

The Gospel Project: *In the Beginning*

Unit 1: *Creation and the Fall*

Lesson 1: *God's Good World*

Genesis 1:1-13; Colossians 1:15-18

Summary: God spoke the world into existence and all of creation points to the Lord Jesus.

The Book of Genesis records a glorious, yet, earthly account of creation rising out of nothing. The book also includes accounts of rebellion and redemption, of sin and salvation, and of failings and faith. Genesis reveals who we are in our sinful condition and who God is in His amazing grace.

God the Creator makes Himself known in all His majesty and goodness as He spins the world into motion and lavishes humans, His image bearers, with love.

Then the Creator introduces us to conflict in His good creation. Sadly, the first humans raised their fists in defiance toward their loving Father. Their rebellion brought chaos into His perfect creation, His peaceful paradise.

Lord God Almighty gave His people a promise that He will make things right again. He will cover our sin and crush our adversary.

The book of Genesis, as recorded by Moses at God's direction, reveals how sin spread throughout the world. However, God remained faithful to His promise to Adam and Eve, His promise to Noah, and His promises to Abraham, Issac, and Jacob.

According to the Psalmist, the Lord merely spoke and the heavens were created. He breathed the Word, and all the stars were born (Psalm 33:6). Everything was good when God brought order from chaos by the power of His spoken Word.

The writer of Hebrews explained how we are to understand God's wondrous creation. By faith we realize that the entire universe was formed at God's command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen. It is impossible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11:3, 6).

None of us were there at the time of creation. So, our faith involves believing (trusting) that God created the universe as recorded in Genesis and confirmed in other places in the Bible. Thankfully, the Lord moved Moses to record the creation account for us.

There are secret things that are known only to Almighty God. He calls us to trust Him for what we don't understand. He also teaches that we need to obey those things that are revealed in His Word (Deuteronomy 29:29).

1. God created everything (Genesis 1:1-2).

Because God created the earth out of nothing, creation has special meaning and purpose and it points us to the Creator.

Genesis 1:1-2

v. 1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

v. 2 The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters.

Because God exists eternally, Genesis 1:1 marked the beginning of the universe in time and space (Psalm 90:1-2). God wanted His people to know about the origin of the world in which we find ourselves.

At this point, the earth was not finished in its shape and it was uninhabited by creatures (Isaiah 45:18-19; Jeremiah 4:23). There was water, but no land area. Within six days, God decorated His initial creation.

According to God's description of the creation of the universe and the genealogies of His people, the world was created recently (thousands of years ago instead of millions of years ago). The universe was created out of nothing and made by God in six consecutive 24-hour periods called days.

In Exodus 20:8-11, the same word for day is used to describe the day of rest in the Ten Commandments. According to Exodus 20:11, God rested from His work of creation as recorded in Genesis chapter 1.

God blessed this day of rest and set it apart to be kept holy, devoted to Him. As an illustration of how we are to rest each week, God ceased working for a 24-hour period, not a long period of time (like a million years).

Our Creator God doesn't need to rest as we do. He created our physical bodies to need rest to function properly. The Lord rested as an example for how we are to live each week. In six days, we are to do our ordinary work and rest on the other day. In this way, we are reminded to trust God to supply what we need as an act of His wondrous grace and unfailing love for us.

God's rest and work schedule serve as an example for how we are to live our lives.

In the New Testament, Jesus said that He is the Lord of all, even the special day known as the Sabbath. The Lord Jesus also explained that the Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, not for people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8; Mark 2:27-28).

2. God created everything good (Genesis 1:3-13).

In God's judgment, creation was good. As Creator, He designed everything to reflect and display His good character. As God's people, we need to support and seek to preserve the goodness of His initial creation.

Genesis 1:3-5

v. 3 Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

v. 4 And God saw that the light was good. Then He separated the light from the darkness.

v. 5 God called the light "day" and the darkness "night." And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

Each of the six creative days began with God speaking. This principal theme of the Bible teaches that God speaks with power and He is the One who brings light into darkness.

God produced physical light and He gave names to what He produced. He called the light *Day* and the darkness, He called *Night*. Later He would send His Son to be the Light of the world (John 8:12). In the future eternity, there will be no darkness at all because of God's glorious, holy presence (Revelation 21:23).

The closing thought of Genesis 1:5 clearly describes a 24-hour day, consisting of an evening and morning. The Jewish people count their days beginning with the evening so that's how a day was described in these verses.

Genesis 1:6-8

v. 6 Then God said, "Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth."

v. 7 And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens.

v. 8 God called the space "sky." And evening passed and morning came marking the second day.

Theologians agree that the 'expanse' (space between the waters) is the portion of God's creation named 'heavens,' the part that is seen when one looks up.

This expanse separated the water from below (subterranean reservoirs) and possibly a canopy of water vapor that acted to make the earth like a hothouse, providing uniform temperatures. The canopy of water vapor would also inhibit mass air movement, cause mist to fall, and filter out harmful, ultraviolet rays, extending the lives of humans.

Genesis 1:9-10

v. 9 Then God said, "Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear." And that is what happened.

v. 10 God called the dry ground "land" and the waters "seas." And God saw that it was good.

God spoke. He gave names to what He created. He saw that it was good. And He blessed His creation (Genesis 1:22, 28; 2:3; 5:2; 9:1).

Genesis 1:11-13

v. 11 Then God said, "Let the land sprout with vegetation – every sort of seed-bearing plant, and the trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came." And that is what happened.

v. 12 The land produced vegetation – all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

v. 13 And the evening passed and morning came, marking the third day.

Vegetation that bears seeds and fruits provide food for humans. This account of creation stresses God's care for human beings. It seems that God intended for vegetation to reproduce and maintain their unique characteristics at that time.

In Genesis 1:21, 24, 25, a similar phrase is used about animals. Animals were designed by God to produce offspring of the same kind, the same species. Dogs produce dogs. Cats produce cats. Horses produce horses.

The Biblical phrasing describes the on-going reproduction of animals within their created species, after the same kind. This indicates that evolution, which proposes reproduction across species lines, is a false explanation of origins.

3. God created everything for His Son (Colossians 1:15-18).

False teachings (heresies) were threatening the Christians at Colossae in New Testament times. One major element of the false teachings was the denial that Jesus Christ is God the Son.

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to Christians in that city to combat this problem. He gave a clear and convincing defense of Christ's deity. Jesus is part of the Godhead (the Trinity), consisting of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. There is one true God revealed to the world as three distinct Persons.

Colossians 1:15-16

v. 15 Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,

v. 16 for through Him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see – such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through Him and for Him.

When His followers saw Jesus while He was on earth, they began to more fully understand Almighty God. During His earthly ministry, Jesus said that anyone who has seen Him has seen the Father (John 6:45-46; 14:9).

Previously, John the Baptist said that no one had ever seen God. But the unique One (Jesus Christ), who is Himself God is near to the Father's heart. The earthly life of Jesus revealed God to us (John 1:18).

During New Testament times, false teachers had incorporated the worship of angels into their heresy. They included Jesus as one of the angels. Paul made it clear that angels were mere creatures and their Creator is none other than the preeminent One, Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:17-18

v. 17 He existed before anything else, and He holds all creation together.

v. 18 Christ is also the head of the church, which is His body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So, He is first in everything.

Creation has always been about Jesus. He is the center of it all!

Jesus is the perfect image—the exact likeness—of God and is the very form of God (Philippians 2:6; John 1:14-15; 14:9), and He has been so from all eternity.

Therefore, Jesus is the beginning, the firstborn in the sense that He surpasses all others. Jesus, God the Son, possesses the right of inheritance over all of creation (Hebrews 1:2; Revelation 5:1-9).

When the universe had its beginning, Jesus Christ already existed, thus by definition He is eternal (Micah 5:2; John 1:1-2). According to Hebrews 1:3, Jesus Christ sustains the universe, maintaining the power and balance necessary to life's existence and continuity.

In his letter to the Christians at Colossae, the Apostle Paul used the human body as a metaphor for the church. The church consists of all people who have ever trusted Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. Jesus Christ serves as the Head of the Church.

Just as the human body is controlled from the brain, so Jesus Christ controls the Church and gives it life and direction (Ephesians 4:15; 5:23). He gave life to the Church through His sacrificial death and resurrection.

According to one scholar, God created and positioned humans to take the raw materials He created and to cultivate, modify, and grow them for His glory. All of creation is about Jesus, the Word. He is at the center of creation holding it all together, and one day, He will return and restore what sin has destroyed (John 1:1-4).

What gives us hope today?

Creation is all about Jesus!

From start to finish, the message of the Bible, Creation—The Fall—Redemption—Restoration, is the story of Jesus.

The Lord Jesus was the first one to be resurrected, never to die again. He is supreme over all who have been or ever will be raised from the dead (John 5:28-29).

He's coming back!

When Jesus returns, we will stand before Him covered in His righteousness, wearing white linen robes (Galatians 3:27; Revelations 3:5; 7:9).

Our Savior, the Lord Jesus will bring His rewards with Him when He comes. He will repay each child of God according to his or her deeds (1 Corinthians 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; 5:23-24).

When He returns, Jesus will make all things new (Revelation 21:1-27; 22:1-21).

Conclusion:

God is love – real love. He demonstrated how much He loves us when He sent His one and only Son, Jesus into the world so that we might have eternal life through Him. Jesus came as a sacrifice to take away our sins (1 John 4:9-10).

The Lord Jesus came to purchase our freedom from sin and darkness. At birth, He was fully human, born of a woman, and subject to the law. He also continued to be fully God the Son. This concept requires us to have a lot of faith to believe it is true because it is far beyond our understanding.

Jesus fulfilled the law and took the curse of it upon Himself when He died on the cross. He took our punishment so we can be forgiven.

Because of all of this, an individual becomes a child of God and co-heir with Jesus when he or she trusts Him as their personal Savior and Lord. Each child of God receives the Spirit of God as part of being adopted into His eternal family. Nothing can separate us from Father God's love for us (Romans 8:14-17, 35-39; Galatians 4:4-7).

There are so many reasons for us to find hope today.

May we express our heartfelt gratitude for God's great love toward us and as a result, may we then extend His unfailing love to others who inhabit this world He promised to restore.

*This Bible Lesson was compiled by Bill and Ruth Crow from various sources, including LifeWay's The Gospel Project, **In the Beginning, Fall 2018**. New recipients, who want to receive free email Bible lessons, can contact us at brcrow81@yahoo.com / ruthcrow81@gmail.com. To unsubscribe, reply at ruthcrow81@gmail.com. Please share these lessons with others. Thank you.*