

Lesson 4

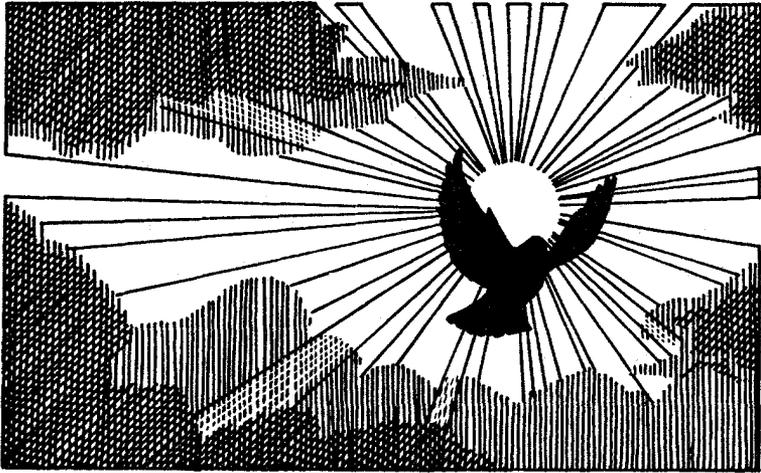
The Spirit in Creation

A Christian astronomer was traveling cross-country by train, on his way to deliver a lecture. In his baggage was one of the first battery-powered scale models of the solar system, which he had constructed and was using in his lectures. An atheist sat down beside him on the train. In the course of their conversation, the atheist began to ridicule the idea of a divine creation of the universe.

The astronomer listened quietly for a while. Then he invited the atheist to accompany him to the baggage car. There he removed the cover from his model and pressed the switch. As the little planets orbited the sun in perfect harmony, the atheist was much impressed “Magnificent,” he said. “Who designed this?” The astronomer smiled. “No one designed it,” he replied. “It all came together by an accident of nature.”

The atheist was silent. These were the very words he had used to explain his ideas about the beginning of the solar system after which the astronomer had patterned his model. If the model needed a creator, how much more did the original design!

The earth, the heavens, and all that dwells in them are the handiwork of a divine Creator. It was by the power of the Holy Spirit that the spoken word of God was put into effect. In this lesson we will study the work of the Holy Spirit in Creation. Our divine, personal Friend was there when the world was formed, and He is still active in our lives today in creative power.



lesson outline

Cooperating in Creation
Creating the World
Creating Man
Sustaining All Things

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Discuss what the Bible reveals about the involvement of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in Creation.
- Explain ways in which the creation of man differed from the rest of Creation.
- Recognize examples of the power of the Holy Spirit in Creation and in sustaining His creation.

learning activities

1. Study the lesson in the manner described in the learning activities for Lesson 1. Read the lesson content, find and read all Scripture texts given, and answer the study questions.
2. As background for this lesson, read Genesis, chapters 1 and 2 and John chapter 1.
3. Find definitions in the glossary at the back of the study guide for any key words you do not know.
4. Take the self test and check your answers.

key words

astronomer	hover	sustaining
astronomy	impartation	universe
celestial	preexistence	vegetation
finite	solar system	

lesson development

COOPERATING IN CREATION

The Pre-Creation Planners

Objective 1. *Explain why the Genesis account of Creation is not more specific about the involvement of the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Creation.*

“In the beginning God . . .” (Genesis 1:1). These opening words of the Bible in the Hebrew language use a *plural* name of God. Although the Son and the Holy Spirit are not specifically named, the Triune God is implied.

The doctrine of the Trinity is part of God’s progressive revelation of Himself that was not developed until the writing of the New Testament. At the time that Moses wrote the Pentateuch (first five books of the Old Testament) many people were polytheistic (believed there were many gods). A revelation of the Triune God at that point in time would have brought confusion. God knew that the people were not ready to receive

this truth, so He did not reveal it. His self-revelation is progressive because He knows exactly how much to reveal at any given time. Thus, the Creation account in the book of Genesis does not give us all of the details of God's creative work. Other Scriptures help us to understand the role of each person of the Trinity in God's creation plan as well as in His redemptive plan.

The book of Genesis talks about many beginnings: of creation, of man, of sin, of judgment, and of redemption. Only the first two chapters tell about Creation. The Creation account is recorded briefly as a background to the early events in man's history leading to his need for redemption.

Even *before* Creation God already knew what would happen to His creation. He anticipated that man would sin, and He made a provision for man's salvation. Several Scriptures reveal this to us:

1. Revelation 13:8 speaks of the book of life belonging to the Lamb (Jesus) that was slain from the foundation (creation) of the world.

2. Ephesians 1:4 tells us that God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world.

3. Matthew 25:34 refers to a kingdom prepared for the faithful since the foundation of the world.

Several Scripture references confirm the eternal existence of the Triune God. Thus, we know that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who always act in perfect unity, planned and carried out the creation of all things together. Let's look at some of these Scriptures:

1. In Psalm 90:2 the psalmist declares: "Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." *This is a reference to the preexistence of the Father.*

2. The apostle John declares *the preexistence of the Son* in John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning." John

goes on to say, “The Word became flesh and lived for awhile among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). The Son was there at Creation in equal presence with the Father.

3. The presence of the Holy Spirit at Creation is implied in Hebrews 9:14, where He is called the *eternal Spirit*. He is without beginning or ending, and He was present with the Father and the Son at Creation. The *preexistence of the Holy Spirit* is confirmed by this reference to His eternal nature.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were present in the beginning. The Triune God, who caused everything else that exists, is Himself the “uncaused cause”—that is, He has always existed, and He will always exist. Our finite minds cannot fully grasp this truth, because we are time oriented. God is timeless. Before the *beginning* spoken of in Genesis 1:1, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in perfect unity decreed the plan of Creation as well as the plan of Redemption.

1 Based on the text, give a reason for the Genesis account of Creation not being more specific about the involvement of the Trinity.

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2 Read the first chapter of Genesis and answer these questions:

a How many times is God mentioned in this chapter?

the Holy Spirit? the Son?

b We believe that verse 1 implies the Trinity because a plural name is used for God. What other verse implies the Trinity?

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The Co-Creators

Objective 2. Describe ways that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were involved in Creation.

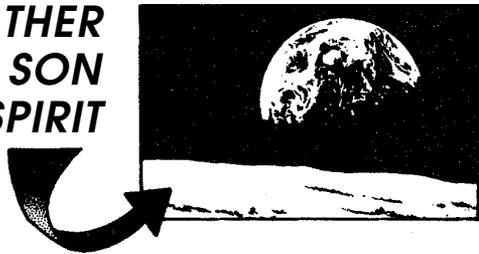
Scripture also very clearly assigns the act of Creation to all of the members of the Trinity.

1. When the early church members prayed to God, they said, “Sovereign Lord you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them” (Acts 4:24). They were obviously praying to the Father.

2. Again, in the beginning of John’s Gospel he spoke these words concerning the Son: “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:3). Clearly Jesus was involved in creation.

3. In a beautiful psalm of praise, Creation is described as a work of the Holy Spirit. In Psalm 104:30 the psalmist declares, “When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.” This speaks not only of the Spirit’s involvement in creating the earth, but also in sustaining it.

**FROM THE FATHER
THROUGH THE SON
BY THE SPIRIT**



Creation is the result of perfect cooperation of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We don’t fully understand how this took place. Stanley Horton says, “The Father is the Creator, the Maker. He created through the Son and by the Spirit. The mystery of how this was done is not explained in the Bible in any detail. The attention is on the fact that He is the Creator and we are His creatures” (Horton, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 52).

We will see that the Holy Spirit took an active part in all of creation. He is specifically mentioned as *moving* in creative power, which is a dominant feature of many of His activities (See Job 33:4; Psalm 104:30; John 6:63; and also Romans 8:11 for reference to the Spirit’s life-giving power.)

3 Even though the creation account in Genesis does not emphasize the involvement of all of the three persons in the Trinity, how do we know that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were equally involved?

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CREATING THE WORLD

Objective 3. *Distinguish between true and false statements regarding the events of Creation.*

Bible scholars, among others, have given many theories to explain the darkness and void that covered the earth before the acts of creation began. Since the Word of God does not reveal the reason to us, and we can only suppose what may have brought it about, we will not attempt to discuss it here. We know from Scripture that it was a condition of emptiness and ruin which only the operation of the Spirit of God could transform into the fullness and beauty that followed.

Moving on the Waters

Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters (Genesis 1:2).

The foregoing verse pictures the Holy Spirit hovering over the pre-creation universe. Deuteronomy 32:11 uses the same verb to describe a mother bird hovering or fluttering over her young in an energetic, protective way. The dynamic spiritual energy of the third Person of the Trinity is revealed here as ready to carry out the creative decrees of God. The series of creative commands that followed were His to carry out. He is revealed as the active agent of Creation.

The first command came: “Let there be light” (Genesis 1:3). Immediately there was light, and it was good.

The second command came: “Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water” (Genesis 1:6).

The foggy mist lifted and became clouds above the waters by the action of the Holy Spirit. One interpretation of Job 26:13 describes what happened: “By His breath [Spirit] the skies became fair.”

The third command was given: “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear” (Genesis 1:9). The oceans surged back as the omnipotent energy of the Spirit of God operated within and upon it. Whole continents emerged from the waters and became dry land.

4 Which of these words best describes the involvement of the Holy Spirit in separating the waters?

- a) Restful
- b) Waiting
- c) Commanding
- d) Powerful

Moving in the Earth

The commands that follow (Genesis 1:11-13, 20-25) regarding the earth portray the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Life. We saw earlier that this is one of the titles given to Him.

He moves over the vast lands of the earth’s continents, and they begin to produce all kinds of vegetation suited to the condition of their climate (Genesis 1:12). He moves in the oceans and lakes and rivers, and they are filled with unnumbered creatures. Beautiful birds fill the air (vv. 20-22). He moves again over the land and gives the breath of life to every kind of animal (vv. 24-25).

The singer of Psalm 104 praises God especially for this part of Creation, and says, “When you send your Spirit, they are created” (Psalm 104:30). It is obvious from the context that *they* refers to the living creatures that populate the waters and lands of our earth (see Psalm 104:24-25).

The variety and beauty of plants, animals, fish, and fowl leave us in awe as to the capacity of their Creator. In the African museum in Brussels, Belgium, there is an enormous variety of plant and animal life from the continent of Africa. One of the

most interesting displays is of hundreds of delicate, intricate, and colorful insects and bugs. Some of them have the appearance of tiny jewels sparkling in the sunlight. This is just a minute part of the great variety in God's creation. It was the Holy Spirit who put God's plan into action in creative power.

5 Read Genesis 1:11-12 and 20-25. These Scriptures reveal that God created

- a) every kind of vegetation, sea creatures, birds, and animals.
- b) certain kinds of vegetation, sea creatures, birds, and animals from which a larger variety developed.
- c) a small number of each type of living thing which produced other types.

Moving in the Heavens

By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry hosts by the breath of his mouth (Psalm 33:6).

In this Scripture the Psalmist records the creation of the heavens by the Spirit (breath) of God. The Genesis account of creation focuses on the earth and the placement of heavenly bodies as its lights (Genesis 1:14-18).

No study reveals the awesome power of God as much as a study in astronomy (the science of the celestial bodies, such as stars). Our universe has such enormous dimensions, to comprehend it goes beyond the ability of our imagination. As human beings we are but specks of dust on the earth, and the earth seems less than a speck of dust in proportion to the universe.

Distances in the universe are so great, our earthly means of measurement seem totally inadequate. For example, measurements in deep space must be based on the speed of light, which travels 186,000 miles (299,270 kilometers) per second. Distances in space are not measured by seconds or minutes, or even hours or days. The measurements are in *light years!*

The nearest star outside our solar system is four and one-half light years away. In other words, its light takes four and one-half years to reach us traveling at 186,000 miles a second. At the

present time, astronomers can observe stars three billion light years away from the earth!

To give you some idea of the *number* of stars that were made by the breath (Spirit) of God, there are 100 billion stars in our galaxy (a galaxy is one of many systems of stars). Astronomers have observed more than a billion galaxies of stars.

Jeremiah spoke for humanity when he used the expression “as countless as the stars of the sky and as measureless as the sand on the seashore” (Jeremiah 33:22). The Psalmist David proclaimed the wonder of God’s creation in Psalm 19:1: “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” What a mighty God we serve! This same Holy Spirit who carried out the Father’s decrees as the agent of Creation is working in our lives today; His power is available to us to carry out the Father’s will in the world that He formed so amazingly.

6 Circle the letter in front of TRUE statements concerning the events of creation.

- a** Each Person of the Godhead was responsible for a different part of the Creation.
- b** The Spirit’s hovering over the pre-Creation waters gives the idea that His dynamic energy is ready to carry out the creative decrees of God.
- c** Even though the universe is enormous beyond our power to imagine, every part of it works in perfect harmony with other parts.
- d** God created the earth, its vegetation, animals, birds, and sea creatures out of nothing.
- e** The Genesis account of Creation focuses on the heavens and how they were formed.
- f** The sun, moon, and stars are celestial bodies created by God.
- g** One of the things the Spirit did at Creation was to give the breath of life to living creatures.

CREATING MAN

Objective 4. *State what gave man life and how this differed from the creation of other beings.*

Designed by God

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness’” (Genesis 1:26). Again there is the plural name of God, followed by plural pronouns. The Godhead is seen planning a special manifestation of divine love.

We described man as a speck of dust when he is compared to the size of the universe. To God he is a very special “speck of dust.” He is the crowning work of God’s creation and the peculiar object of His divine love.

Revelation 13:8 reveals that man’s salvation was planned before creation. This divine decision (Genesis 1:26) must have taken place before the beginning of time. Let’s try to imagine what took place in the Godhead. “Let us design a being like ourselves,” the Father said, “a being that can think and feel and make decisions—a spiritual being we can communicate with—a being with whom we can have close communion.”

In making this plan, God determined to give man full freedom to accept or reject the love of his Creator. In His omniscience, He knew that man would fall into sin, and that it would be necessary to provide a way for him to renew his fellowship with God. The Son of God would be called upon to make the supreme sacrifice. He willingly offered Himself. The Holy Spirit would be the one to carry out the plan. God knew that there would be a select company who would by an act of will choose to follow Him. This company of believers would be partakers of His own nature. Even before the act of Creation God worked out the plan of salvation.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:27).

7 Why did God work out the plan of salvation even before He created man?

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Formed by God

“And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground” (Genesis 2:7). Other species of life came into existence as God spoke the word and the Holy Spirit moved over the face of the earth.

Man was different. God personally molded his body from the dust of the ground. His creation was distinct from all other creative acts. Chapter 2 of Genesis gives us fuller details about some of the creation events in chapter 1. In Genesis 2:21-22 we see that the creation of man was made complete when God took one of the man’s ribs and made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man.

Quickened by God

And the Lord God . . . breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being (Genesis 2:7). The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life (Job 33:4).

To *quicken* means to give life. First God formed the body. Then the Spirit of God breathed into it, bringing to life the spiritual person who would inhabit the body. The living being which came from the breath of God seems to be more of an *impartation* of the Holy Spirit than a creation. Some element of creation is there, but the living being comes from the breath of the Almighty.

While we are considering here both facts and powers beyond our human ability to understand, it is safe to say that the creation of man gives him a place of closeness with God that none of God’s other creatures possesses.

8 At what point in the creation of man did he receive life?

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9 In what way was the creation of man different from the rest of creation?

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- 10** This difference points out that, of all God’s creatures, man is a
- a) physical being.
 - b) spiritual being.
 - c) being of no greater importance in God’s sight than any other.

SUSTAINING ALL THINGS

Objective 5. *Identify Scriptures which reveal activities of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in sustaining creation.*

Just as all three Persons of the Trinity were involved in the creation of all things, so are they active in sustaining creation. Many Scriptures speak of God preserving His people (see Deuteronomy 6:24; Psalm 31:23; Proverbs 2:8; 2 Timothy 4:18). Psalm 121 declares:

I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

Jesus, you will recall, said He would ask the Father to send the Counselor to be our constant Companion (John 14:16). It is He who watches over us day and night, and we are safe in His care. His watchful care extends not only to us but also to the entire created order.

11 Read Job 12:7-10. What is it that the animals, the birds, and the earth, and the fish of the sea teach us?

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12 Read Isaiah 40:7 and 13. State in your own words what these verses mean to you.
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13 Read each Scripture listed (right), and match each with the activity it describes (left).

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| a Jesus sustains all things by His Word. | 1) Psalm 104:30 |
| b We need not fear, because God will strengthen and uphold us. | 2) Hebrews 1:1-3 |
| c The Spirit who created all things also renews all things. | 3) Isaiah 41:10 |

14 These Scriptures reveal that both creation and the preservation (care) of all that was created is

- a) mostly the work of the Holy Spirit.
- b) mainly an activity of God the Father.
- c) carried out by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

As we behold the magnitude of God’s creation, we must stand in awe and amazement at the wonders He has performed. Surely He is worthy of our honor and praise. When He completed His work on the sixth day and observed all that He had done, He said that it was very good.

God created all things for His glory. “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Psalm 19:1). His creation reveals His glory. He created us that we might glorify Him. Many Scriptures exhort us to glorify God (see 1 Chronicles 16:29; Psalm 29:1; Romans 15:6, 9). Do you glorify God your Creator? Do you honor Jesus, the Son, and the Holy Spirit who has come to dwell within you?

There is no better conclusion to this lesson than the words of the four and twenty elders who fell down before the Creator and cast their crowns before His throne (Revelation 4:11, KJV):

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou has created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

self-test

MULTIPLE CHOICE. Circle the letter in front of the best answer to each question.

1 Which of these completions is correct concerning the amount of revelation the Genesis account gives to the participation in Creation of the Godhead? The Genesis account reveals

- a) that all three Persons of the Trinity were fully involved, and details are clearly given.
- b) little about individual involvement, but it emphasizes the plurality of the one eternal God and that He is the Creator of all things.
- c) that the Holy Spirit had the greatest involvement in Creation.

2 Which of these is given the most emphasis in Genesis?

- a) Creation of the universe
- b) Beginning of sin and judgment
- c) Man's need for redemption
- d) Creation of man

3 God's plan of salvation was decided

- a) before the beginning of time.
- b) after man sinned.
- c) at the time Jesus was born.
- d) at the time of Creation.

4 Psalm 90:2, John 1:1, and Hebrews 9:14 confirm the eternal nature of God by reference to

- a) the presence and involvement of the Triune God at Creation.
- b) the preexistence of the Trinity in relation to the time of Creation.
- c) the preexistence of the Father, with the Son and Holy Spirit appearing later in time.
- d) the condition of darkness and void at the time of Creation.

5 Creation is an operation of

- a) the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- b) the Father and the Holy Spirit.
- c) God and man.

6 The Spirit's activity in the Creation of the world was to

- a) speak the Word.
- b) decide what was to be done.
- c) move in power to carry out the divine decree.

7 What was the Holy Spirit's involvement in the creation of man?

- a) Forming man from the dust of the earth.
- b) Making woman from the rib of the man.
- c) Imparting the breath of life which made man a spiritual being.
- d) Hovering over man in creative power.

8 Following creation, the Holy Spirit's involvement with the created order may be described most accurately as

- a) sustaining all that was created.
- b) showing concern for people who obeyed God.
- c) gradually populating the earth with new forms of life.

9 God created man and the world because He wanted to

- a) be complete.
- b) display His glory and receive glory.
- c) have control of something.

10 In what way can we best glorify God for all that He has done?

- a) Enjoy the beauties of nature
- b) Worship and obey Him
- c) Show kindness to all His creatures
- d) Take as much control as possible of all living things

11 In what way was the creation of man different from the rest of Creation?

- a) Man is the only creature who came into being as an adult.
- b) Man was formed by God from dust, and then God breathed into him the breath of life; the rest of Creation was by the spoken word.
- c) Man was given the power to sustain all other things.

12 Why was God's revelation of Himself progressive rather than complete at the time Moses wrote the Pentateuch?

- a) Because His divine nature was not fully developed at that time.
- b) The people were not ready to receive the revelation of a Triune God.
- c) Moses did not understand the revelation of the Trinity clearly enough to explain it so that it would be understood.

answers to study questions

- 8** When God breathed into his nostrils the breath (Spirit) of life.
- 1** The people were not ready for the full revelation of the Trinity at that time—it would have confused them.
- 9** All other created things were spoken into existence by God as His Spirit moved over the earth. God formed man from dust and gave him life with His own breath.
- 2 a** At least 30; once; not at all.
b Verse 26 (plural pronouns *us* and *our*).
- 10 b)** spiritual being.
- 3** Other Scriptures throughout the Bible clearly give credit to the Godhead (the Trinity) for Creation.
- 11** The life and breath are in the hand of the Lord.
- 4 d)** Powerful.
- 12** Your answer. I believe they indicate that the Spirit of God has given us life, and He has control over the beginning and ending of our lives.
- 5 a)** every kind of vegetation, sea creatures, birds, and animals.
- 13 a** 2) Hebrews 1:1-3.
b 3) Isaiah 41:10.
c 1) Psalm 104:30.
- 6 a** False.
b True.
c True.
d True.
e False.
f True.
g True.
- 14 c)** carried out by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- 7** He knew that man would not keep his fellowship with Him and that a provision would have to be made to restore that fellowship.