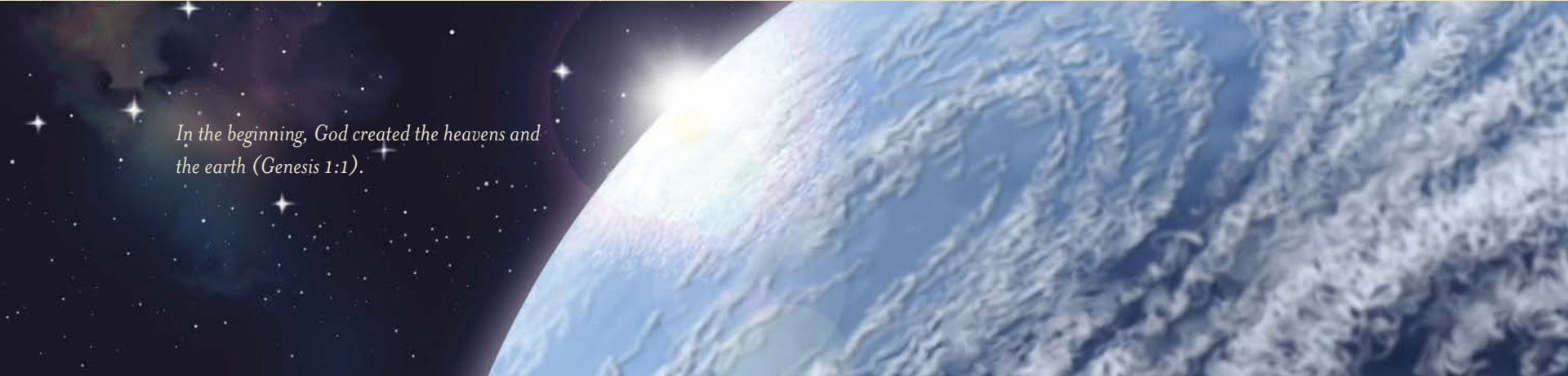


# The Dawning of Time



*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1).*

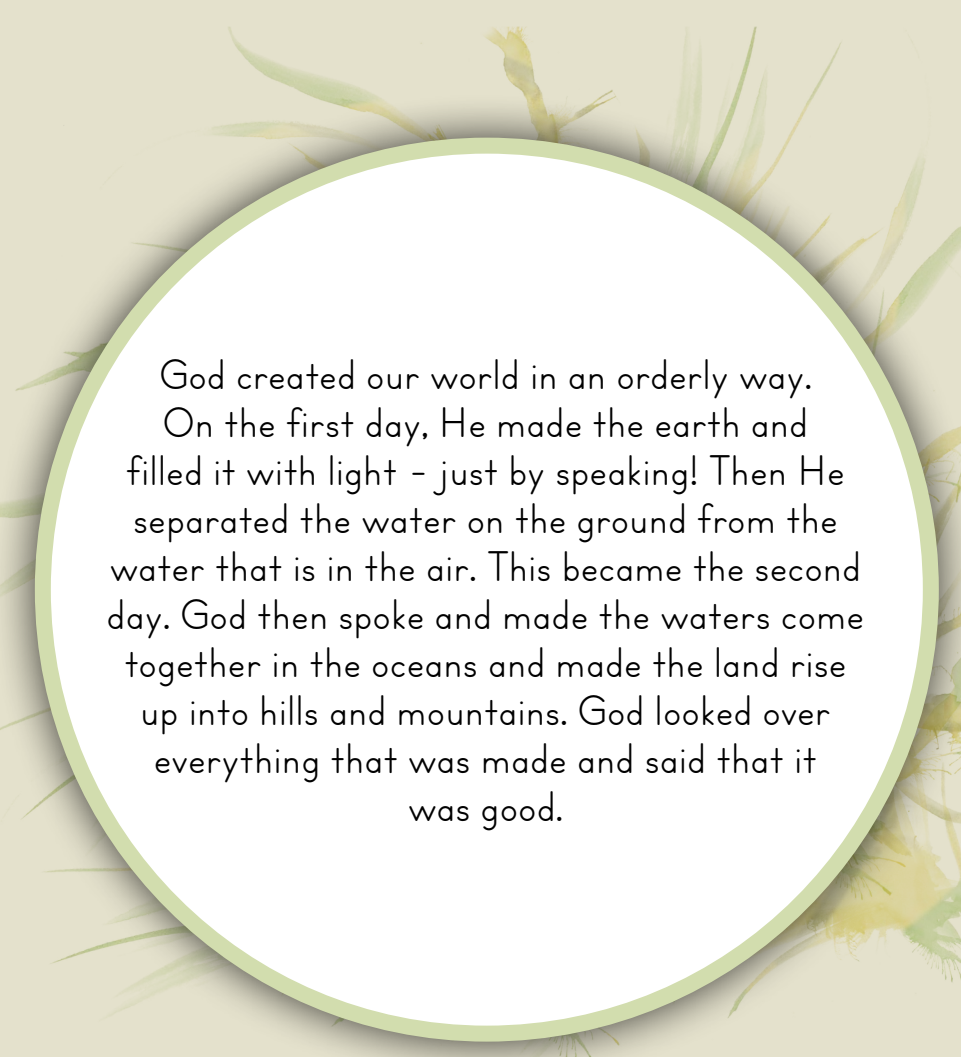
In the beginning, the earth was nothing like what we see today. It was shapeless, lifeless, and empty. Imagine a world without land or light or living things. There was only a dark and barren ocean. But the spirit of God hovered over this watery canvas. And where God is, there is life and purpose. He would create something incredible in this place. Something altogether amazing. Something that only He could do. And this creation would be a stunning display of His glory.

The appearance of light was part of God's plan for shaping this masterpiece. He simply spoke and this light appeared. In an instant, the darkness was exposed. And He called the light "day," and the darkness He called "night."

Then He created a space between the waters of the earth and the waters of the heavens. He called this space "sky." Today it is also known as the atmosphere. The atmosphere contains oxygen and other gases. It is an important part of the water and weather cycles, and it acts as a filter for the radiation produced by the sun. Without the sky, life on earth would be impossible.

Next, God directed the flow of all that water to one location and dry land to appear everywhere else. He called the dry land "earth" and the waters "seas." With perfect skill and artistry, God was shaping the world.

» Genesis 1:1–10



God created our world in an orderly way. On the first day, He made the earth and filled it with light - just by speaking! Then He separated the water on the ground from the water that is in the air. This became the second day. God then spoke and made the waters come together in the oceans and made the land rise up into hills and mountains. God looked over everything that was made and said that it was good.

# Beauty and Purpose


After forming the sky, oceans, and land, God filled these spaces with life.

A wide variety of plants sprouted from the earth. Trees, herbs, and grasses in diverse shades of green dotted the landscape. These plants yielded seeds after their own kind. This was an amazing design feature that made sure the plants could reproduce themselves. Not only were the plants beautiful, they would provide a steady supply of food and oxygen for the creatures that would soon come. God was creating a habitat that would last.

Next, He made the sun, moon, and stars. People are drawn to the sky and can't help gazing at its vast beauty. But it has practical purposes also. From the earliest times, people learned to measure their days by sunlight, and weeks and months by the changing moon. This knowledge helped them know when to plant and when to harvest their crops. Also, the stars form constellations that have served as guides for people traveling by land or by sea. They are like a sparkling map in the sky.

» Genesis 1:11–19

*The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world (Psalm 19:1–4).*



After creating heaven and earth and filling them with light, God spoke again and began calling plants and seeds to life. Growing things began to rise up and thrive. Out of the rich soil came beautiful flowers, delicious plants for vegetables, fruit trees, and more. This wondrous evening and morning of creation became the third day. God then placed the sun, moon, and stars up in the sky. These would light the world and help us mark days and nights, months, special times, and the seasons. This was His fourth day of creating.