

Lesson 1 - "Origins"

Genesis 1:1-3:24

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I'm excited about this lecture because even though I've read the account of Creation many times, in preparing this lecture, the first three chapters of Genesis reminded me that:

- #1 THE WILL OF GOD created perfection
- #2 THE DISOBEYED COMMAND OF GOD destroyed perfection
- #3 THE SON OF GOD will restore perfection

"Genesis" means "origin" so it's an appropriate title for the first book of the Bible which records the origin of the universe; of animal, human and family life; of nations; death; the effects of sin on God's Creation; and the origin of redemption.

God is both Creator in Genesis and Redeemer in Revelation. He is the Origin of all that exists in the universe. God has no beginning. There never was a time when He didn't exist and He will exist eternally. Scripture tells us:

- "The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 40:28)
- "Before the mountains were born, before You gave birth to the earth and the world, from eternity to eternity, You are God." (Psalm 90:2)
- "For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities - His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse." (Romans 1:20)

And God created the universe for His glory and honor: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being." (Revelation 4:11)

Genesis Chapter 1 is the "initial" account of Creation - a big picture of what God created day-by-day for six days. And then, Chapter 2 focuses more on what God did **through** Creation in preparing earth for mankind.

Numerous theories try to explain the origin of the universe without involving God. Some say the universe began with a spontaneous explosion. However, it isn't known where the matter came from that exploded! Evolutionists claim chance is their creator, and slime is their ancestor.

"Evolution isn't responsible [for Creation] because [evolution] starts with an amoeba or with a garbage can or a little piece of seaweed. The Hebrew word for "create" means to create out of nothing. Science cannot, and will never be able, to tell us how something can be made out of nothing, unless they include the One who did the creating." (J. Vernon McGee) Through [His Son] God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see. Everything was created through Him and for Him." (Colossians 1:16-17) And God was intimately involved in His Creation:

- “By faith we understand that the universe was formed *at God’s command*, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.” (Hebrews 11:3)
- “For *at His command* [all Creation] was created.” (Psalm 148:5)
- “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made...*For He spoke*, and it came to be.” (Psalm 33:6,9)

Everything that came to be – humanity, animals, the world, the cosmos – is condensed into ten words. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1) In the beginning, the earth had no shape or substance. Darkness covered the “deep” - the early waters. It was chaos – unorganized and without structure, yet “the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” (Genesis 1:2) God’s order was about to replace disorder.

DAY ONE: LIGHT APPEARS

“And God said, “Let there be light....” (Genesis 1:3) The sun, moon, and stars weren’t created until the *fourth* day, so what was this light source? Bible commentators believe the light was manifested by God Himself - His Shekinah Glory.

God made a distinction between light (daytime) and darkness (nighttime). The existence of an evening and a morning constituted a day. The Hebrew word for day is *yom* and literally means a twenty-four-hour day.

Regarding Creation, why are there debates over what constitutes a “day?” Was each “day” 24 hours? Was a day 1000 years? We don’t question that a “day” means 24 hours anywhere else in Scripture, *except* in Genesis. For example, if 1000 years was a day, was Jonah in the fish for 3000 years? Oh well, I digress.

DAY TWO: SKY APPEARS

God commanded “the waters to separate water from water.” (Genesis 1:6) There were “lower” waters, later to become oceans and rivers; and “upper” waters, the atmosphere, where clouds hang out. Both the upper and lower waters were separated by the “firmament” – the sky – the “vault.” God spoke, and water, sky and air – “became.”

DAY THREE: SEAS AND DRY LAND APPEAR

In days one through three God was preparing a place for man to live. On day three, God organized the dry land and seas and created vegetation. And the “lower waters,” those under the sky, were told to “gather in one place to let dry land appear.” (Genesis 1:9) Mountains rose and valleys sank as God commanded them. (Psalm 104:8)

God told the land to produce vegetation, plants, and trees “according to their kinds” (Genesis 1:9-12) meaning, watermelon seeds produce watermelons, not bananas.

God shaped majestic mountains, picturesque lakes, vast oceans, and seemingly desolate deserts. “Instead of a drab world, [God] created beauty and variety for us to enjoy.” (Focus on the Family) “All this beauty exists because “God said.”” (bibleinfo.com)

In your lesson, what did you name as an example of Creation that brings praise to your heart? Mine is the fragrance of jasmine plants. They may not overwhelm me visually but their fragrance is hypnotizingly awesome!

"O Lord, what a variety of things You have made!" (Psalm 104:24) I doubt the psalmist had any idea how right he was. God's creativity and artistry are unrivaled, and I believe, demonstrate His sense of humor. The world's largest flower bloom is 3 feet across and weighs almost 15 pounds. But it doesn't fill the air with sweet aroma. It's called the "corpse flower" because it smells like dead flesh!

In the waters God placed 28,000 species of fish including spinner dolphins that jump, spin, and tumble for no apparent reason other God made them to! God created 10,000 bird species to soar the skies. Scientists have counted 400,000 plant species which show off God's creative genius and I believe His loving desire to overwhelm us with beauty! There are thousands of species of animals and 36,000 species of spiders. Unfortunately, there are 3,000 species of mosquitos!

DAY FOUR: SUN, MOON, STARS APPEAR

On Day 4 "God made two great lights—the greater light [the sun] to govern the day and the lesser light [the moon] to govern the night..." (Genesis 1:16) Their purpose is to separate day from night and to mark the seasons and years.

In describing the heavens, the author simply wrote, "He also made the stars." (Genesis 1:16b) What an understatement! There are approximately 200 *billion trillion* stars in the universe! "He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them." (Psalm 147:4) There are two *trillion* galaxies and each hold *billions* of stars! I think God loves visual aids!

DAY FIVE: WATER AND SKY ANIMALS APPEAR

The first four days of Creation focused on what man needed to live. On days five and six, God focused on "living creatures": "And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." (Genesis 1:20) God commanded all living things to reproduce, "according to their kind" (Genesis 1:21) meaning one "kind" doesn't change into a different "kind." Rabbits beget rabbits (I don't get to use the word "beget" very often!) not kangaroos. Toucans beget toucans, not hummingbirds. Salmon beget salmon, not sharks. You see God's pattern? Animals adapt over time to their environment, but they don't evolve into another animal species.

DAY SIX: LAND ANIMALS AND MAN APPEAR

On day six, "God said, "Let the land produce living creatures." (Genesis 1:24) God formed three categories of animals: livestock (such as cows, sheep, horses); creatures that move along the ground (such as reptiles and snakes), and wild animals (such as lions, rhinos, dinosaurs) and they all reproduce according to their own kind.

"Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness..." (Genesis 1:26a) Scholars believe the pronouns in that statement were a Divine "consultation" between the Trinity – the Persons of the Godhead.

"Then the LORD God formed a 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) "God created mankind in his own image." (Genesis 1:27) "Only humans, imperfect and finite, share God's nature - His attributes such as life, personality, truth, wisdom, love, holiness, justice." (John Walvoord) Our inner spiritual nature lets us know and worship God.

Adam's job was to name the animals. God may have surrounded him with odd looking creatures to ease Adam's loneliness, perhaps to make him smile with the Aye-Aye, the Blobfish, Okapi, Proboscis Monkey, Star-nosed Mole, and the Bald Uakari.

But God didn't want Adam to be alone so He created a helper. "Helper" is not a demeaning term. Often in Scripture, "helper" is used to describe God Himself.

Did you hear... that when Adam was all alone naming the animals, he came to the very last creature and named it "frog?" Adam asked frog if it had any ideas how he could *not* be so lonely. To Adam's surprise, frog opened its mouth and said, "ribbit."

Ok, that wasn't Scriptural, but this is! "The LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man." (Genesis 2:21-22)

Interesting that the rib is the only bone in our body that will grow back if it's removed. Scholars of Hebrew say the word "rib" also means "the side" or "sides" of objects. God used the man's side or something from it to create the female helper-companion for Adam. In Hebrew, "man" is "ish"; "woman" is "isha", meaning "out of man." God could have created woman from dust but chose to form her out of Adam's body. Matthew Henry said God didn't take woman from Adam's head to be his superior, or from his foot to be his inferior, but He took her from his side to be equal with him.

Man's first recorded words were about the woman. Maybe he exclaimed, "Yes! Finally!" Actually, Scripture says his words were: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." (Genesis 2:23) "Bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh" is a Hebrew phrase meaning "exact counterpart." God created Eve to be Adam's wife – a person to whom Adam could relate to and be a helpmate.

"That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24) Husbands are to leave their parents and unite with their wives, figuratively united to become as one person. *God* spoke those words which reflect on the marital union.

This first marriage occurred in a sinless environment. The romantic in me imagines there was a long interval of time when Adam and Eve existed in perfect harmony as husband and wife. "Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. (Genesis 2:25) They existed in

paradise, innocent and unashamed – even of their own nakedness. They had nothing to hide... yet.

God generously provided nourishment to man and animals. He gave Adam and Eve “every seed-bearing plant, every tree that has fruit.” (Genesis 1:29) And to the animals and birds, God gave “every green plant for food.” (Genesis 1:29) Not until after the Flood when Noah landed the ark was meat sanctioned for food.

“The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground — trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food.” (Genesis 2:9) Jon Courson said that God gave us colors and textures and the taste of bananas and mangoes and avocados and tomatoes and celery. He forgot to mention the taste for chocolate and pizza!

The chaos that existed at the beginning of Creation week, God turned into a cosmos of order and beauty and purpose. Five times God looked at His Creation and declared it was good. With His final creative act in place – mankind – God declared His work ‘very good’ for there was no struggle for existence, no disease, no suffering, no sin, and no death.

Heaven’s inhabitants were also pretty jazzed about what God made. During a discussion with Job about Creation, God told Job, “The morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy.” (Job 38:7) Someone wisely said, “If Creation is not an endless wonder to you, you’re not paying attention!”

About our home, Earth: “Every house has a builder but the One who built everything is God.” (Hebrews 3:4) There would be no life for our amazing “house” without God creating complex systems to provide living things with light, air, heat, water, and food to sustain them. God had prepared Earth for His last and greatest Creation – mankind.

DAY SEVEN: GOD RESTED

The Creator’s work was done and on the seventh day, He rested. God is Omnipotent. He didn’t need to recover. In Hebrew, the primary definition of “rest” is *shabat* meaning “to cease or stop.” God’s work of creating was finished and there was *shabat*.

The Law of Moses would later teach the Israelites to observe the Sabbath, the *shabat*, as a day of holiness and rest from work “so that generations will know that God is the LORD and who makes them holy.” (Exodus 31:13) As followers of Jesus, we’re not required to live by Israel’s laws, however, the wisdom of God’s law remains because setting aside a day of rest can renew our physical and spiritual selves. “The law of the Sabbath is not a commandment we are bound to; it’s a promise we’re invited to enjoy.” (bibleinfo.com)

The Garden was located in Eden where there was perfect weather, friendly animals that wouldn’t eat you, no smog alerts or crowds or traffic or mosquitos! It must have been unbelievably beautiful and abundant with beautiful food-bearing trees. A mighty river watered Eden and split into four rivers; two of them still exist today - the Tigris and Euphrates. Our first parents would stroll through the Garden and have conversations with their Creator. They were unclothed, unashamed, and unaware of the evil that would enter their world.

God also placed two unique trees in the middle of the Garden – The Tree of Life and The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. All earthly pleasures were at man's disposal, except one: "You are free to eat from any tree in the Garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die." (Genesis 2:16,17)

Then evil, in the form of a talking serpent, slithered into the Garden. It was "more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made." (Genesis 3:1a) "The serpent, or snake, was an actual creature. It was not a supernatural being. In some way, Satan entered into the body of the serpent and was the instrument he used to do his tempting." (Christian apologist, Don Stewart)

Satan is caricatured by the world in such a way most people don't believe he exists or take him seriously. But Satan is real; he is our enemy; he "prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." (I Peter 5:8) He is the "devil, a murderer and the father of lies." (John 8:44) In Revelation 12:9 he is, "the great dragon — the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the one who deceives the whole world."

Inhabited by Satan, the serpent focused Adam and Eve's attention on the one fruit they were forbidden to eat. Satan cast doubt on God's command by asking Eve: "Are you sure you heard right? Did God really say you can't eat from **every** tree?" Eve replied they could eat fruit from the trees, but, God said, "You must not eat fruit from the tree in the middle of the Garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die." God didn't tell them they were not to **touch** the tree, but not to **eat** from it.

Satan **denied** God's word. "You will not certainly die." (Genesis 3:4) He lied, implying there was no penalty for disobeying God. Sin doesn't sound so bad if the fear of punishment is supposedly removed.

Satan implied God was keeping something from them. Satan does that today. He slithers up to us, our children, our neighbors, the world, and hisses lies: "You know **why** you're not sssupposssed to do that?" he lies, "Becaussse it's really fun and God doesn't want that for you. If God is sssso good, why does He want you to be resssstricted and misssserable?"

Satan **tempted** Eve with divinity: "Eat it, and you will be like God knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:5) And with **that** lie, Satan's work was done.

Apostle John said sin is: "the lust of the **flesh**, the lust of the **eyes**, and the **pride** of life." (1 John 2:16) The serpent's lies appealed to Eve's flesh and she believed the fruit was good for her; to the lust of her eyes because she liked the look of it; and to her pride because she wanted to be like God.

Eve, then Adam, ate the forbidden fruit. Instead of divine enlightenment, they felt shame and fear. They attempted to cover their sin by covering their bodies. Satan hadn't tempted them to steal or lie or covet but to **doubt God**; to **question** His goodness; to **desire** something that **looked** good without believing it was wrong for them. Satan successfully weaned them away from the Lord.

Wearing scratchy, fig-leaf clothing, the man and woman heard the Lord in the Garden calling for them. It was supposed to be the time of day they experienced an uninhibited relationship with Him. Perhaps there was an evening breeze that cooled the Garden. The setting sounded idyllic, but it was all about to change. "Where are you?" God called.

Adam spoke up, "I heard you in the Garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." (Genesis 3:10) The Lord asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" (Genesis 3:11) Since their creation, they had an intimate relationship with their Creator, but after sinning, they hid from Him.

God's question gave Adam a chance to confess, which he did, but only **after** blaming **both** the One who created him and his wife. "The woman You put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." (Genesis 3:12)

The Lord asked Eve, "What is this you have done?" She too played the blame game, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." Eve confessed **only** after blaming the serpent.

"Confession doesn't forgive us. It simply frees us from the grip of sin on our lives." (Jon Courson) God knows what's best for us whether or not we understand it, and He allows us to choose to do His will or not, even if we end up settling for less than perfection.

The Lord then delivered His first curse. We aren't told if the serpent that Satan used had been upright before being cursed, but snakes would forevermore crawl on their stomach and eat dust. During the Millennium when Earth is restored back to Eden-like conditions, everything will return to its pre-fallen state, **except** for snakes. They will remain in their cursed condition as, "dust will be the serpent's food." (Isaiah 65:25)

Satan's curse contained the first and perhaps **greatest** prophecy in the Bible. God told Satan He would, "Put enmity between you [Satan] and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." (Genesis 3:15 NKJV)

Satan and his seed – those who do his bidding – will be the enemy of humanity. The woman's "Seed" (capital "S") will be the virgin-born Messiah, who will come "to destroy the works of Satan." (1 John 3:8) The Messiah would be wounded by Satan's efforts but would not be defeated. Satan would cause Christ's death, but Christ would defeat death through His resurrection, and at the End of the Age, He will defeat Satan. Isaiah 14 says Satan's demise will include maggots and worms. Revelation 20 says Satan will be cast into the eternal lake of fire. Satan loses. Although sin of the **human** man brings death, the death of the **God-Man** will bring life.

The woman's curse was twofold and will be upon all women: to suffer pain in childbirth, and "her desire will be for [her] husband, and he will rule over [her]." (Genesis 3:16) This Hebrew phrasing means that because of God's chain of authority – which is God first, then man, then woman – when wives desire to be in control of their husbands, it will bring challenges to their marital relationship.

Adam's curse will be upon all mankind. Instead of having perfect, fertile plants to eat, mankind must toil to produce food. He must work to rid the ground of weeds, to fight droughts

and the scorching sun, and battle insects such as the useless mosquito. (Can you tell mosquitos are **not** my favorite of God's created creatures?!)

By "the sweat of his face" (Genesis 3:29), man's work will include physical and emotional labor to survive. Then finally, he will die and return to the dirt from which he was formed. Only when God creates the new heavens and new earth, "No longer will there be any curse." (Revelation 22:3)

The author concluded his account of Creation regarding our first parents:

- "Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living." "Eve" means the "giver of life." Not only will she produce children, but from her offspring will come the One, true, Giver of life eternal.
- God clothed His disobedient children with animal skins. Scholars believe this is a foreshadowing of Jesus' sacrifice that will cover all sin. J. Vernon McGee wrote that the first human's clothing of fig leaves weren't acceptable to cover their nakedness because those coverings were homemade. Mankind can't cover his sin by his own efforts. God must provide the covering of sin obtained only through the death and the blood and the resurrection of the blameless Son of God.
- When they ate from the Tree of Good and Evil, their sin banished them from the Garden. God said: "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:22a) Most scholars believe the "us" is again God speaking as one of the three Persons of the Trinity.
- God continued: "He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever." (Genesis 3:22b) If they ate from the Tree of Life, they would become physically immortal. But because they sinned, they would still know shame, fear, guilt, pain, hardship, loss, grief, and separation from God, meaning they would live eternally in a spiritually dead, sinful condition.
- The Lord prevented contact with the Tree of Life. He posted cherubim guards and a flashing, flaming sword at the entrance of the Garden. "Cherubim" are powerful, winged, angelic beings who serve God. The image of the flaming sword flashing back and forth is amazing. The sword "is associated with judgment and God's anger. It's active, dangerous, and speaks of God's wrath in judgment." (spiritandtruth.org)

Losing access to the Tree of Life signed mankind's death warrant and we see the last of the Garden of Eden - that is, until we see it in the New Jerusalem, where eternal perfection will be restored.

As you study Genesis, I hope you marvel at God's power and creativity, reflect on His character, understand His anger about sin, be grateful His Son accomplished redemption for those who trust in Him because only through the New Covenant can fellowship with God be restored.