot explain. The opening chapters of Genesis... were never intended as a textbook of geology, archeology, earth science or man science. Holy scripture will endure while the conceptions of men change with new discoveries.”
— Elder James E. Talmage, *The Earth and Man* (1931)

"Whether termed a *day*, a *time*, or an *age*, each phase was a period between two identifiable events — a division of eternity." — **President Russell M. Nelson**, "The Creation" (2000)

"The story of the rib, of course, is figurative." — **President Spencer W. Kimball**

"There is no conflict between science and religion. Conflict only arises from an incomplete knowledge of either science or religion, or both." — **President Russell M. Nelson** (2015)

"Even in the beginning there is already relation: there is no absolute beginning, not even in the beginning." — **James Faulconer** (in Bradshaw, *IGIL* 1)

"The story of Adam and Eve, our beginning story and our temple story, have been given through the ages to show mankind how to become as God... It is a story of joy." — **Vivian McConkie Adams**, *Mother Eve and Father Adam* (1991)

"God saw the goodness in every step of the progression. He spoke it out loud on day one... If he were to whisper down from heaven tonight... he would tell you: you are already good." — **Emily Belle Freeman**, *Don't Miss This*

"Turn to science for METHOD, religion for MEANING. Science for PROCESS, religion for PURPOSE." — **Jared Halverson**, *Unshaken*

"God never expected results of day six on day two." — **Brad Wilcox**, *The Scriptures Are Real*

"Light makes it possible to discern differences. To discern differences brings light." — **Robin Griffith-Jones** (in Bradshaw, *IGIL* 1)

Links to Existing Notes in This Vault

- The Genesis Creation Account in Its Ancient Context - BYU Studies — Avram R. Shannon's scholarly article
- Follow Him Episode 2 — Dr. Joshua Sears — full show notes and transcript
- Follow Him Episode 1 — Kerry Muhlestein (Moses 1, Abraham 3) — the preface to creation
- Don't Miss This — Genesis 1-2
- Unshaken — Genesis 1-2: In the Beginning
- The Scriptures Are Real S5E5 — The Great God of Creation
- The Scriptures Are Real S5E6 — Light, Darkness, Chaos
- Gospel Talktrine S01E03 — The Creation (Mark Holt, Brian Cox)
- Jordan Peterson — Biblical Series II: Genesis 1, Chaos & Order
- Temple Symbols Ep 5: Anointing
- Temple Symbols Ep 7: A New Name
- Genesis — Genesis source file

- In God's Image and Likeness 1 — full-text extraction · original PDF: IGIL 1 (PDF) — Moses 2 commentary begins p. 82
- adam and eve by their own experience — Adam and Eve concept note
- Our glorious mother eve — Vivian McConkie Adams' talk
- Moses vs Jesus — Moses/Jesus parallel comparison
- Zachariah and Elizabeth vs Abraham and sarah — parallel covenant stories
- Biblical body part symbolism
- Jaredites and the boat — divine methods of creation/deliverance
- God who sees me — God's personal awareness of His creation

People

- God the Father (Elohim) — the Creator-name used exclusively in Genesis 1; the divine council; Heavenly Mother's whisper in the plural name
- Jesus Christ (Jehovah) — the acting Creator under the Father's direction; "let there be light = let there be Jesus"
- Adam — created in God's image on Day 6; premortal Michael, present at the divine council
- Eve — created simultaneously with Adam in God's image; *ezer k'negdo*, equal and corresponding partner
- Abraham — whose record preserves the council account (Abraham 4)

Locations

- Garden of eden — the garden of Genesis 2, prepared by the Day 3–6 creation; the temple's "return to Eden" pattern

Source Links & Further Reading

Podcasts

- Follow Him Podcast [🔗](#) — Hank Smith & John Bytheway (Ep. 2: Dr. Joshua Sears)
- Don't Miss This Study [🔗](#) — Emily Belle Freeman & David Butler
- Unshaken Podcast [🔗](#) — Jared Halverson
- The Scriptures Are Real [🔗](#) — Kerry Muhlestein
- Temple Symbols & Covenants [🔗](#) — Bryce Dunford (Eps. 5, 7)
- Gospel Talktrine [🔗](#) — Mark Holt with Brian Cox (S01E03)
- Jordan Peterson Biblical Series [🔗](#) — Lecture II
- Scripture Central YouTube [🔗](#)
- LDS Scripture Teachings Ep 354 [🔗](#)

Church Resources

- [Come Follow Me 2026: Genesis 1–2; Moses 2–3; Abraham 4–5](#)
- [Old Testament Student Manual: Genesis 1–2](#)
- [Genesis 1 \(KJV\)](#)

Scholarly

- [BYU Studies: The Genesis Creation Account in Its Ancient Context](#) — Avram R. Shannon
- [Maxwell Institute: Creation Accounts Reflections](#)
- [Ben Spackman: Genesis 1 Commentary Project](#)
- [Hebrew Text Analysis: Genesis 1:1](#)

Books Referenced

- *In God’s Image and Likeness 1* — Jeffrey M. Bradshaw (Eborn, 2014) — verse-by-verse commentary on Moses 1–6 / Genesis 1–5
- *From Creation to Sinai* — Belnap & Schade
- *Seekers Wanted* — Anthony Sweat
- *The Restored Gospel and the Book of Genesis* — Kent P. Jackson

Next Chapter

→ [Genesis 2 — The Garden and the Covenant of Marriage](#)
