

# Genesis Lesson 1

## God the Creator Genesis 1:1–2:3

### Memorize the TRUTH!

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.  
Genesis 3:15

### Learn the TRUTH!

Have you ever wondered why you exist and if there is any real meaning to the universe? Genesis addresses those questions in the first four words: "In the beginning, God ..." (Genesis 1:1). This week, ask God to show you that He is the reason you are here and the purpose for your life.

### Day 1 The Beginning — Genesis 1:1-2

1. What do these verses tell us about the origin of the universe?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. a. According to these verses, who was present at Creation?  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
b. What further details does John 1:1-3 give?  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
c. What truth about the Trinity does this suggest?

### Day 2 Creation Week — Genesis 1:3-25

3. a. How does the size of the earth compare with the rest of creation?  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
b. Why do you think earth plays such an important role in the Creation story?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How did God begin and complete each step of Creation?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What is God's purpose for the sun, moon and stars? How does this contradict popular beliefs concerning astrology and horoscopes?



## Commentary

### Genesis Lesson 1

The Bible assumes God's reality in its opening sentence and does not argue for His existence except by pointing to the presence of the universe itself. The Bible often states that the world proclaims the Creator's glory (Psalm 19:1-4; 104; Romans 1:20). Many interpreters understand Genesis 1:1 to be a topic sentence, summarizing the entire Creation account. The rest of chapter 1, according to this view, provides the details of how Creation occurred.

Genesis 1:1 rejects atheism, because God is present before the created universe is formed. It denies pantheism, since God is separate from His creation. It contradicts naturalism, because it asserts that matter is not eternal. The Hebrew verb translated created — *bara* — is used only of divine activity in the Bible. God does something in Genesis that He alone can do: He brings into existence a universe that is fully functional, self-sustaining, and filled with testimony about Him. Only God can *bara* — create matter by His spoken word. Popularized in the 1800s, another view of the first two verses is the Gap Theory. This view says that the earth was inhabited either by angels (including the one later to be known as Satan), or by human beings, or both in a creation that may have lasted millions of years. However, God found it necessary to punish their rebellion by destroying this creation. Evidence for the Gap Theory is not strong. Likewise, it may be unnecessary from a scriptural point of view to allow for long ages for earth's geological history.

Critics like to point out similarities between Genesis 1–2 and the stories of origins found in other cultures, suggesting that the author of Genesis borrowed his material from earlier pagan accounts. Close scrutiny of the pagan accounts of origins reveals strong differences with Genesis. These pagan accounts describe beings that already exist alongside the creator deity. Moses did not revert to myths. The Bible explains that he received truth directly from God: "With [Moses] I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles" (Numbers 12:6-8).

Days One, Two, and Three show how God gives shape to the formlessness. Days Four, Five, and Six relate how He fills the emptiness. Christians have long disagreed on the length of the creative days. The three most-proposed answers are as follows: (1) 24-Hour Day View — this view has received the widest acceptance and is the simplest. The days of Genesis 1 are 24 hours in length, and signs of layering found in the earth's crust are the result of the Flood of Genesis 6–9; (2) Day-Age View — this is a second view commonly held since the mid-19th century. This view understands the days of Genesis 1 as epochs of great length, typically millions of years. Advocates of this view point out correctly that the word *yom* can and does sometimes mean a long period of time; (3) Literal Days With Intervening Ages — this third view is a combination of the first two. Here the days of Genesis were

## Check It Out!

Our increasing knowledge about the solar system challenges our ideas about the age of the universe. Yet the biblical account of Creation is the standard against which everything must be measured. Though theories abound, the Bible does not tell us when the act of Creation took place, nor does it give an indisputable statement about how long it took.

If we allow ourselves to get caught up in theories or arguments, we can miss the majesty, the wonder of it all. God took a great formless void — a vast emptiness — and created this incredibly complex world in which we live. And He did it all with the power of His Word. He simply spoke the world into existence.

24 hours in length; however, while the creative process took place in these brief spurts, God waited for thousands or millions of years between the days.

God began by bringing light into existence (1:3-5), which is an expression of His own character (1 John 1:5). The second day saw the separation of the skies (1:6) from the waters. The third day brought the boundaries of earthly seas from dry land. On the fourth day, God placed the sun, moon, and stars into the sky (1:16-17). On the fifth day, the water was filled with vast varieties of sea creatures and the sky with every kind of bird (1:20-25). On the sixth day, God created the animals and — the crown of His creative work — humanity (1:26-28).

Man is created as a combination of body and spirit; he is by nature a dependent being, unlike God, who is self-sustaining. Apart from God supplying his daily needs, mankind cannot continue. Neither humanity nor the animal kingdom ate meat at this point in history. That arose only after the destruction brought by the Flood (9:3). Genesis 1 identifies the Creator as Elohim (God), a plural noun with a singular verb called a plural of majesty, suggesting the complex makeup of God. The proposal to create man in verse 26 also uses two plural forms: "Let Us make man in Our image." All three persons of the triune Godhead are involved in Creation. God creates; the Holy Spirit hovers; and Jesus Christ plays a major role. Colossians 1:16 declares, "By Him all things were created." The Trinity's involvement cannot be disputed, nor will it be fully understood this side of heaven.

On the day after the creation of man, God rested and did no work, as an example for His covenant people. God placed a special blessing on the seventh day and set it apart — "made it holy" (2:3). The seventh day became known as the Sabbath, from the Hebrew word meaning to cease. By connecting the Sabbath day with God's creative work, Moses taught the Israelites that the days of work followed by a day of rest and refreshment was the gift of a gracious God.

## Walk the Walk!

What does it mean to be created in God's image? Does it mean, primarily, that we were created as intelligent beings with freedom of choice? We do make independent decisions that have consequences. Without moral choice, we are no different from animals that act instinctively. Or does it mean that we are capable of loving at a far different level than the unconditional love our dogs have ever given us?

God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness" (Genesis 1:26a). Thank God for such a great honor and consider why He made that purposeful decision.

## Dig Deeper:

The universe is definitely awesome to observe and study. What does Scripture say to those who might be tempted to worship it?

Deuteronomy 4:19