



IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED

Reading: Genesis 1

God Reveals Himself in the Bible

Before considering the events of creation as recorded in Genesis 1, we will first list some of the details that God has recorded about Himself in His word, the Bible. It is important that we have a good grasp of these details so that we understand the power of God and His purpose in creation.

- God reveals that He is “*from everlasting to everlasting*” (Psalm 90:1-2; Isaiah 43:10)
- He is the source of immortal life (1 Timothy 6:14-16; 1:17)
- He is the one true God (Isaiah 45:5-7; Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29-32; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Corinthians 8:6)
- He dwells in heaven (Psalm 123:1; Matthew 6:9; Isaiah 66:1-2)
- By His Spirit Power He knows all things. Nothing is hid from His eyes (Psalm 139:1-12; Jeremiah 23:24)
- His creation testifies to His wisdom (Psalm 104:24; Romans 11:33-36)
- The intricacy of man’s faculties testifies to His great power (Proverbs 20:12; Psalm 94:9; 139:14)
- He can foretell the future and bring it to pass (Isaiah 46:9-10; Numbers 23:19)
- He inspired the writing of the Bible (2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:15-17)
- His character combines justice and mercy. He shows mercy to the faithful, but is angry with those who rebel against Him (Exodus 34:6-7; Romans 11:22; Psalm 103)
- He has plainly shown His love for us by providing the Lord Jesus Christ. Through him our sins can be forgiven and we can live in hope of eternal life (1 John 4:8-10; John 3:16)
- He desires men and women to respond to what He has revealed in His word and believe it (Acts 17:30-31; Hebrews 11:6). Nothing will please Him more, nor benefit us more, than that we come to know Him (John 17:3)

God’s Revealed Purpose in Creation

God has revealed that, when He commenced His creative work as revealed in Genesis 1, He had a specific purpose in mind. That purpose is referred to many times throughout the Bible.

It is summarised in the following places:

- God says that He created the earth to be inhabited (Isaiah 45:11)
- God is determined that the earth will be filled with His glory (Numbers 14:21)
- Jesus Christ says that the meek will inherit the earth (Matthew 5:5; see Psalm 37:11).

All things have been created for God’s pleasure (Revelation 4:11)

From these statements we clearly see that God had a determined purpose in creation, namely to populate the earth with people who will reflect His glorious character.

It is Foolish to Deny the Existence of God

Sadly there are those who refuse to face up to the fact that God exists, or acknowledge that He created the heavens and earth, and mankind upon the earth.

This class of person is spoken of in the Bible.

- “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Psalm 14:1)
- We read of those who “professing themselves to be wise, they became fools”, by denying the existence of God as revealed in His word (Romans 1:18-25)

The apostle Paul described the wonder of God’s great works of creation to the pagans of Athens in Greece (Acts 17:22-31). It is worth reading and noting how Paul reasoned through this subject.

*It must be understood that there is **no scientific fact** that can be advanced to prove evolution. It still remains **a theory** about how life came into existence on the earth. It is no different really from the theories of the pagan Greeks who believed that Zeus, Atlas and other mythological gods were responsible for the earth and life upon it.*



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Lesson 2

The Beginning of God's Creation (Genesis 1:1-2)

We will now examine the record of Genesis 1, noting some of the important points associated with God's creative acts that are recorded here.

Verse 1

"In the beginning" We are not told when the beginning was. It was some period prior to those specific acts of creation recorded in Genesis. What we are told is that God existed before this point of time (Psalm 90:1-2).

Verse 2

"The earth was without form and void" Another translation, Rotherham, has: "Now the earth had become waste and wild". It gives the idea that planet earth had been created some time earlier but for some unrevealed reason had now *"become without form and void"*.

It is pointless to speculate how or why this happened as the reason is not specifically revealed in the Bible. The Hebrew word for *"without form"* is "tohu", and means "waste" (Deuteronomy 32:10), or "an empty place" (Job 26:7). "Void" in Hebrew is "bohu" and means "emptiness". Both these words occur together in Isaiah 34:11 and Jeremiah 4:23.

"darkness was upon the face of the deep" Light did not penetrate to the earth's surface. In Hebrew *"deep"* speaks of "an abyss" or "a surging mass of water". The word occurs in Psalm 33:7 and Genesis 7:11.

"the Spirit of God" The Spirit is the power of God by which He performs His mighty works and sustains His creation (Psalm 104:30; Job 26:13; 33:4; Psalm 139:7-12).

The Six Days of Creation (Genesis 1:3-31)

There are six days in which God performed specific acts of creation. Each activity commenced with the expression *"And God said"*. As we consider these events we are compelled to agree with the words of the Psalmist: *"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches"* (Psalm 104:24).

Verse 3

"And God said" When God speaks, His will is then done (Psalm 33:6; 2 Peter 3:5; Isaiah 55:10-11). The angels in heaven always do His will (Psalm 103:20).

"let there be light" God is the source of light, both physical and moral light (1 Timothy 6:16; 1 John 1:5; 2 Corinthians 4:6; John 3:19). His word is our source of enlightenment (Psalm 119:105; 2 Peter 1:19; Isaiah 8:20).

Each Day a 24 hour Period

At the end of each day's activity we read: *"And the evening and the morning were the day"* (v 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). This is the Jewish method of describing a day, from sunset through to the following sunset. Therefore the evening from approximately 6 pm, through the next morning and up to the next sunset is the period spoken of.

There is no reason to reject the view that the six days are literal days of 24 hours. This is established by the Sabbath Law which God gave to Israel. We read: *"In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day"* (Exodus 20:11; 31:17).



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Verses	Day	Events
3-5	1	Light and darkness
6-8	2	Establishment of the earth's atmosphere
9-13	3	Separation of water and land - vegetation and plant life
14-19	4	Positioning of earth in relation to other heavenly bodies to establish signs, seasons, days and years
20-23	5	Creation of birds and sea creatures
24-31	6	Creation of animal life and man - God expresses His reason for creation of man
2:1-3	7	God ends His work and rests

What does it mean when the birds, fish and beasts are called “living creatures”? (Gen 1:20-25)

The two Hebrew words used simply mean “a living, natural, animal body”.

These words are:

nephesh from a Hebrew root meaning “to breathe”. It means a breathing frame. It is translated “creature”, “soul”, “life”, “person” and is used both of animals and man. It is also used to describe a body that is no longer alive (e.g. Joshua 10:28; Ezekiel 18:20).

chayim from the root meaning “to live”.

Used together **nephesh chayim** is translated “living creature” or “living soul”. The phrase is used of the natural life of birds (Genesis 1:20), fish (1:21), animals (1:24, 30; 2:19) and man (2:7).

“And behold it was very good” (Genesis 1:29-31)

In these last few verses of chapter one we observe that man, the animals and birds were given the herbs and fruit for their food. We know that since the entry of sin into the world this placid state has changed and now both man and many other creatures kill and eat meat. This change is specifically mentioned in Genesis 9:3. However, the Bible reveals that when the Kingdom of God is established, this situation will be reversed. Then “*the lion will eat straw like the ox*” (Isaiah 11:7; 65:25).

The statement “*Behold, it was very good*” (1:31) indicates that the creation was in perfect harmony with the Creator. However when sin entered the world this “*good*” state was disrupted and now “*the whole creation groans*” (Romans 8:22-23). Harmony will only be restored when Jesus Christ returns.

Summary Points

1. In the Bible God has revealed many details about His majesty and power, as well as His glorious character
2. He is the one true God (**Deuteronomy 6:4; Ephesians 4:6**)
3. He dwells in Heaven (**Matthew 6:9**)
4. His character combines mercy, justice and love (**Exodus 34:6-7; Psalm 103; 1 John 4:8-10**)
5. God's ultimate purpose in creation is to fill the earth with His glory (**Isaiah 45:18; Numbers 14:21**)
6. The Spirit of God is His creative power or energy (**Psalm 104:30; Job 26:13; 33:4; Psalm 139:7-12**). Everything God desires to do He is able to accomplish by His Spirit
7. The period of creation was a period of six 24 hour days (**Genesis 1:5; Exodus 20:11**)
8. The phrases “*living creature*” and “*living soul*” are translations of the same two Hebrew words **nephesh chayim**. They are used of animals and of man (**Genesis 1:20, 24; 2:7, 19**)



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Lesson 2

Lesson 2 - Questions

1. God has revealed many things about Himself in the Bible. Answer the following questions about God:
2. Where does God dwell?
3. By what power does God know all things?
4. List some aspects of the character of God.
5. What was God's purpose in creation?
6. In Genesis 1:2 we read of "*the Spirit of God*". What is meant by this expression?
7. Briefly list in order what God created on the six days of creation.
8. What does the expression "*living creature*" mean?