

# BEGIN WITH GOD

Week 2

## A study of Genesis 1–12

### FILL ‘EM UP

Summer 2020 welcomed the newest of the jaw-dropping, beautiful, and gigantic stadiums to grace the NFL landscape—SoFi Stadium—home of the L.A. Rams and Chargers. However, as we admire these colossal coliseums, we understand a simple truth, they are worthless until they are filled.

Last Week, we saw God’s work in speaking his stadium into existence. This Week, it’s time to fill ‘em up. Last Week, God prepared the place. Now it’s time to introduce his greatest act of creation yet—life.

Although we take the idea of life for granted, we shouldn’t. A world filled with life is actually, what one astrophysicist called, a “statistical anomaly” and that, “Earth perhaps shouldn’t exist.”

Scientists refer to Earth’s position from the Sun as the “Goldilocks Zone.” That is, we are perfectly positioned so that life can exist. Our position to the Sun is just one of many factors that allow for life.

Some other factors for life include: the amount of water on the Earth, Earth’s magnetosphere, Earth’s moon, even having Jupiter as a giant gravitational shield to protect the Earth from space junk.

Earth is a 1-in-700-quintillion kind of planet. That is literally the current estimate. With odds like that, it becomes hard to argue that our peculiar planet is the product of random chance or a cosmic accident—or to put in scientific terms “an unguided process.”

### GENESIS 1:14–31 (SELECTED)

<sup>14</sup> God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them be signs to indicate seasons and days and years, <sup>15</sup> and let them serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” It was so.

<sup>20</sup> God said, “Let the water swarm with swarms of living creatures and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.”

<sup>24</sup> God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: cattle, creeping things, and wild animals, each according to its kind.” It was so.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness, so they may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move on the earth.”

<sup>27</sup> God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.

<sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made—and it was very good! There was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

As we have said, aspects of Creation produce more questions than answers when studying *Genesis*. Although the question of *when* is not as important as *how*, *why*, and most importantly, *who*, it’s still a valid question. Faithful Christians exist all over the spectrum of the *when*, but a question within that question is *what about the dinosaurs*? Did they really die out millions and millions of years ago? The evidence may surprise you.



### DISCUSSION

What does it mean to speak with authority?

1. What did God say and what happened?

v. 14:

v. 20:

v. 24:

v. 26:

2. What was unique about God’s creation of humankind? (26-27)

3. How does God’s command to “rule” enhance the authority and dignity of all people? (26)

4. How does God’s assessment of Day 6 differ from the others (31)

5. What examples can you provide of a failure to recognize all people as image-bearers of God.

6. Do any of those examples require your repentance?

Perhaps it’s hard for you to understand that you have dignity and worth as an image-bearer of God. Maybe you’ve messed up so much that you feel worthless. You’re not. You are infinitely valuable. Talk to your coach today.

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

## A study of Genesis 1–12

### STUDY NOTES

#### THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

If you watch much of the NFL, you've heard the player introductions that say, "*THE* \_\_\_\_\_ University." As far as I know, *THE* Ohio State University was the first to emphasize the definite article. They love the emphatic "*THE*" because like every college sports fan, their school is obviously the best.

The passion surrounding such a common word is funny. "The" is a definite article that functions to limit the following noun to a definite thing. Even if we don't understand the grammar-talk, all English speakers use it frequently. However, when emphasized, it gives great power. An Ohio State University becomes *THE* Ohio State University. A star athlete becomes *THE* star athlete. An incredible position player becomes *THE* pitcher, *THE* quarterback, *THE* point guard. All the *THE*'s are unique and special in their own way.

Last Week's study began the first few Creation Days. Creation was spoken into existence by God—the ultimate creative being that exists beyond the reaches of the known universe. This Week we pick up the story in Day 4, but we're going to see something very interesting. Despite the power, energy, and awesomeness of speaking all of Creation into being, the writer of *Genesis* lets us know that the heavens and earth were created on "a" Day 1, the water and sky on "a" Day 2, etc. However, Days 6 & 7 aren't just "a" day of Creation like any other, in the original Hebrew, they are *THE* Day 6 and *THE* day 7. We'll spend this Week and next Week of our study understanding why.

#### GOD IS CREATIVE, PART 2

Last week we mentioned that *Genesis* was written to the generation of Israelites that had fled slavery in Egypt; and how the most important of Egypt's gods was Ra, the sun god. The first act of Creation was to create light, which we believe to be the visible light of God's glory. In Day 4, God inserts battery power into our universe through the Sun, Moon, and stars when he *said*, "**Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky...**"

Although I do not condone Egypt's worship of the Sun, its power literally provides all the natural energy for every aspect of life on Earth. God designed these power sources to drive weather, ocean currents, and even plants that turn that energy into food sources. The Sun is a hugely important source for life on Earth, and yet its creation was on Day 4. It is, as we said last week, puny in comparison to the true source of life—God himself.

On Day 5, God said, "**Let the water swarm with swarms of living creatures and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.**" On the second Day, God made a home for sea creatures and birds by stratifying water. Solid water is less dense than its liquid form, which is why ice floats. If water didn't have this rare property, ice would go to the bottom of the ocean seizing up the whole thing. Because of this rare property, not only can the ocean teem with life, but those currents both cause and react to the less dense, water-filled air moving above it. These water and air currents are significant for life on earth and provide a home to everything created on Day 5.

#### GOD'S CREATIVITY REVEALS HIS CHARACTER

Despite the awesomeness of everything God had done through Day 5, nothing in all of Creation compares to God's Day 6 project. God spoke land animals into being and *it was so*. However, animal life wasn't enough. So, **God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness."**

Here we see the uniqueness of *THE 6<sup>th</sup> Day*. God did a special work. Nothing else in all Creation was made *in his own image*. All of humanity—*male and female*—everyone, everywhere are image-bearers. From the all-star to the outcast, all have his image.

Why God chose to create us in his image is the question of the ages. The fact that he did, tells us something about him. God wants a relationship *with us*. He created us to *rule* over all that he made. We are kings and queens with dignity and authority.

What does it mean that we are created in his image? The implications are endless. However, we are living in a time of incredible tension. People hate each other based on race, perceived privilege, and whole host of other things. The foundation for diversity that was declared *very good* by its Creator is now a source of rage. All of the negativity stems from a lack of recognition of the dignity God gave to all of his image-bearers.

Any time one person takes advantage of another, we are defaming that person's Creator. If we bully another person, look down on another person, haze another person—face to face or even online—we defile that person as an image-bearer.

*THE 6<sup>th</sup> Day* and the harmony found within was the foundation for life. Soon we'll see how we got to the hate-filled, shame-filled world we know so well, but that was not God's design. We are kings and queens and should treat each other as kings and queens under the authority of *THE* Creator King.