

I AM

“In the Beginning”

“And Moses said unto God, ‘Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your father hath sent me unto you.’ And they shall say to me, ‘What is his name?’ ‘What shall I say unto them?’ And God said unto Moses, ‘I AM THAT I AM’. And he said, ‘Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.’”

Exodus 3:13-14.

We are all taught that God created us. What does this God that created us look like? Does he look like Gandhi, a Jewish Rabbi, an African slave, Mother Teresa, Sister Kenny, Buddha, Mohammed, you? If we are all made in His image, how can that be?

When I think of creation, I think of all the animals, birds, fish, trees, etc. that God created. I think sometimes he must have almost run out of ideas! I think of Adam. Was he lonely? I wonder if God and Adam talked much before Eve came into the scene. I wonder if they laughed at some of the animals that were created as Adam named them. I think God definitely had a sense of humor and I think He did laugh. I think of the peach or apple tree that only bears fruit every other year. I think of why some animals eat other animals. I wonder why we eat

some meats and not others; how plants know which nutrients to take from the ground. It is too much for my finite mind to comprehend.

First, some humor about the creation and then a very serious poem. This story that has been around the inter-net circle for many years, but it has a lot of meaning as we think of God’s creation. The author is unknown.

“One day a group of scientists got together and decided that man had come a long way and no longer needed God. So they picked one scientist to go and tell Him that they were done with Him. The scientist walked up to God and said, ‘God, we’ve decided that we no longer need you. We’re to the point that we can clone people and do many miraculous things, so why don’t you just go on and get lost.’”

God listened very patiently and kindly to the man and after the scientist was done talking, God said, ‘Very well, how about this, let’s say we have a man making contest.’ The scientist replied, ‘OK, great!’”

But God added, ‘Now, we’re going to do this just like I did back in the old days with Adam.’ The scientist said, ‘Sure, no problem’ and bent down and grabbed himself a handful of dirt. God just looked at him and said, ‘No, no, no. You go get your own dirt!’”

How often do we stop to think we “make something from scratch?” Can we? As Carl Sagan said in Cosmos, “To really make an apple pie from scratch, you must begin by inventing the universe.” What can we really create?

“The Creation,” a beautiful sermon, was written by James Weldon Johnson. He is considered one of the movers of the Harlem Renaissance and has influenced many people. He was very influential in helping the black people and an early activist in the NAACP. He is remembered as an author, educator, lawyer, diplomat and songwriter. I first read his poem when I was in high school and thought it was nice, but it wasn’t until later that I came to really appreciate it. I hope you enjoy it and its beautiful story about the creation.

THE CREATION

*“And God stepped out on space,
And He looked around and said,
‘I’m lonely --I’ll make me a world.’
And far as the eye of God could see
Darkness covered everything,
Blacker than a hundred midnights
Down in a cypress swamp.
Then God smiled,
And the light broke,
And the darkness rolled up on one
side,
And the light stood shining on the
other,
And God said, ‘That’s good!’
Then God reached out and took the
light in His hands*

And God rolled the light around in His hands
Until He made the sun;
And He set that sun a-blazing in the heavens.
And the light that was left from making the sun
God gathered it up in a shining ball
And flung it against the darkness,
Spangling the night with the moon and stars.
Then down between
The darkness and the light
He hurled the world;
And God said, 'That's good!'

Then God himself stepped down --
And the sun was on His right hand,
And the moon was on His left;
The stars were clustered about His head,
And the earth was under His feet.
And God walked, and where He trod
His footsteps hollowed the valleys out
And bulged the mountains up.
Then He stopped and looked and saw
That the earth was hot and barren.
So God stepped over to the edge of the world
And He spat out the seven seas;
He batted His eyes, and the lightnings flashed;
He clapped His hands, and the thunders rolled;
And the waters above the earth came down,
The cooling waters came down.
Then the green grass sprouted,
And the little red flowers blossomed,
The pine tree pointed his finger to the sky,
And the oak spread out his arms,

The lakes cuddled down in the hollows
of the ground,
And the rivers ran down to the sea;
And God smiled again,
And the rainbow appeared,
And curled itself around His shoulder.
Then God raised His arm and He waved His hand
Over the sea and over the land,
And He said, 'Bring forth! Bring forth!'
And quicker than God could drop His hand.
Fishes and fowls
And beasts and birds Swam the rivers
and the seas,
Roamed the forests and the woods,
And split the air with their wings.
And God said, 'That's good!'

Then God walked around,
And God looked around
On all that He had made.
He looked at His sun,
And He looked at His moon,
And He looked at His little stars;
He looked on His world
With all its living things,
And God said, 'I'm lonely still.'
Then God sat down
On the side of a hill where He could think;
By a deep, wide river He sat down;
With His head in His hands,
God thought and thought,
Till He thought, 'I'll make me a man!'
Up from the bed of the river
God scooped the clay;
And by the bank of the river
He knelt Him down;
And there the great God Almighty
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,

Who flung the stars to the most far
corner of the night,
Who rounded the earth in the middle
of His hand;
This Great God,
Like a mammy bending over her baby,
Kneeled down in the dust Toiling
over a lump of clay
Till He shaped it in His own image;
Then into it He blew the breath of
life,
And man became a living soul.
Amen. Amen."*

Prayer: Dear God. Too often we put You in a box. We want to know how everything is done. Help us to show others that we believe that You are the great I AM, that You are creator, and that we can have the simple faith of a child and trust You for everything, every day. Amen

1. Is our faith strong enough to allow God to create the world in just seven days?
2. What is your meaning of "And God said unto Moses, 'I AM THAT I AM'"?
3. How can we put complete trust in God's hands?

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* "The Creation" is reprinted from The Book of American Negro Poetry. Ed. James Weldon Johnson. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1922.