

stop!

PLEASE DON'T READ THESE NOTES UNTIL YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR LESSON.

HEARING GOD FOR YOURSELF IS WAY BETTER THAN MY COMMENTS! REALLY! Ü

Questions

ELOHIM CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH . . .

The Creation story found in Genesis may be a familiar portion of Scripture to you, but our purpose in studying it is to discover all that we can about *Elohim – Mighty Creator* – and to ask the question, "Why does God want us to know that he is the *Mighty Creator*?"

Read Genesis 1:1-25 in your Bible or from the Scripture handout. As you read, circle each occurrence of the word **God** (*Elohim*). You may want to substitute *Mighty Creator* for God as you read.

Create – the Hebrew word *bara* which is a verb that means an action by which something that has not existed before is brought into being. In Scripture, this Hebrew word for **create** is used only of God's activity. **Hebrews 11:3** further tells us that the visible universe was **created** by God's command from "nothing" or *that which is not visible*.

1. **Genesis 1:1** is the summary statement for the Creation story. Along with **Isaiah 45:18**, list everything you learn about God or that is inferred about God in these verses.

Answers might include:

God existed before the heavens and earth was created

There was a beginning for our universe – the heavens and the earth

God **created** (see box above) the heavens and the earth

God fashioned the heavens and the earth – founded it and put everything in place; (The Message reads: "made if from scratch")

God made the heavens and earth with a purpose in mind; not to be empty and chaotic (worthless waste), but to be lived in and inhabited

God is God and there is no other God

Note: The Bible always assumes, and never argues, God's existence. Although everything else had a beginning, God has always been. **Psalms 90:2** *Before the mountains were created, before you made the earth and the world, you are God, without beginning or end.*

It is also important to note that what God creates is something distinct from himself. God is not another name for everything he creates (pantheism). It is true that God indwells the world and that the world has it's being in God, but God remains God and is in **above all** and **distinction** from what he has created.

♥ Is it important to you to know that God created the heavens and the earth? Why or why not?

♥ What is the significance of God creating all that is seen from "nothing" or that which is not visible?

We as humans make things and can be very creative, but only God can create from no existing materials. This demonstrates the absolute power of God and that he is "all powerful." God is God and we aren't!

♥ Why is it helpful to know the "the beginning" of something? Why does *Mighty Creator* want us to know *the beginning*? A *beginning* infers an *ending*. Why would God also want us to know the *ending*?

If we don't know how something **begins**, we are literally jumping into the middle of the story and what is happening in the present has no context and often makes no sense. In order for us to have a sense of **identity**, **purpose** and **significance** in life, we need to know where we come from and why we exist. We need to know that it begins with God, that history is HIS-story and that it's all about God and not us. We also need to know that we are not an accident, but have been planned and created by our Creator and that we exist for a reason and for a purpose.

I believe that one of the reasons some people are so resistant to God as their Creator is because of the implication that if we have our **beginning** in God, then we also have our **ending** in him. If I admit to my creation by God then I also have to admit to the strong possibility that I may return to him after this life or at least be held accountable for the life he gave me – perhaps even judged! Life is a story – a narrative – and the beginning, the middle and the end are all important and all the parts affect all the other parts.

2. As we pick up the creation narrative in **Genesis 1:2**, what has already been created, in what condition do we find it and who is present?

The earth was formless, empty, dark and the **Spirit of God** was hovering (brooding) over the surface of the "watery abyss."

Again, *The Message*: Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss.

Here we see a picture of where God's creative word is NOT bringing order yet. In the beginning the created world lacked order and shape which contrasts sharply with the developing order and beauty of the rest of Genesis 1. The formless, empty, dark world is part of God's creation, but it is a stage on the way towards a fully finished world. It is formless, but God will give it form. It is dark, but God will command the light and the frightening, chaotic deep will be brought to order.

- ♥ What similar images do you see in **Genesis 1:2** and **Deuteronomy 32:9-12**?

Deuteronomy speaks of God choosing his people (the Hebrews) for himself when they were nothing and no different from any of the people and nations around them. He shielded them and took care of them and guarded them (no matter what they went through – or how disobedient they were). He hovered over them like an eagle hovers over and protects and takes care of its young. The picture is of a mother eagle stirring up her nest, fluttering over her young, bringing what is immature into more active life.

This is a similar image or picture of the creative Spirit of God hovering over the chaotic darkness, waiting to bring life, order and beauty from what is formless, empty and dark. The Spirit is "the giver of life" and hovers, (broods- takes care of the young and weak) as he waits to be poured out on all of God's creation and infuse it with life – Job 33:4 – The breathe of God gives life.

What do you think is the purpose of *hovering*? (see above) What is the Spirit waiting to do (**Job 33:4**)? What do these images speak to you about God and your relationship to him?

3. From **Genesis 1:3-25**, list any words and phrases that you find repeated.

God said – Let there be . . . And it was so . . .

God saw it was good . . .

God called . . . (named)

God created . . .

- ♥ What do you learn about God's **power** and **authority** in the repeated phrases, "*God said*" and "*it was so*"? God created by the power of his word alone. He said it and it was so. Nothing more was needed. This creative process demonstrates the incredible power and creativity of God – and the awesome power of his WORD.

What makes God's **power** and **authority** different from any other **power** or **authority** that exists?

No other power can create from nothing or create by just saying the word.

4. What link do you see between the phrase, "*Then God said . . .*" and **John 1:1-3**?

These verses from John are so important for several reasons. John 1:1 begins the same way that Genesis 1:1 begins . . . "In the beginning," thus showing the link between the two texts. In John we learn that Jesus is the Word of God and that he was with God in the beginning, that he IS God and that through him all things were made or created – and that nothing exists that he didn't make. When we consider that Jesus is the **Word of God**, through whom all things were made – the words, "God said" and "it was so" from Genesis 1 takes on a whole new meaning.

- ♥ What does this suggest about the power and authority of God's Word? What *power* does God's Word have in your life? What *authority*? God's Word includes his spoken word, the written Word and Jesus, the Word of God that became flesh (human). God's Word is powerful (as we see in creation), but it also should carry ultimate authority in our life. What could possibly have more power OR authority in our lives than God's Word?
- ♥ God speaking (1:3, 6, 9, etc.) brought order and beauty from darkness and chaos (1:2). In what areas of your life do you need God to bring order and beauty from that which is dark and chaotic? Can you trust him to do this? What, in the creation story, encourages you that he will?

This may be too personal for some to share but we can be encouraged by reminding ourselves when our lives are marked by chaos, ugliness, disorder or confused emptiness – God is a God who comes into the confusion and makes things new. He hovers over our darkness and says, "Let there be light – and there is light and the light is GOOD!

5. "And God saw that it was *good* . . ." How would you define the word *good* as it is used in this account of creation?

This is a great statement to think about and mull over in your mind (meditate on). Good has several meanings: to be desired or approved of; that which is morally right; enjoyable or satisfying – giving pleasure; benefit or advantage to someone.

God saw that everything he made was good – very good! For whom? Good for God? Good compared to what? The good that the author had in view the Creation story has a very specific range of meaning. The "good" is **that which is beneficial for humans**. "God saw that it was good" means that God saw it was good for humans who would occupy his creation. Notice that on the second day of creation (1:6-8), God did NOT "see" that it was good – for there was nothing created that was beneficial to humans that day. They land on which people would live was still hidden and would not appear until the next day, when God would "see that it was good."

The point is, that from the very beginning, it is God who **knows what is good for us** and it is God who is intent on **providing what is good for us**. This fact has never changed. God is still the one who knows what is good for us and it is God who still provides what is good for us. "Every good and perfect gift is from above coming down from the Father of heavenly lights . . ." (James 1:17)

The description of God's works as "good" also means that God's creation has intrinsic aesthetic worth. God delights in beauty – in the "fine arts" – and has given humans the capacity to be creative and responsive and appreciative of beauty.

- ♥ What are some specific things about/in God's creation that you consider to be especially *good*? What should be our response to the good things God has created (1 Timothy 4:4)? How can you do this?
- ♥ What **symmetry** and **order** do you see in God's creation of the heavens and the earth? What does this reveal about God, *Mighty Creator*? What implications does this have for you and your life?

Elohim is a God who brings form out of what is formless, gives order where there is disorder, and brings shape, pattern and beauty to what is yet a "waste." It is God's work to make things ordered and beautiful. This is the way God is. God brings into being things that are not. God brings life where there is not life. "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor. 5:17). God bringing order and symmetry to our lives begins at our new birth, but it continues as he shapes and forms us to be just like Jesus.

- ♥ How have you have met or experienced *Elohim, Mighty Creator* in his creation? When this happens, how does it make you feel? How has this affected your relationship with God?

ELOHIM CREATED HUMANS . . .

Read Genesis 1:26-2:3.

6. What differences do you see between God's creation of humans (1:26-28) and his creation of other creatures (1:20-25)?

There is a series of subtle contrasts between the creation of humans and the creation of other creatures. When God created the birds and the creatures of the sea and the creatures that live on land, he spoke their existence with the impersonal, third person, "Let the water teem with living creatures," or "Let the land produce living creatures." When he created humans he said, "Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves."

When the creatures of water and land are created, they produced "according to their kind." Man and woman were made in the image of God, not according to its own kind. A human's image is not simply of ourselves, but also of God which sets us apart from other created creatures.

The creation of humans is specifically noted as a creation of "male and female." In the creation of other creatures, gender is not considered an important feature to stress. But for humanity, this distinction is important. Both male and female are created in God's image and as we will see, the two together becomes a more complete image of God.

It is only humans that are given dominion or rule over creation. This dominion is expressly stated to be over all other living creatures – creatures of the sky, sea and land.

All of this is to say that humans are marked off as different from the rest of God's creatures. Human are God's creation and they are a special creature, made in the likeness and image of God. (Your group may see some other difference too.)

7. What does God say in **1:26** and to whom might he be speaking (**Genesis 1:2; Colossians 1:15-17**)? It might be helpful to read 1:26 in both the NIV and NLT. Many Bible scholars see that the "us" in these verses is a reference and indication of the triune God: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Colossians (as well as John 1:1-3) that Jesus is the one through whom God created everything in heaven and earth – things seen and unseen. It seems that God is having a conversation with Himself, amongst the Trinity, in this verse.

- ♥ Based on what you know about God from the creation account alone, what are some ways that humans bear the *image* or *likeness* of God? See box below. What *differences* do you see between God and humans? Human are "like" God but they are not God and never will be God. Even when humans were sinless, they never possessed God's awesome power or authority. God is all powerful, all-knowing and everywhere present. Humans will never have these characteristics – even in the new heaven and new earth.
- ♥ What does it mean to you personally that you are created in God's image? How does this affect the way you feel about yourself? What does it say about your worth?
- ♥ All humans bear the image of God. Should this affect the way you think of and treat other people? Why or why not?

All that exists is a creation of God. Even spoiled by sin, God's creation bears his marks and humans bear his likeness. There is nothing, however soiled, that does not owe its existence to God. Everything we see, everything we handle, every creature we meet, every person who crosses our path is a gift from the Creator's hands – a gift to be treasured, honored and treated with respect. The creation has great worth because of Who created it.

In the *image* or *likeness of God* – The Bible does not define exactly what it means by the *image of God*. Most Bible scholars agree that the image of God are characteristics that humans have that set them apart from the rest of God's creatures that have the "breath of life" (**1:30**); characteristics like *awareness of self*, *ability to make choices*, and the *ability to have relationships*, along with the ability to *love, to create, to reason, to rule, to initiate, and to live in harmony with God and creation*. To be created in the image of God also means that humans have the ability and privilege of knowing, serving and loving God, and that we are most fully human when fulfilling our spiritual potential.

8. According to **Genesis 2:20b-24** and **Matthew 19:4-6**, why did God create humans in his own image, *male and female he created them* (**1:27**)?

The two, male and female, come together in marriage and become "one" – a more complete image of God who is both masculine and feminine. (Masculine and feminine is different than gender, male and female. God is "genderless" but possess both the masculine and the feminine

in his person.) To be made in the image of God also includes partnership and relationship, even as we see in the partnership and relationship between Father, Son and Spirit. The partnership between man and woman is special and different. The two that are the same, yet different, come together and become one (in marriage), reflecting the image of God in the "Oneness" of God. The two, from the very beginning, are made for each other and are complete when they come together to make "one." From the very beginning, God created the relationship between male and female, who are both created in God's likeness, to be special and different.

- ♥ Is marriage a human institution or a divine institution? Why is this an important distinction and what difference does it make? We have social or human institutions (government, education, economic systems, etc.) that have evolved throughout history, over time, in different cultures – with which God has given humans freedom to invent, choose and "tweak." It is interesting to note, however, that marriage (and family) was created by God, in the beginning, at the creation of man and woman. As such, it is a divine institution and not a human one. God has defined what marriage is (and isn't) and it is based on and involves his image or likeness. As such, humans have not been given the freedom or liberty to redefine or "tweak" God's creation and definition of marriage.
- ♥ Besides marriage, what other significance do you see in the statement that God created humans in his own image, *male and female he created them*? God is both masculine and feminine (see question 8). Male and female, although **different** (in gender and sexual identity), are both created in God's **image or likeness**. God blessed them (1:28) and **together** they were to rule over the created world. The implication is that although different, both are needed and that God had a purpose and reason for creating humans as male and female. One can assume that each (male and female) has their own gifts and strengths and are meant to work together.
- ♥ What are some specific ways that you can fulfill and implement God's blessing given in **1:28**? Have several share different ways we can be good stewards of the earth that God has given humans to rule and care for. Striving to make things better is a reflection of God's character and we should pursue it whole-heartedly. What are some things that we are prohibited from doing because of this blessing? We are not to exploit or misuse in any way the creation that God has given us to rule. Have several share specific things that should be avoided.
- ♥ To whom does creation belong (**Psalm 24:1-2; 89:11**). Why is this significant?

Every culture understands the entitlement and authority of an owner or creator over that which he owns or creates. It is no different with God. He made all that exists and it belongs to him. As Creator, it is his **right** and **responsibility** to say how his creation should be used – and how his creatures should live. As Creator, Sustainer and Possessor of the heavens and the earth, he is worthy of worship and praise. Each person owes his or her existence to God and we should respond with thanksgiving and grateful praise.

ELOHIM CREATED YOU . . .

9. From the verses below, what do you learn about Elohim's creation of you? Write your answers in the first person as if you were speaking to God (You, I, me, etc.).

Jeremiah 1:5	<i>You knew me before I was formed in my mother's womb. You knew me before I was born.</i>
Psalm 139:13-16	<i>You knit me together in my mother's womb. You made me wonderfully complex and anything you make is wonderful in every way. You saw me before I was born and you laid out my life before I was ever born.</i>
Psalm 100:3	<i>You made me and I am yours. I am a sheep in your pasture.</i>
Acts 17:24-26	<i>You made everything, including me. You gave me life and breath and everything I need. You determined the time that I would live and the exact place.</i>
Ephesians 1:4; 2:10	<i>You loved me and chose me to be yours before the world was ever created. I am your masterpiece, created in Christ to do good works which you planned in advance for me to do.</i>

♥ What truths do these verses convey to you, regardless the circumstances of your birth?

No matter what the circumstances of our conception, God is the only one who can create life and he was present when we were conceived. God knows us before we are even conceived and not conception or birth takes him by surprise. No one is an accident.

♥ Why does God want us to know these facts about our creation? What difference does it make?

God, our Creator, gives every person identity, purpose and significance. God knows each one of us intimately and loves us immeasurably. Our beginning has huge implications for all of life – and for life after this life. To know ourselves and God, we need to know where we came from.

Knowing that God is our creator carries great privilege and responsibility.

10. In the space below, write out **Revelation 4:11**. Considering all you have learned in this lesson, how would you answer the question, "Why does God want *me* to know that he is *Elohim, Mighty Creator*?"

Revelation 4:11 is a wonderful verse that tells us that God is worthy of all glory, honor and praise because he is the Creator of all that exists – and that everything exists for his pleasure (NLT). We will never know our true purpose, identity or significance apart from God. We exist for Him!

♥ How does it make you feel when you have created something special or completed a big project? God made the seventh day of creation different from the other days of creation (2:1-3). What implications does this have for us today, if any? How would you define rest? What do you find restful?

It is interesting to note that the pattern of work and rest was established at creation (like marriage), long before the Law was given to Moses and God declared the seventh day to be a day of Sabbath rest. As we have seen, what God does and creates is good – good and beneficial **for humans**. God knows what we need and he knows what is good for us. Periodic rest is not an option – it is a pattern established by God for our good.

It is also interesting to note that secular culture is also finding this to be true. I just read an article in the *Wall Street Journal* that reported on a study that businesses have been doing where they **force** their workers and executives to take one entire week-end day off work (no email, no phone calls, no "catching-up" or finishing To Do lists) and they found that **productivity** went up along with the **quality** of work produced. Go figure! God rules!

You might want to discuss with your group how persons who is not employed outside the home might practice a pattern of rest their life. This is where defining rest and discussing what is restful is helpful.

♥ **Heart Therapy** (change of title for the lessons; better describes this exercise)

SPEND SOME QUALITY TIME WITH ELOHIM, YOUR MIGHTY CREATOR. . .

Knowing *about* God is not the same as *knowing* God and so it is important that we apply what we have learned about God and make it real in our lives. **Romans 1:20** tells us that creation reveals God's **eternal power** and **divine nature**. Nature is a wonderful way to meet God and experience his Presence.

Take a walk outside this week, looking for the *goodness* and *loveliness* in God's creation. When some scene, image or object captures your attention with its beauty, thank God that the world he created is good and beautiful. Carefully observe what has captured your attention. What does it reveal about God? How does it help you know and understand God better?

True friends speak *and* listen to each other. Ask *Mighty Creator* to speak to you through his creation. Be still and wait for God to communicate. He may fill you with wonder or some other emotion, give you a picture or image in your imagination, bring a Scripture to mind or speak some specific words to your heart and soul. What do you "hear" God saying to you? Write down your experience so you don't forget!

BELOW IS THE SUPPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURE FOR THIS LESSON THAT CAN BE PRINTED OUT FOR SMALL GROUP TIME.

NIV

Isaiah 45:18 For this is what the LORD says—he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited—he says: “I am the LORD, and there is no other.

Deuteronomy 32:9-12 For the LORD’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance. **10** In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling waste. He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye, **11** like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions. **12** The LORD alone led him; no foreign god was with him.

Job 33:4 The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was with God in the beginning. **3** Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

1 Timothy 4:4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving,

Colossians 1:15-17 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16** For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. **17** He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Genesis 2:20-24 So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. **21** So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh. **22** Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. **23** The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.” **24** For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Matthew 19:4-6 “Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ **5** and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? **6** So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

Psalms 24:1-2 The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; **2** for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.

Psalms 89:11 The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth; you founded the world and all that is in it.

Jeremiah 1:5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

Psalms 139:13-16 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. **14** I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. **15** My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, **16** your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Psalms 100:3 Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Acts 17:24-26 “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. **25** And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. **26** From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

Ephesians 1:4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

NLT

Isaiah 45:18 For the LORD is God, and he created the heavens and earth and put everything in place. He made the world to be lived in, not to be a place of empty chaos. “I am the LORD,” he says, “and there is no other.

Deuteronomy 32:9-12 For the people of Israel belong to the LORD; Jacob is his special possession. **10** “He found them in a desert land, in an empty, howling wasteland. He surrounded them and watched over them; he guarded them as his most precious possession. **11** Like an eagle that rouses her chicks and hovers over her young, so he spread his wings to take them in and carried them aloft on his pinions. **12** The LORD alone guided them; they lived without any foreign gods.

Job 33:4 For the Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

John 1:1-3 In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and he was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** He created everything there is. Nothing exists that he didn’t make.

1 Timothy 4:4 Since everything God created is good, we should not reject any of it. We may receive it gladly, with thankful hearts.

Colossians 1:15-17 Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before God made anything at all and is supreme over all creation. **16** Christ is the one through whom God created everything in heaven and earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see—kings, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities. Everything has been created through him and for him. **17** He existed before everything else began, and he holds all creation together.

Genesis 2:20-24 He gave names to all the livestock, birds, and wild animals. But still there was no companion suitable for him. **21** So the LORD God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep. He took one of Adam’s ribs and closed up the place from which he had taken it. **22** Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib and brought her to Adam. **23** “At last!” Adam exclaimed. “She is part of my own flesh and bone! She will be called ‘woman,’ because she was taken out of a man.” **24** This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

Matthew 19:4-6 “Haven’t you read the Scriptures?” Jesus replied. “They record that from the beginning ‘God made them male and female.’ **5** And he said, ‘This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.’ **6** Since they are no longer two but one, let no one separate them, for God has joined them together.”

Psalms 24:1-2 The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him. **2** For he laid the earth’s foundation on the seas and built it on the ocean depths.

Psalms 89:11 The heavens are yours, and the earth is yours; everything in the world is yours—you created it all.

Jeremiah 1:5 “I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my spokesman to the world.”

Psalms 139:13-16 You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. **14** Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—and how well I know it. **15** You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. **16** You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

Psalms 100:3 Acknowledge that the LORD is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Acts 17:24-26 “He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn’t live in man-made temples, **25** and human hands can’t serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need there is. **26** From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand which should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries.

Ephesians 1:4 Long ago, even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.