



Where Is Creation in John?

- *One explicit passage refers to Creation*
- *Is this the only place?*

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That one passage is the Prologue just recited.

See the article for Faith and Science Council by Jon Paulien, and the chapter on “The Word: Creation and New Creation” in Andreas J. Kostenberger, *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters*, 336-354.

John’s Theology

Elusive and Allusive

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Elusive — Tending to elude capture. Difficult to define or describe.

Allusive — Containing or full of allusions (indirect references)

The Lord’s Supper Example

- *Jesus’ final meal with the disciples not described as a Passover meal, nor is there any reference to the Lord’s Supper*
- *Is the Lord’s Supper missing?*
- *Is it nowhere?*
- *Or is it everywhere?*

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There are allusions to the Lord’s Supper in the Wedding at Cana in chapter 2 with the Water turned to Grape Juice
Also allusions in John 6 where Jesus multiplies the loaves and says “I am the Bread of Life”

Creation in John

- *While John only explicitly refers to Creation in one passage*
- *He alludes to it numerous times, tying it to other themes*

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The Problem

- *“... no single piece of scholarship suggests any link between the Johannine literature and the science of origins. In fact, John has been accused of ‘emphatically’ passing over in silence the fact that ‘the world is a divine creation.’ Scholars seem in agreement that when John makes reference to creation,*

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The Problem

- *“he is doing so with spiritual intent rather than speaking to the scientific issues of today’s world. Creation at the beginning becomes a metaphor for revelation and/or for the ‘new creation’ that Jesus establishes through His life, death and resurrection.”*

• Jon Paulien, “Creation in the Gospel and Epistles of John,” 2-3

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Resolving

- *Since John's references to Creation are mostly allusive, we cannot verify "on the surface" if he intended us to take the reference literally with historicity claims included.*

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Resolving

- *Instead, we must note the themes and how they interact in John with the stories to test whether or not they point to historicity claims.*

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References to Creation in John

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References to Creation in John

- *Prologue — “In the beginning . . . All things made by Him . . . The world was made through Him” (Gen 1)*
- *John 5 — “Sabbath miracle, giving life, Father still working and I am working” (Gen 2)*

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References to Creation in John

- *John 9 — Made mud to heal man, “I am the light of the world” (Gen 1-2)*
- *John 19 — “It is finished” (Gen 2)*
- *John 20 — Breathed on them the Spirit (Gen 2)*

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The Prologue 1:1-18

In the Beginning

- *Reference to Creation appears clearly three times*
 - *Verse 1 — In the beginning*
 - *Verse 3 — All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made*
 - *Verse 10 — The world was made through Him*

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In verse 1 “In the beginning” clearly alludes to the Creation account in Gen 1:1. But the text does not say “In the beginning the Word created . . .” Instead, it states, “In the beginning was the Word” — that is The Word, Jesus Christ, predates all Creation.

Verse 3 indicates therefore that all physical matter and the created order referred to in Genesis 1 was accomplished through Jesus Christ.

The negation in verse 3 indicates that beyond His creative work, nothing

Using Verbs Differently

- *Two Greek verbs usually synonyms*
 - *εἶμι — “to be”*
 - *γίνομαι — “to be, to become, come to be”*

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These verbs are typically synonyms — but not here in John when speaking of creation and Christology

Use in the Prologue

- *εἶμι — “to be” — referring to that which is self-existent, no beginning*
- *γίνομαι — “to be, to become, come to be” — referring to that which comes into existence at particular time*

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These verbs are typically synonyms — but not here in John when speaking of creation and Christology

Instead εἶμι is used to refer to Jesus Christ, His self-existence before Creation “In the beginning was the Word”

In contrast, γίνομαι is used to refer to things and people that come into existence at a particular time.

Life and Light

- Verse 4-5 — *“In Him was life and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.”*
- Connection to Genesis 1:3-5, 14-18

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See Kostenberger, 339.

“Life” and “Light” are both subjects in Genesis 1. Because of the context in the Prologue, these terms also allude to the Creation account where the first thing God created was light. He later separated the darkness and the light, and He created all living things.

Themes in John

- *Life and Light are themes that run through John*
- *Light is linked to Jesus and to truth. It stands in contrast to the darkness of falsehood and evil*

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Themes in John

- *Life is tied to the giving of eternal life through belief in Jesus*
- *It encompasses the restoration of eternal life that was lost in the Fall*
- *Thus where the themes of life and light appear in John we can see Creation as well*

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John 5 The Cripple

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Sabbath Miracles

- *John 5 is the miracle of a man healed after 38 long years of being crippled*
- *He is waiting by a pool for a miracle when Jesus stands over him and asks, "Do you want to get well?"*

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Sabbath Miracles

- *The miracle was done on a Sabbath. Jesus is persecuted by religious leaders because He did the miracle on a Sabbath (5:16)*
- *Jesus defends Himself by saying "My Father is working until now and I am working" (5:17)*

The reference to God working in relation to the Sabbath again recalls the Creation account of Genesis 1 and into 2:1-3.

Gen 2 notes that God rested on the Sabbath having finished all His work. Is this in conflict with Jesus' statement in John 5? Not really, It is a qualification on God's rest in Genesis 2, not a denial of the completion of Creation. The later (AD 300-500) *Genesis Rabah* (rabbinic commentary on Genesis) indicates that God continues to work in regard to the wicked and righteous. The rabbis reasoned that if God ceased working, then all life and

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Sabbath Miracles

- *Later in His defense of His actions Jesus refers to life giving done by the Father and the Son (5:21)*
- *This statement ties together a reference to Creation and Resurrection, as 5:24-29 make clear*

Cf. Paulien, 24.

Thus this miracle ties together Protology and Eschatology — a grand cosmic sweep in themes

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John 9 Man Born Blind

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Sabbath Miracles

- *In John 9 another Sabbath miracle occurs. Whereas in John 5, Jesus spoke the man to health, here in John 9 He makes clay and anoints a blind man's eyes*
- *The two miracles parallel God's Creative Word "And God said . . ." in Genesis 1 and His making of the man from the dust of the ground in Genesis 2*

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Sabbath Miracles

- *The miracle in John 9 also ties in to the light theme with Jesus' words, "I am the light of the world" (verse 5)*
- *This statement reminds us of the Prologue and ties into the creation of light on the first day of Creation*

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Sabbath Miracles

- *The blind man himself points back to Creation in John 9:32 when he states "Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind."*

The phrase in Greek is literally ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος which means "from the age" — but it also was used to refer to the time of the world, the duration of the world (see TDNT 1:202-203)

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John 19 At the Cross

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Finished at the Cross

- *In the Gospel of John the cross is a place of glory, the enthronement of Jesus, the completion of His work of salvation*
- *Just before He dies He say, "It is finished" (19:30)*

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Finished at the Cross

- *This terminology is reminiscent of the reference to the first Sabbath in Genesis 2:1-3 where God finished His work and rested*
- *As God completed Creation on the seventh day, so Jesus on the Cross completed Salvation and then rested in the tomb on the Sabbath*

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John 20 Recreation

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Recreation with the Spirit

- *The last reference to Creation in John is in 20:22, "And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"*

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Recreation with the Spirit

- *These words are reminiscent of God making Adam and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life (Gen 2:7)*
- *The same more rare Greek word ἐμφυσάω ("to breath in, breath upon") is used in John 20:22 and Gen 2:7 (LXX)*

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Creation in John

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Note the Numerous References

- *John 1 — In the beginning, made all things, world made through Him, life and light*
- *John 5 — Sabbath, Father working, Christ working, give life raise up*

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Note the Numerous References

- *John 9 — Light of the world, made clay, from the foundation of the world*
- *John 19 — It is finished parallel completion of Creation and first Sabbath*
- *John 20 — Breathed on parallel creation of Adam*

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Physical and Spiritual Realities

- *The Gospel of John invests physical realities with spiritual truths*
- *The light is not simply something created but the light of truth*

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Physical and Spiritual Realities

- *Doing God's work in miracles on Sabbath is following His lead in Creation by doing Recreation and resurrection*
- *As God formed Adam from the dust of the ground, Jesus uses clay to restore the eyes of the blind*

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Physical and Spiritual Realities

- *As God finished His creative work on Sabbath, so Jesus finishes salvation and rests on the Sabbath*
- *As God breathed life into Adam, so Christ breaths the life of the Spirit upon His disciples*

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Physical and Spiritual Realities

- *In each case of reference or allusion to Creation in the Gospel of John physical realities are involved*
- *Jesus makes, speaks life to crippled limbs, makes mud that restores sight, physically dies, breaths upon His disciples*

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Physical and Spiritual Realities

- *The very physical nature of the realities points to the historical reality of Creation as John's underlying starting point*

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See Paulien, 36-37

Two More Helpful Points

- *"First, the salvation that John sees in the present and foresees in the future is only meaningful if there is an interventionist God in the past. It is the power of God in creation that is exercised both in the miracles of the earthly Jesus and the ultimate destruction of death in the future.*

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Two More Helpful Points

- *"Second, John's eschatology clarifies his understanding of creation. The eschatological defeat of "darkness" and death is assumed to be real and located at the end of history. The underlying assumption is that the story of creation is as real and tangible as Jesus' mighty acts in the present and in the envisioned future.*

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Two More Helpful Points

- *“Jesus is portrayed as having the authority to create anew, but if the past creation is not real, the present salvation is an illusion and the future salvation offers no hope.”*

Jon Paulien, “Creation in the Gospel and Epistles of John,” 36-37

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Our Thesis

- *The very physical nature of events in John tied to Creation theology points to the historical nature of Creation.*

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Creation in John

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