

Beauty, Art and the Bible:

**A Christian Aesthetic
from Genesis 1-3**

Thesis:

The origins story in Genesis is a ringing endorsement that beauty and art is an integral part of the creation order

“A man should hear a little music, read a little poetry, and see a fine picture every day of his life, in order that worldly cares may not obliterate the sense of the beautiful which God has implanted in the human soul.”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Four Aesthetics Markers in the Creation Account

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1st – The Creator/creation
structure at the foundation of
everything

*In the beginning God created the
heavens and the earth.*

“The characteristic common to God and humans is the desire to create and make things.”

The Mind of the Maker - Dorothy Sayers

***Creation functions as a
work of art that points
beyond itself to the Divine
artist***

Since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

(Romans 1:19-20)

Four Aesthetic Markers in the Creation Account

1st - Creator and creation

2nd – Its literary structure

Now the earth was *formless and empty*

Day 1-3 creates *form*

Day 1 - The creation of light

Day 2 - the creation of water and sky

Day 3 – the creation of ground and vegetation

Day 4-6 creates *fulness*

Day 4. Light filled out with sun, moon and stars

Day 5. The waters and sky are filled with fish and birds

Day 6. The ground is filled with animals and people

An appeal to the imagination

“Reason is the natural organ of truth; but imagination is the organ of meaning.”

C S Lewis

Four Aesthetic Markers in the Creation Account

1st Creator and creation

2nd The literary structure

3rd A culture making
mandate

*“Now the Lord God had planted a garden
in the east, in Eden.”*

Horticulture

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”

Our culture making mandate

One of the highest forms
of culture making is
creating art

Four Aesthetic Markers in the Creation Account

1st Creator and creation

2nd The literary structure

3rd A culture making mandate

4th An aesthetic judgement on a good creation

“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.”

This included an aesthetic judgement

“The woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food *and pleasing to the eye.*”

Another aesthetic judgement

The value of aesthetics is
in being able to see
further into the wonder of
God's creative work

“Art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it makes visible.”

Paul Klee

“Sometimes reality is just too complex. Fiction gives it form.”

Jean-Luc Goddard

***“In science we have been reading
only the notes to a poem; in
Christianity we find the poem
itself.”***

C S Lewis