

The Book of Genesis

Lesson 1: In the Beginning: God Creates -- Genesis 1:1–2:3

Imagine a blank page. No, more than that. Imagine before there was a page at all. No light, no sky, no ocean, no morning. No music, no laughter, no color. Just God. The Bible does not open with an argument or a proof. It opens with a Person already there, before the first second of time, and it tells us what He did: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” Seven words in English, and the whole universe leans on them.

Then God speaks, and the lights come on. “Let there be light,” and there is light. Day by day the world takes shape under His word, like a great house being built room by room. Waters are gathered, dry land appears, seeds break the soil, stars are flung across the dark, fish crowd the seas, birds fill the air. And over and over a quiet refrain keeps sounding, like a craftsman stepping back from the workbench: “And God saw that it was good.” This is not a cold machine grinding into motion. This is an Artist who delights in what He makes.

Then comes the crescendo. On the sixth day God does something He has done with nothing else. He pauses, almost as if to deliberate, and says, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” And He stoops down and forms you. Not an accident. Not a cosmic afterthought. You bear the fingerprints of God Himself. The same hands that hung the stars shaped the human heart, and the God who called light out of darkness called you into being on purpose.

That is where this study begins, and where the whole Bible begins. Not with a list of rules, and not with an argument you have to win, but with a Maker who is worth knowing. Before you ever did anything right or wrong, before you could earn a thing, you were made, and you were called good. Genesis chapter one is not mainly about how the world began. It is about Whose world this is, and whose you are. So read it slowly. There is a rest waiting at the end of it, and a God waiting at the beginning of it who made you for Himself.

Group Discussion: Read slowly through the opening verses together. What does the way Genesis begins (with God already there, speaking a good world into being) tell us about the kind of God we are dealing with? What surprises you, or stands out, in how the account is told?

Personal Reflection: Genesis says you were made on purpose, by a God who called His work good. Where in your own life do you tend to live as though you were an accident, or as though your days had no Author and no aim? What might change if you truly believed you were made by God, for God?

Read Genesis 1:1–2:3

Study Questions

1. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (1:1). What does this verse claim about God's relationship to everything that exists? Why does it matter that the universe had a beginning, and a Maker, rather than always existing on its own?
2. Many people quietly carry the feeling that their life is random, that they simply happened. Where do you sense that feeling in yourself? How would living as someone deliberately made by God change the way you face an ordinary Monday?
3. Again and again the chapter says, "And God said... and it was so." God creates by speaking. What does the power of God's word in creation reveal about Him, and how does John 1:1-3 connect that creating Word to Jesus?
4. God looks at the sea, the land, the animals, the human body, and calls them "good." Do you tend to treat the physical world and your daily, bodily life as good gifts from God, or as obstacles to endure? How might seeing creation as good reshape your gratitude this week?
5. On the sixth day God says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (1:26). What does it mean that human beings are made in the image of God? How does this set humanity apart from the rest of what God made?
6. If every person is made in God's image, then the people around you, even the difficult ones, carry His likeness. Who is someone you find it hard to treat with that kind of dignity? What would change in how you speak to them or about them if you truly saw the image of God in them?
7. God made humanity "male and female" (1:27), blessed them, and gave them fruitfulness and work. What does this reveal about God's intention and design for human beings, and about the goodness of being made man and woman?
8. God placed humanity over creation to "subdue it" and "have dominion," giving them real work and responsibility. How do you usually view your daily work and the things entrusted to you? What is one way you could do your work this week as a steward serving under God, rather than just a task to finish?
9. Genesis presents God as the purposeful Creator of all things, and humanity as specially made in His image, not the product of blind, undirected chance. How does this account shape the way a Christian thinks about where the world came from, about human dignity, and about a purely natural explanation that leaves God out? And where Scripture does not spell out every detail (such as the exact age of the earth), how can we hold those secondary questions with humility while standing firmly on what the text clearly teaches?
10. Look back across the whole passage, from the first "Let there be light" to God resting on the seventh day. Name one specific way the truth that God made you, and made you on purpose, is reshaping how you will live, work, or treat others this coming week.

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: John 1:1–3, the eternal Word through whom all things were made; Psalm 19:1, the heavens declaring the glory of God; Colossians 1:16–17, all things created through Christ and held together in Him; Hebrews 11:3, understanding by faith that the universe was formed by God’s word; Psalm 8:3–6, the dignity God gives to the man He crowned with glory and honor.