

Genesis 1:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

Analysis

And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry l... This verse is part of the creation account that establishes God's sovereign power and purposeful design. The structured pattern of the seven days reveals divine order, intentionality, and progressive development from formless void to a world prepared for human habitation.

The recurring phrases "And God said," "and it was so," "And God saw that it was good" create a liturgical rhythm emphasizing:

1. creation by divine decree
2. immediate fulfillment of God's word,
3. divine evaluation of creation's goodness.

This pattern refutes both polytheistic chaos-and-conflict creation myths and modern materialistic chance-based origins.

Each stage builds toward the climax of human creation in God's image. The theological themes include divine transcendence and immanence, purposeful design, creation's inherent goodness, and humanity's unique role as God's image-bearers and stewards. The creation account provides the foundation for understanding work and rest (Sabbath), male and female relationships (marriage), human dominion (stewardship), and moral accountability to the Creator. These

opening chapters establish the worldview framework for all subsequent biblical revelation.

Historical Context

Genesis 1 stands in stark contrast to ancient Near Eastern creation accounts like the Babylonian Enuma Elish, Egyptian creation myths, and Ugaritic texts. While these portrayed creation resulting from conflicts between deities or sexual generation of gods, Genesis presents a sovereign monotheistic God who creates effortlessly by divine decree. This would have been revolutionary to ancient readers accustomed to polytheistic cosmogonies.

The Hebrew text's literary structure (seven days, recurring formulas) suggests careful composition as theological proclamation rather than primitive mythology. Archaeological discoveries of creation tablets from Mesopotamia (2000-1500 BCE) reveal that Genesis addresses similar questions but provides radically different answers about the nature of God, humanity, and the cosmos. The absence of theogony (origin of gods) and theomachy (conflict between gods) distinguishes Genesis from its ancient Near Eastern context.

For Israelites emerging from Egyptian bondage or later facing Babylonian captivity, this truth that Yahweh created everything would have been profoundly liberating and countercultural. The gods of Egypt and Babylon were mere creations, not creators. Genesis 1 establishes that Israel's God alone is supreme, rendering pagan deities powerless and their worship futile.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does this verse contribute to the biblical doctrine of creation, fall, or redemption?
2. What specific changes in thinking or behavior does this verse call us to make?
3. In what ways does this narrative foreshadow or typify aspects of Christ's redemptive work?

Interlinear Text

אֱלֹהִים וְאָמֵר	יָקֹר	בְּמִים	מִתְחַת
said	And God	be gathered together	Let the waters
H559	H430	H6960	H4325
under the heaven	unto	place	one
H8064	H413	H4725	H259
and let the dry	land appear		
H3004	H7200		

Additional Cross-References

2 Peter 3:5 (References God): For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water;

Psalms 95:5 (Parallel theme): The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

Jeremiah 5:22 (Parallel theme): Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

Jonah 1:9 (References God): And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land.

Psalms 33:7 (Parallel theme): He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.

Ecclesiastes 1:7 (Parallel theme): All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.

Job 26:10 (Parallel theme): He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end.

Revelation 10:6 (Parallel theme): And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: