

TARGUM NEOFITI ON GENESIS

The Targums—2nd to 4th century Aramaic translations and paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible—often substituted the term *Word* for the sacred Name of God, *Yahweh* (which our English Bibles translate LORD). The following translation is a translation of Targum Neofiti on Genesis 1. Note how “God” is not referred to at all; rather, the Word and the Lord are the Agents of creation.

1:1 From the beginning with wisdom the **Word of the Lord created** and perfected the skies and the earth.

1:2 and the earth was waste and unformed, desolate of man and beast, empty of plant cultivation and of trees, and darkness was spread over the face of the abyss, and a spirit of mercy from before the Lord was blowing over the surface of the waters.

1:3 And the **Word of the Lord said**: Let there be light, and there was light according to the decree of his Word.

1:4 And it was manifest before the Lord that the light was good and the Word of the Lord separated the light from the darkness.

1:5 And **the word of the Lord called** the light daytime and the darkness he called night. And there was evening and there was morning in the order of the work of creation: the first day.

1:6 And **the word of the Lord said**: Let there be the firmament in the midst of the waters and let it separate the lower waters from the upper waters.

1:7 And the Lord created the firmament and separated the waters that were under the firmament from the waters that were above the firmament, and it was so according to his Word.

1:8 And **the Word of the Lord called** the firmament the sky. And there was evening and there was morning in the order of the work of creation: the second day.

1:9 And **the Word of the Lord said**: Let the waters under the skies be gathered together inot one place and let the dry land appear. And it was so according to his Word.

1:10 And **the Word of the Lord called** the dry (land) the earth and the gathering-place of the waters he called the Seas. And it was manifest before the Lord that it was beautiful and proper.

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1:26 And **the word of the Lord said**: Let us create man in our image, similar to ourselves, and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea and over the birds of the skies, and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

1:27 And **the Word of the Lord created** the son of man in his (own) image, in a resemblance from before the Lord he created him, male and his partner he created them.

1:28 And **the Word of the Lord blessed** them and **the Word of the Lord said** to them: Be strong and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fishes of the sea and over the birds of the skies, and over every living thing that creeps upon the earth.

1:29 And **the Word of the Lord said**: Behold I have given you all the herbs that produce seed that are on the face of all the earth and every three that has fruit on it—the fruit-bearing tree—to you I have given them as food.

1:30 and to every beast of the earth and to all the birds of the skies and to everything that creeps upon the earth, that has in it the breath of life, (I have given) every herb as food. And it was so according to his word.

1:31 And there was manifest before the Lord everything that he had made and it was very beautiful and good. And there was evening and there was morning; the order of the work of creation: the sixth day.

2:1 And they completed the creatures of the skies and earth and all the hosts of them.

2:2 And **the Word of the Lord completed** on the seventh day his work, which he had created because there was rest and repose before him on the seventh day from all his work, which he had created.

2:3 And **the word of the Lord blessed** the seventh day and declared it holy because on it there was a great rest and repose before him from all his work which the Glory of the Lord had created to do.