

What's Your Image of God?



IN THE BEGINNING

"In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth . . ." (Gn 1, 1). This simple verse is one of the foundational beliefs of Christianity. We are not a random collection of atoms. The world is not a lucky combination of cosmic circumstances. The universe did not just accidentally happen.

The beginning of wisdom is acknowledging that a higher power is at work in our life, that the universe has purpose, and that everything was created by God. The ancient writers and editors of Genesis expressed these ideas in the Creation stories. The church affirms these beliefs. They are expressed in a prayer called the Apostles' Creed, which begins, "I believe in God the father almighty, creator of heaven and earth."

Genesis expresses another foundational belief: God created everything good! Read the story in chapter 1 and see how this belief is constantly repeated: And humankind is "very good," created in God's own image. This is God's message to you in the first chapter of the Bible: You carry God's image within you. You are very good! Don't let anyone ever convince you otherwise.

► Gn 1, 1—2, 4

did you KNOW?

Literary Genres

Some Christians believe that God actually created the world in seven twenty-four-hour days. Such a belief comes from a literal reading of the first chapter of Genesis, as though it were a scientific textbook. However, Genesis was written not as a science article but as symbolic stories, sometimes called mythic stories, that convey great moral and spiritual truths. We should not try to come to any scientific conclusions about the creation of the world from reading these stories.

Mythic stories are one literary type, or genre. You just have to look in a newspaper to see examples of different literary genres: news stories, advice columns, editorials, and comics. Each genre has different rules for interpreting its meaning. The Bible also contains many types of literary genres, including hero stories, poetry, laws, legends, fictional satire, debates, and letters. To properly understand the Bible, pay attention to the literary genre—otherwise, you might believe the Bible is saying something God doesn't intend.

▶ Gn 1, 1–2, 4

PRAY IT!

In God's Image

God does not make mistakes; people do. Some people might be tempted to deny their racial heritage, to even change their physical appearance in order to fit into the latest fad or the dominant cultural image of beauty. We must remember that physical features are not accidents. God planned for them—we are all made in God's image.

If we are to authentically love ourselves, we must love our whole selves. This includes a love for dark skin or light skin; straight hair or tight curly hair; wide nose or pug nose; and all the variation in between. Whatever our appearance, we are all blessed of God.

Dear God, I praise you for who I am on the inside and on the outside. Amen.

▶ Gn 1, 26–27