

Covenant & Kingdom



Module 1: Creation, Image, and the Commission of Man **Week 1: God Brings Order**

Series Overview

This module seeks to instill a biblical-theological vision of the story of redemption. Across four weeks, *From Chaos to Cosmos* traces the movement of Scripture from the beginning to the end—showing how the Great Commission in Matthew 28 is the fulfillment of the creation mandate first given to Adam and accomplished in the Last Adam, Jesus Christ.

This framework shapes how we read the entire Bible. It teaches us to see Scripture not as a collection of disconnected stories, but as a unified account of God bringing order, purpose, and fullness to His creation. In doing so, it helps the Christian in the 21st century understand both their spiritual inheritance and their ongoing role in God's work of bringing fullness to His creation.

This Series Will Address:

Week 1: God Brings Order

Week 2: God Dwells

Week 3: Disorder Enters

Week 4: De-Creation and Hope

This Week: *Tohu Wabohu* — From Formlessness to Fullness

Text: Genesis 1:1-2:3

Big Idea: God alone brings order to chaos by forming and filling creation through His Word.

Covenant & Kingdom

Leader Guide

Opening Questions (5 minutes):

- When you hear the word chaos, what comes to mind?
- Where do you see chaos in the world today?

Transition:

Today we are going to see that the Bible begins not with order—but with chaos—and more importantly, with a God who brings order out of it.

Reading of the Word (2-3 minutes):

- Genesis 1:1-2
- Genesis 1:26
- Genesis 2:1-3

Teaching Section:

I. Chaos: The World Before Order (5 minutes)

“The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep...” (Gen. 1:2)

Before God forms and fills creation, we are given a picture of *tohu wabohu* (pronounced “toe-who-wah-beaux-who”)—“formless” and “void.” This concept of chaos is foundation to understanding, not only the Old Testament world, but how the New Testament sees itself fulfilling the demands of that world.

In Genesis 1, the unformed matter—“chaos”—is described as “without form,” “void,” “darkness,” “the deep,” “waters,” and “seas.” These are not random descriptors—they are meant to pull our minds back to pre-order reality. Which means that chaos is not simply “messy.”

Instead, to be chaotic is to be:

- unstructured
- uninhabitable
- unproductive
- Useless
- Without purpose

It is a world not yet shaped for life.

WCF 4.1 —On Creation

It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good.

Voices from the Past

“God brings order out of confusion, and light out of darkness.”

— Thomas Watson

Covenant & Kingdom

Discussion (3 minutes)

- Why do you think Scripture begins with chaos instead of order?
- What does this teach us about God?

II. God: Creator and Orderer (10 minutes)

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." (Gen. 1:1)

In the Ancient Near East, gods did not create what we know as creation. Instead, they *ordered* what was already in existence. The gods would give laws, regulations, and statutes so that society was properly ordered—because the opposite of chaos is order. And this ability to give divine law, to establish order, was proof of their deity. But the Bible offers a different tale, a different origin story, a history in which there is a greater god, a greater *elohim*. Not only is our God one who orders the chaos—the other gods try claim that—but he is the one who created it (*Barah*) to begin with. This god—our God—is not like the other gods, he does that which the others have never dreamed: he creates, and fills creation with a unique order that brings him alone glory.

Key Word Study: *Barah*

Barah (pronounced bah-rah) is word the Hebrew text uses only of a specific creative action by YHWH—others can make or create, but only YHWH can *barah*. It is a uniquely divine creative action solely for His prerogative. This means: God is not working with something already there—He is the source of everything.

Christ Connection

Consider, in light of this, the claims of John 1:3:
"All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made."

See also Col. 1:15-17:

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

Now, consider Mark 9, where Jesus calms that chaos (the raging sea).

The one who creates and orders the chaos of Genesis is the same one who calms the sea in the Gospels. Only God has authority over chaos because:

- He created it

Voices from the Past

"Creation is a mirror wherein we may behold the wisdom and power of God."
— Stephen Charnock

Covenant & Kingdom

- He sustains it
- He commands it

Discussion (3 minutes)

- Why does it matter that God creates, not just orders?
- How does this shape our view of Jesus?

Voices from the Past
“The same power that created
the world upholds it.”
— John Owen

III. Creation: Forming and Filling (8 minutes)

We know the story well: over the course of six days, God creates all that there is in the heavens and on earth. But we often miss the *pattern* of this amazing work. God completes this work on two stages: in days 1-3 He begins giving structure to the chaos. He forms spaces—or spheres—that will later be filled:

- Day 1: Light / Darkness
- Day 2: Sky / Waters
- Day 3: Land / Sea

He is separating and naming.

Once the spaces have been made, God begins filling what He has formed:

- Sun / Moon / Stars
- Birds / Fish
- Animals / Humanity

God does not just *remove* chaos—He *replaces* it with order, purpose, and fullness. If God’s work is to bring order and fullness, then our lives are disordered whenever they resist His design.

Discussion (2-3 minutes)

- Why is both forming and filling necessary?
- Where do we see this pattern elsewhere in Scripture?

IV. Humanity: Image and Commission (5 minutes)

“Let us make man in our image...” (Gen. 1:26)

After all of God’s forming and filling—which is a reversal of the *tohu wabohu* (formless and empty)—God reaches the pinnacle of His creation: Mankind. Man is formed from the dust of the earth, filled with the breath of God, and made in His image. Adam—

WCF 4.2 — On Humanity
After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change.

Covenant & Kingdom

from the Hebrew word *adama* (which means “ground”)—is a combination of physical wonder and spiritual eternity. He is of the earth yet of the very breath of God Himself. This part of creation is unlike all other parts. And God gives His image-bearer something he gives to no one else:

“Let them have dominion...”

This dominion is more than just authority—it is delegated creational work. Adam is tasked with:

- Serving and protecting the Garden
- Extending God’s created order
- Continuing the “filling” of creation

Adam is not a passive recipient—he is commissioned to participate in God’s ordering work.

Discussion (2-3 minutes)

- What does it mean to bear God’s image?
- How does dominion relate to our lives today?

V. Sabbath: The Cosmos Completed (5 minutes)

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished...” (Gen. 2:1)

God rests—not because He is tired, but because His order is established. Creation is ordered, filled, and delegated. Instead of thinking of the Sabbath as “relaxation,” we should think of it as enjoying the fruits of labor. Consider a flower bed: six days you shall plant, pull weeds, water, and inspect for pests. But on the seventh day, you shall sit by your flowers and enjoy their beauty. As God rest, so should His image bearers. The goal of creation—and the Sabbath command—is not just order, but observance of restful, complete, God-centered order.

Discussion (2-3 minutes)

- What does God’s rest teach us about creation?

WCF 21.7—On the Sabbath

As it is the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in His Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages, He has particularly appointed one day in seven, for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week: and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which, in Scripture, is called the Lord’s Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath.

Voices from the Past

“The Sabbath is a day wherein God calls us to delight in Him and in His works.”

— Thomas Watson

Covenant & Kingdom

- How does this shape our understanding of worship?

VI. Biblical-Theological Connection: Seeing the Bigger Picture (5 minutes)

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt. 28:18-20)

WCF 7.2—The Covenant of Grace
Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offers unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.

The goal of this series is to see the movement from Creation -> Christ -> Commission. This pattern threads its way throughout Scripture:

- Adam was told to fill the earth
- Christ fulfills Adam’s role
- All authority (dominion) now belongs to Christ
- Christ commissions the church to fill the earth (Matthew 28:18-20—the Great Commission)

The Great Commission is not new—it is the renewed creation mandate for those in the New Adam.

VII. Reflection (3 minutes)

- Where is there “chaos” in your life right now?
- Are you trusting God’s order—or creating your own?
- How does the church participate in “filling” the world today?

Voices from the Past
“Christ came to restore what Adam lost.”
— John Owen

VIII. Key Takeaway

God brings order out of chaos and calls His people to live within and extend that order.

IX. Final Summary

- **God creates and orders all things**
 - **He forms and fills creation**
 - **He creates humanity in His image**
 - **He commissions humanity to extend His order**
- And ultimately: Christ fulfills what Adam failed to do.**