

*by this*  
**NAME**

John R. Cross

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## **By This Name**

Edition 2

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This book is an adaptation of *The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus*—it “stands on the shoulders” of that product. All those who helped me with *The Stranger* are really part of *By This Name*—the artists: Matthew Almy, Adah Biggs, Don Dolton and Ian Mastin; the staff at GoodSeed and many, many more. Once again, thanks so much. In addition, I want to express my appreciation to Mitch Kary, Jim McCulley and Scott McGhee for their part in creating the cover.

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Last, but not least, I wish to thank my wife, my faithful companion for more than three decades. She has worked tirelessly, a full member of the team. Her support and understanding have been limitless.

To my wife, Janice E. Cross, I dedicate this book.

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To maintain ease in reading and to remain consistent with the biblical text chosen, in most cases I have used small initial letters for pronouns and certain nouns that relate to God. In areas where there might be confusion about who is being referred to, I have used capital letters consistent with traditional grammar rules.

All Bible portions are italicized and indented. Where Scripture text is boldfaced, an emphasis has been added. Square brackets in the quoted text indicate additions for explanatory purposes.

The text uses Canadian spelling, which is similar to that used in the British Commonwealth as a whole. American readers will notice few differences, but may be surprised to see words such as center, somber and fiber spelled as centre, sombre and fibre.

*By This Name* introduces the reader to nine different translations of the Bible. None of the translations differ in content communicated or affect the accompanying commentary.

# PREFACE

We live in a world of many different belief systems. Whether you call them religions, faiths or cults, what people believe cannot be ignored. History is strewn with wars and scrapping over religion. In the past these battles were fought on a local level. Now, with the advent of the global village, people of very different beliefs are being pressed up against each other, and the potential for major conflict is enormous.

It is important to know what our neighbours believe and why they believe it. Though we may never agree with them, when we know what others believe, we can disagree without being disagreeable.

*By This Name* is about the *Holy Bible*. If you are one of those who seriously want to understand the central message of the Bible, then this book is for you.

In communicating the Bible's message, I've tried to be as objective as possible. That is not easy. By its very nature, the Bible demands a response. Nonetheless, I've sought to explain the Bible clearly, allowing it to speak for itself, but letting you draw your own conclusions. What you believe is up to you.

Some may accuse me of losing objectivity because I've communicated the Bible as fact. I've felt that it was a risk I must take as the Bible presents itself that way. To do otherwise would not be true to the text. The Bible is quite direct in what it has to say, and I was determined to avoid watering down its message or resorting to vagueness.

So read on. There is a reason for the Bible being the all-time bestseller. It's a fascinating story, a story you really must know for yourself.





The Holy Bible says:

*“Come!” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wants it take the water of life free of charge.*

*Revelation 22:17 NET*

# CHAPTER ONE

**1** THE UNIQUE BOOK

**2** PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

**3** FORTY WRITERS

**4** AN EDUCATION

**5** YAHWEH

**6** GOD-BREATHED

# 1 THE UNIQUE BOOK

Over half the world's population claims to follow all or parts of the most widely distributed and most vehemently disputed book in history. This book is called the *Holy Bible*. An additional percentage would state that it is a good book with many good things to say. These are impressive figures, but very few of the same people could explain even the most basic concepts found in the Bible.

Scholars agree that for centuries the Bible has been a bestseller. It's "*the most quoted, the most published, the most translated and the most influential book in the history of mankind.*"<sup>1</sup> Yet, in spite of its distinction, it is a neglected volume, even among literature professors and students. A bestseller? Seldom read? It doesn't make sense.

Why read it anyway? That question has many answers, but four are especially significant.

1. First of all, the Bible speaks about the source of joy and sorrow. It gives counsel on marriage, parenting, children and employer/employee relationships. It talks about the wise use of money, talents and time; of freedom from guilt, fear and shame. It is a gold mine of facts about life in general, and much of that advice is couched in stories that have inspired countless books and movies.

2. Secondly, the Bible has much to say concerning what happens to us after we die. What makes this information so critical is that the Bible says *this life* affects the *next life*—one cannot wait till death to be informed. Then it will be too late.

Now I know there are those who say, "I believe that when I am dead, I am dead. Nothing more!" But that sort of thinking is like a baby in a womb saying, "I don't believe in life after birth. Life exists only for the here and now, right here in this dark, warm womb."

It would be foolish for an unborn baby to say such a thing. With that in mind, it would seem wise for one to investigate a book that talks about a "life to come" and see what it has to say, whether good or bad.

3. Thirdly, approximately 27% of the Bible is prophecy and a significant amount of it has been precisely fulfilled. Those fulfilled prophecies are woven throughout the text in such a way as to lend credibility to the entire message. It really is astounding!

The Bible says it gave those prophecies so that we would be *astounded* enough to pay attention to what it has to say about *things we cannot see*, as well as *things we can see*—things having to do with life, death and life after death!

4. The fourth reason is certainly not the least. The Bible speaks of a cosmic battle occurring in the universe between good and evil. What makes this so significant is that *we* are on the front lines—it is not a battle from which we can exempt ourselves. Though much of this battle is invisible, it does affect us in every way. It is one reason why bad things happen to good people. If this battle is real, then it makes sense to know where we fit in the scheme of things.

These four areas alone are valid enough reasons to gain a basic knowledge of the book called the *Holy Bible*.

The word *Bible* is derived from the Greek and Latin word for “book”—it has no mystical implications. The word *Bible* doesn’t even appear within the Bible’s pages! Instead the Bible refers to itself as *Scripture* which simply means “writings.” That both Bible and Scripture should be referred to as *holy* has greater significance. The word *holy* means “that which is set apart, that which is different.” It has the idea of being unique. As I summarize the biblical story in the following pages, we will see just why it is called the *Holy Bible*—literally, the *Unique Book*.

## 2 PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

Before we begin our overview, we need to establish ground rules for how we are going to proceed. As a starting point, I am going to assume that you have little acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures—perhaps no knowledge of the Bible at all. Now it might encourage you to know that by the time you have finished reading this book, the Bible will make remarkable sense. Nevertheless, read each chapter carefully, making sure you understand the content before moving on.

Many times I will be quoting directly from Scripture. When I do, it will appear as an indented paragraph in italics. At the end of each quotation, I will give the *reference* or “address” showing its location in the Bible. It will look like this:

*For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

Romans 15:4 NASB

## A PUZZLE

As we begin, think of the Bible as a large puzzle with the pieces scattered loosely before you. We will be putting those pieces together one at a time. To ensure that we assemble the biblical puzzle accurately, we will apply four *universal principles of learning* that are used in school and university classrooms every day.

### 1. The Priority Principle

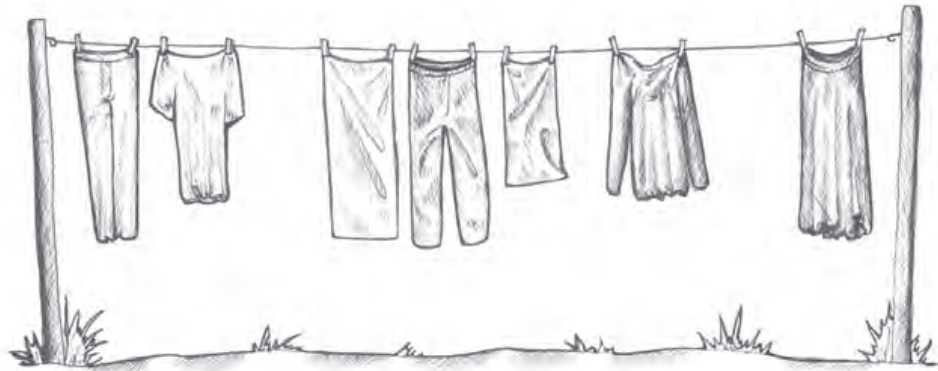
The first principle states that when you study a new subject, *learn the most important information first*. For example, if a builder wants to teach a person how to construct a house, he will stress the importance of laying a firm foundation, erecting solid walls and finishing with a tight roof. He will leave till later such things as choosing furnishings or paint colours.

In the same way, the Bible covers an incredible array of topics, but not all are of equal importance. In this book we will focus on the most significant theme in the Bible. Once you understand it, the Bible will make profound but simple sense.

### 2. The Storytelling Principle

This second principle is intuitive. When one reads a story, one doesn't start in chapter ten, jump to chapter six, read chapter two and conclude in chapter nine. No! We all know that to make sense of a story, one needs to *start at the beginning and move step by step through to the end*. That may seem obvious, but many people tend to read the Bible in bits and pieces, resulting in confusion.

Since much of the Bible is a narrative, we will simply follow its natural chronological progression. At the same time, we will apply the Priority Principle, covering the most important stories first, stringing them together in a row, like hanging laundry on a clothesline. Since this overview is far from comprehensive, expect some gaps in the storyline.



The gaps can be filled in later after one has the overall picture. Although this clothesline cannot include every story in the Bible, the events covered will tie together in one continuous narrative.

### 3. The Mathematical Principle

The third principle takes the above progression and adds another dimension to it. In learning, *start with the simple and move to the complex*. For example, children are not taught algebra in kindergarten. Rather, they learn basic arithmetic, equations such as: one apple + one apple = two apples. Over time they move to complicated mathematics, such as in  $E=MC^2$ . Teaching algebra in kindergarten would result in confused children.

It's the same way with the Bible. If you skip the basics, your biblical understanding will incorporate unusual ideas, resulting in a muddled message. To avoid that problem, we will progress through the story building on previously gained knowledge.

### 4. The Clarity Principle

The fourth principle addresses two issues. The first area has to do with the *meaning* of certain words. Over centuries word meanings can change, but the Bible has a system that locks the meaning of a word in place. To define a word, the Bible tells a story. Through the story we learn exactly what the word means. It cannot be changed. In this regard, the clarity principle advises us to *let Scripture define its own words*.

The second area has to do with the study of topics. For example, normally we study sciences by subject—such as astronomy, chemistry or biology—without mixing them. For a beginner, listening to a lecture on the solar system and on the structure of the cell at the same time would be confusing. When content is new or unfamiliar, the clarity principle advises a teacher to *stick to one subject at a time*. We will be doing just that.

As we apply these four principles, we will clearly understand the Bible's message—the puzzle will be correctly assembled.

## 3 FORTY WRITERS

Just where did the Bible come from, and how did we get it?

The Bible was written by about 40 men. These men came from every imaginable walk of life—including kings, military

generals, statesmen, scholars, peasants, philosophers, shepherds, poets, fishermen, a prime minister, a doctor, a tax collector—to name just a few. Their writing crossed three continents—Asia, Africa and Europe—with venues as diverse as palaces and dungeons, deserts and cities. They wrote during war and peace, sometimes in anguish, other times in gladness. They wrote in three languages—Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek—two languages from the east and one from the west. In all, they recorded 66 books across a span of 1500 years. Those books, compiled into one volume, constitute the Bible.

*Although many of these 40 writers never knew each other, and though their subject matter included hundreds of controversial topics, what they recorded spoke with harmony and continuity from beginning to end.*

Now this is quite remarkable. Think about it for a moment. If we had just ten authors—all living today, all from the same generation, all in the same line of work, all coming from the same geographical background, all speaking the same language—what would be the odds of them agreeing if they were given only *one* controversial topic to write on and were unable to consult with each other? The likelihood would be extremely remote. And yet that is what happened with the Bible—not to ten men writing on one topic, but to 40 men writing on many controversial topics. Remarkable indeed! It's one of those things that makes the Bible unique—or holy.

### ONE SOURCE

So how did it happen? Simply put, none of these men claimed to be the source of the Bible's information. Instead they claimed a common origin for the thoughts they wrote, a source that spoke as one voice to them all.

*To discover the identity of that one source, we will launch into the biblical text, beginning with the man who wrote the first five books. His name was Moses. We'll be starting at a point in time about 3500 years ago, with Moses retelling the events surrounding his own birth.*

### A MAN NAMED MOSES

Moses belonged to a group of slaves called *Israelites* or *Hebrews*—numbering about 2½ million—who had been in Egypt for over 350 years. The Egyptian king or *Pharaoh* was worried about their escalating population.



The story picks up with Pharaoh speaking. He said:

*“The people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.*

*Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens ... But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves.* Exodus 1:9-13 ESV

When forced labour didn’t whittle down the number of slaves, Pharaoh revised his plan for population control.

*Then Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, gave this order to the Hebrew midwives ... “When you help the Hebrew women as they give birth, watch as they deliver. If the baby is a boy, kill him; if it is a girl, let her live.”*

*Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Throw every newborn Hebrew boy into the Nile River. But you may let the girls live.”* Exodus 1:15-16, 22 NLT

Pharaoh’s instructions were horrific, but even under difficult conditions, life goes on. Scripture says a young Hebrew man took a wife and she ...

*... became pregnant and gave birth to a son.* Exodus 2:2 NLT

Pharaoh’s orders were strict. The infant boy was to be thrown into the Nile River. But the mother ...

*... hid him for three months. But when she could hide him no longer, she got him a wicker basket and covered it over with tar and pitch. Then she put the child into it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile.*

*His sister stood at a distance to find out what would happen to him. The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the Nile, with her maidens walking alongside the Nile; and she saw the basket among the reeds and sent her*





*maid, and she brought it to her. When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the boy was crying. And she had pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." Exodus 2:2-6 NASB*

It's quite possible that Pharaoh's daughter wanted a child but was barren. When the baby came floating along, it was like an instant solution to her predicament. Moses' sister was watching and, when Pharaoh's daughter opened the basket, she slipped out of hiding and approached the princess.

*"Should I go and find one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" she asked. Exodus 2:7 NLT*

Moses' sister was offering to find a slave to care for the baby.

*"Yes, do!" the princess replied. So the girl went and called the baby's mother.*

*"Take this baby and nurse him for me," the princess told the baby's mother. "I will pay you for your help." So the woman took her baby home and nursed him. Exodus 2:8-9 NLT*

Moses' mother was paid to care for her own son!

*So the woman took the child and nursed him. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses. Exodus 2:9-10 ESV*

So it was that Moses was raised in Pharaoh's palace.

## 4 AN EDUCATION

The Holy Bible says:

*Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians. Acts 7:22 NASB*

Even a brief walk through the ruins of ancient Egypt reveals the vast breadth of knowledge Moses received—from architecture to astronomy. Woven throughout every aspect of his schooling would have been the Egyptians' all-encompassing religion.

### NO SACRED BOOK

Though the ancient Egyptians had a well-developed system of beliefs, it would be hard to nail down a unifying theme for their religion. They revered no sacred book or texts; they held no body of teaching as the ultimate test for truth. Individual towns often venerated different gods and goddesses, and even those held in high esteem changed over time.

## ONE GOD VERSUS MANY GODS

It is still a matter of debate as to whether they worshipped one supreme being who manifested himself as many different gods, or whether they simply worshipped many gods.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps both were true. There is no doubt that the Egyptians were quite broad in their mindset, adopting new gods and adding them to the old, mixing one god's attributes with another, and holding stories as equally authoritative even when they disagreed.<sup>3</sup> All agree that they revered an immense pantheon of deities. Moses would have been well acquainted with all the primary gods and goddesses and probably many of the minor ones.

### THE SUN GOD

The ancient Egyptians worshipped the sun god, *Ra*, as the supreme deity. They believed that Ra created himself and subsequently he created all the other gods, goddesses, humans and animals. Ra was sometimes referred to as the “father of gods” or the “god of gods.” He was portrayed as a falcon with a human body and a golden disk (the sun) on his head.



### VERY RELIGIOUS

Although the Egyptians respected their gods, they could also be quite demanding of them. But the gods were not ignored. Religion pervaded every facet of life—from the use of charms, magic and secret incantations to the public celebration of religious holidays. Even their architecture was influenced by the gods.

### PRESTIGE RELIGION

Four thousand years ago the Egyptian way of life was highly respected. Their beliefs were considered the “prestige religion.”

It was in this world of ancient Egyptian thought that Moses received his esteemed education. But Moses also had the learning of a Hebrew. His true mother had cared for him as a child, and she undoubtedly tutored him in her own faith.<sup>4</sup> The two belief systems contradicted each other, but that made no difference to the Egyptians. They paid no attention to the Hebrew god. After all, a god of the slaves had to be very weak—no one even seemed to know the god's name!

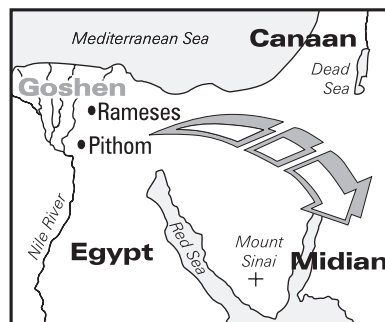
## 5 YAHWEH

In spite of Moses' extensive Egyptian upbringing, he had not forgotten his roots.

*One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.*

*When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian.* Exodus 2:11-12,15 ESV

As a “man on the run,” Moses took deep cover. He married a local woman, became a shepherd and learned to lead sheep.



*Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law... And he led the flock to the back of the desert.* Exodus 3:1 NKJV

On this particular day he spotted a very unusual sight. Somehow a tree had burst into flames, but as Moses watched, it was evident that the wood was not being consumed. This was odd!

*So Moses thought, “I will turn aside to see this amazing sight. Why does the bush not burn up?”* Exodus 3:3 NET

As Moses approached the bush, a voice called out to him from within the fire.

*“Moses! Moses!”* Exodus 3:4 NET

You can imagine Moses' fright. Who was speaking to him from inside this burning bush? Was this some sort of god or goddess?

*And Moses said, “Here I am.”*

*God said, “Do not approach any closer! Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.”*

Exodus 3:4-5 NET



Moses must have been bewildered! Why was this ground considered holy—unique, one-of-a-kind? If the voice was that of a god, who might it be? Before Moses could say a word, the mysterious voice spoke again.

*"I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob."*

*Exodus 3:6 NET*

## God

The word *god* is a generic word meaning "strong one, mighty leader, deity," and can be used in reference to any god. It's a broad term. But this god specifically identified himself as the god of Moses' father, and then he mentioned three names: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. These three men were long-deceased relatives of Moses—the founding fathers of the Israelite nation, the nation of slaves. Clearly, it was the god of the slaves speaking directly from the burning bush—not Ra or any of the other Egyptian gods.

Moses had heard stories from his mother about the god who conversed with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but that was long ago. Some wondered if those stories were true. Besides that, an Egyptian scholar would have told you that the gods never stooped to speak to a mere human. They were always distant, silent or spoke through a temple priest. But now here was the god of the slaves speaking directly to Moses from a burning bush—as one person speaks to another. Truly this god was unique! The Bible says:

*Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.*

*Exodus 3:6 NET*

God spoke again.

*"I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land..."*

*So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."*

*Exodus 3:7-8,10 NIV*

Moses was terrified! He had been a fugitive for 40 years. His return to Egypt might be tolerated but it was doubtful Pharaoh would welcome his reappearance. How could he ever confront the most powerful man on earth and demand the release of all his slaves? And would his own Hebrew kinsmen accept him as their spokesman?

*Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘**What is his name?**’ what shall I say to them?”*

*Exodus 3:13 ESV*

## POWER?

We don’t really know why Moses requested the god’s personal name. One possibility relates to the Egyptian beliefs about the source of strength. According to their thinking, each god had a varying degree of power protected by the secret name of the deity. If you knew the god’s private name, you also possessed that god’s strength and ability.

Since this is what Moses had been taught concerning the Egyptian gods, perhaps he wondered if it also applied to the god of the Hebrew slaves. Conceivably, Moses thought that if he could discover the name of the Hebrew god, then he would be better equipped to face a mighty man like Pharaoh. But there was a catch. Moses knew the Egyptians believed that none of their deities ever disclosed their personal names. But maybe the god of the slaves would be different. What motivated Moses to ask for a name we really don’t know, but the reply was certainly clear.

*God said to Moses, “**I AM WHO I AM.** This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘**I AM** has sent me to you.’”*

*God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘[**YAHWEH**], the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever.”*

*Exodus 3:14-15 NIV*

## THE NAME

In the original language, the phrase I AM and the name YAHWEH<sup>5</sup> (yah´way) are essentially synonymous; they both mean “I AM the one who is,” or “I AM the self-existent one.”

The god of the slaves, by his very name, was claiming to live by his own power. Whereas mankind needed food, water, air, sleep, light, shelter—an endless supply of essential items to live—this god was saying he needed nothing. Apparently this was so true that it was an intrinsic part of his name. He was the “self-existent one,” the I AM—YAHWEH. No Egyptian god or goddess claimed this. The god of the slaves was truly unique!

**YAHWEH**

The ancient Israelites were in such awe of YAHWEH that in the centuries to come they refused to speak his name. In reading Scriptures out loud, wherever they came to the word YAHWEH they would simply say "LORD" or "THE NAME" with everyone understanding that it was actually referring to YAHWEH. Even to this day, when you read God's answer to Moses, it is written using the substitute word *LORD* in place of YAHWEH.

*God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever."*  
Exodus 3:15 ESV

So, in the Bible, whenever you see the name LORD, with all the letters capitalized, understand it as the ancients understood it. You are actually reading YAHWEH—the personal name of this unique god. To help us remember that connection I will sometimes refer to this god as LORD YAHWEH. Also, in Holy Scripture, wherever you see the word *god* capitalized, as in *God*, it is referring to YAHWEH.

Some scholars feel Moses was the first person to know this unique God's personal name. He was to tell everyone about him, that he was called YAHWEH. It was a name intended to be on everyone's lips. And unlike the ancient Egyptian gods and goddesses, the LORD God was not threatened by someone stealing his power.

*LORD, there is no one like you! For you are great, and your name is full of power.*  
Jeremiah 10:6 NLT

**SUMMARY**

1. The generic name *god* means "strong one, mighty leader, deity." Many other gods and goddesses are mentioned in the Bible. To differentiate between them, when YAHWEH is referred to, *god* is always spelled with a capital "G" as in *God*.
2. YAHWEH is often referred to as the *holy* God, meaning "unique, different, one-of-a-kind."
3. Many centuries after the time of Moses, for purposes of respect, the personal name of YAHWEH was not spoken aloud. Even when written, it was substituted with the word *LORD*, as indicated by all the letters being capitalized.
4. The phrase I AM and the name YAHWEH are synonymous, both meaning "I AM the self-existent one."



### THE POWER IN A NAME

This story is not found in the Bible—it is from Egyptian mythology. It illustrates the type of thinking prevalent in the time of Moses.

A story involving “power” is centred on the Egyptian sun god, Ra, and his granddaughter, Isis—a goddess with aspirations to reign over heaven and earth. Jealous of Ra’s immense power, Isis asked him for his secret name. Of course, Ra did not divulge it. But that did not end the story. Isis privately created a venomous snake and put it in Ra’s path. As Ra took his daily journey across the sky, he “stepped” on the snake only to be bitten severely. As he cried out in pain, other gods and goddesses offered help, but none could relieve his misery.



Finally, Isis came forward. She promised to heal Ra, but only if he revealed his personal name. Well, of course Ra was not willing to do this. He stalled, and then with great reluctance, began to divulge names to her. This did not impress Isis who knew that Ra was trying to confuse her with fake personal names. She waited and waited. Finally, Ra, in deep agony, passed his secret name on to Isis and was healed.

As the story goes, Isis became a powerful goddess, equal to Ra. Often referred to as the “Queen of Heaven,” Isis was adopted by the Greeks and Romans along with many other nations, as the *mother of gods*.

An important distinction between Ra and YAHWEH is that the LORD YAHWEH made no attempt to conceal his personal name. Instead, he told Moses to reveal his name to the entire world. Moses did just that when he penned the first five books of the *Holy Bible*.

## 6 GOD-BREATHED

Moses' encounter with the LORD YAHWEH at the burning bush was just one of many exchanges to come. Moses was the first of the 40 men who recorded the 66 books that constitute the Bible. All of those men except one were Israelites.<sup>6</sup> And it was the LORD YAHWEH who spoke as the one voice—the common source for those 40 men—giving Scripture its unique continuity and harmony.

### GOD-BREATHED

The LORD did not dictate Scripture to Moses as an executive would to a secretary. Rather, the process was paralleled to breathing.

*All Scripture is God-breathed.*<sup>7</sup>

*2 Timothy 3:16 NIV*

The whole concept of the LORD breathing out Scripture is a study in itself. Just as when one exhales his breath, that breath coming from his innermost being, so ultimately all Scripture was to be viewed as coming directly from the LORD YAHWEH himself. God and his words are inseparable, which is one reason the Bible is also referred to as *God's Word*.

*Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm.* *Psalms 119:89 NIV*

### FOOLPROOF SYSTEM

In the chapters to come, the story will unfold the foolproof system the LORD used to transfer his Word to these 40 writers. You'll be able to judge for yourself whether this system prevented con artists from fabricating Scripture and passing it off as coming from God. For now, it is important to understand that all 40 men wrote under the same God-inspired guidance.

### EXTREME ACCURACY

The LORD's words were first written on a scroll, usually an animal skin called *parchment*, or on paper made from the stem of a plant called *papyrus*. The originals were called *autographs*.

Since the autographs had a limited lifespan, copies were made of the scrolls. Of course, all of this was done by hand. The writers' awareness that what was being recorded was the LORD's own Word resulted in one of the most remarkable reproduction jobs ever done.

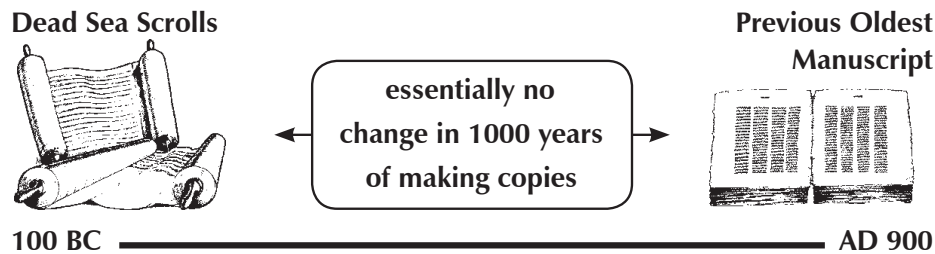


In writing the Hebrew text:

*“They used every imaginable safeguard, no matter how cumbersome or laborious, to ensure the accurate transmission of the text. The number of letters in a book was counted and its middle letter was given. Similarly with the words, and again the middle word was noted.”*<sup>8</sup>

This was done with both the copy and the original autograph to ensure that they were exactly the same.

These scribes were so accurate in their transcription that when the Dead Sea Scrolls were found (written in 100 BC), and compared with manuscripts resulting from centuries of copying and recopying to a period of time 1000 years later (AD 900), there were no significant differences in the text.<sup>9</sup>



Josephus, a descendant of the Hebrew slaves and a historian from the first century AD, summed it up for his people when he stated, *“How firmly we have given credit to those books of our own nation, is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them, or to make any change in them; but it [is] natural to all [Israelites] ... to esteem those books ... divine.”*<sup>10</sup>

These men were absolutely convinced that to meddle with the text was to tamper with the LORD himself. We have ample reason to be assured that what we have today is essentially the same as what the 40 men wrote.

## TRANSLATIONS

Both the autographs and copies were initially transcribed in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. Since many of us do not know these tongues, Scripture has been translated into many other languages. These translations work from early texts that find their roots in the ancient past. It has been said that the Bible may have been tampered with—changed—so that prophecies would appear to have been fulfilled. But with the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the ability to reach

far back in history to see what had been written, reliable scholars agree that no such thing has happened. It is interesting that the ancient writers recorded the LORD himself as saying:

*The grass withers, the flower fades, But the Word of our God stands forever.*  
Isaiah 40:8 NASB

*Until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law [the five books written by Moses] until all is accomplished.*  
Matthew 5:18 NASB

## FORTY YEARS

We don't know specifically when or where Moses recorded all that the LORD YAHWEH told him, but we do know it would have been written in the last 40 years of his life. We will be following some of his experiences as we continue. As you read, keep in mind that the Bible claims to be the Word of the LORD. We are told that through its pages we can become acquainted with YAHWEH himself. The LORD says:

*"You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."*  
Jeremiah 29:13 NKJV

### NAVIGATION AIDS

As we begin to navigate through the 66 books found in the Bible, it is useful to know that each book is divided into chapters, and each chapter into verses. Many Bibles also include historical introductions, footnotes, cross-references, maps and a concordance. These can be helpful, but we need to be clear in our minds that these "extras" were not part of Scripture that was given to the 40 writers. They were added by men commenting on the Bible's content.

It is also helpful to understand that the Scriptures are divided into two major sections—the Old and New Testaments. Historically, the Old Testament portion was divided into three categories:

1. The Law of Moses: This section is sometimes referred to as *The Torah, The Books of Moses, or The Law.*
2. The Writings, sometimes called the *Psalms.*
3. The Prophets

In the Bible, the phrase *the Law and the Prophets*, is a way of referring to the entire Old Testament portion, a part that comprises approximately two-thirds of the Scriptures. The remaining one-third is referred to as the New Testament.



# CHAPTER TWO

**1** IN THE BEGINNING

**2** A PERSON

**3** ANGELS AND STARS

# 1 IN THE BEGINNING

As Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, he must have felt like he was back in school again. Certainly he received an education in the process. The Israelites of that day knew very little about their God; so much of what they learned was new.

## FOUR WORDS

The first book was called *Genesis*, which means “beginnings.” Genesis opens with four very profound words:

*In the beginning God...*

*Genesis 1:1 NASB*

The Bible does not begin with arguments for the existence of YAHWEH—the LORD is just there. He has always existed!

This would have been astonishing news to both Egyptian and Israelite. Even Ra had a beginning—the ancients said Ra created himself!<sup>1</sup> But YAHWEH was saying that he had been there all along. He had always existed, before plants, animals, people—before the earth and the universe. Moses wrote:

*From everlasting [past] to everlasting [future] You are God.*

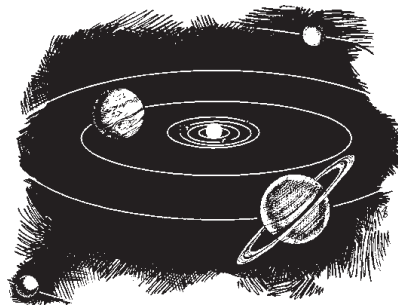
*Psalms 90:2 NASB*

The gods of the ancient Egyptians were born and grew old with time, but the Bible said the LORD had not only existed from eternity past, but he would live forever.

Since our bodies are finite—living on earth for only a short time—the concept of an eternal God is difficult for us to grasp. But there are illustrations to help our comprehension. For example, we can compare eternity with the cosmos.

Most of us can fathom our solar system—the sun surrounded by orbiting planets. We know it is vast, but space probes have made even the farthest distances seem reachable.

But go a step further and begin to measure the universe. If we were to climb into a spaceship and travel at the speed of light, we would circle the earth seven times in one second! Heading out into space at the same speed, we would pass the moon in two seconds, Mars in four minutes, and Pluto in five hours. From there you are off into our galaxy, the Milky Way.



At the speed of light  
you circle the earth  
seven times in  
one second.

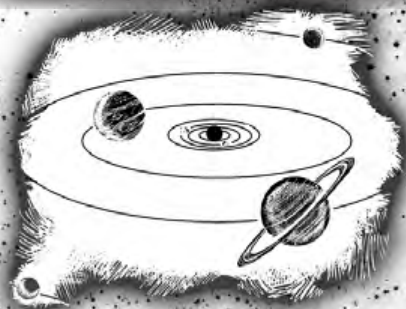
... pass the  
moon in two  
seconds.

... and Pluto  
in five hours.

... Mars in  
four minutes.

**There are 60 seconds in a minute. If you travel at the speed of light you will go 300,000 kilometres or 186,000 miles in just one second.** Think how far you would go in a minute, in one hour, in a day, or in a year! At the speed of light, it would take 4.3 years to reach the closest star, which means each second of those years you travel 186,000 miles or 300,000 kilometres—a total distance equivalent to 25,284,000,000,000 miles or 40,682,300,000,000 kilometres!

Our star, the sun, is near the edge of the Milky Way Galaxy. Our entire solar system with its orbiting planets could fit in this box.







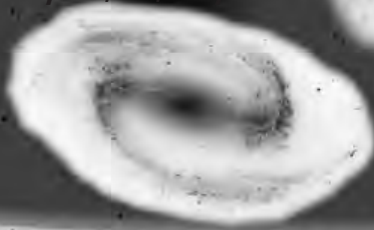
## The Milky Way Galaxy<sup>2</sup>

The band of stars you see in the night sky is part of a gigantic family of stars called the Milky Way Galaxy. Travelling at the speed of light, it would take 100,000 years to cross it from one side to the other. There are an estimated 100 billion galaxies in the universe, many comprising billions of stars. Galaxies come in clusters and superclusters. There are about twenty galaxies in our cluster, and thousands of galaxies in our supercluster.

### Want a star named after you?<sup>3</sup>

Based on the present population of the earth, you could have 16 *galaxies* named after you. That means *billions* of stars could carry your name!

At the speed of light, you will reach the next closest galaxy in 2,000,000 years ...



... and the next closest cluster of galaxies in 20,000,000 years.

At this point you have only begun to travel the universe.

Yes, the thought of eternity is difficult to grasp, but so is the vastness of our universe. Both are mind-boggling, yet both are real. And when it comes to the eternality of the LORD God, the Bible speaks emphatically on this point. It says he is eternal, and his “forever existence” is such an inherent part of his nature that it is used as one of his names.

*The name of the LORD, the everlasting God.      Genesis 21:33 KJV*

## 2 A PERSON

One time I was discussing the Bible with a young couple when suddenly the husband stopped me and with a puzzled voice said, “The way you talk about God is as if he were a person.”

I said, “Yes, that is correct.” I then asked him what he was thinking.

“Well,” he said, “I’ve never thought of God that way before. I guess I always thought he was some sort of . . . some sort of force.”

I assured him that Scripture defines the LORD YAHWEH as a living being—with character and personality—not as some sort of universal force or divine mind.

### ONE YAHWEH, MANY NAMES

One of the ways the Bible reveals to us the personality of God is through his names. Though it is appropriate to say that God has only one personal name, he has other names that function as titles, all declaring something about his character. For example, YAHWEH is often called the Most High.

*That they may know that You alone, whose name is the LORD [YAHWEH], are the Most High over all the earth. Psalm 83:18 NASB*

The name *Most High* emphasizes the LORD’s role as a sovereign ruler. Just as ancient empires had absolute leaders or sovereigns who reigned over their domains, so YAHWEH is King of the universe.

We know that the ancient Egyptians believed that Ra was the chief god, and that all the other gods and goddesses were created by him. *But was the LORD YAHWEH the chief God in a family of gods? Did he have other gods and goddesses under him? Was the name YAHWEH just another name for the god Ra?*

First of all, it is very important to understand that YAHWEH is *not* another name for Ra or for that matter, any other god. Secondly, Scripture speaks of many gods and goddesses, but they are *not*



part of a family of gods with the LORD at the top. As we progress in the story, we will see where the other gods fit in the puzzle, but for now, all we need to know is that ...

*... the LORD ... is the living God and the everlasting King.*

*Jeremiah 10:10 NASB*

The idea of LORD YAHWEH being king may conjure up an image of an old man seated on a gold throne floating somewhere in the stratosphere. Though the Bible nowhere illustrates the LORD as an old man, it does refer to his throne—not set in a cloud, but rather situated in a perfect place called *Heaven*.

*The LORD is on his heavenly throne.*

*Psalms 11:4 NIV*

The Bible tells us that the LORD rules from Heaven. We don't know much about this place, but the little we do know is wonderful. We will discuss Heaven in greater detail later on.

## A SPIRIT

In the Bible the LORD is referred to using the male gender, as in *he* and *him*. This does not mean he has sexual characteristics as do humans. YAHWEH is not like Ra or any of the other Egyptian deities—he has no wives or children. The Bible tells us that ...

*God is spirit.*

*John 4:24 NASB*

The ancients often illustrated their deities as part animal, part human. No such depiction was ever attempted of YAHWEH, since being a spirit he cannot be seen—he doesn't have a body of flesh.

Think of a funeral of a friend who has died. If the casket was open, you may have seen the body, but where was your friend? He was gone; your friend's spirit was no longer present. When we look at someone, we only see their house, the human body; we don't actually see the real person, the spirit. In the same way, YAHWEH cannot be seen because he is a spirit, but he still has all the attributes of a person—having character and personality.

## SUMMARY

We have barely commenced our study, but already we have learned quite a bit about the LORD YAHWEH.

He is an eternal being—not an impersonal force.

He is a spirit—without physical body or bodily functions.

He is the Most High, the Sovereign Ruler of all.

And that's the way it was—"in the beginning."

### 3 ANGELS AND STARS

We now read another word which follows the first four words that Moses wrote.

*In the beginning God **created**...*

*Genesis 1:1 NASB*

The LORD's first creative act is scattered across the pages of Scripture. You can pull together enough information to answer simple questions, but that is where it stops. The Bible was not written to satisfy man's endless curiosity. It gives basic information on some events, but when it comes to further details, the pages fall silent. This is precisely the case with the subject of spirit beings.

#### NAMES

The Bible calls spirits by many different names. We often call them angels, but Scripture uses many terms to define them: cherubim, seraphim, angels, archangels, morning stars—the list goes on. Collectively they are referred to as multitudes, hosts or stars.\* These spirits are not abstract impersonal forces as one might see in certain movies, but rather they are *persons* or *beings* capable of thought and feeling.

\*Not to be confused with stars in the sky.

*The host of heaven worships You [YAHWEH].*     *Nehemiah 9:6 NKJV*

They may all have individual names but only a few are mentioned, such as Gabriel and Michael.

#### INVISIBLE, INNUMERABLE

As with the LORD, spirits are invisible, having no bodies of flesh and blood like you and me. Even though we can't see them, they must be everywhere. The idiom used to number just those surrounding God's throne communicates an unfathomable sum.

*Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, ... and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.*     *Revelation 5:11 NKJV*

Now this leads us to a question. *Since we saw that the LORD's throne is in Heaven, does this mean that Heaven is the angels' dwelling place?* Well, whether angels need a home or not is highly debatable, but taking the body of Scripture as a whole, it would seem that angels are based in Heaven yet can travel anywhere in the universe. The Bible is clear that angels—as spirits—do not live in temples, houses, rocks, trees or rivers.

## SERVANTS

At this point it would be reasonable to ask ourselves, “*Since the Bible speaks about many different gods, are angels gods or goddesses?*” The simple answer is, no, they are neither. Rather, they are spirit beings created to serve the LORD YAHWEH and do his pleasure. They are called “ministering spirits.”

*Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve?*

*Hebrews 1:14 NIV*

The word *angel* is derived from a Greek term meaning “messenger” or “servant.” Because the LORD made them, they belonged to him and did whatever YAHWEH asked them to do.

## CREATOR—OWNER

The concept of the *creator* also being the *owner* has lost its strength in our money-driven economy. I remember walking through a tribal village in Papua New Guinea. Every item I asked about—“Whose paddle is this? Whose canoe is that?”—elicited a response that designated an owner. When I inquired how they knew who the owner was, they looked at me in disbelief. Apparently I had asked a foolish question. To them it was obvious. “*The owner is the one who made it!*” The creator-owner connection was very strong.

Since the LORD created the angels, it was not out of place for them to be considered his possessions. And since they belonged to him, they were to do his bidding—as his servants and messengers. This was not some ancient form of servitude. There are no parallels here to forced bondage. The angels could have had no better Creator-Owner.

## EXTRAORDINARY INTELLECT AND POWER

To carry out his directives, the LORD created the angels with great intellect and power. They were created as perfect beings without any evil. But they weren’t robots either; they each had a will which gave them the ability to choose.<sup>4</sup> This is significant.

Scripture often speaks of the angels praising the LORD as they go about their work. The word *praise* means “to speak of the excellence of a person, to show admiration.”

*Praise the Lord, you angels, you mighty ones who carry out his plans, listening for each of his commands. Yes, praise the LORD, you armies of angels who serve him and do his will!*

*Psalm 103:20-21 NLT*

But praise is meaningless if not given freely. Let me illustrate using a different form of human expression—sympathy.

For a while I spent time in a country where it was common to have paid mourners. At a funeral there would be a separate group of people wailing and weeping intensely. It was heart-rending to watch, but they could shut it off instantly, especially if they decided they were not being paid enough. The sympathy they expressed looked real, but it was not genuine. It was empty of meaning.

If the angels had been programmed like robots to praise the LORD, it would have been as empty as the hired mourners, but since they were created with a free will, any expression of joy, love or appreciation was genuine. In the Bible the praise of YAHWEH is often connected to the concept of worship.

*You preserve them all, and the angels of heaven worship you.*  
Nehemiah 9:6 NLT

## WORSHIP

The word *worship* has the idea of showing someone profound love and admiration because you consider that person *worthy* of esteem. It's a form of praise. In this case, the angels worship God.

This is only fitting since the LORD is the Sovereign King and, as such, rightly deserves to be held in high esteem. By way of contrast, if I am boasting about a friend's deeds, someone else could call into question whether my friend deserves as much praise as I'm giving him. But the Bible says the LORD is truly worthy of honour, so the angels are quite right in directing their praise toward YAHWEH—to worship him and him alone.

*You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for  
You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.*  
Revelation 4:11 NKJV

## SIMILAR BUT DIFFERENT

It should be noted that angels share some similarities with man, though man is not nearly as powerful or intelligent. The Bible says that the LORD YAHWEH made man ...

*... a little lower than the angels.* Psalm 8:5 NKJV

Though similar, angels are distinct from man. They never die.<sup>5</sup> They neither marry nor reproduce.<sup>6</sup> Though normally unseen, on certain assignments they are visible. When they talk to man, the language they use is understandable to the hearer.

Because angels do at times mingle with and talk to people, the Bible states that there are occasions when these spirit beings have been confused with God or gods. But as we saw before, the LORD YAHWEH created them, and they are distinct from him. They are neither gods nor part of the LORD God. Just as a canoe paddle does not fit in the “maker” or “creator” category, angelic beings do not fit in the “God” category. They are distinctly different. One is the *Creator*; the other is the *created*.

Role	Category	Personal Name(s)
Creator	God	YAHWEH
created	spirit being (angel)	Gabriel, Michael

### THE ANOINTED CHERUB

The most powerful, the most intelligent and the most beautiful spirit ever created was a cherub. Some Bible editions directly translate his name into Latin as *Lucifer*, but the original Hebrew name means “shining one” or “star of the morning.”

*O shining one, son of the dawn!*

*Isaiah 14:12 YLT*

The Shining One was referred to as an *anointed cherub*. The meaning of the word *anointed* has its origins in the ancient rite of pouring oil on someone or something to set it apart for a special task. The act of anointing was considered sacred and not to be taken lightly.

*“You were an anointed guardian cherub . . . You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created.”*

*Ezekiel 28:14-15 ESV*

The Shining One’s job description kept him in the presence of the LORD at all times. We will learn more about this anointed cherub as the story progresses.

### THE ANGELS WATCH

With the creation of the spirit beings, the LORD’s creative acts had begun. Now, as all the angelic host watched and rejoiced, the Most High embarked on his next great work—the creation of the entire universe.

*“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much. Who determined its dimensions and stretched out the surveying line? What supports its foundations, and who laid its cornerstone as the morning stars [or spirit beings] sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?”*

*Job 38:4-7 NLT*

# CHAPTER THREE

- 1 JUST BY SPEAKING
- 2 THREE ATTRIBUTES
- 3 ORDER AND LAWS
- 4 PERFECT AND CARING
- 5 THE IMAGE OF GOD
- 6 HIGH YET NEAR

# 1 JUST BY SPEAKING

The first 12 chapters of Genesis contain critical information for understanding Scripture as a whole. If the Bible were assembly instructions for the puzzle we talked about earlier, then these chapters would be among those labelled “Read Carefully.”

When we say that the LORD instructed Moses to write about the “beginnings,” we mean that quite literally. God had Moses record what occurred on the very first day the earth existed.

## DAY ONE

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth ... God said, “Let there be light.” And there was light! God saw that the light was good ... God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.” There was evening, and there was morning, marking the first day.*

*Genesis 1:1,3-5 NET*

Notice how God did the creating. The text says that the LORD *spoke* the light into existence. He didn’t use hands or tools to create. Rather, the Bible says the whole ...

*... universe was formed at God’s command. Hebrews 11:3 NLT*

This great person, this great being—YAHWEH—created all we see and don’t see, simply by speaking!

Also notice, he made everything out of nothing. We as humans create, but only with pre-existing material. We paint pictures using oils and canvas. We build houses out of wood, mortar and brick. But when the LORD created, he used nothing. He just spoke!

*“Let there be light ...”*

*Genesis 1:3 KJV*

...and there was light! And day one was completed.

## DAY TWO

At the conclusion of day one, the earth as created was completely covered with water. Now, on day two ...

*... God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters and let it separate water from water.” ... God called the expanse “sky.” There was evening, and there was morning, a second day.*

*Genesis 1:6-8 NET*

The expanse<sup>1</sup> was probably synonymous with what we call the atmosphere. The earth’s atmosphere and water are just two of many features that make life possible on this planet.

On day two we see the first indication that the world as originally created was different from what we now know. It seems it had a different atmosphere and was universally warmer. Later on we will read about the circumstances that may have changed the environment to its present state.

### **DAY THREE**

At the beginning of day three, the water under the expanse still constituted one vast ocean with no visible dry land.

*God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place and let dry ground appear." It was so... God saw that it was good. God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: plants yielding seeds according to their kinds, and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds."... God saw that it was good. There was evening, and there was morning, the third day.*

*Genesis 1:9-13 NET*

Day three can be divided into two parts. First, we see the dry land appear. Apparently, as the ocean bottom sank forming huge basins for the water, dry ground rose up out of the watery depths. Second, we see the creation of plant life—plants and trees that were already bearing fruit and seeds. The Bible says God created everything in a mature, fully functioning state.

I remember discussing this one time with some children. I asked them to gather as many different seeds as they could find in five minutes. They came trooping back with a whole assortment—seeds with barbs, seeds made to sail on the wind, those that popped when heated; some the size of a speck, others much larger. I explained how each tiny seed contained a massive encyclopedia of instructions stating how that seed should grow: whether its leaves should be broad or narrow, green or red; whether its stem should be delicate as ivy or sturdy as a tree trunk; when it should grow, how fast, how tall, on and on. It also contained instructions on how to manufacture more seeds. When you think about it, the whole process is incredible, something no human has ever come close to duplicating. Yet the Bible says the LORD YAHWEH created full-grown plants and trees with all their genetic information, simply by speaking them into existence. Amazing!

*Great are the works of the LORD; They are studied by all who delight in them.*

*Psalms 111:2 NASB*



Creation was a solo effort. No other god was involved.

*For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the LORD, and there is no other."* Isaiah 45:18 NKJV

Only the LORD was capable of making what we see and don't see.

## 2 THREE ATTRIBUTES

One doesn't have to be a rocket scientist to know that someone who could create this immense universe must also be extraordinarily powerful. Scripture actually takes it a step further. It tells us that the LORD is *all-powerful*.

*Great is our Lord, and mighty in power.* Psalm 147:5 NKJV

Not only is YAHWEH all-powerful, he is also *all-knowing*. You can see aspects of this knowledge revealed in the complexity of what he created. The Bible says...

*... his understanding is beyond measure.* Psalm 147:5 ESV

What's more, when one looks at the vastness of creation, one has to conclude that the Creator must have ability to move far and wide, to place the things he has created wherever he wants them. Once again, the Bible takes it beyond what we can observe. It tells us that the LORD YAHWEH is *everywhere present at the same time*.

*"Am I only a God nearby," declares the LORD, "and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD.* Jeremiah 23:23-24 NIV

Only YAHWEH possesses this triad of attributes—*all-knowing, all-powerful and everywhere present at one time*—and only a faultless combination of these three attributes would be able to create the complex realm in which we live.

*He has made the earth by His power; He has established the world by His wisdom And stretched out the heaven by His understanding.* Jeremiah 51:15 NKJV

In Scripture no other god or goddess is ascribed these characteristics. Neither do the angels possess these abilities, even as powerful

and intelligent as they are. And us? We don't even come close to this sort of capability.

For us to construct even the simplest object takes combined human effort. For example, let's say we decide to make a simple chair—the kind you find in a school auditorium.

For starters we need metal. *But where do you find metal?*

In rocks. *But who knows which stones contain the required metal?*

We need a geologist and a prospector who know a great deal about finding the rocks which carry iron ore.

*Assuming we have found the right rocks, what's the next step?*

We need someone with the know-how to manufacture dynamite and assorted mining equipment. We need miners who have the expertise to extract the ore safely from the ground.

*But you still can't build a chair with a mound of iron ore. It needs to be melted down. Can you build a fire hot enough to melt rocks?*

We need those who know the smelting and alloy process. *So we found those fellows, but guess what?*

They just poured for us a glob of steel. At this point we might be willing to sit on the ingot—after it has cooled down, that is! But if we are going to make a chair, it will necessitate having someone who understands how to roll that block into a thin sheet of metal, bend it into a tube and then weld it.

*Welding?* Sounds like we need someone with knowledge in electricity and how to generate it.

As you can see, making a chair is a complicated process. And we haven't even discussed the plastic parts.

*Plastic?* Hmmm. Doesn't that get into petroleum products? Now let me see. Drilling a well to find oil takes ... what!

And all we wanted to do was make a chair. To create even the simplest object takes hundreds of people with combined knowledge and allied skills. No one person knows it all.

No human, no god, no angel, no spirit can be compared in even the smallest way to the LORD, the Creator God, who knows all things, who has all the power to create from nothing, and is present everywhere so that he can place the objects he has made wherever he chooses. This God stands alone.

*Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.*  
*Jeremiah 32:17 NKJV*

## A PERSON

Not all the attributes of the LORD are equally comprehensible. Somehow it's easier for us to envision God being "all-powerful" and "all-knowing" than to see him being "present in all places at the same time." But over and over again, Scripture teaches us that the Creator God is everywhere-present.

In the tenth century BC, a leader of the Israelites wrote these words as he was directed by God:

*Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?*

*If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.* *Psalms 139:7–12 NIV*

The fact that the LORD is *everywhere at one time* needs to be separated from the concept of *pantheism*.

Have you ever heard people say that all of nature—the whole universe—is somehow part of god, indeed, is god? Or have you heard it said that the universe has a cosmic soul, mind or consciousness with which a person can develop oneness? Have you heard God described as an impersonal force—a universal all-in-all? This sort of thinking is called *pantheism*, and though popular, represents ideas of God that are not found in the Bible.

Moses would have recognized aspects of pantheistic thinking. The ancient Egyptians believed that the lines between god, human, animal, bird, insect, wood and water were quite blurred. Many of their gods had human bodies, but those bodies had the heads of animals, birds or insects. They believed objects could talk, giving them a form of "godness." Everything had some sort of life force, so that when corn was harvested and crushed to flour, a farmer was, in essence, cutting the body of the corn god and trampling it to pieces on the threshing floor.

### CREATOR-CREATION DISTINCTION

In contrast, the Bible teaches that the LORD is a *person* or *being* who is separate from his creation. Just as a tribal man is not part of his canoe paddle, so neither is the LORD God part of his creation. Indeed the paddle could be damaged or destroyed and it would have no effect on the tribal man at all. It's not part of him.

In the same way, Scripture tells us that YAHWEH created the universe and all that is in it, but the universe is not part of God nor is the LORD part of his creation. The LORD God is everywhere, but he is *not in* or *part of* everything. He is above creation and rules over it. The Bible makes a clear distinction between the Creator and his creation, a distinction that it never blurs.

The Bible teaches	Pantheism teaches
YAHWEH is a person or being	god is impersonal, not a being
YAHWEH is not part of his creation	all nature is god or has godness
YAHWEH is everywhere, as a ruler	god is universal, as a force

## 3 ORDER AND LAWS

It seems every nation had its own ideas about origins. Moses would have known the Egyptians had four stories relating to the beginning of the earth, though none of them agreed with the others. Such confusion is common. Now it was as if the LORD were saying, "Since none of you were around in the beginning, I'm going to tell you how the world began—to stop speculation. This is the way it was done":

*By the **word** of the LORD the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His **mouth** ... Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For **He spoke**, and it was done; **He commanded**, and it stood fast.*

*Psalm 33:6,8-9 NKJV*

When you really think about it, this is the sort of power you would expect from an all-powerful God.

### DAY FOUR

On the first day of creation, the LORD had drawn back the curtain of darkness when he spoke light into existence. On the fourth day, God created the light givers.<sup>2</sup> Moses wrote:

*God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them be signs to indicate seasons*

*and days and years, and let them serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” It was so.*

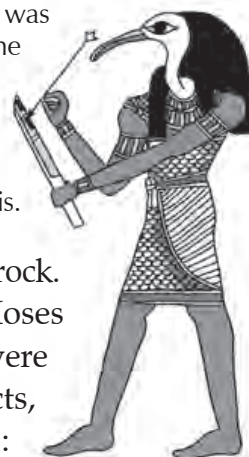
*God made two great lights—the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night. He made the stars also.*

*God saw that it was good. There was evening, and there was morning, a fourth day.*

*Genesis 1:14-16, 18-19 NET*

We have already learned that the ancient Egyptians worshipped the sun god, Ra. They also revered Thoth, the moon god.\* Back then the people had no way of knowing that the sun and moon were just objects of gas or rock. But now, going solely by what the LORD had Moses write, they could know that the sun and moon were not gods. Rather, they were lifeless *created* objects, distinct from the Creator. The LORD told Moses:

\*Though Thoth was the moon god, he was illustrated as having a human body with the head of a bird, the Ibis.



*“And when you look up into the sky and see the sun, moon, and stars ... don’t be seduced into worshipping them.”*

*Deuteronomy 4:19 NLT*

The sun and moon were not to be admired and esteemed as though they were persons. They had no intellect or feelings. They were nothing more than inanimate gas and rock, belonging in the same category as rivers and mountains.

In contrast, the LORD is a living being totally distinct from the sun or moon. The *Maker* is not to be misunderstood as being part of what he *made*.

*I am the LORD, who made everything, who alone stretched out the sky.*

*Isaiah 44:24 NET*

## A GOD OF ORDER

The Bible says that the LORD created the sun and the moon, not only to give light and heat, but to be like huge celestial clocks that would mark off days, seasons and years.

*He made the moon to mark the months, and the sun sets according to a regular schedule.*

*Psalms 104:19 NET*

The ancients knew that the universe functioned with amazing precision. They could easily see that the LORD was a God of order, that he had rules or laws to keep the universe functioning properly.<sup>3</sup>

Today we study those physical laws through various sciences such as astronomy, biology, physics and chemistry. We take these laws so much for granted that we never consider what the world would be like without them. But imagine if, for a few minutes, the law of gravity was suspended. Chaos and death would reign. The law of gravity, as well as all the other laws, are there for a purpose. They keep things safe and secure.

*He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.*

*Colossians 1:17 NASB*

We instinctively treat these laws with great respect. For example, we walk along the edge of a cliff very carefully because we know that to defy the law of gravity has serious repercussions. The reason for this is that *whenever you have a law, you also have a consequence*. Laws define uncompromising boundaries as to how something will function. If you remain within the boundary, you are safe. If you move outside the boundary, you get hurt.

*Yours is the day, yours also the night; you have established the heavenly lights and the sun. You have fixed all the boundaries of the earth.*

*Psalms 74:16-17 ESV*

These laws—this structure and order—are a reflection of the LORD's nature. The LORD is a God of order, a God who has rules; he is not erratic. A person can count on his consistency and faithfulness.

## **DAY FIVE**

On the fifth day, God created the whole kaleidoscope of sea life and birds.

*Then God said, "Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens."*

*Genesis 1:20 NASB*

This teeming diversity in air and sea was another statement about the LORD's creative ability. And as he had done with the plants, God created full-grown, mature animals. Each animal was fully equipped with a genetic library to determine how it would grow and reproduce.

*So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.*

*Genesis 1:21,23 ESV*

**PERFECT, FLAWLESS, HOLY**

As Moses wrote, he would have noted that YAHWEH ended each creation day with the words:

*God saw that it was good.*

*Genesis 1:25 NASB*

This was possible because in the totality of his being, the LORD is perfect; he is good.

*As for God, His way is perfect.*

*Psalms 18:30 NKJV*

Moses would have known that the gods of the ancient Egyptians were very human in their thoughts, emotions and actions. They had wives and children, allies and enemies. Quite promiscuous in lifestyle, they plotted, deceived, fought for power and brutally killed each other. Ultimately, they controlled the other deities through manipulation and magic.

But YAHWEH was different. His character is without blemish—perfect. One of the words used to describe that perfection is the word *righteous*. It means “upright, honest, honourable.”

*Splendid and majestic is His work, and His righteousness endures forever.*

*Psalms 111:3 NASB*

The LORD’s purity—his righteousness—is unique to him.

*The holy God will show Himself holy in righteousness.*

*Isaiah 5:16 NASB*

As mentioned before, the word *holy* means “unique, one-of-a-kind, separate.” The preceding verse could be read as:

*The unique God will show Himself unique in uprightness, honesty, and honor.*

*Isaiah 5:16 paraphrased*

As we have progressed through the days of creation, we’ve learned how YAHWEH is truly one-of-a-kind. Now I want to enlarge the definition of holy by linking it to God’s righteous character. These two words, *holy* and *righteous*, are almost interchangeable in meaning. They both speak of his moral perfection.

The absolute righteousness of the Creator cannot be over-emphasized. Keep this in mind as you continue to read. It’s a piece that cannot be left out of the puzzle. Because the LORD is perfect, he could only make a perfect creation. Creation has changed, as we will see, but in the beginning it was just right! God said “it was good.” It was perfect.



### ANCIENT BUT ACCURATE

Although not a textbook on science, the Bible is accurate whenever it speaks about the physical universe. Whole books have been written on this subject, but here are a few items of interest.

Centuries ago, it was commonly believed that the earth was flat. This thinking never had its origins in the Bible. Scripture uses a word that alludes to the spherical shape of the globe when it states:

*He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth.*

*Isaiah 40:22 NIV*

Some ancients speculated that the earth sat on a strong foundation or was supported by a god. The Bible says that the LORD...

*... hangs the earth on nothing.*

*Job 26:7 NKJV*

In the second century, Ptolemy catalogued 1022 stars—a number which was considered authoritative until Galileo's invention of the telescope in the seventeenth century. Though only about 5000 stars are visible to the unaided eye, the Bible from its earliest pages relates the number of stars to...

*... the sand which is on the seashore.*

*Genesis 22:17 NASB*

Until a century ago, it was believed the ocean bottom was shaped like a great bowl, whereas the Bible speaks of the sea floor having both mountains and valleys.

*... down to the moorings of the mountains ...*

*Jonah 2:6 NKJV*

*The valleys<sup>4</sup> of the sea ...*

*2 Samuel 22:16 NIV*

In the mid-1800s, Matthew Maury plotted the currents of the ocean and air. He was inspired by verses that spoke of...

*... the paths of the seas.*

*Psalms 8:8 NKJV*

*The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north;  
around and around goes the wind, and on its circuits the  
wind returns.*

*Ecclesiastes 1:6 ESV*

The monument raised in his honour shows him holding sea charts in one hand and a Bible in the other. It reads: "Matthew Fontaine Maury, Pathfinder of the Seas, the genius who first snatched from the oceans and atmosphere the secret of their laws. His inspiration, Holy Writ [meaning, Holy Bible]."

## 4 PERFECT AND CARING

### DAY SIX

The sixth day was the pinnacle of God's creative act. The LORD began the day by creating the land animals.

*Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind"; and it was so.*

*God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.*      Genesis 1:24-25 NASB

### KINDS

On days three, five and six, it is respectively stated that plants, sea life, birds and animals were to reproduce "*according to their kind.*" What does it mean when it says, "*according to their kind*"? Simply put, it means that cats give birth to cats, horses to horses and elephants to elephants. We don't need to be concerned that when we plant potatoes, palm trees might sprout.

Through breeding, creatures can develop into different varieties, but they will still be the same kind. The original dogs created by God were full of genetic information which could never be improved upon or added to. We derive different breeds by selectively reducing the amount of genetic information in each dog. Whether we end up with a wolfhound or a chihuahua, it is always a *reduction* in genetic information that gives rise to the new breed. And regardless of the breed, it is still a dog—it still belongs to the same kind. Because kinds are fixed, a farmer need not be concerned about the neighbour's milk cow interbreeding with his prize horse. Why? It's because the LORD embedded physical laws in the system to maintain order. We count on it. It makes life secure.

### HE CARES

The LORD didn't limit his creation of plant life to a few kinds. Instead, we see an overwhelming variety. The Bible says that YAHWEH...

*...richly provides us with everything to enjoy.*      1 Timothy 6:17 ESV

A God who created an enjoyable world is a God who truly cares. To show care is to exhibit a form of love.

The LORD could have coloured all plants and animals blue, but instead he made everything with an endless variety of pigmentation and hues. Not only did he invent colour, but he also created eyes able to see the colour.

The Creator could have made all food to taste bitter! But no, YAHWEH created endless flavours, and he also provided us with taste buds able to enjoy the fine nuances of a whole host of cooking styles.

Along with many other things, he gave fragrance to flowers and created the nose with its ability to appreciate a multitude of scents. Everything could have smelled like rotten eggs, but that is not the way God designed it.

*The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the LORD.*

*Psalm 33:5 NASB*

Love is an attribute of the LORD YAHWEH—it's a part of the way he is—it's in his nature to love.

*The lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting.*

*Psalm 103:17 NASB*

## A HOME

I have lived and travelled among cultures where it is expected that before a man can be married, he must first build a house for his intended bride. It's an interesting process to watch. The work is usually done with great thought and care. It's quite evident the young man has someone special in mind. Well, in the same way, the Bible tells us that...

*...this is what the LORD says—he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited.*

*Isaiah 45:18 NIV*

From its unique atmosphere to its vast oceans of water, from its celestial clocks that mark off time to its diverse flora and fauna, from its laws that make things safe to its great-tasting food—all things great and small were made by a kind and caring God in preparation for man to inhabit the earth.

*The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made.*

*Psalm 145:17 NIV*

In six days, the LORD YAHWEH made earth ready—ready for someone with whom he could be a special friend.

# 5 THE IMAGE OF GOD

## DAY SIX (CONTINUED)

*Then God said, “Let us<sup>5</sup> make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

*Genesis 1:26-27 ESV*

## THE IMAGE OF GOD

Man was created in the image of God. What did this mean? The ancient Egyptians believed Pharaoh was a god or at least half god. Did it mean man could be a god?

First of all, it is obvious that we are not exact duplicates of the LORD.

*For I am God, and not a man—the holy one among you.*

*Hosea 11:9 NIV*

None of us are all-knowing, all-powerful or everywhere present at one time. Rather, man is like a mirror which reflects the image of the object but is not the object itself. In a sense, when you look at man, you see many things that resemble God.

Because the LORD is a person, God created us as beings—*persons* in our own right, with personalities and various traits, as those with whom the LORD could relate and be a friend.<sup>6</sup>

God also gave man part of his *eternal* nature—a spirit that would exist forever. YAHWEH wanted friendships that would last for time without end. Scripture says:

*He has planted eternity in the human heart.* *Ecclesiastes 3:11 NLT*

Since the LORD is morally perfect, man was created innocent of all wrongdoing. That has all changed as we will see, but in the beginning man had a *sinless* nature.

Because God is the great Creator, he made man with the capacity to create. In a sense, the LORD gave man a dab of his intellect. Because man was given a *mind*, he could investigate and understand, abilities which God possesses—abilities which are an important part of being a person. Man could relate to God as an intelligent, thinking being.

Because God has feelings, he created man with *emotions*. Not only did the LORD want mankind to be able to experience kindness, he

wanted man to have the ability to show heartfelt appreciation. The ability to feel is a very important aspect of personhood. Without feelings, one's response to others would be like that of a robot—cold and calculated.

God also created man with a *will*. Man's ability to make decisions for himself is often taken for granted, but the capacity to choose and have preferences is what defines one as a person and not a robot. Man was given a will so he could freely respond to the LORD, not like a machine, but as a genuine friend.

All of these abilities are a reflection of God's character—sometimes referred to as *God's glory*. When the LORD created man in His image, he created man to reflect a little of what God is like.

*For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor.* *Psalms 8:5 NKJV*

Because humans are created in the image of God, we are set apart from any other living creature. Just as humans do not belong in the “God” category, neither do they fit in the “animal” category. We are distinct from each other.

Role	Category	Name(s)
Creator	God	YAHWEH
created	spirit beings	Gabriel, Michael, the Shining One
created	human beings	Kumar, James, Ali, Susan, etc.
created	animals, birds, fish, insects, etc.	Arabian Horse, Bald Eagle, Bluefin Tuna, Monarch Butterfly, etc.

Distinct from ...  
Distinct from ...  
Distinct from ...

Mankind alone was made in the image of God, with the glory of God. It would be with men and women that the LORD would establish lasting relationships.

### BREATH OF LIFE

There are other aspects of God's image we could look at as well, but let's move on in the story. The Bible says:

*The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.* *Genesis 2:7 NKJV*

The phrase *breath of life* is often associated with the spirit or non-material side of man. This is an additional reflection of God's image, for the LORD YAHWEH is a Spirit. As we stated before, spirits

cannot be seen since they have no bodies. However, in man's case, in addition to creating him in God's image, the LORD chose to also provide a physical house of flesh and bones for man's spirit to dwell in—a house formed from the dust of the ground. Once formed, the body would have laid there, complete in every way but entirely lifeless. It was when God breathed the spirit into man that the body became alive. Only the LORD can impart life; no person or angel, no other god or goddess has that ability.

### A COMPANION

The first and only man God created was named *Adam*, which means “man.” God then created the woman.

*The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.”*      *Genesis 2:18 NASB*

*So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.*

*And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*  
*Genesis 2:21–22, 25 ESV*

These few verses have generated heated arguments. Some have understood that when God made woman, he made her a second-class citizen. This is not consistent with what the Bible teaches. The LORD took woman out of man's side, to be a companion—not from man's heel, to be his slave. God wanted them to be each other's friend.

Adam gave his wife the name *Eve*, meaning “life giver.”

### THE PERFECT GARDEN

*The LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made.*      *Genesis 2:8 NLT*

In the Bible, Eden is spoken of as a perfect paradise—a place with luxuriant foliage, sparkling clear water teeming with fish, an incredible variety of animals—with beauty beyond description! It seems the weather was different too.



Though we have very little idea of what Eden was like, obviously God did not create a garden where Adam and Eve were struggling to survive. The garden had an abundance, and everything they could possibly need was adequately provided by the LORD. It was a perfect world in which to live. It was an expression of his love, his friendship.

*Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people.*

*Psalm 100:3 ESV*

## 6 HIGH YET NEAR

When one ponders the immensity of the universe, the intricate detail of his creation, the structure of his laws—the LORD’s greatness as a “living being” can leave one breathless.

### UNKNOWNABLE

However, even at best, our understanding of YAHWEH is limited. Much is hidden.

*Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, And His greatness is unsearchable.*

*Psalm 145:3 NKJV*

*Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. ... and his understanding no one can fathom.*

*Isaiah 40:28 NIV*

### KNOWABLE

But what we do know about YAHWEH is amazing. And though God is very great, the LORD is not distant, uncommunicative.

*For thus says the LORD ... “I have not spoken in secret, In a dark place of the earth ... I, the LORD, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.”*

*Isaiah 45:18-19 NKJV*

He speaks—and, yes, he speaks to us lowly humans.

*For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”*

*Isaiah 57:15 NIV*

Yes, the unique God is seated in Heaven, but he also walks among us. He created us.

*The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.*

*Psalm 145:18 NASB*



**CREATOR-OWNER**

Just as the angels belonged to God because he created them, so Adam and Eve belonged to God because the LORD was their Creator. (Remember the tribal illustration? He who makes the paddle also owns the paddle.) The Bible says:

*The LORD owns the earth and all it contains, the world and all who live in it.*

*Psalm 24:1 NET*

*Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours.*

*1 Chronicles 29:11 NIV*

And just as the angels were given the position of being God's servants, so YAHWEH gave Adam and Eve and all their future children the responsibility of taking care of the earth.

*God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

*Genesis 1:28 NASB*

*Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.*

*Genesis 2:15 NASB*

**A FRIEND**

Scripture says that God filled every need of Adam and Eve.

*Then God said, "I now give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the entire earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the animals of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." It was so.*

*Genesis 1: 29-30 NET*

It would seem that God appeared visibly to Adam and Eve as a man, as the Bible records instances of the LORD taking on human form so people could see him. Scripture speaks of YAHWEH coming in the evening to walk with Adam and Eve, as one would walk with a friend.

To stroll in the garden with the Creator must have been quite an experience! Perhaps God spent time explaining in detail how he made things, imparting profound knowledge of intricate flowers, calling down birds high in the treetops, and discussing the vast spectrum of animals. Perhaps he explained the laws that kept everything running so precisely. What an education and what

an Educator! No one could have better instructed them on how to care for the garden.

Because Adam and Eve were innocent of any sort of evil or wrong, they had a perfection that allowed them to be in God's company. The Bible says only perfect people<sup>7</sup> can live in the presence of a perfect God.

At this time in history, there was a bridge of friendship between God and man. The world was a perfect place in which to live. It was the way God created things to be.



### CREATION COMPLETED

*God saw all that he had made—and it was very good! There was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day.*

*Genesis 1:31 NET*

Creation was complete. People often start projects with great gusto and then lose interest over time. But God is different. The LORD always finishes what he sets out to do.

*The plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.*

*Psalms 33:11 NIV*

Some people have said that creation is ongoing, that the gods continue to tinker with the world, but the Bible says that...

*...in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh day.*

*Exodus 20:11 NET*

### DAY SEVEN

The LORD rested or ceased work on the seventh day, not because he was tired, but because his creation was complete. Perhaps he spent the day with Adam and Eve—we really don't know. What we do know is that the Bible says creation was the work of only one God, the God whose name is LORD YAHWEH.

### REVIEW

As we have read the book of beginnings, we have learned more about this unique God.

The LORD is an *eternal spirit*—the only Holy Spirit.

The LORD is a *person* or *being*, not a force.

The LORD is *all-knowing, all-powerful, and everywhere present at one time.*

The LORD is a God of *order*; he established laws that he faithfully maintains.

The LORD is a *perfect* God, morally pure and righteous.

The LORD is a *caring* God, one who shows love.

The LORD is exceedingly *great*, but he also *communicates* with mankind.

These characteristics of God form part of what is known as his *glory*. And it is the unique combination of YAHWEH's many attributes that makes for one very unique God. The Bible says:

*"No one is holy like the LORD, for there is none besides You."*

*1 Samuel 2:2 NKJV*

### WHAT ABOUT DARWINIAN EVOLUTION?

The Bible does not mention evolution. This book is not written to address this topic, but here is a little food for thought.

It is not correct to simply designate evolution as science and creation as religion, as some do. Why not?

- ♦ There is no agreed-upon body of facts that explains origins. Since Charles Darwin first published the theory in 1859, classic Darwinism has been largely replaced by Neo-Darwinism and Punctuated Equilibrium—theories that differ greatly from each other.

Many scholars point out that these theories are inconsistent with known science. For example, they tell us:

- **Cosmic evolution violates known laws of physics.** For instance, our culture is taught that, with time, the universe moved from initial chaos to ever-increasing order. We now know that the Second Law of Thermodynamics states the exact opposite: an isolated system<sup>8</sup> will become more disordered with time.

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- **Evolution is mathematically impossible.** Examples abound, but an interesting parallel was made by Sir Fred Hoyle, noted astrophysicist and mathematician who spent most of his working life at Cambridge. He compared the likelihood of even the simplest cell forming by natural processes to the probability of a tornado sweeping through a junkyard and assembling a Boeing 747.<sup>9</sup> It would never happen.
  - **Evolution is biologically untenable.** For example, Darwin wrote that the many varieties of dogs were an instance of evolution, not knowing that genetics would reveal the exact opposite—multiple “dogs” are the result of each breed having a reduction in genetic information—a *de*-evolution instead of evolution.<sup>10</sup>
- ❖ Ardent evolutionists have typically begun with the premise that there is no Creator. They believe that with sufficient time, evolution is possible. These are faith-based choices in thinking, identified more with religion than science.

On the other hand, to put creation wholly in the religion category is not correct either. Why not?

- ❖ A significant community of scientists has concluded that this complex universe could only exist if there was a designer (such as God), or a team of designers. Solely using science, they point out that the world has an irreducible complexity at even the smallest level.<sup>11</sup> They demonstrate that such universal complexity and order could only exist if it were planned from the ground up—it could not evolve by random chance. Complexity demands a designer.

Since the mid-1960s, there has been an explosion of written material on the subject (see Appendix). Much of it is readable for those unschooled in advanced sciences.

Some wonder about the creation account as it relates to dinosaurs. From a biblical viewpoint, there is no reason not to believe that God created them along with the rest of the animals. Evidence

exists that dinosaurs lived at the same time as man. Later we will see what may have caused their demise.

Others wonder about the earth's age—to some it appears very old. It is true that scientists have developed various methods<sup>12</sup> to gauge the age of the universe, but while they employ reasoned calculations, the computed ages have left scientists scratching their heads. Depending on the method used, ages range from a few thousand years to billions of years. Darwin theorized 400 million years for biological evolution. Today, a common estimate starts at 4.6 billion years. Whose clock is right?

Is there a reasonable answer that fits the biblical account? Going strictly by the Bible, we know that God created a mature earth. On the day of his creation, Adam could have walked among towering trees, marvelled at immense animals and gazed at stars in the night sky. Perhaps he thought, *"Wow! This place has been around for a long time."* However, God would have told him that it was at most, six days old; he had created the whole universe in a fully functioning state. Scientists, in looking back, try to determine the past by what they observe, just like Adam would have done. The Bible, however, records the origins of the earth from the perspective of an eyewitness—God himself.

So, did YAHWEH mean it when he said he created the universe? Who are we to believe? Whose word is to be trusted?

Centuries ago, a king pondered his place in the world:

*When I look up at the heavens, which your fingers made, and see the moon and the stars, which you set in place, Of what importance is the human race, that you should notice them?*

*Of what importance is mankind, that you should pay attention to them, and make them a little less than the heavenly beings?*

*You grant mankind honor and majesty; you appoint them to rule over your creation; you have placed everything under their authority, including all the sheep and cattle, as well as the wild animals, the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea and everything that moves through the currents of the seas. O LORD, our Lord, how magnificent is your reputation throughout the earth!*

*Psalms 8:3–9 NET*