

Genesis: Creation

Lesson 1 Teacher's Guide

The book of Genesis provides a foundation for all faith. All the major teachings of the Christian are supported by what is presented in this book. Acceptance of God's Word as it is written is instrumental in accurately understanding Who God is and what mankind's place is in His plan - both as individuals and as a collective group. God's Word is relevant to all history and to our own lives and, as such, none of it can be disregarded or modified. Rather, our task is to understand our Creator God, as much as our human minds are able.

The topics of evolution and the oneness of God might be raised in the study of the Creation in Genesis 1 and 2. It would be wise to be prepared for discussion or questions in these areas. Some additional information on these topics is provided in this guide. If questions are raised for which the answer is not known, inform the group that you will research those areas and bring answers to the next group meeting.

Written by Moses

Moses (c. 1500 B.C.) is traditionally credited with writing the book of Genesis (see Deut. 31:9ff; Josh. 1:7, 8). Until he did so, the historical accounts of individuals and events would have been passed orally from generation to generation. God would also have inspired Moses with what He wanted recorded in writing.

God first reveals Himself as a Creator and there are many things we learn about God through His Creation. Here is a partial list:

- He is orderly
- He is thorough
- He makes what is good
- He is imaginative
- He is concerned about His creation
- He sustains His creation
- He commits Himself to His creation
- He is a God of life

Why was Genesis written?

Genesis provides answers to some of the deepest questions of mankind: Where did we come from? Why is there evil and death in the world? It also lays out the relationship of God to man and vice versa, as well as the foundation of God's plan for mankind.

God

"God" is a translation of the Hebrew word *Elohim*. The "im" ending on Elohim is a plural ending, so this word can be used to describe both a single God (in the case of the one true God) or god and a multiplicity of gods (as in pagan gods). (In this way, the word Elohim is like the English word "deer" in which the same word is used whether describing a single or several deer).

To determine whether Elohim is describing a single God or several gods is determined by the accompanying verb and the pronoun used to replace the noun Elohim. In Genesis 1:1, Elohim is followed by the singular verb *bārā* (created).

Throughout Genesis 1, when a pronoun is used to replace Elohim (God), the word "he" is used. In Genesis 1:26, God speaks of "us" and "our." This can be explained by either God speaking in the royal "we", or God speaking to the angelic beings which Job 38:4, 7 states were present at the Creation. In other Biblical descriptions of angels, they look like men, which indicates they are also in the image of God since angels and man look similar and man has been made in God's image according to Genesis 1:27.

In Isaiah 6:8, the voice of the Lord is heard to say "whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" This "us" comes right after Isaiah has witnessed God's heavenly throne and the heavenly beings that surround it. Since God refers to himself first as "I" - a singular pronoun - it is reasonable in light of Isaiah's vision to understand the "us" to refer to God Himself and the heavenly beings serving Him.

In the beginning

What beginning is being described in Genesis 1? This beginning is that of the universe and our world, not of God. God existed eternally (Gen. 21:33, Jer. 10:10, Ro. 16:26, 1 Tim. 1:17) and has no beginning or end.

“The heavens and the earth” is descriptive of the entire universe, since the Hebrews did not have a word for “universe.”¹

Genesis 1:5 defines a “day” as it is used throughout the Creation account evening and morning. This is important to recognize to refute evolutionist arguments. Creation occurred in six 24-hour periods. Evolution theory states that it took billions of years for our world to become what it is. The amazing thing is that God actually took six whole days to create what He could have made in a much shorter period of time. Yet the seven days of Creation (including God’s day of rest) are the basis for the seven-day week we see on our calendars today.

The culmination of God’s creative activity is His formation of mankind - male and female. They are the only aspect of Creation that is described as being in God’s image. This raises humankind to a level that is far above animals. God’s Word says that we are related to Him through our creation in His image. We are God’s created sons and daughters (see Luke 3:38). Evolution teaches mankind is related to animals.

The study of Creation and the theory of evolution leads one to the inevitable question: How can we know truth? Where do we put our foundational faith? In God or science? This is the essence of an individual’s worldview (how one views and evaluates the world).

In essence, a worldview is a lens through which a person views reality. The Christian lens is to be the Bible, yet with the indoctrination by public schools and media of unbiblical concepts, many professing Christians now believe that science or psychology or government or philosophies other than the Bible provide the best lens through which to look at life. The book of Genesis immediately challenges many of the beliefs people have developed through years of public education, beginning with the theory of evolution. Belief in either the Creator God and Creation as described in the Bible or the theory of evolution impacts all other areas of life, society, and culture.

Religion is defined as:

- belief in and reverence for a supernatural power recognized as the creator and governor of the universe
- the spiritual or emotional attitude of one who recognizes the existence of a superhuman power or powers
- an objective pursued with zeal or conscientious devotion (*American Heritage Dictionary*)

Under this definition of religion, the theory of evolution is as much a religion as any other system of belief. There is no proof to support the tenets taught under evolution (namely, that one creature can change into another kind of creature) which requires great faith in chance by those who believe it. The study of evolutionary theory is pursued with great zeal by those who wish mankind to be demeaned as an animal rather than honored as a creation in the image of God. Law suits are brought against public schools for mentioning the Creation as viable, even though teaching Creation is not prohibited by law.² (see “What Can Be Done About Evolution Being Taught in Class?” <<http://www.creationtoday.org/what-can-be-done-about-evolution-being-taught-in-class/>> 11 Oct 2012.)

Science is defined as:

- the observation, identification, description, experimental investigation, and theoretical explanation of natural phenomena
- methodological activity, discipline, or study
- an activity that appears to require study and method
- knowledge, esp. knowledge gained through experience (*American Heritage Dictionary*)

The first item of note is that science has to do with natural phenomena. Interestingly, all natural phenomena were created by God. Thus, science actually is the study of God’s creation, including observation of nature, classifying nature (begun by Adam in Genesis 2:19, 20), and describing various aspects of nature (Solomon as scientist, 1 Kings 4: 33). Science tries to understand the order and organization God gave to His creation (1 Cor. 14:33a) by performing experiments and following specific steps to examine and test the natural laws. Science accumulates great quantities of knowledge through the practices of experimentation and observation.

One other aspect of the definition is that of theoretical explanations. Theory is defined as:

- systematically organized knowledge applicable in a relatively wide variety of circumstances, esp. a system of assumptions, accepted principles, and rules of procedure devised to analyze, predict, or otherwise explain the nature or behavior of a specified set of phenomena
- abstract reasoning; speculation
- an assumption or guess based on limited information or knowledge (*American Heritage Dictionary*)

A theory can range from rules and principles (which have been proved through experimentation and repeated observation) to assumptions and guesses. It is important to always remember that evolution is a theory in the sense of an assumption or guess based on limited information or knowledge. Evolution is not proven, nor is there empirical evidence of such a process occurring in the first five kinds of evolution (listed in the margin of unit 2, lesson 1: cosmic, chemical, stellar and planetary, organic, and macro evolution). Evolutionists often claim that creation is not scientific because of the unprovable assumptions that it is based on. The fact that evolution is based on its own set of unprovable, untestable, and unfalsifiable assumptions is often unrecognized in the scientific community.³

Only microevolution has been observed and verified as occurring, and refers to simple variations occurring as a result of natural selection. Microevolution is not evolving or transforming from one kind to another kind of animal (i.e. a lizard to a bird, etc.). Natural selection acts to decrease or conserve the amount of genetic information in a population. In order to turn an amoeba into an ape, there has to be an increase in genetic information. Despite this fact, evolutionists insist on the increasing complexity of life over time. To add to the problems of the evolutionary story, life must have evolved from nonliving chemicals. No one understands how this could have happened, but it is accepted as true regardless of any evidence.⁴

Here is an interesting quotation commenting on the Christian's position versus the position of science. Consider this when examining your comfort level in standing firm on the Word of God's truth (notice that this was written in 1877):

You are not to be dogmatical in theology, my brethren, it is wicked; but for scientific men it is the correct thing. You are never to assert anything very strongly; but scientists may boldly assert what they cannot prove, and may demand a faith far more credulous than any we possess. Forsooth, you and I are to take our Bibles and shape and mould our belief according to the evershifting teachings of so-called scientific men. What folly is this!⁵

Genesis 1 and Genesis 2

Genesis Chapters 1 and 2 are both descriptions of God's Creation activity, but even though they differ, they are not in conflict. Chapter 1 provides the overview or framework of God's creative work. Chapter 2 gives details of events on the sixth day of Creation. Genesis 2:4-7 states that no shrub or plant of the field had yet sprung up when God formed man from the dust of the ground. This may be referring to crop plants for which a cultivator is needed: There was no man to work the ground. These would be different plants than those created on Day 3 (Genesis 1:11-12).⁶ Chapter 2, verses 8 and 19 both align with the order of creation in Chapter 1 since they state that God had planted a garden and had formed animals before bringing the man to his tasks.

Other creation passages

God's creation of the heavens and the earth are not limited to the Genesis 1 and 2 passages. Here is a partial listing of additional passages that can be referenced regarding God's creation:

Job 38-41

Psalms 19

Psalms 33

Psalms 104

Proverbs 3:19, 20

The Equation of Life, Genesis 2:7

The chapters on man's physical nature from *Systematic Theology* by Alva Huffer make good preparation for teaching about the equation of life of Genesis 2:7. A correct understanding of the truth about man's spirit, that soul means a being (animal or man), and what death is, is vital for full comprehension of God's plan for mankind.

Marriage

Genesis 2 also addresses the marriage relationship between man and woman. Jesus quotes Genesis, chapters 1 and 2, and provides commentary when discussing marriage in Matthew 19:4-6 (also Mark 10:5-9).

¹ Ken Ham. "Could God Have Created Everything in Six Days?" 27 Sept 2007. Accessed 4 Mar 2018 <<https://answersingenesis.org/days-of-creation/could-god-really-have-created-everything-in-six-days/?sitehist=1520181000152>>.

² Eric Hovind. "What Can Be Done About Evolution Being Taught in Class?" 6 May 2010. Accessed 11 Oct 2012 <<http://www.creationtoday.org/what-can-be-done-about-evolution-being-taught-in-class/>>.

³ Roger Patterson. "Biological Evolution." 3 Feb 2011. Accessed Mar 2012 <<https://answersingenesis.org/evidence-against-evolution/biological-evolution/>>.

⁴ Patterson.

⁵ C.H. Spurgeon. *The Sword and the Trowel*. 1877. 197. Accessed 4 Mar 2018 <as quoted in <https://answersingenesis.org/days-of-creation/could-god-really-have-created-everything-in-six-days/?sitehist=1520181000152>>.

⁶ Tim Chaffey. "Feedback: Do Genesis 1 and 2 Contradict Each Others?" 3 Sept 2010. Accessed 9 Mar 2011 <<http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/2010/09/03/feedback-genesis-1-and-2>>.