Creation of the Earth and Man

Key Concepts and Teachings

All Things Were Created By Christ and For Christ
Jesus Christ is the Firstborn of Heavenly Father. The Apostle Paul taught specifically what Jesus Christ is the “firstborn” of. Read the following passage, including ‘footnote 15 b’ and explain exactly what Jesus Christ was the “firstborn” of–

Read Colossians 1:15 including footnote b
Paul explained what it meant to be firstborn. Read the following passage of scripture and list what Paul teaches about Jesus Christ:

Read Hebrews 1:1-2
In a First Presidency statement, Joseph F. Smith and his counselors declared: “Jesus Christ, whom we also know as Jehovah, was the executive of the Father, Elohim, in the work of creation” (“The Father and the Son,” Improvement Era, 19:934-942, Aug.1916; also Ensign, Apr. 2002, 13-17)

Read Moses 1:32-33 and 2:1

As Creator, Christ is Rightful Ruler of the Earth
As referenced by the Apostles Paul in the above: “all things were created by him, and for him” (Col 1:16; emphasis added). Jesus Christ is both the rightful heir and ruler of the earth He created. Enoch, who lived in the first millennium after the Fall of Adam, spoke of Christ as both God in heaven and earth. His throne including the footstool of his throne were to be found in both heaven and earth.

Read Moses 6:43-44

President John Taylor (1808-87):
- The Scriptures … represent Christ as being the rightful heir, and inheritor of this world; they represent him as having come once to atone for the sins of the world; but that he will afterwards come as its ruler, judge, and king. (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: John Taylor [2001], 222; emphasis added)
- Who made this earth? The Lord. Who sustains it? The Lord. Who feeds and clothes the millions of the human family that exist upon it, both Saint and sinner? The Lord. Who upholds everything in the universe? The Lord. … Who has given to man understanding? The Lord. Who has given to the gentle philosopher, machinist, etc., every particle of intelligence they have with regard to the electric telegraph, the power and

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**Introduction**

As we have seen, “the great plan of the Eternal God” is built around three stages or estates of existence. The first estate prepares each spirit for the second estate. Likewise, the purpose of the second estate is to prepare Heavenly Father’s children for third and final estate: the immortal estate.

The second estate centers on a fallen, mortal existence through which each of Heavenly Father’s children must pass in order to progress to the third estate. Consider the following:

David A. Bednar  Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Our physical bodies make possible a breadth, a depth, and an intensity of experience that simply could not be obtained in our premortal existence. Thus, our relationships with other people, our capacity to recognize and act in accordance with truth, and our ability to obey the principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ are amplified through our physical bodies. In the school of mortality, we experience tenderness, love, kindness, happiness, sorrow, disappointment, pain, and even the challenges of physical limitations in ways that prepare us for eternity. Simply stated, there are lessons we must learn and experiences we must have, as the scriptures describe, “according to the flesh” (1 Nephi 19:6; Alma 7:12–13). (“We Believe in Being Chaste,” Ensign, May 2013, 41–4)

The creation of the earth, the Fall of Adam, and the Atonement of Jesus Christ work together to bring about the immortality and eternal life of God’s children. These were essential parts of God’s eternal plan. President Russell M. Nelson explains:

The plan required the Creation, and that in turn required both the Fall and the Atonement. These are the three fundamental components of the plan. The Creation of a paradisiacal planet came from God. Mortality and death came into the world through the Fall of Adam. Immortality and the possibility of eternal life were provided by the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement were planned long before the actual work of the Creation began. (“The Creation,” Ensign, May, 2000)

The focus of this reading assignment is on the creation of the earth and man. It is not our intent to study the process of the creation. This would be best studied in an Old Testament or Pearl of Great Price course. Rather, there are certain aspects of the creation that are important to the objectives of this course.
application of steam to the wants of the human family and every kind of invention that has been brought to light during the last century? The Lord. … Who has a right to rule the nations, to control kingdoms and govern all the people of the earth? (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: John Taylor [2001], 221-2; emphasis added)

James E. Talmage (1862-1933) Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
I invite your attention to . . . the certainty of the return of Jesus Christ to earth in the near future, to reign upon the earth in person by bodily presence as the rightful King of earth. (Conference Report, Apr. 1916, 126)

Earth was Created for Mankind to Inhabit and Possess

Though we have seen that Christ created this earth “by him and for him” (Col. 1:16), the earth was created for all Heavenly Father’s children. Each of the following passages of scripture teach this doctrine, each with an additional principle. Record what each teach regarding this truth:

  Read Abraham 3:24-25
  Read D&C 49:15-17
  Read 1 Ne. 17:36

Nephi’s statement in the above reference 1 Ne. 17:36 uses the words inhabit and possess. The 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language (in use at the time Joseph Smith was translating the Book of Mormon and receiving revelations recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, offers the following primary meaning of the word possess, giving us interesting insight into the above reference, 1 Ne. 17:36, as well as the D&C 38:17-22 that was to be read in the preceding subtopic:

To have the just and legal title, ownership or property of a thing; to own; to hold the title of, as the rightful proprietor, or to hold both the title and the thing. (Emphasis added)

This is an important aspect of the purpose of the creation of the earth! All who come unto Christ through making and keeping Gospel covenants, will become joint-heirs with Christ and will inherit and possess the earth as during the Millennium.

  Read D&C 38:19-22
  Read D&C 88:17-20

That this earth is primarily created for God’s children has been frequently taught by latter-day prophets and apostles. The following are only examples:

Russell M. Nelson President
Grand as it is, planet Earth is part of something even grander—that great plan of God. Simply summarized, the earth was created that families might be. Scripture explains that a husband and wife “shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation” (D&C 49:16). (“Creation,” Ensign, May 2000, 84-6)

Dieter F. Uchtdorf First Presidency

The universe is so large, mysterious, and glorious that it is incomprehensible to the human mind. “Worlds without number have I created,” God said to Moses (Moses 1:33).

... Astronomers have attempted to count the number of stars in the universe. One group of scientists estimates that the number of stars within range of our telescopes is 10 times greater than all the grains of sand on the world’s beaches and deserts.

And while we may look at the vast expanse of the universe and say, “What is man in comparison to the glory of creation?” God Himself said we are the reason He created the universe! His work and glory—the purpose for this magnificent universe—is to save and exalt mankind (Moses 1:38-39). In other words, the vast expanse of eternity, the glories and mysteries of infinite space and time are all built for the benefit of ordinary mortals like you and me. Our Heavenly Father created the universe that we might reach our potential as His sons and daughters.

This is a paradox of man: compared to God, man is nothing; yet we are everything to God. While against the backdrop of infinite creation we may appear to be nothing, we have a spark of eternal fire burning within our breast. We have the incomprehensible promise of exaltation—worlds without end—within our grasp. And it is God’s great desire to help us reach it. (“You Matter to Him,” Ensign, Nov. 2011, 19-20)

“The Earth is Full, there is Enough and to Spare”

An important principle associated with the doctrine of the Creation is that God, who is omniscience—all knowing—has planned enough resources for His children to live and accomplish the purposes of the second estate.

Read D&C 104:17. What important principle has the Lord declared in this verse?

And understanding of this truth is important for many reasons. Consider what President Nelson has taught regarding this principle:

Russell M. Nelson President

The process of construction is truly inspiring to me. From conception to completion, any major building project reflects upon the work of the Master Creator. In fact, the Creation—of planet Earth and of life upon it—undergirds all other creative capability. Any manmade creation is possible only because of our divine Creator. The people who design and build are given life and capacity by that Creator. And all materials used in the construction of an edifice are ultimately derived from the rich resources of the earth. The Lord declared, "The earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things.” (Teachings of Russell M. Nelson [2018], 72; also “Creation,” Ensign, May 2000, 84)

Regarding a specific issue of concern, President Nelson spoke of this principle of the creation:
Another excuse some use to justify abortion relates to population control. Many in developing nations unknowingly ascribe their lack of prosperity to overpopulation. While they grovel in ignorance of God and his commandments, they may worship objects of their own creation (or nothing at all), while unsuccessfully attempting to limit their population by the rampant practice of abortion. They live in squalor, oblivious to the divine teaching-stated in the scriptures not once, but thirty-four times—that people will prosper in the land only if they obey the commandments of God (e.g., Lev. 26:3-15; 1 Ne. 2:20; Mosiah 1:7; 2:22, 31; D&C 9:13).

How can God fulfill his promise to prosper his children in obedience if they worship idols or destroy life created by him—destined to be in his very image?

They will prosper only when their education includes faith in and obedience to the God of this world, who said, “I, the Lord, ... built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine. And it is my purpose to provide. ... But it must needs be done in mine own way. ... For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare.” (D&C 104:14-17; italics added.) (“Reverence for Life,” Ensign, May 1985, 25)

Creation of Man and Woman

The account of the creation of earth and man is found in Genesis 1 and Moses 2, which is the JST account of Gen. 1. When one reads through the successive days of creation, an important point is made when regarding the creation of life: plant, animal, and man.

On the third day of creation, we are told that from the earth, God brought forth various kinds of plants, each “yielding seed after [its] kind.” Then the Lord declared that what He had “made [was] good” (Moses 2:11-12).

On the fourth day, God brought forth various kinds of “fowl which may fly above” and all kinds of creatures that live in the “waters,” both producing seed “after their kind (Moses 2:20-21).

On the sixth day, God brought forth “the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind” (Moses 2:24-25).

On that same day, God brought forth man and woman after His kind. Read each of the following passages and note what each passage adds to our understanding of the creation of man:

Read Moses 2:26-27
Read Mosiah 7:27
Read Ether 3:15
Read D&C 77:2 A

Russell M. Nelson President

We are children of God, created by Him and formed in His image. Recently I studied the scriptures simply to find how many times they testify of the divine Creation of man. Looking up references that referred either to create or form (or their derivatives), with either man, men, male, or female in the same verse, I found that there are at least fifty-five verses of scripture that attest to our divine Creation. I have selected one to represent all those verses that convey the same conclusion: “The Gods took counsel among themselves and said: Let us go down and form man in our image, after our likeness. . . . So the Gods went down to organize man in their own image, in the image of the Gods to form they him, male and female to form they them.” (Abraham 4:26-27). (Teachings of Russell M. Nelson [2018], 75-6)

Supplementary Reading (Not required)

The following First Presidency declaration gives commentary of the above passages of scripture—

First Presidency Statement (Joseph F. Smith, President)

“God created man in His own image.” This is just as true of the spirit as it is of the body, which is only the clothing of the spirit, its complement—the two together constituting the soul. The spirit of man is in the form of man, and the spirits of all creatures are in the likeness of their bodies. This was plainly taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith (see D&C 77:2).

What more is needed to convince us that man, both in spirit and in body, is the image and likeness of God and that God Himself is in the form of a man? . . .

Adam, our first progenitor, “the first man,” was, like Christ, a preexistent spirit, and like Christ he took upon him an appropriate body, the body of a man, and so became a “living soul.” The doctrine of the preexistence . . . shows that man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father, prior to coming upon the earth in a temporal body to undergo an experience in mortality. It teaches that all men existed in the spirit before any man existed in the flesh and that all who have inhabited the earth since Adam have taken bodies and become souls in like manner.

It is held by some that Adam was not the first man upon this earth and that the original human being was a development from lower orders of the animal creation. These, however, are the theories of men. The word of the Lord declared that Adam was “the first man of all men” (Moses 1:34), and we are therefore in duty bound to regard him as the primal parent of our race. It was shown to the brother of Jared that all men were created in the beginning after the image of God; whether we take this to mean the spirit or the body, or both, it commits us to the same conclusion: Man began life as a human being, in the likeness of our Heavenly Father.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, basing its belief on divine revelation, ancient and modern, proclaims man to be the direct and lineal offspring of Deity. God Himself is an exalted man, perfected, enthroned, and supreme. By His almighty power He organized the earth and all that it contains, from spirit and element . . . He formed every plant that grows and every animal that breathes, each after its own kind, spiritually and temporally –[quotations from D&C 77:2]. He made the tadpole and the ape, the lion and the elephant, but He did not make them in His own image, nor endow them with godlike reason and intelligence. Nevertheless, the whole animal creation will be perfected and perpetuated in the Hereafter, each class in its “distinct order or sphere,” and will enjoy “eternal felicity.” That fact has been made plain in this dispensation (see D&C 77:3).

Man is the child of God, formed in the divine image and endowed with divine attributes, and even as the infant son of an earthly father and mother is capable in due time of becoming a man, so the undeveloped offspring of celestial parentage is capable, by experience through ages and aeons, of evolving into a God (“Origin of Man,” Improvement Era, Nov. 1909, 75-81; reprinted in the Ensign, Feb. 2002, 26-30).
The Creation culminated with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They were created in the image of God, with bodies of flesh and bone. Created in the image of God and not yet mortal, they could not grow old and die. “And they would have had no children” nor experienced the trials of life. (Please forgive me for mentioning children and the trials of life in the same breath.) The creation of Adam and Eve was a paradisiacal creation, one that required a significant change before they could fulfill the commandment to have children 6 and thus provide earthly bodies for premortal spirit sons and daughters of God. (“Atonement,” Ensign, Nov. 1996, 33; also Teachings of Russell M. Nelson [2018], 74)

The account of creation in Genesis [and Moses 2-3] was not a spirit creation, but it was in a particular sense, a spiritual creation. This, of course, needs some explanation. The account in Genesis, chapters one and two, is the account of the creation of the physical earth. The account of the placing of all life upon the earth, up and until the fall of Adam, is an account, in a sense, of the spiritual creation of all of these, but it was also a physical creation. When the Lord said he would create Adam, he had no reference to the creation of his spirit for that had taken place ages and ages before when he was in the world of spirits and known as Michael.

Adam's body was created from the dust of the earth, but at that time it was a spiritual earth. Adam had a spiritual body until mortality came upon him through the violation of the law under which he was living, but he also had a physical body of flesh and bones. (Doctrines of Salvation, 3 vols. Comp. Bruce R. McConkie [1954-56], 1:76-7; emphasis added)

God left the world unfinished for man to work his skill upon. He left the electricity in the cloud, the oil in the earth. He left the rivers unbridged, the forests unfelled and the cities unbuilt. God gives to us the challenge of raw materials, not the ease of finished things. He leaves the picture unpainted and the music unsung and the problems unsolved, that we might know the joys and glories of creation. (Teachings of Thomas S. Monson [2011], 76).

We have seen earlier in this reading assignment that the earth’s final destiny is to become the celestial globe for the celestial kingdom. Read D&C 88:17-20 and 130:9-11

Mark E. Petersen (1904-84) Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

This earth was not designed merely as a home for mortals, however. Not at all. It has a greater destiny than that. This earth will not remain in its present condition. It is to become immortal. It will pass through a refining process by which it will become a celestial globe and be like a Urim and Thummim in the skies. (See D&C 130:9.) That will require further acts of divine creation, and, of course, ordinary common sense tells us that no spontaneous accident could produce a change like that.

The Savior will reside here when the earth is celestialized, and His Father will visit it from time to time. It then will be the eternal home of those who achieve celestial glory in the kingdom of God.

Such is the final destiny of the earth. Such was the purpose God had in mind in creating it, for He planned it so in the beginning. (“Creator and Savior,” Ensign, May 1983, 63)