

# CREATION STUDY 2025

## OCEAN DEPTHS AND DELIGHTS

### BEGINNING

Are you familiar with what the Bible says about the ocean and its origins and the unique way the seas are portrayed in scripture? In this study we focus on the deep waters that cover two-thirds of our planet. We listen for the voices of the ocean and how it responds to intimate interactions with God.

- **Do you get a sense of excitement in or near the sea or do you find it rather terrifying?**
- **Are you fascinated by all the hidden species living in the ocean?**
- **Do you find in the ocean an expression of the deep mystery of God's presence?**

Read Genesis 1.1-10 which portrays the birth of Earth.

- **What role do the ocean waters play in this story?**
- **How might the waters respond to this part of the creation story?**

Psalm 104 has a totally different picture of the way Earth and the waters are first associated.

- **What do you think is implied by God giving commands to the ocean?**
- **Is the ocean more than just water?**
- **How might the waters respond to God in this version of the creation story?**

### EXPLORING OUR MAIN TEXT

*Read Job 38.1-7*

**Discuss:**

- **What insights about the nature of Earth do you see in this image of its origin?**
- **What is the significance of the celestial beings celebrating the erection of Earth?**
- **What is God's relationship to Earth in this imagery?**

*Read Job 38.8-18*

- We sometimes see images in the passing clouds. Do you see the clouds as an extension of the sea or as Job puts it, its garment?
- How should we relate to the ocean?
- In what ways does this text suggest that the sea is more than a source of food or a passage for navigation?
- What kind of relationship seems to exist here between God and sea?
- What is the voice of sea you hear from these two passages?

## CONSCIOUS OF THE CRISIS

It is relatively easy for us to ignore the condition of the sea. It seems so vast and distant. How can a few people on land create a genuine problem for the sea? Listen to a passage from John Kunich's book *Killing our Oceans*

- What do you think we ought to do to raise awareness of the state of our oceans?
- For you is this more than a moral issue, if so in what ways?

## CONNECTING WITH CHRIST

*Read Luke 5.1-11*

- In the light of this text, do you think Jesus has a special relationship with the sea?
- Does Christ come to heal our broken relationship with the seas as well as with God and each other?
- What voice might we hear from the ocean in response to Christ's coming?

## CLOSING WITH PRAISE

*In the Lord I'll be ever thankful,  
in the Lord I will rejoice!  
Look to God, do not be afraid;  
lift up your voices: the Lord is near,  
lift up your voices: the Lord is near.*

## PRAYER

*Christ, the wisdom of God from the deep,  
help us to understand the mystery of the ocean  
and of your presence among us as Jesus, the fisherman,  
and as Christ, the cosmic mystery  
that unites all things in God. Amen*

# **WISDOM IN THE CREATURES OF THE EARTH**

## **BEGINNING**

This study explores the kingdoms of the wild, living creatures great and small that inhabit our planet, in myriads of forms, shapes and designs.

- **What wild creatures fascinate you most?**
- **Do you have a sense of kinship with any of them, or do they seem distant, strange or alien?**
- **Would you like to understand wild creatures better?**

## **EXPLORING OUR MAIN TEXT**

*Read Job 39.1-8*

- **Have you ever tried to grasp the way that a wild creature instinctively reproduces, socialises and communicates to survive?**
- **Are wild creatures very different from humans?**
- **Are there creatures of the wild that offer a model of behaviour, or a lifestyle that humans might do well to emulate?**

*Read Job 39.9-12*

- **Do you think this text is designed to make Job realise that humans are not designed by God to be the dominant creatures, but to understand the ‘way’ of creatures in the wild as guides to human behaviour?**

*Read Job 39.26-30*

- **What happens when humans change wild ecosystems with new species, toxins or other activities that transform the landscape?**
- **Is the wisdom of a given species necessarily capable of adapting to a world dominated by destructive human forces?**
- **Can humans, by their folly, destroy the wisdom of wild creatures?**

*Read Psalm 104.14-23*

- **If God relates to the world of the wild in this way, what might be our relationship with species deep in the jungle or high in the Himalayas?**
- **Do you have any sense of wanting to celebrate with specific animals in the world of the wild? If so how?**

## CONSCIOUS OF THE CRISIS

Listen to this short piece.

- **What kind of forces are at work to break down the ecosystems in which creatures of the wild find sustenance?**
- **Would we be more likely to preserve the world of the wild if we consciously recognised that God celebrates with these creatures?**

## CONNECTING WITH CHRIST

*Read Luke 12.22.-31*

**This sermon of Jesus might be summarised in wisdom terms as follows:  
Consider the ways of the kingdom of the wild and be wise!**

- **What lessons from the domain of the wild might be learned to gain a closer relationship with our Creator and with Christ in his kingdom?**

## CLOSING WITH PRAISE

*In the Lord I'll be ever thankful*

## PRAYER

*God of all creation, Christ in all kingdoms,  
Take us with you into the kingdom of the wild,  
Where your creatures know the wisdom  
Of living and celebrating in a balanced ecosystems  
And teach us to create your kingdom on Earth  
With the same wisdom, care and sensitivity. Amen*

# **GOOD NEWS FROM THE SKY**

## **BEGINNING**

The theme of our study is the way in which the sky not only announces and celebrates God's presence, but also sympathises with creation when it suffers.

- **Have you ever watched the skies when a storm is brewing, black clouds rolling in like wave after wave?**
- **Have you ever had a sense of God's presence in the storm or God's voice in the thunder as many ancient peoples did?**
- **Have you ever sensed that eerie feeling that comes during an eclipse when all the animals are spooked by the unexpected darkness?**

Read Genesis 1.6-8

- **Recall some texts from the Old Testament that you have associated with heaven.**
- **Do they refer to the sky or to some other domain?**
- **What about texts where the sky responds to what happens on Earth?**

## **EXPLORING OUR MAIN TEXTS**

*Read Jeremiah 4.23-28*

- **Have you experienced the sky responding to human evils?**
- **What are the signs in the sky that indicate sky is suffering or mourning?**
- **Are we like Jeremiah aware of our effect on creation, including the sky?**
- **Can you think of poets or others who write about the sky's suffering?**

*Read Psalm 19.1-6*

- **Contrast the good news from sky celebrated in this Psalm with what happens when we pollute our atmosphere.**
- **Give examples of when you had a sense of the good news from the sky that the Psalmist proclaims here.**
- **What do you think are the main messages of that good news?**

## **CONSCIOUS OF THE CRISIS**

Listen to this short piece

- **How has the pollution of our atmosphere and sky affected your community?**
- **What violations of our sky must be faced if we are to have a healthy planet in the future?**

## **THE CHRIST CONNECTION**

*Read Mark 15.33-39*

**Imagine if you were at the foot of the cross and everything became dark, as in an eclipse.**

- **What would you think?**
- **How would you feel?**
- **Why is this darkness an important part of the passion narrative?**
- **When you pray to Jesus, where do you find him, in your mind or part of your faith?**
- **Do you see Christ as a figure on a throne in heaven or a presence that permeates everything?**

## **CLOSING WITH PRAISE**

*In the Lord I'll be ever thankful*

## **PRAYER**

*Christ, whose cosmic presence fills creation,  
help us sense the sympathy of the skies  
and hear the message proclaimed from above  
so that we may praise your name  
with all the voices of creation. Amen.*

# THE WISDOM BEHIND THE WORLD

## BEGINNING

- **What kind of God do you discern when you peer into the distant galaxies of the cosmos?**
- **Earth may be but a speck of stardust in the cosmos, but are the myriad of mysteries in the smallest life-form on Earth any less staggering?**
- **Where is God in this world of amazing worlds?**

There are four types of wisdom in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament:

- **teachings** about how to live with God in society handed down by the wise, often called fathers, from one generation to the next (Prov. 5.1-2),
- **instructive insights** about life and the natural world gained by close observation of nature and society (Prov. 6.6)
- **the way or code** that is innate in each component of both animate and inanimate creation that governs their essential nature (Job 29.36)
- **a presence or partner** that existed prior to, and accompanied, the creation process from the beginning (Prov. 8.22-31).

It is the fourth of these understandings of wisdom that we explore in this Study.

- **Explore ways in which you in your life have sought to acquire wisdom?**
- **Are the categories outlined above helpful?**
- **How is God the ultimate source of all such wisdom?**
- **Do we humans have an innate capacity to pursue wisdom?**

## EXPLORING OUR MAIN TEXT

*Read Proverbs 8.22-23*

- **How do you react to the claim of Wisdom that she is the first thing that God acquired, even before God began creating?**
- **Wisdom is not an attribute of God here, but a primal partner with God. Does this seem reasonable to you?**
- **Does it seem contrary to the evidence of science? How might you understand it?**

*Read Proverbs 8.24-29*

- If each component of creation has its inherent way implanted by wisdom, how might we discern that wisdom around us?
- Are scientists ultimately exploring the endless 'ways' of wisdom inherent in the universe, whether genes or galaxies?

*Read Proverbs 8.30-31*

- How might we reflect the truth that both Wisdom and the Creator rejoice and celebrate the wonders of creation?
- Where might we discern this rejoicing in the world around us?
- Have the destructive ways of humans removed us from nature and reduced our awareness of a celebrating Creator and Wisdom?

## CONSCIOUS OF THE CRISIS

Listen to this short piece

- Outline ways in which our folly has negated the wisdom God in creation and are there ways in which we can discern the wisdom in our environment and in so doing help redeem our wounded world?

## THE CHRIST CONNECTION

*Read Colossians 1.15-20*

- If Christ is indeed the force at work in the healing of creation, where might we see that happening and as His servants do we have a role?
- Are the ugly wounds caused by global warming and similar evils also the concern of the cosmic Christ suffering with creation?

## CLOSING WITH PRAISE

*In the Lord I'll be ever thankful*

## PRAYER

*May the cosmic Christ whose healing presence  
fills the universe and works to reconcile all things,  
help us to discern the presence of Wisdom in creation,  
to celebrate her wondrous impulses  
and to discover the ways she reveals  
for us to be agents of Christ is healing our planet. Amen*