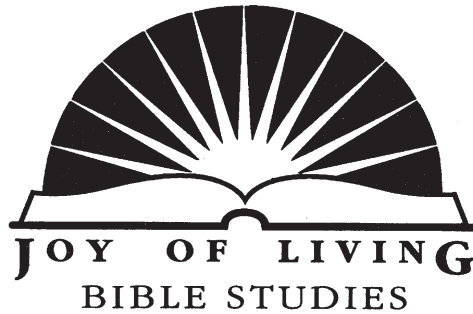


Genesis

Lesson 2



Overview of Genesis 1

How can you know that God created the universe even though you weren't there when He did it? Hebrews 11:3 states, "By faith [i.e. by believing what God says] we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible." Yet God does not leave us without proof. All one has to do is look. All creation bears witness that it is just that, a *creation*, not an accident.

This *Joy of Living* study is not a scientific discourse but a study of what God has revealed to us in the book of Genesis. It is enough to say that the Bible does not contradict any scientifically proven *fact*. The Bible sets forth God's truth. True science only verifies what God has already told us. It is only people's unproven theories that clash with the truth given to us by God.

Some people who try to explain the origin of the universe and everything in it without God have worked out a theory called "evolution." The theory of evolution maintains that the universe started with the first bit of matter and from it life arose. Evolutionists believe that life then evolved or progressed so that eventually humans evolved from lower forms of life. Evolution is believed because it appears to be scientific, and because it gives people an excuse for not submitting to their Creator.

The first real problem for the evolutionist is this: from what source did the first matter which makes up the universe come? When the evolutionist has gone back as far as he can, he still must find the source of the first matter. The Bible answers this for us with the simple statement in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created."

The second major problem with evolution is, how did the first "life" develop from "non-life" and then develop into all the varieties of life in existence today? Dr. Terry Mortenson explains the difficulty, "All living things contain in their cells the DNA molecule that carries the information (genetic instructions) for making all aspects of that creature, and all this information is in the first fertilized cell of each kind of creature. Amoeba DNA has no information for making hooves, hair, tails and eyes, but horse DNA does. Alligator DNA has no genetic information for producing feathers, hollow bones and one-way lung systems, but eagles do... Some DNA information is common to many different kinds of creatures, but there are also differences. So the key questions related to evolution are these. One, how did this information come into existence in the evolutionist's supposed first living microscopic crea-

ture? And, second, how did the information in that 'simple' creature get changed and augmented to produce all the different kinds of plants and animals that we see living and in the fossil record?"¹

The book of Genesis clearly teaches that God made different "kinds" of plants and animals during the first six days of creation and that He gave each creature the ability to reproduce "according to their various kinds" (Genesis 1:11, see also verses 21,24). This allowed for enormous varieties *within* the original kinds but not the ability to change into a different kind. Natural selection and gene mutation (accidental changes in cells) are considered to be the basis of evolution, but neither process produces the *new* genetic information needed for the evolution of different kinds of creatures from their original kind.

Edward Conklin, a professor of biology at Princeton University in the early 1900's, said this about evolution: "The probability of life originating from accident is comparable to the probability of the unabridged dictionary resulting from an explosion in a printing factory." To solve a complicated problem in mathematics, you do not put the numbers into a hat and shake them around to solve the problem. You know that it takes the numbers plus your mind to work out the correct answer. A mechanic may have all the parts of an automobile lying at his feet, but it will take his mind to make an automobile out of them. The jet engine, the helicopter and the skyscraper are products of the mind, not chance. This universe is infinitely greater and more complex than the greatest manufactured product that the most intelligent human being could think of. Surely it would be impossible for the elements of which this universe is made to bring themselves together by mere chance to form this wonderful world in which we live!

Almost every manufactured item bears the trademark of its maker. If you only look, you will find the signature of the Creator of this universe in the world that He made. Nature itself gives evidence of a Creator—in the rocks, in the flowers, the birds, and the stars. The skies are filled with stars and galaxies so vast that the most powerful telescope cannot see the end. Each molecule is made up of atoms and particles so small that they cannot be seen with the most powerful microscope, all of these moving with such precision and balance that only a thinking mind, a Creator, could have planned them. "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood

1. Dr. Terry Mortenson. "National Geographic is wrong and so was Darwin." Answers in Genesis, November 6, 2004. <<http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs2004/1106ng.asp>>.

from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Romans 1:20).

Who is this Creator? This question is posed for us in the Bible. "Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?...Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing" (Isaiah 40:12,26).

It is also *answered* for us in the Bible, "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 40:28). It is a statement of fact in the very first verse of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

Creation Begins

There was a time when the heavens and earth did not exist—there was only God. "Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God" (Psalm 90:2). God began time, as we know it, with the creation of the heavens and earth.

As Genesis begins we see these words, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). In these few simple words we have the biblical declaration of the origin of this material universe. God called all things into being by His Word. He spoke and worlds were formed (see Hebrews 11:3).

Genesis 1:2 tells us that the earth was formless, empty and dark, a blank slate that would be transformed by God's creative power in verses 3-31. Interpretations of the methods God used in creation may vary but the truth of the fact that He created remains.

Notice that Genesis 1:2 says, "The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." Sometimes when we read that "God" created, we assume that means "God the Father." But God in His triune Being—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—was present and working at the time of Creation, just as He is today. John 1:1-3 says about Jesus, the Son of God, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." Psalm 104:24,30 says, "How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures...When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth." Job 33:4 says, "The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life."

The First Day

"And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). Notice that there is no mention of any means used in this creation by God, except His Word, "God said." Then the simple statement of

the fact, "and there was light." Scripture then tells us that God saw that the light was good and He separated light from darkness. "God called the light 'day', and the darkness he called 'night'. And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day" (Genesis 1:5).

There is much controversy about how long that first day was. Some people will insist that it was a literal 24-hour day and have a list of reasons, some from Scripture (e.g. Luke 24:21, John 11:9), as to why it was only 24 hours. Others believe it was an indefinite period of time and they use Scripture to prove that, too, (e.g. 2 Peter 3:8-10).

We need to be careful not to be self-confident or judgmental in our attitudes toward others who may take a somewhat different view of how God created the earth in Genesis 1. If we accept the authority of the Bible as God's Word, we need to be very cautious and careful in forming our own conclusions and perhaps even set aside some of our questions on creation until we meet God in heaven, where He can clearly tell us exactly what He did in Genesis 1. God has chosen to keep some things partially veiled from us human beings (see Deuteronomy 29:29). The Bible says, "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone—while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4-7).

The Second Day

Here we find that God divided the waters. The "expanse", which God called "sky", was made by the separation of the waters beneath the sky from the waters above it. Here is another mystery, which we cannot fully comprehend. Below the sky there are lakes, rivers, streams, oceans and even vast underground storehouses of water. We also see great clouds floating overhead carrying many tons of water.

The water cycle—evaporation, condensation, and precipitation—is a marvelous system. The more one studies the laws of nature the more one realizes this could not happen by accident, but that this is a carefully planned and intricately balanced creation. Just think of what a wonderful balancing act this is! Since God is able to balance all this, think of how perfectly He is able to bring everything in your life into proper balance by His power because of His love for you! Will you trust God with your life today?

The Third Day

The next step in creation is the emergence of dry land: "And God said, 'Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.' And it was so. God called the dry ground 'land', and the gathered waters he called 'seas'. And God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:9-10). Again God speaks and the creation responds with lush plant life. "Then God said, 'Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.' And it was so" (Genesis 1:11).

“According to their various kinds.” This is the law of growth that God established and it has been so ever since. You do not look for apples on a pear tree. You do not plant carrots and get surprised by potatoes. Each plant that God created was to reproduce “according to their various kinds.” And what a large assortment of “kinds” there are! A plant may be microscopic in size and simple in structure, as are certain one-celled algae, or a gigantic, many-celled complex system such as a tree.

One of the smallest species of flowering plants is an aquatic duckweed (*Wolffia angusta*) found in Australia. It is only 0.6 millimeters (.024 inch) long and 0.3 millimeters (.012 inch) wide. It weighs about 150 micrograms (1/190,000 of an ounce), or the approximate weight of two ordinary grains of table salt.¹ In contrast, God made the giant sequoias of central California. These are the most massive trees in the world. One of them, the General Sherman, is the largest living thing on earth at nearly two hundred eighty feet tall. It takes about twenty people with outstretched arms to reach around the trunk, which is 26 feet in diameter. When the Lord Jesus Christ walked the earth, this tree was already old—it is believed to be at least 2,500 years old.² God created these species, large and small, to each flourish in its own environment and produce according to its own kind.

What great pleasure God has in His creation. In Genesis 1:12 God looked at His creation and said that it was “good.” God is totally satisfied and delighted with His creation. Do you appreciate the wonders of God’s creation as you look out over the world? Do you ever stop and thank God when you see beauty in nature? Do you help others to see and appreciate this beauty? Why not make it a point this week to be more thankful to God for the beauty and wonder of His creation?

The Fourth Day

“And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.’ And it was so. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars” (Genesis 1:14-16).

The two great lights for the earth were to “serve as signs to mark seasons, days, and years” and to “give light on the earth.” The moon not only provides light at night—the gravitational force it exerts on the earth causes the ocean tides which come in and go out with such predictability that ships can determine the appropriate sailing times. Our days and nights are determined by one full rotation of our earth on its axis, which gives us night as we are turned away from the sun and day as we are facing the sun. The seasons come about as the earth tilts on its axis during its orbit around the sun. The entire process takes place with such precision that farmers can calculate the proper planting season.

1. Armstrong, W.P. “World’s Smallest Flowering Plant.” Wayne’s Word, March 1996. <<http://waynesword.palomar.edu/plmar96.htm>>
2. Steve Christman. “Sequoiadendron giganteum.” Floridata.com, February 22, 2000.

The sun is over ninety million miles away from the earth. The temperature at its center is 10 to 20 million degrees Celsius. If the sun were closer or further away, life on the earth would be impossible. God placed the sun and the earth just the right distance apart. The sun is about eight hundred and sixty-five thousand miles in diameter—not a very large body as stars go.³ It appears so bright because of its proximity to earth. If it were as far away as the stars in the Big Dipper, we could not see it without a telescope. The star Betelgeuse in the constellation Orion is more than 13,000 times larger than the sun.⁴ God created the sun, moon, and stars by His Word, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky” (Genesis 1:14).

When we look at the vastness of the universe, we may wonder, “Does the Creator of all things know or care about me?” We may feel like David when he said, “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?” (Psalm 8:3-4). Yet, David knew that God cared for him. Read Psalm 23 to see how David expressed God’s care for him.

God takes care of us, too. He wants to lead and guide us. The question is not with God; the question is with us. Do we want God to lead us? Are you willing to follow when God tells you what He wants you to do? Ask yourself what God would have you do today, this week, this month, this year. Pray that His Holy Spirit will reveal His plan to you.

The Fifth Day

This passage tells us of the creation of animal life in the water and in the air. Again God speaks and they are created. He says that each is to bring forth “according to its kind” (Genesis 1:21).

“Let the water teem with living creatures” (Genesis 1:20). Fish range tremendously in size. Some are extremely small like the pygmy goby of the Philippines, which reaches only 0.5 inches long and about .05 ounces in weight. Some are as large as the whale shark, which grows to 60 feet in length and over 20 tons in weight.⁵ The largest mammal and possibly the largest animal that has ever lived is a sea creature, the blue whale. Specimens up to 108 feet in length have been recorded, with weights estimated at up to 150 tons.⁶

“Let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky” (Genesis 1:20). God designed a bird’s entire body for flight. The bones are partly hollow to decrease its weight, its muscles are exceptionally strong and the tail helps in steering, balancing and acts as a brake. Even the feathers that cover the bird are marvelous examples of ingenuity. Each feather contains a series of amazing locks or barbicels that hold the feather together. If the feather is separated it can be smoothed back into place because the barbicels act somewhat like

3. “General Characteristics of the Sun”, *Columbia Encyclopedia*, Sixth Edition, 2004. <http://encyclopedia.com>.

4. *Columbia Encyclopedia*

5. “Fish”. *The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia*, Release 6, 1993.

6. “Blue Whale.” American Cetacean Society, 2004. <http://www.acsonline.org>

a zipper. Birds keep their feathers in good condition by combing or “preening” them with their bills.¹

The Sixth Day

There were a great many things that God made on the sixth day of creation. “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind. And it was so” (Genesis 1:24). The number of the world’s insects alone is beyond counting. Over 900,000 species are currently known!²

Finally, on the sixth day, man was created. The climax of all creation is man. God did not create man until He had prepared a place for him. When all things were ready, then the Lord God made man. We may think that we are not very important when we look at the vastness of this universe. Yet man, we are told in Genesis 1:26-27, was made in God’s image.

Genesis 1:26 is one of the controversial verses in the Bible. To what is God referring when He says, “Let us make man in *our* image, in *our* likeness” (italics added)? There are numerous thoughts on this. Many Christian scholars believe that God was referring to the creation of man in the image of God’s triune being as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (which is commonly called the Trinity), since 1 Thessalonians 5:23 also refers to man as being a triune being—“spirit, soul and body.” Other scholars believe Genesis 1:26 refers to the fact that man has a moral nature and is able to *think, feel* and *will*. Still others have a combination of these various thoughts. Needless to say, mankind is unique, set apart from all else that God created.

The Bible describes the creation of man like this: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27). In the next chapter we find, “The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7). In contrast to every other creature He made, God made man in a special way—He created man in His image and breathed into him the “breath of life.” This is not said of any other of God’s creations.

From the beginning God placed man over all creation. God said, “Let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground” (Genesis 1:26). And He told them, “Fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28). Let us make a list of some of the things over which mankind rules or has subdued. The earth yields to us precious treasure: coal, oil and natural gas for energy; gold and silver and precious stones for our use and adornment. Grain, fruit, and vegetables are cultivated to meet our needs. Animals become obedient to our commands and also serve as food. The seas, rivers, and lakes carry our ships, turn water wheels to make electricity and give us water to drink. And the list goes on and on. Surely we see God’s goodness and love toward us in His provision for us. God created this beautiful world

to meet all of our physical needs and to provide for our enjoyment. He expects us to rule it properly, as everything He made was “very good” (Genesis 1:31).

God is not just a distant creative force. He has revealed Himself as a living person through His creation. We see His love and care for us throughout this world. And God doesn’t stop with just providing for our needs. He actually wants us to have fellowship with Him. “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

1. “Bird”. *The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia*.

2. “Insect Species”. *Columbia Encyclopedia*.

Study Questions

Before you begin each day:

- ☞ Pray and ask God to speak to you through His Holy Spirit.
- ☞ Use only the Bible for your answers.
- ☞ Write your answers and the verses you use.
- ☞ Answer the “Challenge” questions if you have the time and want to do them.
- ☞ Share your answers to the “Personal” questions with the class only if you want to share them.
- ☞ If you desire, insert your name in the assigned verses to make them more personal.

First Day: Read the Commentary on Genesis 1.

1. What meaningful or new thought did you find in the commentary on Genesis 1, or from your teacher’s lecture? What personal application did you choose to apply to your life?

2. Look for a verse in the lesson to memorize this week. Write it down, carry it with you, or post it in a prominent place. Make a real effort to learn the verse and its “address” (reference of where it is found in the Bible).

Second Day: Read Genesis 2, concentrating on verses 1-3.

1. When the heavens, the earth, and all that they contained were completed, what did God do on the seventh day? (Genesis 2:2-3)

2. a. What did God instruct the Israelite people to do on the seventh day according to Exodus 23:12?

- b. What principle of rest is even commanded for the land in Exodus 23:10-11? How often does God say this should be done?

3. a. What does Jesus Christ suggest that His apostles do after they have had a busy time teaching and working for the Lord? See Mark 6:30-31.

- b. Personal: Do you believe that God wants you to draw apart and rest from daily activities so that you can have fellowship with Him and enjoy Him? If you find it difficult to do this, pray and ask Him to help you find the right time and place each day.

4. a. According to Mark 16:9a, what day was it when Jesus Christ rose from the dead?

- b. The last day of the week, celebrated by the Jews as the Sabbath, is Saturday. What is the first day of the week?

5. When did the disciples of the Lord Jesus come together for communion and a time of preaching and worship according to Acts 20:7?

6. a. What does Hebrews 10:25a tell us not to do?

- b. What is one reason we are to meet together? (Hebrews 10:25b)

- c. Personal: Besides drawing aside to rest and fellowship with the Lord are you meeting with other believers? If you are, list some of the benefits you receive from this. If not, what do you plan to do about it?

Third Day: Review Genesis 2, concentrating on verses 4-7.

1. What does Genesis 2:4 say we been given an account of?

2. What were the reasons no “shrub of the field” had appeared on the earth and no “plant of the field” had sprung up? (Genesis 2:5)

3. Since there was no rain, how was the soil watered at this time? (Genesis 2:6)

4. a. Read Genesis 2:7. How was man formed?

- b. How did man become a living being? (Genesis 2:7b)

5. Challenge: Read John 20:22 and John 6:63. How are Jesus’ action and words similar to God’s action in Genesis 2:7?

6. a. By the breath of God man became a living being, in right relationship with God. Because of sin, our relationship to God is broken. Read John 1:12-13 and 3:5-7. What way did God provide for this relationship to be restored?

- b. Personal: Have you been born again by the Spirit of God? If not, just pray now and receive Jesus Christ as your Savior.

Fourth Day: Review Genesis 2, concentrating on verses 8-15.

1. Where did God put man after He created him? (Genesis 2:8)

2. a. What kind of trees did God cause to grow in Eden? (Genesis 2:9)

- b. How was the Garden of Eden watered? (Genesis 2:10)

- c. Challenge: Name the four headwaters into which the river separated and where they flowed. (Genesis 2:11-14)
3. From Genesis 2:15, where did God put man and what was man given to do?
4. a. As you can see from the previous question, God did not intend for people to be idle. What do the following verses say regarding work?
Ecclesiastes 2:24

Ecclesiastes 3:22

Ecclesiastes 5:19
- b. It is a blessing from God when we are able to take pleasure in the work that we do. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. What does verse 10 say regarding the believer and what type of work he or she is to do?
5. a. Read Colossians 3:23. What should our attitude be as we go about our daily work?
- b. Personal: If you applied Colossians 3:23 to your life and your work how might it change your attitude toward work? Is there some specific area you could work on? Why not pray and God for help in this area?

Fifth Day: Review Genesis 2, concentrating on verses 16-22.

1. a. In the Garden of Eden what freedom was given to man and what was the restriction God placed on this freedom? (Genesis 2:16-17a)
- b. What would be the result if man didn't heed this restriction? (Genesis 2:17b)
2. a. Read Genesis 2:18a. Beside the need for food, what other need did God say the man had?
- b. How did God plan to meet this need? (Genesis 2:18b)
3. a. From Genesis 2:19-20a, what privilege did God give to the man?
- b. What name did God give to the man? (Genesis 2:20b)
- c. Was a suitable helper found for Adam from all the beasts of the field and the birds of the air? (Genesis 2:20b)

4. Although there was no helper found for Adam, we learn from Genesis 2 that God already had a plan. From Genesis 2:21-22 how did God make a helper for Adam?

5. a. Read Philippians 4:19. What need of yours does God say He will meet?

- b. Personal: Sometimes we look around at everything and we don't see how God can meet our need. But God has promised us to meet our needs. Will you trust Him, that in His time and in His way He will meet your need? Write a prayer to God stating this. If there is something specific you are waiting on God to provide, name it in this prayer.

Sixth Day: Review Genesis 2, concentrating on verses 21-25.

1. Compare Genesis 2:21-22 with Genesis 2:7. How was the creation of the woman different from the creation of the man?

2. How did Adam respond to the woman when God brought her to him? (Genesis 2:23)

3. How does this relationship between the man and the woman differ from all other human relationships? (Genesis 2:24-25)

4. a. What does Ephesians 5:25-33 say concerning a husband's love for his wife? Put this in your own words if possible.

- b. What does this passage say about how a woman should respond to her husband?

5. Challenge: In Proverbs 31:10-31 we find a description of a wife who is honored by her husband as the "suitable helper" God created her to be. Try to put this passage into your own words, making it applicable to what a wife would do in today's society.

6. a. Personal: Is there a message in any of today's verses that you would like to apply to your life and trust God by the Holy Spirit to work out in you? Be specific.

- b. What encouragement do you find in Philippians 2:13?