

# G Jones Bible Survey 1 of 4

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[ 0 : 00 ] Hope you're all well. We're going to start a new series today, just for four weeks. We're going to go through the Bible in 80 minutes. Not all today. It's just a quick overview of the whole story of the Bible. It's obviously going to be quite superficial. There's going to be a whole host of detail, many, many stories we won't cover.

But we're just going to look at some of the highlights, some of the key points. If you want to understand the story of the Bible, hopefully we will cover the four key things you need to know about what the Bible says.

So we're going to start. We're going to have one reading, and then I'll ask you to look at a couple of verses in the Psalms afterwards. We'll start with Genesis 1, at the very beginning of the Bible. You'll find that on page 1.

Although there are a few introductory pages before page 1. So here's Genesis 1.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep.

[ 1 : 21 ] And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light. And there was light.

And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness he called night.

And there was evening. And there was morning. The first day. And God said, Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters.

And let it separate the waters from the waters. 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. And God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening. And there was morning. The second day. And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place.

[ 2 : 25 ] And let the dry land appear. And it was so. God called the dry land earth. And the waters that were gathered together he called seas.

And God saw that it was good. 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. 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. And there was evening, and there was morning. The third day. And God said, Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night.

And let there be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years. And let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.

[ 3 : 32 ] And it was so. 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.

And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, to rule over the day and over the night. And to separate the light from the darkness.

And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning. The fourth day. 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. 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. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.

[ 4 : 37 ] And there was evening, and there was morning. The fifth day. 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. 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. 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.

So God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them. And God blessed them.

[ 5 : 41 ] 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.

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.

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. 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. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and the host of them.

[ 6 : 40 ] 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.

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. And then turn with me, if you would, to Psalm 33.

You'll find that on page 463. Please give us just a bit of a summary, which will hopefully make it just a bit easier to focus on what we're looking at today.

Just a few verses in Psalm 33. And I'll start reading from verse 6. So page 463.

And down on the bottom of the left-hand side, verse 6. By the word of the Lord, the heavens were made. And by the breath of his mouth, all their host.

[ 7 : 43 ] He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap. He puts the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

For he spoke, and it came to be. He commanded, and it stood firm. So, keep your Bibles open there, and we'll just say a brief prayer before we begin.

Our Father in heaven, we thank you for your words. We thank you that you speak to us. And we thank you that we can hear your voice here. We pray that you would help us to hear this as your word.

As it truly is. And help us to understand it. And believe it. And put our trust in you. In Jesus' name. Amen. In the beginning, God.

In the beginning, God. No heaven. No earth. No nothing. In the beginning, God. So begins the great Duke Ellington's concert of sacred music.

[ 8 : 59 ] That great piece. In the beginning, God. Goes on. No barracuda. No buffalo. No birds. No bees. No beetles. No symphony. No jive. No Gemini 5. No 10, 9, 6, or 8.

No men trying to fill an insight straight. No applause. No critique. No amateur. No professional. No questions. No answers. No singers. No dancers. No varied and sundry.

Ranting and raging. Hither and yon. From pillar to post. No nothing. In the beginning, God. If you're going to understand the message of the Bible, you need to know that there are two kinds of people.

Two kinds of people. These two groups are what one writer, I think, has helpfully called. Oneists and twoists. Two groups of people.

One group of people. They are the oneists. And the other people are the twoists. Oneists. Who are the oneists? These are the people who believe that everything that exists is all one.

[ 10 : 06 ] There is just one system. There is one thing. Everything is one. Some oneists might be complete naturalists or what we call atheists.

Believing that the material or the natural world that we see is the only thing there is. There is just this one system. One world. This one self-contained thing that we know as the world or the

universe.

Just one thing. There are oneists who would even believe in the supernatural. They might believe that this one system also contains spiritual forces.

They might call them gods. So often when you find religions where they have many, many gods, there will tend to be more like a oneist system in which both gods and animals and people, the point is always to keep the harmony, keep the balance of this one system.

There might be a light side and a dark side, but you've got to keep the balance there. It's a bit like Star Wars. That is a very oneist film that preaches oneism to you very clearly.

[ 11 : 19 ] There is light and dark, and you must keep the balance. That is the aim. But either way, time and space are ultimate, and there is only one thing.

The material world, maybe it's a result of some kind of explosion, maybe it's because some gods had a fight, and this was the damage that they created. Maybe some gods wanted some slaves. Maybe we are the children of the gods. But where this system comes from, who knows? There is just this one system. That is the belief of the onest.

As varied as they are. Then the twoists, believe it or not, will say that there are two. There is a creator, and there is what he has created.

The creator and the creature. There is a very clear line between creator and creature. Oneism would say there's no line anywhere. There's just one.

[ 12 : 22 ] Twoism would say there are two very clearly distinct. Two things. It's a bit of a weak analogy, but it's a bit like the distinction between Shakespeare and Hamlet.

Hamlet is down here in the play. Shakespeare is up here writing it. That's a very clear difference between Hamlet and Shakespeare. If you were to ask, did Hamlet ever meet Shakespeare?

The question almost doesn't make sense. It's a very clear distinction. So while the onest will hold that time and space in some way are the ultimate thing, and that they are sort of the absolute thing, the twoist knows that time and space have been made by someone from the outside.

And the Bible insists that we should be totally twoist. The onest might go as far as to say that a long time ago, a God who is living in heaven made the earth.

But the Bible insists that in the beginning, this absolute self-contained God, who simply is there, he created from nothing both heavens and the earth.

[ 13 : 43 ] not out of need, not by accident, but out of his free choice, God created the heavens and the earth. Obviously there's a wealth of stuff that we could say about this.

And from Genesis 1 passage and from Psalm 33. But here are just three things that we should focus on for today, just as we start this journey of Bible in 80 minutes.

So here's the first thing. We need to look at three things, the creator and the climax and the call.

The creator, the climax and the call. So let's look first at the creator. While the Bible insists that we should be twoists, it is not just to be generic twoists.

Twoists. The point is not merely that there is a creator, and that we just happen to believe that there is a creator somewhere out there. But the Bible is telling us it's this creator.

It's this particular person who created. The thing about Hamlet is not that he was written by a playwright. He was written by Shakespeare.

[ 14 : 54 ] And in this text, the creator is speaking to us. If not, it's a pointless guess that someone made. There's no other way of hearing or knowing about the creator unless the creator somehow steps down to speak to us.

And that is what this Bible is. This is the creator who is on the other side of that line of division.

Then, this is that creator giving us this book.

It's like Shakespeare giving Hamlet a biography of Shakespeare. It would be a bit like that. Or Shakespeare writing himself into the play so that Shakespeare could meet Hamlet. It's a weak analogy, but it would be a bit like that.

This is what this Bible is. And so who is this creator? Well, in Psalm 33, we see that he's called the Lord. This is the name that he revealed to his Old Testament people.

When you see Lord in all capitals, it is that name with the letters Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh. In English, it would look like a Y-H-W-H. Sometimes it would pronounce Yahweh, some would pronounce it Jehovah.

[ 16 : 05 ] This is his covenant name that he has given to his people to call him by. But note something else as well. Something that both Psalm 33 here and Genesis 1, they both do something

very significant.

So just a look at it here in verse 6. We're introduced to God, who is the Lord. And we are introduced as well to his word, in verse 6, by the word of the Lord, the heavens were made.

And also, here we're introduced to his breath, or his spirit. In the original, it's exactly the same word. So in Genesis 1, the spirit of the Lord was hovering over the water, and here, by the breath of his mouth, it's exactly the same, by the spirit of his mouth, the world was made.

So it's that same word, Ruach, in both cases. And this isn't a full-blown explanation of the doctrine, but here are the seeds of what Jesus would later explain when he said that the name of God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The word and the spirit. Word is the son, and here we have his breath, or his spirit, here as one God. One theologian said it quite helpfully that it's as if that in the Old Testament all the furniture is laid out.

[17:31] So in these earlier writings, the furniture is all put in place, and then in the New Testament, as Jesus explains that the one name of God, the name of that one God, is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

It's as if the light comes on, and you can see that it was there the whole time. And here we see an instance of that. We see there's a distinction, but also there's one God with somehow a three-fold distinction that we should make.

And so this light that Jesus shines on, it makes sense of what we read here about God and his word. And his breath, or his spirit. And so we learn about who the creator is.

Not just a generic creator that we guess about, but a real creator who is speaking to us here, and introducing himself to us here. That's the creator. So let's think about the climax.

Creator, now the climax. As we heard, at those days creation, as we were reading through Genesis 1, and we saw three days where the various realms were created, three different realms that God was making, three kingdoms, you could call them even.

[18:42] And then the next three days, we see God filling those next three kingdoms. He fills the sky with stars and planets, he fills the sea, and then he fills the earth over those six days.

And the climax of those six days is when he creates mankind. And he gives to mankind the authority to rule the world under him.

Not instead of him, as though he lets go, and not against him, but to rule the world under him, in obedience to him. So there are two key things we need to note from here.

The first is we do belong here. You can sometimes hear a form of eco-friendly teaching or the kind of narrative that might be proposed that we somehow don't belong here.

That we, that the world doesn't belong to us, the world belongs to animals and plants, and we have somehow intruded on this world. That is somehow it will speak of.

[19:45] We mess up the world, is how many will say, just by our being here. Some people are messing up the world, but just the fact of us being here is a problem.

Some will speak like that. We're kind of intruder, but the Bible is saying, no, we belong here. The world was made for us to cultivate, for us to rule over it, for us to steward it for our benefit, and for God's glory.

Then on the other hand, of course it means that we do have responsibility. It means we do belong here, but we belong here with responsibilities to look after this creation wisely.

Not as intruders, not as though we were accidents, but as those deliberately put here to look after the world. We are entrusted with the care of the world in that sense.

We oughtn't to feel that we don't belong, we do belong. The world was made with us as that climax. We were the ones that God was preparing for in those six days, but it means we have responsibilities in that sense.

[20:51] But there's an even greater climax. We get to the climax of day six, but then seven is almost like an extra that takes you to the real climax of the whole thing.

Day seven, we see that man is not made mainly for a task, but to enjoy the blessing of a day that God has blessed.

God blesses a day. And we are not made here just to do things, but we are made here to be living in a blessed day. That is what he made us for.

We are made to enjoy life with God. Life, enjoying his blessing. That is the climax of the story from the beginning.

That is the point. That is the climax. What a great beginning to what God is telling us here. We've seen who the creator is.

[ 21 : 47 ] We've seen the climax of the story is man to be here ruling, but then also enjoying the blessing of God and his rest. And so finally the call.

between the creator and the climax and the call. I've mentioned some of our responsibilities in a very particular sense in terms of our responsibilities to the world and how we look after it.

But the key responsibility that we need to know if we are good toists is in verse 8 of Psalm 33. Let all the earth fear the Lord.

Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. That is the key thing to see. That we owe God to stand in awe of him, to fear him.

It doesn't mean be afraid of him, but to acknowledge him, to be the creator. To acknowledge him to be awesome in the most literal sense of that word.

[ 22 : 52 ] He is literally awesome. The Bible shows later on that the root of all problems is when mankind refuses to acknowledge the creator as creator.

When we turn away from the creator to the creation, our focus becomes onest. Our focus becomes worship what this world is, worship the creation.

Worship what you see. Worship this world. And maybe you're thinking, surely not in our sophisticated days. Sure, back then, back then, people worship trees and stuff, didn't they?

They worship animals. They worship cats or rivers. Surely by now we're more sophisticated. But have you ever spoken, heard someone speak about Mother Earth?

Have you heard people speak about Father Time? Have you ever heard someone say, I'm going to see what the universe has in store for me this year? Have you heard of people saying, we must be on the right side of history, as though time is the judge that we need to stand in awe of, as though space is what provides for us?

[ 24 : 08 ] Time and space are not ultimate. Space does not provide for us, time is not the one who judges us, we are to stand in awe of the Lord.

We are to stand in awe of the Creator who made us. So as we live acknowledging Him, we see there is a key distinction. If you live in a oneist world, nothing matters, because ultimately everything is the same.

Ultimately, a raven might as well be a writing desk, and an orange might as well be an apple. the difference doesn't matter. There isn't a real difference there.

We're just sort of making that up. But in a twoist world, where we see that this is the God who has made the world, we first stand in awe of Him. We fear Him.

Fear Him with joy. Fear Him knowing that what His aim for us is to enjoy His blessing, to enjoy what we call now His Sabbath rest that He gives us, this privilege of resting in Him, resting with Him, enjoying fellowship with Him.

[ 25 : 21 ] And of course I've mentioned that there are problems in the world, and you know full well that there are problems in the world. And so when we look at this description of the world, it is obvious for us, isn't it, that something has gone tragically wrong, which will have to be what we look at next week, as we continue to look at the Bible in 80 minutes.

But let's remember these things, that this is a key place to start as we start on that journey. So I'm going to close with a brief word of prayer, so do join me in prayer.

Thank you. Thank you.