

## Research: Gen. 1:31

Seven times in Genesis 1, God observes His creation to be good. In Genesis 1:4, after He had spoken light into existence, He declared it to be good. In Genesis 1:10, after separating the water from the land, He called that good. After creating plant life, in Genesis 1:12 He saw that it was good, also. In Genesis 1:18, after putting in place a system for lighting the earth and for separating night from day, He calls that good. In Genesis 1:21, after creating animals to populate the water and the air, He observes that to be good. In Genesis 1:25, after populating the land with animals and insects, He calls that good, too. Finally, after creating humanity as the capstone of His creation (Genesis 1:26–30), He observed all He had made and declared it to be not just good but *very good*.

The Hebrew word translated as “good” in the English is *tov*. The term rendered “very good” is *hennah tov*, which could be translated as “certainly good” or “surely good.” It is noteworthy that the word *good* is never actually defined in the Bible—the concept is simply assumed. It does seem, though, that the kind of good referenced in Genesis 1 is a good in the qualitative sense of functionality. Because of the success in design and execution of all that was created, it could be that God was calling things good because they were ***effective for fulfilling the function for which He designed them. If so, this would reflect a kind of instrumental good.***

It is also worth noting that in each of these instances it is said that God “saw” that it was good. That God was observing that these things were good implies that He had a design and purpose in mind and that the created products met His approval—He judged them to be effective for serving His purpose. As the Creator, God

has the right to define and judge. He assessed that which He had created and determined it was good. This is a good reminder for us that, because He has the authority that only a sovereign Creator can have, we ought to look to Him to learn of His judgments and assessments. If He judges something to be good (or not good), then it is that.

31 – 'behold/indeed it was very good' – is intended to apply to the whole of the work of creation. Whichever way you look at it, it's all good.

What does Genesis 1 31 teach us?

This world is far more than very good; it is infinitely good and eternally glorious. While Genesis 1:31 is most specifically a verse that speaks of God's fundamental goodness in making the world; it is also a verse that gives Christians hope that what he started as good, he will bring to fruition.

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From Von Rad's Commentary on Genesis:

**Very good = completely perfect**