

## Trinity Sunday

OLD TESTAMENT – Genesis 1:1-2:4a

### *The Creation of the World*

**1** In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. **2** The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. **3** And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. **4** And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. **6** And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” **7** And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. **8** And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. **9** And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. **10** God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. **11** And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. **12** The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. **13** And there was evening and there was morning, the third. **14** And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, **15** and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. **16** And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. **17** And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, **18** to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. **19** And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. **20** And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” **21** 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. **22** And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” **23** And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. **24** And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. **25** And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. **26** Then God said, “Let us 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.” **27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. **28** And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” **29** And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. **30** And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. **31** And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

A few introductory items...

- “Genesis” is a Greek word meaning “origin.” Genesis is not intended to be a general history of the ancient world. The specific purpose of Genesis is to trace God’s saving activity. Genesis is the first chapter in the history of God’s magnificent rescue operation which we call His plan of salvation. (PBC)
- Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible which includes Genesis. They are referred to “the Torah.” “Torah is usually translated as “Law” and means “instruction,” “teaching.” It isn’t just “does” and “don’ts.” It also contains the love of God shown to His people and plan of salvation for all people. These five books are also commonly called the Pentateuch “the five fifths of the Law.” (PBC)
- Moses arranged his literary material in ten sections, each introduced by the formula: “This is the account of...” These ten “accounts” are mini-histories and illustrate how from the very beginning of time God been interested and active in establishing a family of believers. Nine of these ten “accounts” or histories are named after people, the very first is the “account of heaven and earth” (2:4). (PBC)

Here is a summary of the ten “accounts”: (PBC)

1. The account of heaven and earth (Genesis 2:4-4:26 explains what happened when evil invaded God’s perfect creation.
2. The account of Adam (5:1-6:8) traces the ancestry of the promised Messiah from Adam to Noah.
3. The account of Noah (6:9-9:29) gives us an awesome double message. While destroying all life outside the ark through a worldwide flood, the Lord graciously preserved the messianic line through Noah and his family.
4. The account of the sons of Noah (10:1-11:9) emphasizes the unity of the human race by tracing the distribution of Noah’s three sons into various nations and languages. The account concludes with the dispersion of Babel.
5. The account of Shem (11:10-26) gives us the forefathers of the Messiah, narrowing the Savior’s ancestry from the line of Shem to Terah, the father of Abraham.

These first five “accounts” trace the early history of God’s saving activity in the ancient world. The second set of five “accounts” trace God’s saving activity among the patriarchs.

6. The account of Terah (11:27-25:11) is one of the longest “accounts” covering almost a quarter of the book of Genesis. God called Abram out of culture where idolatry was practiced, and trained him to trust completely in God’s promise.
7. The account of Ishmael (25:12-18) is the shortest of Moses’ ten “accounts.”
8. The account of Isaac (25:35-29) carries the fulfillment of the Messiah promise through two generations that followed Abraham.
9. The account of Esau (36:1-37:1) again constitutes a side line.
10. The account of Jacob (37:2-50:26) is the last and longest of Moses ten “accounts.”

**1:1-2:3** God’s creation of the world is presented in three stages; declaration of the creation of matter out of nothingness (1:1-2); the ordering of creation (days 1 and 2, 1:3-8); and the filling of creation (days 3 through 6, 1:9-31). Chemnitz: “On the first day He created the earth in order that one the third day He might...mold and prepare it for the use of man” (LTh 1:163). God fills creation in two steps: inanimate objects first (days 3 and 4, 1:9-19), then animate beings (days 5 and 6, 1:20-31). The account concludes with God’s rest on the seventh day (2:1-3). The text is written in prose, though several aspects, such as the

repetition of the formula “God saw that it was good,” give the text a heightened rhetorical feel. (TLSB)

**1:1** A summary statement introducing the six days of creative activity. The truth of this majestic verse was joyfully affirmed by poet (Ps 102:25) and prophet (Isa 40:21). (CSB)

Making the claim that Moses did in his day he would have faced the same challenges it meets today. Imagine yourself for the moment at the world’s greatest university in Moses’ day. The center of learning is located at the heart of a sophisticated society. Ancient Egypt had distinguished itself with previously unequalled achievements in arts and letters as well as the sciences. Moses, who was raised in Pharaoh’s court, benefited from the best Egypt could offer. Unlike most people, Moses enjoyed leisure time to learn the literature and arts of Egypt. Why, Moses could have gone on a picnic with his friends to the Great Pyramid. This structure, already a thousand years old in Moses’ day, is proof of expertise in mathematics and engineering that still astounds scientists some five thousand years later. The Egyptian builders worked within margins of error that compare favorably with the modern skyscrapers. In such an environment we could expect Moses to make his point with great care and skill. And Moses did just that as he wrote Genesis. (LL)

*In the beginning God.* The Bible always assumes, and never argues, God’s existence. Although everything else had a beginning, God has always been (Ps 90:2). (CSB)

*In the beginning.* Jn 1:1–10, which stresses the work of Christ in creation, opens with the same phrase. (CSB)

The ESV reflects the traditional translation of the opening phrase, which establishes the point in time at which the action occurs. (Some critical scholars translate the Hebrew text similarly to two Babylonian epics, the “Eua Elish” and the “Epic of Atra-Khasis.” Their translation allows denial of the important biblical teaching that God created the world out of nothing (ex nihilo) and argues instead that matter is eternal) The Bible affirms that God created the world (Ps. 90:2; Jer. 10:16) and that He created it out of nothing through Jesus Christ (Rom. 4:17; Heb 1:2). Tertullian: “By not mentioning (a source of material, (Scripture) has given us a clear proof that there was no such thing” (ANF 3:489). (TLSB)

The word order of this first sentence of the Bible seems perfectly normal in English, but Hebrew sentences normally begin with the verb. Here the word order is inverted, for the sake of emphasis. Moses wants to emphasize that there was a point of absolute beginning, when only God was in existence. (PBC)

*God created.* The Hebrew noun *Elohim* is plural but the verb is singular, a normal usage in the OT when reference is to the one true God. This use of the plural expresses intensification rather than number and has been called the plural of majesty, or of potentiality. In the OT the Hebrew verb for “create” is used only of divine, never of human, activity. (CSB)

Hebrew “bara” is never used with a subject other than God in the OT. God alone has the power to create (bring into existence from nothing). Humans make (or “create) things only by rearranging what God has created. That God alone is the Creator of all that exists affirms that He is the only true God. (TLSB)

This summarizes the entire text before the details are given. While it describes the work of the one God (all three persons), in light of the Gospel we may refer verse 1 especially to “God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

The Hebrew verb translated “created” is a very special one. In the Bible that verb (1) is used only of God’s activity, and (2) always expresses the origin of something extraordinary, absolutely unique.

Sometimes God creates by using existing materials; when He created Adam, for example, He used the dust of the ground. But if the activity described in this opening verse took place at the beginning, when only God existed, it must have been a creation out of nothing. (PBC)

Moses began with Genesis and then followed with Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. All five books show his interest in mapping the family line of the people of Israel. So serious is Moses' desire to trace the family tree that he takes us back to the beginning of all history. But more than the past was on Moses. Mind! The children of Israel had spent centuries in Egypt, a land that its own explanation of the world. Particularly important to Egyptians was portraying the sun, the stars, and the earthly elements as gods. By beginning Israel's family tree with the statement that God created "the heaven and the earth," Moses takes away their positions as gods. The original Hebrew word for create is used only with God as the subject and refers to His special, sovereign action. Only the true God, *Elohim*, is to receive credit for creating and controlling the universe. (LL)

*the heavens and the earth.* "All things" (Isa 44:24). That God created everything is also taught in Ecc 1:5; Jer 10:16; Jn 1:3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2. The positive, life-oriented teaching of v. 1 is beautifully summarized in Isa 45:18. (CSB)

The first "couple" did not arise by any natural process but came into being as a result of God's direct and unique creative activity. In addition, these terms together refer to the world of God's creation, the details of which follow. Throughout Chap.1, "heavens" refers to the sky and the cosmos beyond the boundaries of the earth, not to the abode of God. (TLSB)

God's first act, the creation, is an act of grace. God acts freely to reflect His character, making the world "very good" (1:31). Even after the fall and the coming of sin, much of the goodness that God built into creation remains. Philosophers debate why evil exists, and people ask how a good God could allow bad things to happen. But it is not the existence of evil and suffering that requires an explanation; it is the existence of goodness and beauty and love that is most remarkable. A world without God cannot explain such things. The persistence of goodness reminds us of what we have lost, but it also offers us a glimpse of God's grace and the everlasting glory to which God has called us through Christ. • "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps 51:10). Amen. (TLSB)

**1:2-8** Describes matter at the first moment of creation (v. 2) and then describes how God arranged the matter He created. First God separated light from darkness (vv. 3-5). Next, God separated what is below the sky from what is above it (vv. 6-8). These arrangements established what we call "time" (expressed in the sequence of days and nights) and "space" (expressed in the separation of the waters above and below the sky). This work was the first two days of creation. Scripture does not explicitly state when God made the angels. Ancient rabbinic and Christian interpreters commonly held the angels were created during the first days, though their opinions and reasons varied widely. (TLSB)

**1:2 earth.** The focus of this account. (CSB)

Once again the order of the Hebrew sentences, which normally begins with the verb, is inverted. Moses wants to focus our attention on just one part of the universe – the earth, the home God has designed for the human race. (PBC)

*without form and void.* The phrase, which appears elsewhere only in Jer 4:23, gives structure to the rest of the chapter. God's "separating" and "gathering" on days 1-3 gave form, and his "making" and "filling" on days 4-6 removed the emptiness. (CSB)

God's initial creative act resulted in shapeless matter that God proceeded to arrange, or order, in several stages. (TLSB)

The piles of concrete block and sand and lumber a builder assembles at the construction site aren't very pretty. Neither was the earth after God's initial creative act. Moses lists four conditions which God was going to modify during that creation week. If in subsequent discussion, these four conditions are referred to as deficiencies, this is not to be understood as suggesting that God's original creation was not good. The following are the four conditions which were temporary and which God would modify during the creation week: (PBC)

- *Formlessness* (The universe was a shapeless blob of material); (PBC)
- *Emptiness* (The universe lacked the vegetation and the creatures God would later supply); (PBC)
- *Darkness* (This would be removed only when God announced: "let there be light!"); (PBC)
- *The deep* (A fluid mass covered everything). (PBC)

Christians confess that *God the Father Almighty* is the maker of heaven and earth. This is not to be understood as though the other persons of the Trinity had nothing to do with creating the universe. The Apostle John says concerning *God the Son*: "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:3). *God the Holy Spirit* was also active at creation. He is described as "hovering" over the waters. Moses uses this verb elsewhere to describe the action of a mother eagle hovering over her nest, providing for her young and protecting them. The life-giving Spirit of God was active at the creation, preserving what God had created, preparing the universe for what God had in mind. The work of creation, then, is a work in which all the members of the Trinity share. (PBC)

*darkness ... the waters.* Completes the picture of a world awaiting God's light-giving, order-making and life-creating word. (CSB)

*and.*† Or "but." The awesome picture of the original state of the visible creation is relieved by the majestic announcement that the mighty Spirit of God hovers over creation. The announcement anticipates God's creative words that follow. (CSB)

Formlessness is pictured as a watery mixture; neither the sky nor the dry land has been distinguished. Israelites understood water as a formless material. (TLSB)

This would only be removed when God announced: "Let there be light!" The deep expresses the idea of a fluid mass covering everything. (PBC)

*Deep.* Wordplay: "without form" (Hebrew *tohu*) and "deep" (Hebrew *tehom*) sound similar. "Deep" not the everyday term for water or the oceans; suggests the vast inaccessible and formless depths of the seas. Image of the unidentified matter of creation as a limitless ocean is suggested by the formlessness of the underwater world, which was unknown, and, therefore, mysterious (cf. Job 38:16). Elsewhere, God's power to control the depths of the sea is a sign of His supremacy over both creation (cf. Ps. 77:16; 135:6) and other gods (see the parting of the Red Sea in Ex. 15:5, 8; cf. Ps. 106:9; Is. 51:10; 63:13). (TLSB)

*Spirit of God.* He was active in creation, and his creative power continues today (see Job 33:4; Ps 104:30). (CSB)

*hovering over.*† Like a bird that provides for and protects its young (see Dt 32:11; Isa 31:5). (CSB)

The Spirit's activity is pictured as a bird or butterfly fluttering over the waters. Basil the Great: "By the Spirit of God, he means the Holy Spirit" (NPNF2 8:62). Melancthon: "The Father, by speaking, begets the Word who is the image of the eternal Father. And of the Holy Spirit it is expressly said, 'And the Spirit...'" (Chemnitz, LTh 1:50). God was directly involved in not only the action of creating (bringing into existence out of nothing) but also in the work of bringing form and order to that which He had created. There is no place in the biblical view of creation for the abstract and impersonal process of evolution. The Bible affirms that the Father directly and intentionally called the order of the cosmos into being through the Son (Pr. 8:22-36; John 1:3; Heb. 1:2). (TLSB)

The verb hover is found elsewhere only in Deuteronomy 32:11, where it describes a bird hovering over its young, calling to mind the Spirit as a dove in Matthew 3:16. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

**1:3** *God said.* Merely by speaking, God brought all things into being (Ps 33:6, 9; 148:5; Heb 11:3). (CSB)

Luther understands this to be a reference to the Jesus Christ. God speaks the creating Word, the eternal Logos. The powerful Word dispelled the darkness over the surface of the deep as God made all things out of nothing, beginning with light. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

Note well: In pagan religions of the ancient Near East, nature and the realm of the gods were blended together; material things, such as the sun and moon, or trees and stones, were thought to be divine. (In the Babylonian "Epic of Atra Khasis," the material world was formed when the gods mixed the blood of a slain god with dirt. In the "Enuma Elish," the material world was formed out of the body parts of a slain goddess. By these literary devices, ancient mythology communicated the idea that matter itself was formed of the essence of divinity.) In contrast, the Bible makes clear that God is distinct from the material world. The cosmos is not divine, made up of elements of the gods. Rather, the one true God called the cosmos into being out of nothingness and arranged it by the power of His Word alone. God's Word is "performative" - it does not merely state something, but it accomplishes, or brings about that which it declares. (TLSB)

John 1:3-4: "3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men."

John 1:9: "The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world."

*Let there be light.* God's first creative word called forth light in the midst of the primeval darkness. Light is necessary for making God's creative works visible and life possible. In the OT it is also symbolic of life and blessing (see 2Sa 22:29; Job 3:20; 30:26; 33:30; Ps 49:19; 56:13; 97:11; 112:4; Isa 53:11; 58:8, 10; 59:9; 60:1, 3). Paul uses this word to illustrate God's re-creating work in sin-darkened hearts (2Co 4:6). (CSB)

Not a natural sunlight, but light called into being by God's Word to contrast the unbroken darkness that was the setting for God's initial creative act (v. 2). This anticipates the restored creation at the end of time, in which God's presence will enlighten all things, and there will no longer be a need for the sun or the moon (Rev. 21:23; 22:5). Jesus embodied the light of God's presence (John 8:12), and God shines this light in us to create faith in Him. For these reasons, lights (lamps or candles) are used in Christian worship to symbolize God's active faith-creating and faith-sustaining presence among His people. (TLSB)

The question has been asked: "How could there have been light on the first day if the sun and the stars weren't created until the fourth day?" The Hebrew language distinguishes between the substance of light

(energy in the form of particles of waves, or a combination of the two) and the heavenly lightbearers, just as we distinguish between the light produced by a reading lamp and the lighting fixture itself. Light itself was created on the first day; the bodies which regulate light were not created until three days later. (PBC)

Moses' contemporaries would have caught the implication that the God of Israel, and not the Egyptian sun-god Re (Ray), created light. (LL)

**1:4** Everything God created is good (see vv. 10, 12, 18, 21, 25); in fact, the conclusion declares it to be "very good" (v. 31). The creation, as fashioned and ordered by God, had no lingering traces of disorder and no dark and threatening forces arrayed against God or man. Even darkness and the deep were given benevolent functions in a world fashioned to bless and sustain life (see Ps 104:19–26; 127:2). (CSB)

God separated the light from the darkness. He did not destroy darkness, since he realized that like light, it would serve a salutary purpose. (PBC)

God judged that this first step to ordering His creation conformed to His will. In the same way, all that God creates is good (vv. 10, 12, 18, 21, 25), and the whole of His creation is summarized by the phrase "very good" (v. 31). (TLSB)

There is a rhythmic repetition and progression reminiscent of a liturgy. Note that all the plants and animals are created "according to their kinds," in direct contradiction to the theory of the ever-changing, random (chaotic) evolution of species. Good looks upon all he has created and regards it as good, i.e., as emanating from his own innate goodness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

This adjective good means more than a lack of fear. It also presents the goodness of creation. (LL)

Psalm 106:1: "Praise the LORD. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever"

**1:5** *called*. See vv. 8, 10. In ancient times, to name something or someone implied having dominion or ownership (see 17:5, 15; 41:45; 2Ki 23:34; 24:17; Da 1:7). Both day and night belong to the Lord (Ps 74:16). (CSB)

Hebrew idiom used to assign name. Literally, "God call to the light: day." Though God allowed Adam to name the living things with which He filled creation (2:19-20), God Himself assigned names to the fundamental distinctions He made as He ordered His creation. (TLSB)

*There was evening* – The word here translated "was" is better translated "became," "came on." After a period of light, evening came. Evening set in, bringing the light period to an end. (PBC)

*There was morning* – Perhaps better: "Morning set in," "morning followed," bringing the period of darkness to a close. (PBC)

Turning the Day Around – Rev. Ted Schroeder – Thrivent Sept/Oct, 2002

The grandchildren visited last week. There are only two of them, just 5 and 8. How is it that their needs – the books that needed reading, the stomachs that needed meals – filled entire days? Even more, how could they fill them so completely that one grandfather found himself falling exhausted into bed each night? Was it simply because their demands were added to the demands of work and home? How does this happen? How can we get so busy with our obligations that we find ourselves ground down weary at the end of the day?

One of the reasons may be that we have forgotten about the Biblical rhythm of things. Even though the Sabbath was a time of rest at the end of the week, the days themselves were turned the other way.

Genesis sees God creating the days with the words “there was evening” and then “there was morning.” That sequence clearly placed a time of rest at the beginning of the day. Rather than falling exhausted into bed at the end of the day, the Biblical people moved into the day rested from a night’s sleep. Evening was the beginning. It may seem like a small thing, but it’s important.

Scientists tell us that it takes most of us about seven to 10 minutes to fall asleep. Certainly we can use those minutes at the end of the day to gather our regrets, add up our mistakes and fret our way into a weary sleep. Or we can use those before-sleep minutes to begin a new day, a day that ends with the fading of the sun and begins as the Spirit moves over us in the coming darkness, bringing comforting quiet and sleep. What a great way to begin. As our eyes close instead of worrying over the past, we can begin the day with prayer and purpose.

The old day is gone, after all. The troubles of that day, the mistakes, even the sins – we have to let all that go. So the first step is to put the old day away with a prayer like Luther’s evening prayer: “I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have kept me this day from all harm and danger, and I pray that you would forgive me my sins, where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

And then, refreshed with the forgiveness that God has for us in Jesus Christ, we can begin to lean into the day that is to come. We can set out to do what we know we can do – and leave in God’s hands the things we know won’t be able to do. We can rest in the love that God has for us. And then, comforted, forgiven, reassured and renewed, we can go to sleep.

Then, when we rise, we are not staring at a stark new day, but – revitalized in body and spirit – we are ready to continue a day already placed in God’s hands and begun with God’s blessing.

Maybe it’s not a big thing. Maybe it’s only a matter of changing our point of view. But in this tactic world, we need all the help we can get.

Try it. Turn your day around. Make it evening and then morning – a new day. It might make all the difference in God’s world.

*first day.*† The first day was reckoned from evening to morning, according to the prevailing custom of the Jews. The six days of creation make up a period of time equal to Israel’s work week (Ex 20:9–11). (CSB)

Literally “day 1.” The first cycle of time, initiated by the distinction of light from darkness. “First” Literally, “one.” Moses used the cardinal number here instead of the ordinal form “first”; his time related words make it quite clear that we are to understand this day 1 as a normal 24 hour day, bounded by an evening and a morning. With six days to follow, it makes up a single week. “Day” Hebrew yom; not always used to designate a 24 hour day (e.g., refers to only the daylight portion of a 24-hour day in vv. 5, 16), but that is by far its most basic use. (TLSB)



**1:6** God’s ordering activity changes. God introduced three fundamental distinctions in the physical world, as the Israelites understood it: sky, sea, and dry land. (TLSB)

*expanse.* The atmosphere, or “sky” (v. 8), as seen from the earth. “Hard as a mirror” (Job 37:18) and “like a canopy” (Isa 40:22) are among the many pictorial phrases used to describe it. (CSB)

Difficult term. Hebrew *raqia*; translated “Heaven” in verse 8, suggests a metal plate made flat though hammering. The point of the image is the function rather than the substance: the sky serves as a divider. The Israelites often used figurative terms to describe the cosmos as it appeared to them (cf. Is. 40:22, where the sky is described as a “curtain” and a “tent”). (TLSB)

*Separate the waters from the waters.* The expanse separates the waters that are above from the waters that are below (v. 7). This was the first step in organizing the spatial aspect of creation. (TLSB)

**1:7** *God...separated.* World is described in terms of human experience. To the Israelites, a blue sky and falling rain indicated that there was water above the layer of the air. The seas and the water that emerges from the ground in springs and wells indicated that there was water below (cf. Ps. 24:2). The layer of air serves to divide these two sources of water. (TLSB)

*And it was so.* The only possible outcome, whether stated (vv. 9, 11, 15, 24, 30) or implied, to God’s “Let there be.” (CSB)

**1:8** *heaven.* Not God’s abode beyond the realm of creation, but the layer of air that separates the water above from the water below (v. 7). (TLSB)

*Second day.* The text now switches to the ordinal number “second” to refer to the ongoing sequence. (TLSB)

**1:9-31** God fills what He has created (v. 1) and arranged (vv. 2-8). (TLSB)

**1:9** *one place.* A picturesque way of referring to the “seas” (v. 10) that surround the dry ground on all sides and into which the waters of the lakes and rivers flow. The earth was “formed out of water” (2Pe 3:5) and “founded ... upon the seas” (Ps 24:2), and the waters are not to cross the boundaries set for them (Ps 104:7-9; Jer 5:22). (CSB)

Having separated the waters, God then began to fill the space beneath the sky by drawing the waters below the sky together into one place, allowing dry land to emerge. (TLSB)

**1:10** *dry land* – It’s interesting to note that the word translated “land” is the same word translated “earth” in verses 1 and 2. There the term referred to the entire earth; here it is clearly restricted to dry land. We’re reminded once again how carefully Moses defines terms. (PBC)

**1:11** *God said.* This phrase is used twice on the third day (vv. 9, 11) and three times (vv. 24, 26, 29) on the sixth day. These two days are climactic, as the following structure of ch. 1 reveals (see note on v. 2 regarding “formless and empty”): (CSB)

- | <i>Days of forming</i>                      | <i>Days of filling</i>  |
|---|---|
| 1. “light” (v. 3)                           | 4. “lights” (v. 14)   |
| 2. “water under the expanse ... water above | 5. “every living and moving thing with which the water teems ... every winged |

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>it” (v. 7)</p> <p>3a. “dry ground” (v. 9)</p> <p>b. “vegetation” (v. 11)</p> | <p>bird” (v. 21)</p> <p>6a<sub>1</sub>. “livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals” (v. 24)</p> <p>a<sub>2</sub>. “man” (v. 26)</p> <p>b. “every green plant for food” (v. 30)</p> |
|---|--|

Both the horizontal and vertical relationships between the days demonstrate the literary beauty of the chapter and stress the orderliness and symmetry of God’s creative activity. (CSB)

*Let the earth sprout.* Filling the space beneath the expanse with inanimate things continues from lesser to greater. Though today we think of plants as “living” (they grow and produce), Israelites thought plants lacked the unique force that qualifies a living creature. (TLSB)

*yielding seed...trees.* Text appears to distinguish two main types of vegetation, trees that produce fruit and other plants that propagate their seed without fruit. This is a general distinction, not an attempt to establish a complete scientific categorization of plants. (TLSB)

*kinds.* See vv. 12, 21, 24–25. Both creation and reproduction are orderly. (CSB)

Phrase here and in following passages indicates that chapter 1 talks not only about creation of specific individuals but of classes (or kinds) of things. God does not make one plant, but many plants of different kinds. This is also true of the animals referred to later in chapter 1. (TLSB)

**1:12** *land brought forth.* Earth responds to God’s commands as He works to fill His creation. Throughout the Bible, God controls and directs the course of history and the forces of nature by His Word. (TLSB)

**1:14** *let there be lights.* Sources of light above the expanse. Just as God gathered the waters into a consolidated place (the sea), God joined the light that He had previously created (vv. 3-5) to natural sources. These sources of light will now govern the cycles of time that He established until they are no longer needed at the end of time. (TLSB)

*signs and seasons.* In the ways mentioned here, not in any astrological or other such sense. (CSB)

Movement of stars helps us keep track of months, seasons, and years. Stars do not control humankind’s destiny or predict the future. (TLSB)

*Days.* Hebrew plural for “day,” but in the context it appears to refer to what we call a month (not otherwise mentioned here). It is unlikely that “days” here refers to a week because that period of time is not indicated by the movement of the sun, moon, or stars, but comes into being when God establishes every seventh day of rest (cf. 2:1-3). To sustain the argument that day 1 does not refer to a normal 24-hour day, one would have to show that all these other time-related terms are being used in some figurative, extended sense. This is not the case. Here the sun, moon, and stars, govern normal days, nights, months, seasons, and years. (TLSB)

**1:16** *two great lights.* The words “sun” and “moon” seem to be avoided deliberately here, since both were used as proper names for the pagan deities associated with these heavenly bodies. They are light-givers to be appreciated, not powers to be feared, because the one true God made them (see Isa 40:26). Perhaps because of the emphasis on the greater light and lesser light, the stars seem to be mentioned almost as an afterthought. But Ps 136:9 indicates that the stars help the moon “govern the night.” (CSB)

*Greater. Sun.* Words “sun” and “moon” are likely omitted to exclude the possibility of understanding them as deities, as was common throughout the ancient Near East. (TLSB)

*Lesser. Moon.* (TLSB)

*to rule.* The great Creator-King assigns subordinate regulating roles to certain of his creatures (see vv. 26, 28). (CSB)

**1:17–18** The three main functions of the heavenly bodies. (to give light on the earth – to govern the day and the night - to separate the light from the darkness) (CSB)

**1:20** *living creatures.* Hebrew *nephesh chayyah* applies to animals and humans, but not to inanimate things (as understood by the Israelites) that fill creation: plants and sources of light in the skies. (TLSB)

**1:21** *great sea creatures.* The Hebrew word underlying this phrase was used in Canaanite mythology to name a dreaded sea monster. He is often referred to figuratively in OT poetry as one of God’s most powerful opponents. He is pictured as national (Babylon, Jer 51:34; Egypt, Isa 51:9; Eze 29:3; 32:2) or cosmic (Job 7:12; Ps 74:13; Isa 27:1, though some take the latter as a reference to Egypt). In Genesis, however, the creatures of the sea are portrayed not as enemies to be feared but as part of God’s good creation to be appreciated. (CSB)

Hebrew *tanninm*, used in mythology to refer to divine or semi-divine sea monsters. By contrast, the Bible uses this word to refer to snakes or serpents, sometimes to crocodiles, and sometimes, as here, to any of the mysterious and unknown animals that inhabit the depths of the seas. (TLSB)

*winged bird.* The term denotes anything that flies, including insects (see Dt 14:19–20). (CSB)

**1:22** *Be fruitful and multiply.* God’s benediction on living things that inhabit the water and that fly in the air. By his blessing they flourish and fill both realms with life. God’s rule over his created realm promotes and blesses life. (CSB)

First explicit blessing in the Bible. As seen in v 3, God’s Word performs that which it speaks. By pronouncing a blessing, God granted the power of procreation to the animals He had created. The granting of procreative powers to provide for the ongoing welfare of His creation demonstrates God’s care. (TLSB)

**1:24** *let the earth bring forth.* God’s previous activity had filled the sea and sky with living creatures. God then began to fill the landmass with living creatures and with three general types of land animals. (TLSB)

*Livestock.* Word commonly used for domesticated animals such as cattle or oxen but also for animals in general. (TLSB)

*creeping things.* May refer here specifically to reptiles, but is also at times used to refer to animals in general (9:3). (TLSB)

*beasts.* General term (literally, “living things”) may be used here as a kind of catchall for everything that does not fall into the other two categories, perhaps implying wild animals as opposed to the domesticated animals of the first group. (TLSB)

**1:26** *us ... our ... our.* God speaks as the Creator-King, announcing his crowning work to the members of his heavenly court (see 3:22; 11:7; Isa 6:8; see also 1Ki 22:19–23; Job 15:8; Jer 23:18). (CSB)

While affirming the singularity of God, it is not unusual for the OT to use the plural when speaking of God and His activities. This anticipates the doctrine of the Holy Trinity (though some interpreters understand it to be grammatical device, a plural of majesty or an honorific plural, with no specific theological significance). Irenaeus of Lyons: “With Him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things, to whom also He speaks” (ANF 1:487-488). Tertullian: “If the number of the Trinity also offends you... with whom did He make man? And to whom did He make him like? (The answer must be), the Son on the one hand, who was one day to put on human nature; and the Spirit on the other, who was to sanctify man. With these did He then speak, in the Unity of the Trinity, as with His ministers and witnesses” (ANF 3:606-7). Luther: “Here both appear: ‘Let Us make’ and ‘He made,’ in the plural and in the singular; thereby Moses clearly and forcibly shows us that within and in the very Godhead and the Creating Essence there is one inseparable and eternal plurality” (AE 1:58). (TLSB)

In writing the creation account Moses consistently used language which would be in complete harmony with the information God would subsequently reveal to us about the plurality of persons in the Godhead. (PBC)

*image ... likeness.* No distinction should be made between “image” and “likeness,” which are synonyms in both the OT (5:1; 9:6) and the NT (1Co 11:7; Col 3:10; Jas 3:9). Since man is made in God’s image, every human being is worthy of honor and respect; he is neither to be murdered (9:6) nor cursed (Jas 3:9). “Image” includes such characteristics as “righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4:24) and “knowledge” (Col 3:10). Believers are to be “conformed to the likeness” of Christ (Ro 8:29) and will someday be “like him” (1Jn 3:2). (CSB)

Hebrew *tselem* means something more than mere physical resemblance. An image, in ancient Near Eastern thought, was that which manifested the presence of the gods within the material realm. Created in God’s image, Adam not only reflected God’s character but also was His representative in the world, His steward over all that He had made. “They had God’s Law written into their hearts, because they were created in God’s image” (FC Ep. VI 2). Gregory of Nyssa: “Painters transfer human forms to their pictures by means of certain colors...our Maker also, painting the portrait to resemble His own beauty, by addition of virtues, as it were with colors, shows in us His own sovereignty...purity, freedom from passion, blessedness, alienation from all evil, and all those attributes of the like kind which help to form in men the likeness of God” (NPNF2 5:391). Gregory of Nazianzus: “(God) will reason with us, and oppose us, and set before us those bitter accusers, our sin...the image (of God in us)...has been blurred and spoiled by wickedness” (NPNF2 7:250). (TLSB)

*have dominion.* Man is the climax of God’s creative activity, and God has “crowned him with glory and honor” and “made him ruler” over the rest of his creation (Ps 8:5–8). Since man was created in the image of the divine King, delegated sovereignty (kingship) was bestowed on him. (For redeemed man’s ultimate kingship see notes on Heb 2:5–9.) (CSB)

The order that God imposed upon His creation extends to the beings with which He filled it, whether in the air or in the sea or on land. As God’s steward and representative, Adam is placed over all that God has made, to rule over it as God Himself would rule it. Luther: “Man is a creature far superior to the rest of the living beings that live a physical life, especially since as yet his nature had not become depraved” (AE 1:56). (TLSB)

The first man and woman, equally created in the image of God, not only knew God to be good, but lived in complete conformity to the divine design, even participating in the creator's reign over his creation.

**1:27** This highly significant verse is the first occurrence of poetry in the OT (which is about 40 percent poetry). (CSB)

Here and in the following chapters, some verses have been set as poetry, reflecting a literary judgment by the ESV editors based on the heightened rhetorical sense that the repetition in the passage suggests. (TLSB)

*created.* The word is used here three times to describe the central divine act of the sixth day. (CSB)

*in our images, after our likeness* – Because God is a spiritual being and no person or thing can equal him in any way, the likeness of the people to God is spiritual, not physical, and always “less than,” not “equal to.” In the most proper sense, being created in the image of God means that people were created without sin. But this image was lost in the fall into sin. In the broader sense, the image of God refers to humanity's rationality and will, and still remains in people, though the presence of original sin has also corrupted that likeness (Gen.9:6; Jas 3:9). through Christ people regain the likeness to God (Rm. 8:29) (Lutheran Bible Companion – Volume 2)

In trying to understand the concept of the image of God, it may be helpful to describe the effect the divine image had on the personality of Adam and Eve – on their intellect, emotions and will. Unlike the mental dullness and ignorance we bring with us into the world, Adam and Eve understood perfectly with their intellect what God wanted them to know. While they possessed the image of God their emotions were in tune with God's; they found their greatest happiness in God. And unlike the rebellious will of each of us brought into the world, their will was in complete harmony with God; what He wanted was what they wanted. Every impulse and desire of theirs was in tune with God's good will. Created in the image of God they were human replicas of what God is like. (PBC)

Like his Creator, a rational spirit, exercising dominion. Made in wisdom, holiness, and righteousness. (CB)

So rich in meaning is this short phrase that it is difficult to explain fully. Our imagination and intellect, our souls and spirituality, our place and position in creation – all are derived from the image of God (LL)

*male and female.* Alike they bear the image of God, and together they share in the divine benediction that follows. (CSB)

Moses gives a summary statement of the creation of mankind and details about it in chapter 2. Luther: “Moses puts the two sexes together and says that God created male and female in order to indicate that Eve, too, was made by God as a partaker of the divine image and of the divine similitude, likewise of the rule over everything. Thus even today the woman is the partaker of the future life, just as Peter says that they are joint heirs of the same grace (1 Peter 3:7). In the household the wife is a partner in the management and has a common interest in the children and the property, and yet there is a great difference between the sexes” (AE 1:69). (TLSB)

**1:28** *God blessed them ... fill ... subdue ... have dominion.* † Man goes forth under this divine benediction —flourishing, filling the earth with his kind, and exercising dominion over the other earthly creatures (see v. 26; 2:15; Ps 8:6–8). Human culture, accordingly, is not anti-God (though fallen man often has turned his efforts into proud rebellion against God). As God's representative in the creaturely realm, he is

steward of God's creatures. He is not to exploit, waste or despoil them, but to care for them and use them in the service of God and man. (CSB)

God extended to humankind the blessing of procreative power that He had given to animals. But here He added an additional element: Instructions to subdue the earth and have dominion over all the other beings that God has made. These additional instructions reflect the special role that humankind plays in God's creation. (TLSB)

Sex and childbearing are blessed by God in holy wedlock. Cf. Ps.127-128. "Genesis 1:28 teaches that people were created to be fruitful, and that one sex should desire the other in a proper way. We are not speaking about lustful desire, which is sin, but about that appetite that was for the other in its perfection. They call this physical love. This love of one sex for the other is truly a divine ordinance" (Ap XXIII 7). (TLSB)

**1:29–30** People and animals seem to be portrayed as originally vegetarian (see 9:3). – The physical well-being of every creature is assured by God's provision of food (plants only; still no death). (CSB)

Because no mention is made of carnivores in Genesis 1, perhaps God did intend for us to order from a vegetarian menu. Nevertheless, sin changed the world's metabolism. While we walk this sin-changed world, God does not eliminate meat from our diet or demand kosher eating habits so long as our food is recognized as coming from God's bounty. (LL)

**1:29** *I have given you.* God shows His care by providing food and allowing the man and woman to eat everything that is not categorized as a living being. In the more detailed account of Gn. 2, we learn that this general permission is restricted by the prohibition that they may not eat the fruit from one specific tree (2:16-17). (TLSB)

**1:30** *everything...life.* "Living creatures" in verse 20. God extended the gift of food to everything that has the character of life. (TLSB)

**1:31** *very good.* Creation is summarized by stating that it conformed to God's intentions in the best possible way. Basil the Great: "All (creatures) bear the marks of the wisdom of the Creator" (NPNF2 8:104). Chemnitz: "The word *tob* refers to something which is beautiful or pleasant, which delights the eye of the beholder or the mind of one who considers it, as Gen. 3:6 says of Eve" LTh 1:190). As a result of the fall (chapter 3), the introduction of sin into the world, and our rejection of God and His will, we do not experience all of creation as "very good." (TLSB)

*the sixth day.* Perhaps to stress the finality and importance of this day, in the Hebrew text the definite article is first used here in regard to the creation days. (CSB)

**1:2–31** God makes all things good. He takes great care to place man and woman in the garden to care for the things that He created. Sin has placed the things God created, including us, in bondage to death and decay. Yet Jesus' death and resurrection has restored the things of God's creation just as it has restored us (Rm 8:19–23). Indeed, God even used His creation to accomplish our salvation: a cross made of wood; the water of Baptism; the bread and wine of the Eucharist; the printed words on the page in, with, and under which He reveals His Word of life to us. • Lord, You have reclaimed all that is Your own, redeemed and restored all of Your creation to Yourself. Preserve me and Your creation, O Lord, by Your grace. Amen. (TLSB)

*The Seventh Day, God Rests*

**Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.**

**2:1-3** In the conclusion of the creation account, God rested on the seventh day and then set the seventh day aside to commemorate His work of creation. (TLSB)

**2:1** *finished and all the host of them* – Creation is complete. Yet the triune God continues to preserve and govern all that he has created. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

The things with which God had filled the earth, sea, and sky. (TLSB)

God had also completed that segment of creation which is invisible to the naked eye – the world of the atom and the molecule, for example. God “thought up” energy – solar, electrical, atomic. I am told there is enough energy in this sheet of paper that if it could be released it could power an ocean liner across the Atlantic. The forces of nature – gravity for example – which God initiated during creation week are still operative. Highest of God’s invisible creation are the angels, God’s secret agents. Moses’ summary term “a vast array,” has to be an understatement. (PBC)

Hebrews 1:2-3: “<sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. <sup>3</sup>The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”

**2:2** *finished ... rested.* God rested on the seventh day, not because he was weary, but because nothing formless or empty remained. His creative work was completed—and it was totally effective, absolutely perfect, “very good” (1:31). It did not have to be repeated, repaired or revised, and the Creator rested to commemorate it. (CSB)

Hbr verb *yishboth* is related to the noun *shabbath*. Ancient Near Eastern creation accounts to which Gn is sometimes compared lack any parallel to the account of God resting after His creative activity. Here God rests because His creative work is complete, not because He is weary. (TLSB)

It’s important to emphasize, however, that God did not stop working. The universe would have collapsed, the sun would have stopped shining, two human hearts would have stopped beating if God had not been ceaselessly active, preserving what He had created. (PBC)

**2:3** *God blessed the seventh day and made it holy ... rested.* Although the word “Sabbath” is not used here, the Hebrew verb translated “rested” (see v. 2) is the origin of the noun “Sabbath.” Ex 20:11 quotes the first half of v. 3, but substitutes “Sabbath” for “seventh,” clearly equating the two. The first record of obligatory Sabbath observance is of Israel on her way from Egypt to Sinai (Ex 16), and according to Ne 9:13–14 the Sabbath was not an official covenant obligation until the giving of the law at Mount Sinai. (CSB)

The creation of the world is the first basis for the Sabbath worship of God, as also in Ex. 20:8-11. Interestingly, the parallel passage Deut 5:12-15 bases the Sabbath on the redemption of God’s people. While we make proper distinctions between the three articles of the Creed and between the three persons whose works are described therein, we are reminded that it is the one God who both creates and redeems, that redemption is a form of re-creation, and that the heavenly goal is not unlike a return to Eden, though the final state will surpass the first. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 3)

Sabbath day means rest day. For the Jews God appointed the seventh day of the week as a day of rest (Ex 20:9-11), on which they were not permitted to do any labor except works of charity and of necessity (Mt 12:10-12). While the fact that God rested from His work on the seventh day was not the reason why just this day was appointed, the day was not properly observed by merely resting, for we read that God “sanctified” and “hallowed” this day, thereby setting it aside for sacred use. No day is holy in itself, but it is the use we make of it that either sanctifies or desecrates it. The Jews kept the Sabbath day holy by hearing, studying, and pondering the Word of God in their Synagogues (Num 28:9; Lev 23:3; Luke 4:16). Thus the chief thing in this Commandment is the “sanctifying,” and not “day” nor the “resting.” In order that no one for the sake of material profit might either work himself or have his servants work for him, and thus be kept from “sanctifying,” God fixed a certain day and forbade the Jews to do any work in it.” Besides the weekly Sabbath God appointed monthly festivals (Num 28:11) and annual feasts (Ex 23:15, 16; Lev 16:29). In all of them not the day as such, nor the resting as such, but the “sanctifying” was the real moral obligation, and where this was lacking, the feasts were an abomination to the Lord. (Is. 1:10-14). [Mercy not sacrifice – Hos 6:6]. The stipulations concerning time and labor were auxiliary measures binding upon the Jew “throughout their generation” (Ex 31:12-17), but no longer binding upon us under the new covenant. (Small Catechism Annotated – Koehler p. 62)

Matthew 12:8 shows that Christ has the right to abolish the Sabbath day. Col 2:16-17 shows that in the NT the Sabbath is abolished. We can judge a person only in such matters as are covered by a specific law; where there is no law, there can be no transgression, and it is impossible to judge a man’s actions. As long as the laws concerning “meat and drink,” with respect to holy day, new moons, and “Sabbath days” were in force, people were judged whether or not they observed these laws. And since God had given these laws, it was a sin to transgress them. But in our text we are told, “let no man judge you” in any of these things; hence it necessarily follows that these laws are no longer binding upon us. And since it is God Himself, who speaks by the mouth of Paul, it follows that God Himself has abolished the laws with respect to Sabbath days. Furthermore, these days were “shadows of things to come.” Shadows lose their meaning when “the body,” which they foreshadowed, appears. Christ is this body, therefore with the coming of Christ the laws concerning meat and drink and Sabbath days have lost their force. (Small Catechism Annotated – Koehler pp. 62-63)

In the early Christian congregations were converted Jews, who still regarded one day, perhaps the Sabbath, above other days; there were also converted Gentiles, who esteemed all days alike. If the Sabbath or any other days was regarded as especially holy, then Paul would certainly have told these people. But Paul does not decide this question in favor of the Jewish Christians, but allows each one to follow his own opinion. This plainly shows that he does not reaffirm the Sabbath laws of the OT, nor does he appoint any other day that must for conscience’ sake be observed. He leaves the matter open, there is no divine command respecting the observance of any particular day – From Gal 4:10, 11 we learn that, if anyone believes that still he must observe certain days, etc., it is to be feared that he does not yet understand the liberty with which Christ has made us free from “the weak and beggarly elements” of the OT ceremonial laws, to which Paul refers to in Col. In the NT God has not specified any day or time when we should worship Him, every day is for us a day of worship and service dedicated to the Lord. (Practice Presence of God) We Christians may, therefore, set aside any day we choose for public worship, and it need not even be one out of seven, but we must never say that it is God who wants us to observe just that day. (Small Catechism Annotated – Koehler pp. 63-64)

Probably in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ did the early Christians assemble for worship on the first day of the week, thus it became customary in the church to meet for public worship on Sunday. Of itself Sunday is not holier than any other day, nor is it kept holy by merely resting from work, by reading the paper and seeking amusements. “The force and power of this Commandment,” says Luther, “lies not in the resting but in the sanctifying.” Any day, and hour we spend in prayer, in hearing or pondering God’s Word is a real Sabbath day and Sabbath hour. But in order that we may assemble with our fellow



Christian for public worship (Heb 10:25; 1 Cor 16:2), we must indeed agree on the time, day and hour, for such worship, and such “assembling of ourselves together” we should not neglect. Work on Sunday: evil and sinful work desecrates any day of the week; honest work does, in itself, not profane the Sunday, but it should not keep us from attending public worship. Some people must work on Sunday; physicians and nurses, railroad and policemen, and others; for them some other convenient time for public worship should be arranged. (Small Catechism Annotated – Koehler pp. 64-65)

Hbr *qadash*, verb used in its basic sense of setting something aside for special use, in this case the commemoration of the completion of God’s creative work. See p 7. God anticipates His later commandment (Ex 20:8–11) both here by His own actions and also when His people are on the way to Mount Sinai (Ex 16:22–30). Unlike the other cycles of time mentioned in the creation account, the cycle of a week (bounded by the day of rest) is determined not by the movement of the heavenly bodies but is established only by God’s special command. Given this, it is not surprising that there is no equivalent to the OT Sabbath in any other ancient Near Eastern religion. There is also no evidence that Israel’s neighbors observed a calendar period equivalent to the week. (TLSB)

**2:1–3** God creates (sets aside) the Sabbath. In the OT, Saturday is the Rest (Sabbath) Day. When Christ fulfilled the whole Law (Mt 5:17), He liberated God’s people from the obligation to observe the Sabbath given to the people of Israel in the OT (Col 2:16–17). All days belong equally to God (Rm 14:5–6). Nevertheless, faith in Christ moves God’s people to respond to His grace in worship: to hear His Word, to receive His gifts in the Sacraments, to praise Him and give thanks to Him for His mighty works, and to call on Him in prayer. Such worship is the constant response of faith to God’s grace. Because God has called Christians together into one Body, the Church, through which He gives His gifts of Word and Sacrament, it is proper for Christians to gather together to worship Him. Sunday, then, symbolically represents the first day of the new rest into which God’s people have been called in Christ. (As the first day of this “new creation,” Sunday is sometimes referred to as “the eighth day.”) • We praise You, O Lord, for the day of rest that our bodies need. We exalt You, O Christ, for the eternal rest that You have won for us! Amen. (TLSB)

*The Creation of Man and Woman*

**4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.**

**2:4** *account*. The word occurs ten times in Genesis—at the beginning of each main section. (CSB)

The first of Moses’ ten “account” begins by drawing a lovely picture of the relationship that existed between the Creator and His children. It shows us a God intent on making them happy. (PBC)

Literary device used throughout Genesis to introduce the next stage in the unfolding of the story. (TLSB)

*the heavens and the earth.*† The phrase “the account of the heavens and the earth” introduces the record of what happened to God’s creation. The blight of sin and rebellion brought a threefold curse that darkens the story of Adam and Eve in God’s good and beautiful garden: (1) on Satan (3:14); (2) on the ground, because of man (3:17); and (3) on Cain (4:11). 1:1–2:3 is a general account of creation, while 2:4–4:26 focuses on the beginning of human history. Ch. 2 sets the stage for the fall (ch. 3). It tells of the scene and circumstances of the fall, supplementing the terse account of man’s creation in ch. 1 with only such data as comes into play in the ensuing tragic drama. (CSB)

Here the heavens and the earth are treated, for literary purposes, as the first generation of God’s creation; humankind is presented as the descendants of this couple. (TLSB)

*When they were created* – Not a specific day in the creation account, but meaning “when” (in accordance with its common use in Hbr). (TLSB)

*LORD God.* “LORD” (Hebrew *YHWH*, “Yahweh”) is the personal and covenant name of God, emphasizing his role as Israel’s Redeemer and covenant Lord, while “God” (Hebrew *Elohim*) is a general term. Both names occur thousands of times in the OT, and often, as here, they appear together—clearly indicating that they refer to the same one and only God. (CSB)

In verses 4 and 5 Moses introduces us to a new name for God. The Hebrew name consists of the four consonants YHWH, originally pronounced “Yahweh.” Throughout the OT this was the name that distinguished the God of Israel from the idols of surrounding nations. The Greek translation of the OT translates Yahweh as *kyrios*, meaning “Lord.” (PBC)

Lord is the special name of Israel’s covenant God. When used it means that God is the promise keeper. (PBC)

## EPISTLE – Acts 2:14a, 22-36

*Peter's Sermon at Pentecost*

**14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.**

**22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know — 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. 25 For David says concerning him, “I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; 26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. 27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’ 29 “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, 35 until I make your enemies your footstool.” 36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”**

**2:14 with the Eleven.** The apostles had been baptized with the Holy Spirit and had spoken in other languages to various groups. Now they stood with Peter, who served as their spokesman. (CSB)

*sun tois hendeka*, “with the eleven.” This may imply that it is the apostles (as opposed to the entire 120, 1:15) who alone are consecrated to the public preaching of the Word as their office in the Church. We are

told in v 43 of this same chapter that “many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

Peter is always named first in lists of the apostles. His work is the focus of chapters 1-12. (TLSB)

*give ear* – Literally “let it be put in your ears.” (Sacra)

*enōtisasthe*, “give ear,” means to give full attention, more than just *akouō*, “listen.” A noteworthy problem in society today is that people do not exercise themselves in careful listening. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 2)

**2:22-32** The setting is Pentecost, the middle of Peter’s sermon. The crowd “came together in bewilderment,” having heard the sound and the preaching in the language of each person (v 6). The crowd is mixed by language and geography, composed of “God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven” (v 5). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Since Luke and Acts were conceived as one work and meant to be read sequentially, Luke’s prelude about writing a systematic and ordered account for the purpose of teaching (catechizing) is important (Luke 1:1-4). Luke was not one of the eyewitnesses spoken of in our text (2:32). Yet the Holy Spirit inspired him to research and order the account of the Acts of the Apostles. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

The events of our text occurred 50 days after the resurrection and 10 days after Jesus ascended to be with His Church more than ever. While His visible bodily presence had governed the first 40 days, the Holy Spirit now centers the church’s life on His invisible bodily presence. Jesus is still teaching and feeding His Church. What He began before His ascension (1:1), He now continues through His apostles. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

The text is a continuation of Peter’s sermon from Pentecost morning (Acts 2:1–21), but it stops just short of the burning question of the crowd, “Brothers, what shall we do?” (v 37) and the staggering response of 3,000 Baptisms. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

The Holy Spirit was poured out as tongues of fire on the apostles on the Day of Pentecost, making it possible for them to address the international assembly gathered for the Feast of Pentecost in the native languages of those who heard them, and to announce to them what God had accomplished for them and for the redemption of Israel. The crowds were amazed to hear the apostles speaking in their own tongues and wondered how this could happen (Acts 2:1–12). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Speaking in the name of all the apostles, Peter announced that what they were proclaiming was the fulfillment of the prophecy given through Joel (Joel 2:28–32), and that, just as Joel had promised, those who took this proclamation to heart and called on the name of the Lord would be saved (Acts 2:14–21). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

The words of Peter included in vv 22–36 have within them hard words, a strong articulation of Law, spoken clearly and boldly, without fear or hesitation: “This [Jesus] was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross” (v 23). For those who will receive these words and take them to heart, God offers hope through the proclamation of the Gospel and the Sacraments, as we learn in the verses that immediately follow this text (2:37–39). It is perhaps unfortunate that they are not included in this preaching text, for the convicted sinner must not be left without the invitation to faith and new life, which faith in the Gospel brings. In our

preaching we must proclaim that Gospel. However, we are not to attempt to turn the Law itself into Gospel, so as to deprive it of its power, or to preach from the assumption that the Law contains the heart of the Gospel within it. Let the Law retain its right, theological purpose, but do not slight the Gospel. The Law works death; the Gospel alone works saving faith and life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

**2:22** Verses 17–21 prepare for the “miracles, wonders and signs” done by God through Jesus Christ, since these are the last days. The three terms for Jesus’ work do not distinguish the acts of Jesus into specific categories, since they are synonyms (cf. v 19). The signs, for example, are also miracles. The theological import of *sēmeion* is especially significant in John’s gospel (2:11; 4:48; 6:2, 14, 26, 30; 12:37). The evidence of the signs become Peter’s point of entry for the introduction of Jesus into the sermon. The tongues are a continuation of the work God performed during Jesus’ earthly life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

*men of Israel* - Pentecost is a miracle of speaking and hearing. Just a few weeks earlier Peter had cursed and denied Jesus by saying, “I do not know the man.” Now he proclaims the crucified and risen Christ with courage and clarity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

Theological critics may have trouble with the miracles of Jesus, but Peter had none. The reality of Jesus’ miracles wasn’t the issue, for Peter says, “as you yourselves know.” In fact, the wide knowledge of his life-giving miracles (Jn 11:45–48) was a major factor behind the efforts of religious leaders to crucify him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

Not ethnic or geographical (v. 14) but a strictly religious form of address. (TLSB)

*hear these words - akousate* Peter calls on his hearers to “listen carefully,” as you would to evidence in a trial (Barclay Newman, Jr., *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* [London: United Bible Societies, 1971]) and know that Jesus was “approved” (proven, proclaimed) *apodeidegmenon* by God with *dunamesi* “miracles” (such as restoring sight to the blind and raising the dead), *teras* “wonders” (changes in the natural order of the universe, cf. Acts 2:19, “wonders in the heaven above”), and *sēmeiois* “signs” (a special indicator). The three terms are used together in 2 Cor 12:12 to indicate the presence and power of an apostle. Peter sought to remind the crowd how unique Jesus was when he ministered among them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

*attested..mighty works and wonders and signs.* The mighty works done by Jesus were signs that the Messiah had come. (CSB)

God richly supplied Jesus’ credentials in His works. (TLSB)

*apodeidegmenon*, from *apodeiknumi*, to show, to prove by arguments, to demonstrate. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

To demonstrate or exhibit (Strong’s). To be approved by a higher power.

Theological critics may have trouble with the miracles of Jesus, but Peter had none. The reality of Jesus’ miracles wasn’t the issue, for Peter says a “as you yourselves know.” In fact, the wide knowledge of His life-giving miracles (John 11:45-48) was a major factor behind the religious leaders to crucify Him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

**2:23** *lawless men*. The Gentiles were acting in an evil way. (CSB)

Men without the law (Romans) bloodied their hands, but “you” are the real doers of the deed. The priestly leaders and the excited mob of Good Friday, the men of Israel are indicted for murder in the first degree. Yet, Peter proclaims that it was all according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

*you crucified* – Not every Israelite had rejected or would reject the Messiah, but as a nation the Jews had done so. Yet not of this could have happened if it had not been in accord with “God’s set purpose and foreknowledge.” The men who crucified Jesus were responsible for what they did. They were not helpless robots. But their actions served God’s purpose, which was to offer his Son for the sins of the world. (PBC)

Jesus’ crucifixion occurred not only because of the will of sinful people and their corrupt leaders, *anomōn* (lawless, outside the law of Moses) but also because it was part of God’s “plan” (*boulēi* and “foreknowledge” *prognōsei* (the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, (R. C. H. Lenski, *The Acts of the Apostles* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1934] 83). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

*definite plan and foreknowledge* - Paradoxically, God uses man’s free work for His purposes. (TLSB)

The “set purpose” (*hōrismenē boulē*) and “foreknowledge” (*prognōsis*) indicate that God doesn’t abandon his Messiah, but enacts the design which had been in place from eternity. *Prognōsis* is also used of the election/predestination of Christians in 1 Pet 1:2. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

*lawless men* - Jesus was handed over to the Romans, who were not under the yoke of Moses’ Law. (TLSB)

*crucified and killed* - Distinction between mere death and accursed crucifixion. (TLSB)

**2:24** *loosing the pangs of death* - lxx TRANSLATION OF Hebrew is “cord of Sheol” (cf. 2 Sm.22:6), which implies to death an image usually associated with giving birth. Because death’s pangs are terminal, not temporary, only God can overcome them. Luther: “(Christ) came back to life, and this became an opportunity for life, which before had been an opportunity for death. In this way death has become the door to life for us; disgrace has become the elevation to glory; condemnation and hell, the door to salvation. And this happened through Christ, who was sinless, etc.” (AE 19:31). (TLSB)

By means of the resurrection, *anestēsen* (to raise up, come back to life), God reversed the sentence that human judges passed on Jesus and which his executioners carried out (F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970] 70). If God ordained Jesus’ death, he also ordained his rising to new life. *The Pulpit Commentary* (A. C. Hervey, editor, *The Acts of the Apostles* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.] 52) notes that it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Jesus (1) because of the union of his two natures, (2) because the character of God will not allow anyone who trusts in God to ever be forsaken, and (3) because “Scripture cannot be broken.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

*pangs of death* – The word translated “agony” here is literally “birth pains.” Death was “in labor” while Jesus lay in the grave. It could not hold the Lord of life indefinitely and had to give him up. This,

of course, is picture language. Death did not give life to Jesus as a mother gives life to her newborn. Rather, God raised him from the dead, and thus death could not hold him. (PBC)

“It was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.” When Good Friday ended in the bloody death and hurried burial of Jesus of Nazareth, there was no panic and no uncertainty in heaven. There was no question that Jesus would live again, for Jesus is life itself! When Jesus on the cross cried out, “It is finished,” he didn’t mean that the battle and the victory were half-finished. The crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord are really one event. When one is pitted against the other as if one is greater, serious harm is done to the Gospel. When an empty cross is seen as more fully heralding the Gospel than a crucifix, serious harm is done to the Gospel. Already on Good Friday death gave way to life as many came from their tombs (Mt 27:52, 53). The Lord of life tasted death fully for us sinners, including the punishment of the second death, the lake of fire. But make no mistake, “It was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.” So also it is impossible for death to keep its hold on those clothed (baptized) in Christ (Gal

3:27). See also Rom 6:3–4. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

*krateisthai*, from *krateō*, to become master, to hold fast. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

**2:25-28** Quoting Ps 16:8–11, Peter states that the words cannot refer to David, for his flesh did undergo decay. This psalm rather refers to King Messiah, “great David’s greater Son,” whom David himself prefigured. The flesh of Jesus, wounded for our transgressions, is not dead but rather living and life-giving (Jn 20:27). We cannot see it as did Thomas, and Jesus does not instruct us to touch it with our hand. We can, however, receive it to eat in blest reality. As Jesus promised, “This is my body given for you” (Lk 22:19). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

The teaching of the risen Christ in the first 40 days had opened Peter’s mind to understand the Scriptures (Lk 24:45) and to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in Jesus’ name. The Holy Spirit’s inspiration continued Jesus’ instruction that all the Old Testament Scriptures (Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms) testify of him (Lk 24:27, 44). As Peter strung Old Testament texts together like pearls (Joel 2:28–32/Ps 16:8–11/Ps 110:1), he gave radical application to his present day in Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

The lengthy quote from Psalm 16:8-11 is Peter’s *apologia* (“apology,” as in that of the Augsburg Confession) for the concept of the resurrection. Not only is the promise of a resurrection present in the OT, it is provided by none other than David. The quote is identical with the LXX except for the inversion of *mou kardia* in v 26. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The teaching of the risen Christ in the first 40 days had opened Peter’s mind to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:45) and to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in Jesus’ name. The Holy Spirit’s inspiration continued Jesus’ instruction that all the OT Scriptures (Moses and the Prophets, and the Psalms) testify of Him (Luke 24:27, 44). As Peter strung OT texts together like pearls (Joel 2:28-32/Psalm 16:8-11/Psalm 110:1), he gave radical application to his present day in Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

David (“I”) speaks in two dimensions. First, the king rejoices that God will not allow death to cut off David’s or God’s covenant people. Second, through David, Christ speaks prophetically of His own soul’s deliverance and His body’s escape from corruption. (TLSB)

**2:25** *David say concerning him* – Now Peter quotes Psalm 16:8-11 in order to show his hearers that what happened to Jesus was in accord with their own Scriptures. (PBC)

David speaks for Jesus, his descendant. (TLSB)

*I saw the Lord* – Christ has always beheld God, His heavenly Father. (TLSB)

*at my right hand* – Helper from all distress. (TLSB)

**2:27** *not abandon my soul to Hades*. David referred ultimately to the Messiah (v. 31). God would not allow his physical body to decompose. (CSB)

*egkatalipseis*, from *egkatalipō*, to leave helpless, to totally abandon and forsake. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

Though David himself hopes for bodily resurrection, v. 27 is about Christ. (TLSB)

*Holy One see corruption* – Every Jew knew that that “descendant” was the promised Messiah and Peter was inviting them to conclude that the “Holy One” whose body would not see decay was the Messiah. (PBC)

*diaphthoran*, from *diaphthora*, the corruption that ensues when a dead body decays. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

**2:29-32** Peter explains that David was obviously not writing about himself because David died, was buried, and his body remains in his grave “to this day” (Neh 3:16 mentions David’s tomb as a matter of public record as well). Instead, David wrote as a prophet about the Messiah God would send who would die but also be resurrected. To underscore his claim, Peter declares of himself and the others who preached by inspiration of the Spirit: “we are all witnesses of the fact” (v 32). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

**2:29** *with confidence* - Regarding “confidently,” “in all instances [in Acts] then, *parrēsia* might be rendered ‘candor,’ . . . the meaning is basically controlled by the situation of confession” (TDNT 5:882). Thus, KJV translates “let me freely speak unto you,” and the ASV “I may say unto you freely.” The NIV, on the other hand, emphasizes certainty: “I can tell you confidently.” “Courage” or “boldness” are the preferred translations in Acts 4:13, where the Jewish authorities are surprised by the *parrēsia* of the apostles, who were unschooled men. It is also the petition of Peter and John in their prayer within the fellowship (Act 4:29). (See Acts 9:27; 13:46; 14:3; 28:31 for uses of the verb form). “This power of bold and open speech, which is given by God and confirmed by the Lord, is in the situation of confession made possible for the servants of God, the apostles, only by the Spirit” (TDNT 5:882). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

*parrēσίας*, from *parrēsia*, to speak frankly, openly, and with confidence. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

*his tomb is with us*. The tomb of David could be seen in Jerusalem. It still contained the remains of David’s body. The words of Ps 16:8–11 did not fully apply to him. (CSB)

David’s tomb, like all tombs except Christ’s encloses a corpse. Only one tomb is remembered with joy because it was empty. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

David, the head of his dynasty, lasted in Judah for 422 years. Ranked with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (TLSB)

**2:30-31** The first component of Peter's confident telling is David's death and entombment. Peter uses that fact to speak confidently of the resurrection of Jesus. As certain as the first is, so much more certain is the second, based on the very words of David. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

What a wondrous office the pastor of Jesus Christ possesses today. Even angels longed to look into the sufferings and glories of Christ that pastors are called to proclaim. David and other Old Testament prophets searched intently and with greatest care concerning the time and circumstances of what they predicted (1 Pet 1:10–12). This is the first sermon flowing from the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. Through Peter, the Spirit unveils the Gospel in Psalm 16 and moves Peter to proclaim the fully revealed time and circumstances of the Gospel. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

A theological debate has arisen regarding the hermeneutics of Peter's use of Psalm 16. Is Peter saying that David's words apply only to Christ's resurrection, and not at all to David or other believers? Some interpreters say yes. Others, however, contend that the resurrection promise in the psalm applies first of all to Christ, then secondarily and in a future sense to all who are in Christ, that is, to all believers, including David. In Acts 2 Peter is arguing that the primary (but not exclusive) referent of the psalm must be Christ. In the psalm itself David appears to be rejoicing in God's promise not to abandon him or any holy or faithful one (*chasid*), and in fact some Hebrew texts (such as the Snaith edition) have in v 10 *chasideyka*, "your holy/faithful ones (plural)," applying the promise to all believers. The preacher can make use of this by stressing that Christ's resurrection is the promise of our own. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

**2:31** *The Christ* - First use of the term in Acts. (TLSB)

**2:32** *God raised up* – This was the heart of the message which the apostles preached in all the world and which they recorded in the pages of the NT. It is the foundation of our faith. (PBC)

*witness* - The role of the witness is critical as the pericope concludes. Two witnesses are required to establish the facts of the case (Dent 17:6; Mt 18:16; 1 Tim 5:19). This legal principle is addressed by Jesus as he points to his work and the testimony of the Father as his witnesses (in 8:13–18; 15:36–37). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

"We are all witnesses of the fact," is the acceptance on the part of Peter and the other disciples of the role given to them in the upper room on Easter. "You are witnesses of these things" (Lk 24:48; the "things" are defined in vv 46–57). The term *martus*, "witness," ties Luke and Acts together. Acts 1:8 puts the thought into the future tense. Throughout Acts appeals are made to the eyewitness role assigned to the disciples. Acts 3:15, 5:32, 10:39 all have variations of the wording. "Telling confidently" on the part of the disciples is done because they have seen the risen Lord with their own eyes. One of the criterion by which Matthias was chosen was his presence with them from Jesus' Baptism to his Ascension (Acts 1:22). The witnesses are specially fitted for the task "They discharge the task by proclaiming both the facts and their significance as they have grasped this in faith" (TDNT 4:492). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

If the witnesses are restricted to include only the eyewitnesses of the resurrection, then in what sense are believers today able to consider themselves witnesses? To apply passages such as Luke 24:48, Acts 1:8,



and 2:32 to all believers as witnesses isn't appropriate, since the force of the confident telling done in these passages is rooted in the eyewitness nature of their testimony. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

This distinction can be noted in Acts 13:30–31, where Paul preaches in Pisidian Antioch. He refers to those who had seen Jesus alive after the resurrection. “They are now his witnesses to our people.” While here Paul doesn't include Barnabas and himself among such witnesses, we do find him describing the commission he receives from Ananias in terms of being a witness (Acts 22:15, literally “witness to him,” since *autōi* is dative, not genitive). Strathmann explains: “Paul is not a factual witness in the same sense as the older apostles . . . He is, however, a witness to truth who seeks to propagate the Christian faith by confession. The result is that, when the term *martus* is applied to Paul, the second aspect begins to predominate over the first” (ID) VT 4:494). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

“God has raised this Jesus to life.” Modern theology may question the bodily resurrection of Christ, but not Peter and not the early church. In simple words he states its certainty: “We are all witnesses [eyewitnesses] of the fact.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

**2:33** *right hand of God* – That is, Christ exercises the power of God and enjoys the honor of God. What he had from eternity according to his divine nature he now has and uses according to his human nature as well. He has the authority to send the Spirit whom he promised to send and he sent him. (PBC)

Jesus has equality with God the Father. (TLSB)

If Jesus is not in the tomb, where is he? Peter answers that he has been “exalted.” Lenski points out that the exaltation included both the glorification of Jesus' body at the time it was resurrected and the ascension of his body into heaven (97). V 33 is an irrefutable reference to the Trinity (Father, Son, Spirit). Peter makes clear that the triune God is working together for the salvation of all. At his Baptism, Jesus received the Spirit in a public inauguration of his ministry and, again, at the right hand of the Father in heaven so that he could impart (“pour out”) the Spirit on those he left behind to continue his ministry (Bruce, 72). Evidence of the Spirit could be easily verified by the things the crowd could “now see and hear” (cf. Acts 2:1–4). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

*has poured out.* See v. 17; Joel 2:28. (CSB)

*execheen* presents a common image related to the Holy Spirit, one that provides an entrance into an understanding of how God works in and through us. In a variety of settings, the Holy Spirit is spoken of in terms of a fluid that can be “poured” out and “fill up” a container, the believer. Acts 2:4 says the disciples were “filled with the Holy Spirit” (emphasis added). Peter quotes a passage from Joel in which God twice promises, “I will *pour out* my Spirit” (Acts 2:17–18, emphasis added). See not only Joel 2:28–29 but also Acts 10:45 and Titus 3:6 for other examples of the Holy Spirit being “poured.” The water image of pouring and filling is also related to Jesus' promise in Jn 7:38 about “rivers of living water” flowing from the heart of those who believe in him. John explicitly makes the connection between this overflowing water and the Spirit (Jn 7:39). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

Implicit in the imagery of pouring are several important dynamics. We are never the ones who pour; we are the passive vessels who receive the gift. Filling up also implies a purpose or an intended result. In Acts 2, the result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is the preaching of the Gospel and about three thousand new baptized believers. Though the text itself does not develop it further, the image of pouring and filling for a purpose can help us proclaim the work of the Trinity to save us and those around us. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 3)

**2:34-35** David reverses conventional speech by addressing one of his descendants as his superior. Christ, David's son, is David's Lord. (TLSB)

Peter again quotes David, Ps 110:1, to show that the words of exaltation were written about Jesus, not David. Jesus used the words of Psalm 110 to identify himself and his mission and ministry (Mk 12:35–37; Mt 22:41–45; Lk 20:41–44). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

**2:34** *David did not ascend* – Nowhere in the tradition is David believed to have ascended to God's presence. Therefore, the text must apply to his messianic successor, who has ascended to the right hand of God. (Sacra)

*The Lord said to my Lord.* The Lord (God) said to my Lord (the Son of David, the Messiah). According to Peter, David addressed his descendant with uncommon respect because he, through the inspiration of the Spirit, recognized how great and divine he would be (Mt 22:41–45). Not only was he to be resurrected (vv. 31–32) but he was to be exalted to God's right hand (vv. 33–35). And his presence there was now being demonstrated by the sending of the Holy Spirit (v. 33; Jn 16:7). (CSB)

**2:36** *all the house of Israel* - Devout Israelites gathered for Israel's third great feast (Pentecost) commemorating the completion of the grain harvest (Lev. 23:15-21). They were fully taught (catechized) from Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms. What they hadn't believed is the identity of the Christ whom they were expecting. The Spirit's Christ-centered emphasis is clear in Peter's preaching. "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

*know for certain - asphalōs*, from *asphalēs*, safely, assuredly; here "inescapably." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 2)

*made* - Appointed to office. Through the resurrection, God clearly reveals Jesus' status as Son, Lord, and Messiah. (TLSB)

*you crucified* - Though only some people were directly responsible for Jesus' trial and murder. His death was required to remove the guilt of all people' sin. (TLSB)

*Lord and Christ* - The Church has always confessed that Jesus is God. (TLSB)

Bruce (73) says of this summary verse: "The gospel message has been proclaimed: the witness of the apostles and the testimony of prophecy have combined to give assurance of the truth of the proclamation. The attested facts point to one conclusion: 'Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.'" (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

*kai kurion . . . kai Christon*, "both Lord and Christ." Jesus' death not only makes him Savior, but also exalts him to the highest place and gives him authority over all as Lord. There is power in the blood of Jesus. Having his blood on you—being literally, metaphorically, and theologically implicated in his death—is the only way to life and salvation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

## GOSPEL – Matthew 28:16-20

## *The Great Commission*

**16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**

We do not know for sure how much time passed between Jesus’ appearance to the women on Easter Sunday and His appearance to the eleven in Galilee. We do know that Jesus appeared to various people in various places over a period of 40 days before He ascended into heaven. It may well be that this incident took place near the end of those 40 days. (PBC)

**28:16** *eleven*. Judas had committed suicide (27:5). (CSB)

“the eleven disciples.” Considerable attention has been given (inside and outside of Lutheran circles) to the question of whether Jesus’ commission to the disciples in this text applies to them primarily (or even in a more exclusive sense) as representatives of the pastoral office, or whether it applies to them also (or primarily) as representatives of the whole Church. Suffice it to say that it is both possible and necessary to understand Jesus’ “Great Commission” as having application both to pastors and to the wider Church, bearing in mind both the proper distinction and the proper relationship between the pastoral office and the priesthood of all believers (see “The Power and Primacy of the Pope,” 31; also “Of the Church” in *A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod*, 1932). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

*Went to Galilee*. Jesus fulfills his second promise (given in 26:32, reiterated in 28:7,10) by returning to Galilee, where his authority and his presence will continue to expand, not only to Israel’s lost sheep but now also to all the Gentiles and nations of the earth (28:18-20). In Matthew’s narrative of Jesus, Galilee is the place of light, of mission (See Is. 9:2-7). (CC)

Nolland, *Matthew*, 1261: “In some sense what had taken place in Jesus’ ministry is to begin afresh and on a new level in the ministry of the disciples now.” (CC)

Galilee is also the place of reconciliation and restoration. Only Jesus could be the obedient Son and Messiah, and so he had predicted the apostasy of his apostles and that of Judas would betray him (26:21-25, 31-35). In the same breath, however, Jesus had promised his restoration and reunion. Matthew does not narrate precisely when and how the reconciliation happened. As he introduces this last unit, however, it is clear that the reconciliation has taken place. (CC)

The name of the northernmost province of the three provinces of Israel. The name was already used in OT time (Joshua 20:7; 1 Kings 9:11). Galilee was given to the tribes of Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali (Joshua 19:10-16, 224-39). The land was fertile and a number of important routes crossed the area (Is. 9:1). (Lutheran Bible Companion – Volume 2)

At the time of Christ, Galilee extended from Mt. Hermon on the North to Mt. Carmel on the south, and from the Jordan River on the east side to the Mediterranean Sea on the west. Herod Antipas was its ruler. Jesus performed the major part of His ministry there. The twelve disciples, except Judas Iscariot, were all from Galilee (Mk. 14:70). The leaders of Judea hated Galileans, who were known by the way they talked. (Lutheran Bible Companion – Volume 2)

*had told them.* See v. 10(CSB)

Jesus had named a certain mountain in Galilee to His disciples, where He would meet them after His resurrection, but we know neither the time of this meeting nor the location of the mountain. It had been His express command that they assemble there, and after they had received the confirmation of this word by the message of the women on Easter morning, they went to keep the appointment. (Kretzmann)

This instruction probably was conveyed to the eleven through the women described in vv 1-10. The women were commanded twice – first by an angel (v. 7), then by Jesus Himself (v. 10) – to relate the order. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 3)

The rendezvous of the eleven with Jesus was probably the occasion also of His appearance to the “about five hundred brethren” who according to 1 Cor. 15:6, saw Him together at one time after Easter. When it was reported in the circles of the faithful that Jesus would meet with His disciples in Galilee, the whole number of believers who celebrated His resurrection flocked to the mountain in the north country to see and hear Him again. There in the seclusion and peace of Galilee, far away from the hostile Jews in Judea, the Savior could communicate with those near and dear to Him the final matters of the central importance to Himself and the church. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

THE MOUNTAIN – That a mountain setting was selected doubtless marked outwardly the fact that a noteworthy event was to transpire; for it was on a mountain that Jesus had preached His great sermon (chapters 5-7), on a mountain after spending a night in prayer He had chosen the twelve apostles from among His many disciples, on a mountain He had discoursed with the multitudes and then fed the five thousand and four thousand respectively. Now on a mountain He would issue the Great Commission. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

Mountain is used as symbolical of strength and stability. (Unger’s Bible Dictionary)

The location is unknown. Traditionally it is thought to be the Mount of Transfiguration. (TLSB)

**28:17** *worshiped him.* As with the worship of the two Marys (28:9), so now with the Eleven, we can imagine that this is worship in deepest sense; the seed of all true Christian worship is seen here in Matthew’s short description. (CC)

France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 1110, suggests “There is little doubt that here Matthew intends the full sense of ‘worship,’ implying that Jesus is now recognized as more than human – cf. the same verb used of the disciples with the exclamation ‘You are the Son of God’ in 14:33.” (CC)

*Some doubted.* No one knows for sure what or why they doubted or which of the Eleven are in view. My own guess is guided by what Jesus says next. That is to say, I take Jesus’ words in 28:18-20 as his response to those among the Eleven who doubted. It seems unlikely that any of them would doubt that it was Jesus himself or that he was raised for the dead. For my part, it seems likely that what caused their doubts was what lay ahead of them. Just as Peter doubted (14:31) when he took his eyes off Jesus and saw “that the wind was strong” (14:30), perhaps some of the Eleven doubt because they know what is coming and they have their eyes on that. Jesus had taught them in both the Missionary Discourse (9:36-11:1) and the Eschatological Discourse (24:1-26:1) that the time of mission would now be at hand and that they would be sent to herald the Good News of the reign of God. Now Jesus will begin to build his church, entrusting the comprehensive teaching by which the doorway to salvation under God’s reign is opened. Although the gates of Hades will not ultimately prevail against the church (16:17-19), still, out of those gates will pour hostile forces and ideas (16:22-23). Opposition, persecution, and coldness of heart (24:12)

await them in their efforts. There on the mountain in Galilee, the Eleven worship Jesus, but in the face of what the future holds, some doubted (28:17). Jesus' words now address and assuage their doubt. (CC)

*hoi de edistasan*, "but some doubted." This is not the same word (*apistos*) used to signify the "doubt" (tantamount to unbelief) attributed, for example, to Thomas in Jn 20:24–25, 27. Helpful is Jeffrey A. Oschwald's comment, drawing on the work of R. T. France: "The verse . . . gives us a picture not of disciples refusing to worship Jesus because they did not believe in him, rather of disciples who were so confused and overwhelmed by the sight of their risen Lord that they did not know what to do. . . . Hesitation is, humanly speaking, quite understandable here" ("Homiletical Helps" in *Concordia Journal* 37:2 [Spring 2011], 147). The Church Father Chrysostom observes: "If 'some doubted,' herein again admire the Evangelists' truthfulness. Even up to the last day, they were determined not to conceal even their own shortcomings" (*Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament Ib—Matthew 14–28*, ed. Manlio Simonetti; gen. ed. Thomas C. Oden [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002], 313; hereafter ACCS). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

Upon seeing Jesus, those present worshiped Him, though some were unsure. Does this mean they did not believe in the risen Christ, or simply that they entertained reservations? The meaning of *distzo* can range from "doubt" (Mt. 14:31) to "hesitate" (BAGD), he still expresses faith when he calls to Jesus, as Lord, to save him (Mt. 14:30). The other gospels too depict some of Jesus' followers in varying degrees of uncertainty, even after His resurrection (e.g., Mk 18:8; Lk 24:11, 25; Jn 20:24-29). Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 3)

Suddenly Jesus appeared before the eleven, Matthew goes on to report. The overwhelming effect of His divine presence was to lead the larger number to prostrate themselves in worship. How are we to understand this doubt attributed to "some" among the eleven? The apostles surely were not all alike; and there is the possibility that the perversity of their flesh, the deceitfulness of their hearts, darkened the faith of the minority in the miracle of the resurrection. A more likely explanation, however, is that some of the disciples questioned within themselves whether the figure who presented himself before them was indeed the resurrected Christ. Nothing in the context points to the matter of the resurrection itself. To assume these disciples' uncertainty as to the identity of the person who stood at some distance from them would appear, furthermore, Easter afternoon the travelers from Emmaus "found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon" (Luke 24:33-34); and that the disciples in Jerusalem were glad, when they saw the Lord already Easter evening (John 20:20). There were also subsequent contacts of the eleven with the risen Christ during the forty-day period prior to His ascension. Perhaps the new glorious mode of Christ's resurrection appearance was strange, wonderful, and such as to perplex. Mary Magdelene had not at first recognized Jesus in the garden Easter morning. We may further recall that even before Easter the entire band of disciples had not recognized Jesus when He was walking on the Sea of Galilee. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

Though not in rank unbelief, they had a hard time absorbing the events that had transpired. (Cf. Luke 24:39). (TLSB)

**28:18-19** Though all God's people are to bear witness to the Lord (cf Ps 145; Is 43:10), the focus here is on the apostles and their calling as leading witnesses and representatives of Jesus. (Compare to the authorization in Mt 10:1–7.) (TLSB)

"Go therefore." "Therefore" (*oun*) always implies a previously expressed basis. What is it in this case? The basis is Jesus' assurance in v 18 that "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Pastors preach, teach, and administer the Sacraments not on their own authority but on the basis of Christ's authority (cf. Mt 21:23–27)—an authority manifested in seeking to serve (Mt 12:15–21) and to

save the lost. It is this same authority that serves as the foundation for every form and variety of the Church's participation in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

The command to "go" is given now that Jesus has completed the mission that gives rise to the mission. But God himself has been about this business from "before the foundation of the world" when "he chose us in" Christ to be "holy and blameless" (Eph 1:4). The mission has *always* been God's mission. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

**28:18** *Jesus came* – God's amazing, saving grace; He could have stood atop the mountain; challenged them to climb the rest of the way; condemned those who doubted. Not so! He treated those doubters as He treated Thomas in John 20:24-28. (Koehneke)

When, as verse 18 tells us, "Jesus approached and spoke to them" then surely all uncertainty disappeared. The entire apostolic band was eager to hear what their Lord had to say. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

*and said to them* – There are two different words for "speak" and "say"; emphasis on the Lord's verbal communication with us to disclose His heart, His will, His desires, His purposes for us; He takes the initiative; His word is truth. NOT "Now what do you have to say for yourselves?" BUT "I will tell you what you need to know to carry out my plan for you." (Koehneke)

*all authority* – *ezousia*. Absolute power (Bauer)

Christ's human nature, which had refrained from exercising the divine authority belonging to the person of Christ, now is fully exalted and given free use of divine authority (cf v 19). "He can also powerfully effect and do everything that He says and promises" (FC SD VII 43). "The Church's authority and the State's authority must not be confused. The Church's authority has its own commission to teach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments [Matthew 28:19–20]. Let it not break into the office of another. Let it not transfer the kingdoms of this world to itself. Let it not abolish the laws of civil rulers. Let it not abolish lawful obedience" (AC XXVIII 12–13). (TLSB)

Authority is illusory unless backed by real power (Kittel p. 563). It means no hindrances, to be able, unlimited opportunity. It also means that an action is not prevented by a higher norm or court, that it may be done or is not forbidden. There are three foundations: (1) Denotes the power which decides. It signifies the absolute possibility of action which is proper to God, who cannot be asked concerning the relationship of power and legality, He is the source of both. Luke 12:5 and Acts 1:7 speak directly of God's incontrovertible freedom. (2) The power of decision is active in a legally ordered whole. The power of God is variously displayed in the sphere of nature. (3) Can denote the freedom which is given to the community. For authority imparted to the community the outstanding characteristic is that the Church owes its existence and nature to Christ. It needs ennoblement even to enter the Kingdom of God. (Kittel – Volume 2, Pages 562 & 566).

This is plan "A" and there is no plan "B".

To possess authority means to have both the right and the power to rule and enforce obedience according to one's wishes. Jesus asserted that his was the absolute, the total control over all created things in heaven – the entire angelic host and the spirits of the saints already in glory and over all forces of nature, devils, and all the rest of his animate and inanimate creation. Whole creature world had to submit to His will and respond to His command; no hostile power could withstand Him. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

No dying philosopher ever uttered so all-embracing charge to his followers, nor did any world conqueror. The best Augustus of Rome could manage for his last words was a witty borrowing from Greek theater: "Have I played my part in life's farce well enough? Then clap your hands and take me off the stage." Other famous last words are not much more profound than this. Jesus, however, was not dying. He was instead establishing an almost limitless objective for Christianity, and the only thing more amazing than the words themselves is the fact that they have been fulfilled. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

God the Father originally gave Christ this authority according to His human nature already at the time of Jesus' incarnation. This happened at the time of His very conception when He took on human nature, and the divine and human were united in the one God-ma, Jesus Christ. During the period of His humiliation, which extended from His conception to His death and burial, however He in His humanity did not continually use the omnipotent authority which had been given Him. Now the Savior would rule in the interest of His Church and the success of the saving work He has assigned it. Paul later referred to this great truth in Ephesians 1:19-23. The Savior's assurance must have mightily heartened the disciples who had dedicated their lives to His service. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

The Savior's assurance must have mightily heartened the disciples who had dedicated their lives to His service. It is likewise a strengthening encouragement to us who are the Lord's own in this concluding period time of history to realize and believe with all our hearts that, despite the spreading of anti-Christian power and the advance of evil in our generation, the glorified Christ continues to govern the affairs of men, of nations, of history and the machinations of Satan. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

The speech of Jesus is majestic, but His whole bearing was friendly and intended to take away all apprehension of whatever kind among them all. His final commission is a wonderful bit of solemn oratory. As He stands before them, in His spiritual body, true man as ever during His earthly life, but no longer in humility and weakness: all power in heaven above and on earth beneath is given to Him. He is the almighty God, with unlimited authority. (Kretzmann)

**28:19** *therefore* – oun - Now – (Young's Concordance)

Inferential, denoting that what it introduces is the result of or an inference from what precedes. (Bauer p. 593)

He could not only give commands to His disciples but also clear the way and do everything necessary for them to carry out His commands. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

Shows that what otherwise would be absolutely impossible now becomes a glorious possibility, yes an assured reality. (Lenski)

*go* – poreuthentes – As you are going through life...each moment of your life. – The disciple-makers must go out where these people are. Not as in the OT period by attracting them to Jerusalem, the Temple, and its worship, but by traveling out to all the unbelieving and presenting them with Word and Sacrament where they live. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

Ongoing, continuing, relentless. One of our greatest problems is that we want to stay put and turn inward. (Koehneke)

Set in motion, to bring on the way, to lead. In the NT it means to go, to take a journey that only ends in eternity. (Kittel – Volume 6, Page 573)

The participle is merely auxiliary to the main verb, having gone, disciple. (Lenski)

*make disciples* – In the NT *mathetes* occurs only in the Gospels and Acts. It is a common word attested for certain some 250 times. Apart from a few exceptions, disciple (*mathetes*) denotes the men who have attached themselves to Jesus as their Master. Unlike the people of Jesus' day, they did not choose him but he chose them (John 15:16). Disciple (*Mathetes*) always implies the existence of a personal attachment which shapes the whole life of the disciple and which in its particularity leaves no doubt as to who is deploying the formative power. (Kittel – Volume 4, Page 441).

Explicitly or implicitly the disciple is always accompanied by the teacher (*didaskalos*) around whom the disciples gather. (Kittel – Volume 4, Page 442).

The term appears in Acts 6:1 and refers not specifically to the personal disciples, but to all Christians. (Kittel – Volume 4, Page 443)

The emphasis is not so much on the incompleteness or deficiency of education as on the fact that the one learning, that his education consists in the appropriation or adoption of specific knowledge or conduct, and that proceeds deliberately and according to a set plan. There is no disciple without a teacher. The process involves a corresponding personal relationship. (Kittel – Volume 4, Page 416)

The groups which assembled around the great philosophical teachers of antiquity were much too solidly established to disintegrate when teachers died. On the contrary, it increased responsibility for the work and strengthened commitment to it. (Kittel – Volume 4, Page 423)

Acts 11:26, "...The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." *Xristianismos*, being a Christian as expressed in lifestyle, simply means discipleship. (Kittel – Volume 9, Page 576).

The call of Peter to discipleship (Luke 5:1ff.) is also a call to work with Jesus (5:10). This is no accident, nor is it exceptional. It perhaps corresponds to the fact that the disciples called by Jesus are His disciples. As He Himself does not turn inwards into Himself, but girds Himself for service, so He directs the gaze and powers of His disciples to His task, which by their association with Him is also theirs. (Kittel – Volume 4, Page 452).

One who accepts, learns from and follows a teacher and instruction. A disciple of Jesus is one who devotes himself to Jesus in this way. This is possible only when through the miracle of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, a person is enabled to accept Jesus as his Savior and Lord, and this for this reason seeks to learn of Christ and doing His bidding. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

Jesus gives us the tools to make disciples: Baptism and His teaching. (TLSB)

This imperative, of course, means, "to turn into disciples". (Lenski)

John 8:31-32, "To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'" A disciple is someone who continues to learn from Jesus (His Word).

John 13:35, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." A disciple is loving.



In the case of a Christian repentance continues until death, for all through life it contends with the sins that remain in the flesh. As St. Paul testifies in Romans 7:23, he wars with the law in his members, and he does this not with his own powers but with the gift of the Holy Spirit which follows the forgiveness. This gift daily cleanses and expels the sins that remain and enables man to become truly pure and holy. (Tappert – Page 309)

“Aim at heaven and you’ll get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you’ll get neither.” C.S. Lewis “Mere Christianity”) his kingdom, and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you as well.” Unlike false leaders who are interested only in themselves and use people to attain their ends, Jesus is interested in us, whom he enables to have life to the full when he states in John 10:10, “...I have come that they (the sheep) may have life, and have it to the full.” (CSB)

Someone has said that Jesus gives us life without the big “if” in the middle. With Jesus life takes on meaning and has an eternal future. He gives life that delivers joy, rests content, and blossoms in glory. We believe, and we receive that life from Jesus. (PBC)

Luke 14:26-27, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters – yes even his own life – he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14:27, “And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.” A vivid hyperbole, meaning that one must love Jesus even more than his immediate family. A disciple is committed to Jesus and follows Jesus wherever that may lead.

John 15:8, “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit showing yourselves to be my disciples.” Luke 6:43-45, “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briars. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks. Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

Christian character is produced by the Holy Spirit, not by the mere moral discipline of trying to live by law. Paul makes it clear that justification through faith does not result in acting without moral restraint. For other lists of virtues see 2 Corinthians 6:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-3; 5:1-2,8-10; Colossians 3:12-17. (CSB)

2 Timothy 3:15-17, “and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching (God’s Word tells us all we need to know about salvation that is ours in Jesus’ death and resurrection), rebuking (God’s Word refutes the demonic lies that undermine the fact of Christ’s work on our behalf), correcting (God’s Word sets us on our feet when we fall into sin) and training (God’s Word educates us about the favorable verdict already rendered because of Jesus and helps us to share that good news) in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” “Man of God” is used of the Christian. (Kittel – Volume 1, Page 364).

From Professionally Speaking – May 1992...Seven basic characteristics of a disciple

1. Christ’s Disciple puts Christ first (Luke 14:25).
2. Christ’s Disciple is committed to Christ’s teachings (John 8:31).
3. Christ’s Disciple denies self and follows Him (Luke 9:23)
4. Christ’s Disciple glorifies God (John 15:8).

5. Christ's Disciple has joy (John 15:11).
6. Christ's Disciple loves as Christ loves (John 15:12-14).
7. Christ's Disciple bears fruit (John 15:8).

*all nations.* Contrast 10:5–6. (CSB)

Not just the Jews, but Gentiles too (cf 10:5–6). (TLSB)

It appears as an adjective here and then three more times in the verses ending Matthew's Gospel: "all nations," "all things – everything," "all the days – always." In biblical numerology four refers to creation – all four corners. The fourfold recurrence of this "all" assuredly alerts us to the sweeping, all-compassing nature of Christ's concluding declarations to His disciples then, and also for our illumination now. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

ethnee – When Martin Luther translated the Bible into German, he used the word Heiden, which means "the heathen." Although the Eleven were all Jews, they were to preach the gospel to Jew and Gentile alike. This was in keeping with God's ancient promise to Abram: "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:3). It is significant that Jesus chose to utter these words in Galilee, where Jews and Gentiles had been in frequent contact with one another for centuries. (PBC, Page 443)

And since this is true, therefore they, in going forth, in doing the work of their apostolic mission, should make disciples of all nations. The whole earth should be their sphere of activity. (Kretzmann)

*baptizing them.*† The adverbial participle (i.e., without the article) denotes that baptism is more than a sign. It is a means of grace. Disciples are made by "baptizing them" and by "teaching them" (v. 20), also an adverbial participle. The Word (teaching) and the sacraments (e.g., baptizing) are the means through which the Holy Spirit produces faith, which is a gift of God (Eph 2:8–9) and which results in fruits of faith (Eph 2:10; Gal 5:22–23). (CSB)

Washing with the water of new birth. "Baptism is no human plaything, but it is instituted by God Himself" (LC IV 6). "It is necessary to baptize little children, that the promise of salvation may be applied to them, according to Christ's command to baptize all nations (Matthew 28:19). Just as in this passage salvation is offered to all, so Baptism is offered to all, to men, women, children, infants. It clearly follows, therefore, that infants are to be baptized, because salvation is offered with Baptism" (Ap IX 52). (TLSB)

Here included are all aspects of missionary outreach, witnessing for Christ, confessing the faith, preaching the Gospel, sending and supporting missionaries and their work – everything that precedes and leads to the administration of baptism to young and old alike at home and abroad. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

There is a whole host of things that, in the push and shove of daily Christian living and mission, go into the process of getting people to the point where they are baptized, as well as enabling them to be taught comprehensively to guard everything that Jesus commanded all of his people to guard. All one has to do is read the rest of the NT (or just the Gospel of Matthew) to learn the importance of loving one's neighbor (even the enemy [5:43-48]), doing good deeds that direct glory to the Father who is in heaven (5:16), working together to restore and preserve one's fellow disciples (18:15-20). This means that the commission to "make disciples" is given here in only the barest of skeletal forms. (CC)

*1 Peter 3:15, "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."*

1Peter 2:1-9, “Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. <sup>2</sup>Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, <sup>3</sup>now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. <sup>4</sup>As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— <sup>5</sup>you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup>For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” <sup>7</sup>Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,” <sup>8</sup>and, “A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. <sup>9</sup>But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

“People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.” (John Maxwell ‘The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader’ P. 103)

In every era those who oppose the Christian faith justify their opposition by pointing to bad behavior by Christians. Paul, Peter, John and James all call Christ’s followers to lead exemplary lives – not just because holy lives please God, but also “so that in every way (we) will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive” (Titus 2:10) (Today’s Light Bible)

*in the name of.*† In Judaism this phrase indicated that a person was being effectually committed to something or someone. One circumcised “in the name of the covenant” was committed to the covenant, brought under its blessing and placed under its obligations. A person baptized “in the name of the Father” has God as his gracious Father. Baptized in the name “of the Son,” one receives all the benefits of the Son’s redeeming act. Baptized in the name “of the Holy Spirit,” one receives the life-giving, life-sustaining power and presence of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the enacted gospel of the Trinity. (CSB)

“the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Only Matthew’s Gospel contains this classical trinitarian formula, and it comes—as a kind of climactic revelation—at the very end of his Gospel. The doctrine of the Trinity unfolds in Matthew’s Gospel through a concentrated and developed focus on the person and work of Jesus as the God-man who reveals God to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (See “The Development of the Trinity in the Gospel of Matthew” in David Scaer’s *Discourses in Matthew: Jesus Teaches the Church* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004].) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

“Name” is singular, followed by the threefold naming of the divine persons. This illustrates the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Those baptized in the name of the Father has God as their Father; baptized in the name of the Son, they receive all the benefits of the Son’s redeeming act; baptized in the name of the Spirit, they receive the life-giving, life-sustaining power and presence of the Spirit. Christian Baptism is founded on this institution. (TLSB)

**28:20** *teaching them* – didasko – The form in which Jesus teaches is that of a Jewish teacher of the period. After reading of the Scripture portion which took place standing, Jesus seated Himself like other expositors of the time and based His address on the passage just read. Jesus does not restrict His teaching to exposition of the Law. For one thing, He is against estimation of the Law merely for its own sake. For another, He stands in irreconcilable opposition to the lifeless casuistry which does not start with the situation of the one who needs the counsel of experts in the religious sphere, but irrespective of his own questions, subjects him to its own principle and system, bringing about religious separation from those who for practical reasons, or for conscience sake cannot allow themselves to be bound by it. The whole

teaching of Jesus is with a view to ordering of life with reference to God and one's neighbor. Thus His teaching constantly appeals to the will, calling for a practical decision either for the will of God or against it. (Kittel – Volume 2, Pages 139-140.)

Disciples are made not only through Baptism, but through the ongoing catechetical work of the Church. (TLSB)

“I wonder whether Peter, Paul, Moses, and all the saints fully and thoroughly understood a single word of God so that they had nothing more to learn from it, for the understanding of God is beyond measure. To be sure, the saints understood the Word of God and could also speak about it, but their practice did not keep pace with it. Here one forever remains a learner. The scholastics illustrated this with a ball which only at one point touches the table on which it rests, although the whole weight of the ball is supported by the table. (Luther's Works – Volume 54 P. 9 No 81)

*to observe* – tereo - To guard from loss or injury by keeping the eye on it. (Strongs)

Christians are called to do more than “obey”; they are called to treasure God's Word in their hearts. (TLSB)

To go back and reread this Gospel! No one can exhaust this book the first time through. Now that we have made it to the end, we can go back and see new things in the opening chapters that did not dawn on us the first time. (PBC)

This teaching is not to be a mere intellectual process. Jesus says “teaching to guard,” which means to obey and preserve, and also to preserve and to keep inviolate. A living reception in the heart is had in mind, an assimilation by means of faith, one that will henceforth control and mold the entire character and life. (Lenski, Page 1179)

*Ephesians 4:11-15, “<sup>11</sup> It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. <sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.”*

*Hebrews 5:11-14, <sup>11</sup> We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. <sup>12</sup> In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! <sup>13</sup> Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. <sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”*

From Stanley Hauerwas and John Westerhoff's, “Schooling Christians.”...

Christians are made not born. Baptism is the sacrament by which the church makes Christians – that is, by which persons are raised to new life in Christ, incorporated into Christ's body (the church), infused with Christ's mind and character, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be Christ's continuing presence in the world. Page 262

Through Christian initiation within a Christian community of faith, persons are formed and transformed into the person that baptism establishes them to be. This process, historically known as catechesis – to

echo the Word – is the means by which a community re-presents Christ (his life, teachings, death and resurrection) in symbol, rite and common life and thereby fashions novices so that they might join the community in representing Christ to the world. Page 262

Catechesis necessitates three deliberate or intentional, systemic or interrelated, sustained or lifelong processes essential to Christian faith and life: formation, education and instruction. Page 266

Instruction aids persons to acquire that knowledge and those abilities useful for responsible personal and communal Christian life in church and society. Instruction alone, however, can produce a person who knows all about Christianity but who does not intend to be a Christian. Nevertheless, without the benefit of instruction, persons may not know what faithfulness is, what it implies, or how to decide what is faithful. Pages 266-267

Education aids persons to reflect critically on their behavior and experiences in the light of the gospel so that they might discern if they are being faithful and when they might need to change their behavior. Christians need to make education a natural way of life and not just a program, as they engage in critical reflection on every aspect of their lives. Page 267

Formation aids persons to acquire Christian faith (understood as a particular perception of life and our lives), Christian character (understood as identity and appropriate behavioral dispositions), and Christian consciousness (understood as that interior subjective awareness or temperament that predisposes persons to particular experiences). For example, Christian formation is the participation in the practice of the Christian life of faith. Page 267

Instruction informs. Education reforms. Formation both conforms (nurtures) and transforms (converts). Page 267

Formation is related to a natural process called enculturation; when enculturation becomes intentional it is called formation. Education is necessary for faith formation, and instruction is important for faithful education, but formation is foundational because it is the primary means by which Christians are made. Page 267

Several biblical texts come to mind...

Psalm 1:1 “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.<sup>2</sup> But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. <sup>3</sup> He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.”

Deut. 6:6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.<sup>7</sup> Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. <sup>8</sup> Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. <sup>9</sup> Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Christians cannot expect to resist the values of the unbelieving world if they devote one hour of the week to meditating on God’s word and the other 167 hours to providing for the needs of their bodies and enjoying worldly entertainment. We need regular Bible study with fellow Christians. We need to recognize the importance of regular family devotions and personal Bible study. We need to cultivate the habit of remembering and applying the truths of God’s word when we are confronted with temptations or

faced with decisions in daily life. God's children will find their greatest joy and satisfaction in studying his word and thinking about it day and night. (Psalms 1 of People's Bible Commentary, Page 42)

*all that I have commanded* – He asks that his disciples teach those who are converted and baptized not only to know (academically), or keep in mind, but also to observe, or do His will – and to do so not only 90% but all 100% of the things he has commanded his disciples. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

It may be noted here, too, that the divine will for every follower of the Lord includes this, that he strive to make use of the special gift of grace with which God has endowed him for service in the Kingdom (Romans 12:6-8). (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

In urging the second aspect of the process of disciple-making Jesus directs the eleven and the whole church to bring to realization, in the case of fellow believers, what His Word elsewhere tells us is the final purpose of all the Triune God's saving activity in their behalf, and of their being brought into existence as the people of God – and this is that they might be and live to please Him. God saves people via the means of grace and the church which administers them in order that they may serve Him. St. Paul writes in 2 Cor 5:15: He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again." (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

The second means of making disciples is that of teaching them to observe closely all things which Jesus has committed to His disciples, to expound to them the counsel of God to their salvation. Not human notions, but the Word of the Gospel, the inspired Word of God shall be the content of all preaching in the Church of Jesus Christ, no more, no less. (Kretzmann)

Not only Christ's moral injunctions (the Law) but also His invitation to trust in Him (the Gospel). (TLSB)

*with you.* Matthew ends with the reassuring and empowering words of him who came to earth to be "God with us" (1:23). (CSB)

This is not a general sort of promise of Christ's presence with his disciples; rather, it is a promise that sustains and enables the making of disciples. The church will not go out alone as she baptizes and teaches. Jesus will be going with her. In that sense, although the Great Commission is, on one level, Jesus' command to which Jesus commits himself; he will undergird and accompany the performance of it. "The one who receives you receives me" (10:40). With this authority (28:18) and this promise (28:20), Jesus speaks to their doubt. (CC)

"I am with you always, to the end of the age." Chrysostom, again: "He promised to be not only with these disciples but also with all who would subsequently believe after them. Jesus speaks to all believers as if to one body. Do not speak to me, he says, of the difficulties you will face, for 'I am with you,' as the one who makes all things easy" (ACCS, 313). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 3)

Among other things these words imply that Christ's blessing would attend the presentation of the apostolic word by future believers. This is a pledge that extends far beyond the lifetime of those present with Jesus in Galilee; it reaches even to the end of time. (A Short Explanation of Matthew 28:16-20 – Walter A. Maier)

Like parents encouraging a child to walk – encourage (words – arms out – sometimes hanging on by 1 finger). Hug and kiss when he/she succeeds. Immanuel = God with us

And if His commission is carried out in this manner, then His promise also will stand secure, that He will be with us all the days until the end of time. When this age comes to its close, when He Himself will usher in the new age by the dawn of His Judgment Day, then only will the work of the Church have come to an end. (Kreztmann)

Not only in Spirit but also according to His human nature. He is present especially in His Church and congregation on earth as Mediator, Head, King, and High Priest. This presence is not a part, or only one half of Him. Christ's entire person is present, to which both natures belong, the divine and the human – not only according to His divinity, but also according to, and with, His received human nature. (TLSB)

*end of the age.* When He returns visibly. (TLSB)

**28:16–20** Christ commissions His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations through Baptism and teaching. Christ promises to be with us, and He is the one who makes disciples through our baptizing and teaching. Today, remember your Baptism and confirmation in the faith, which are precious blessings for the Lord's disciples. His love and care are new for you every morning. • Send us, Lord, to make disciples in Your name in accordance with our callings in life. Amen. (TLSB)