

BEGIN WITH GOD

Week 1

A study of Genesis 1–12

GLORY

In every school, there are trophy cases, medals, photographs, and other paraphernalia arranged to say, “Look at what we’ve accomplished.” From academics to athletics, these noble reminders can be summed up in a single word—“Glory.”

While a school may have a lot to show, God’s display case is a bit bigger. Israel’s great poet-king, King David, wrote, “*The heavens declare the glory of God*” (Psalm 19:1). He goes on proclaiming the greatness of God observed through Creation. The Apostle Paul would later write, “*his invisible attributes—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, because they are understood through what has been made*” (Romans 1:20).

There are many “How” questions regarding Creation, but the question we *should* be asking is “Who?” Although our study may touch on some various “How’s” along the way, trust us that many scientifically-minded Christians have done a lot of work in that area. We aren’t avoiding the issues; we just don’t want to distract from the critical question—“What does Creation teach us about the Creator?”

GENESIS 1:1–13

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was without shape and empty, and darkness was over the surface of the watery deep, but the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the water. ³ God said, “Let there be light.” And there was light! ⁴ God saw that the light was good, so God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light “day” and the darkness “night.” There was evening, and there was morning, marking the first day.

⁶ God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters and let it separate water from water.”

⁷ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. It was so.

⁸ God called the expanse “sky.” There was evening, and there was morning, a second day.

⁹ God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place and let dry ground appear.” It was so.

¹⁰ God called the dry ground “land” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” God saw that it was good.

¹¹ God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: plants yielding seeds and trees on the land bearing fruit with seed in it, according to their kinds.” It was so. ¹² The land produced vegetation—plants yielding seeds according to their kinds, and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. God saw that it was good. ¹³ There was evening, and there was morning, a third day.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The book of *Genesis* touches on the BIG questions of life—where did we come from, why are we here? Unfortunately, for the modern reader, we are often left with more questions than answers.

This area of our study seeks to provide some resources for further study to learn more about the things that we don’t have space to address. As an example, scan the QR code to the right.



DISCUSSION

What is something you made or put together that you were proud of? What inspired pride?

ICEBREAKER

1. What activity occurs, when, and by whom? (1)

OBSERVATION

2. What did God say and what happened?

v. 3:

v. 6:

v. 9:

v. 11:

3. In your own words, define “created” as used here. (1)

INTERPRETATION

4. In what ways was God’s creation “good?”

5. What difference does it make to you, if any, that God created the heavens and the Earth?

APPLICATION

As we begin the study, especially in a book like *Genesis*, you may have questions along the way about what you read. Your coach may not have all the answers, but they’re there for you.

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STUDY NOTES

“GENTLEMEN, THIS IS A FOOTBALL”

At the start of training camp 1961, Green Bay Packers coach, Vince Lombardi, held up a football and uttered these famous words to a squad of professional athletes. These words live on as a lesson about fundamentals, which was his point. However, as our study opens the very first page of the most important book in all human history, Lombardi's words teach another great lesson. Sometimes, the best place to start is the beginning.

After the declaration of, “*In the beginning*,” the Bible asserts the largest presupposition in all of Scripture—**God**. No fanfare, no introduction, no sermon, God simply bursts onto the page. And, as God is the first being mentioned in the Bible, we might conclude that for all it has to say on a wide range of topics, its ultimate message is about God himself. Or, as some have said, “God exists and he has spoken.” If that is true, and we believe it is, then that changes *everything*.

What did God do in the beginning? He **created**. If we take just a moment to think about our world, we immediately begin to learn things about God. The fact that God is *Creator* speaks to his power, but when we think about *Creation*, we realize that God is also *Creative*, which speaks to his intelligence. He designed remarkable creatures that have lived so deep under the sea that humankind only recently discovered their existence and brilliance—but I’m getting ahead of myself. God is not some cosmic force. He is an intelligent Being capable of wondrous things.

GOD IS CREATIVE

What did God create? He created **the heavens and the earth**. Let me teach you a word you can use to impress your English teachers, “Merism.” A merism is a figure of speech using two extremes to include everything in between. In this case, “the heavens and the earth” doesn’t just represent those two things. Losing some of the poetic nature of the merism, Genesis 1:1 may have said “God created the heavens and the earth *and everything in between*.” Although that’s what the author is saying, it loses its punch.

How did God create? In the scripture, underline the words, “**God said**.” Both this Week and next in our study, we’re going to see that God’s act of creating was manifested *through speaking*! As we see each day, God isn’t *subject* to his created Laws of Nature, rather he rules them, and he occasionally even *overrides* them in what we call a “miracle.”

The first thing that God spoke into being was “**Let there be light.**” **And there was light!** So, what was the light that God created days before creating the sun and the moon? It seems like the question from the first book is answered by the last book because in Revelation 21:23 we read, “*The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, because the glory of God lights it up, and its lamp is the Lamb.*”

GOD’S CREATIVITY FOCUSES OUR WORSHIP

Even in the very first command, we miss something that the first audience would have immediately understood. In Zero Week, we discussed that Moses wrote *Genesis* after leading the captives to freedom from Egypt. The most important of Egypt’s many gods was Ra, the sun god. On this first day of Creation, God boldly rebuked Egypt’s false religion. Not only is God the Author of light, but he also waited until Day 4 to create such a puny physical source.

Here too we see an important truth—God is distinct from Creation. God created the “**sky**,” “**land**,” “**seas**,” “**plants**,” “**trees**,” and next Week’s study will show he created even more. When I stand on a mountain and look out over tree covered valleys while admiring a sunny day with big white puffy clouds, I’m not observing God. I’m observing what God has made. That is a critical difference. I stand in awe, not at what has been created, but that there is a Creator.

Not only does God exist, but he has spoken—he has revealed himself to his creation. Why? Well, the obvious answer is that he didn’t create it, and then walk away unconcerned with how things played out. We must conclude that God’s reason for revealing himself is relational. God wants a relationship with *us*! And although, as we will see, humanity messes up that relational opportunity, God made a way of reconciliation in Jesus Christ.

Like the pagan god Ra, trees, or rocks, worshipping anything within Creation is crazy when we consider that we have the opportunity for a relationship with the Creator. Next Week, we’ll continue in the second half of the Creation story. But, the most important thing we want you to understand *in the beginning* of this study, is that if God can create everything out of nothing by his words, he can change you too. If you’re tired of giving your heart to relationships, to gratification, to awards, to starting positions, and everything else *within* Creation, then turn your heart to the only One *above* Creation. By creation we witness him and by his Word he has revealed himself. The only question is, “Do you know Him?”