

# GENESIS

## Lesson 1

### In the beginning God ...

Genesis is the first book in a group of writings called the Pentateuch (Five Scrolls) or Torah (Law) which make up the first five books of the Bible. These books are sometimes called the Law or writings of Moses in the New Testament (Luke 24:27; John 5:46, 47).



A study of Genesis is one of the most fascinating and important any Bible student can undertake. This is the story of an infinite God who designed and created the world and all that is in it. In Genesis, God reveals the creation of man, the entrance of sin into the world, and the introduction of a law code for man to follow. In Genesis, we begin to see God's ultimate plan to redeem men and women from the corruption of sin. James Smith writes, *"The importance of Genesis 1 for the biblical world view cannot be overestimated. The teaching of this chapter is foundational to all the Bible teaches."*<sup>1</sup>

### 1. As you begin this study, what do you think are the most important lessons found in Genesis?

Since Genesis contains 50 chapters, it is not possible for us to cover the book in a verse by verse format in these lessons. Instead in this series of discussions, we will concentrate on some of the main themes found in Genesis. For those who want to dig deeper into the rich treasures of Genesis, additional study resources will be suggested.

## THE CREATION

### Genesis 1:1 - 2:3

All people want to know about their origins and this is where God's revelation in Genesis begins. It will be our view in this study that Genesis provides an accurate account and that God has revealed all that we need to know about the creation in Genesis. It is our

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, James E. *Biblical Protology: Commentary on Genesis 1-11*. 2007.

further conclusion that man *cannot* resolve the question of origins accurately apart from God's special revelation.

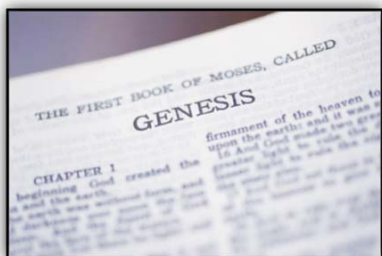
In the Western world it was the commonly held belief that God created the world and that Genesis was a reliable account of that Creation until the latter half of the 19th century.



For further research into Creation vs Evolution please go to Answers in Genesis at: <http://www.answersingenesis.org/>

The writings of Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution brought doubt that God created all life in its present form. The research of Hermann Gunkel compared ancient creation accounts from many sources and concluded that the Biblical account was not unique and therefore not inspired. Julius Wellhausen proposed the theory that the book of Genesis included two creation accounts that were inconsistent and contradictory. These men and those who have espoused, promoted, and further developed their teachings have brought doubt in the minds of many in our world (and even in the lives of Christians) as to the trustworthiness of the creation accounts.<sup>2</sup>

**2. How would our world be different (and how might our job of evangelism be different) if these theories had not been developed?**



Traditionally Moses has been identified as the author of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy (the Pentateuch). New Testament writers also attribute these books to Moses (Mk 12:19, 26; Jn 8:5; Acts 15:21.)

Moses was born nearly three hundred years after the *last* event in the book of Genesis, so where did he get his information?

The answer must be that God revealed this information to Moses and perhaps he learned some of the later details from oral tradition. Whatever the case, we understand that Moses wrote as one inspired by the Holy Spirit, so we can accept the writings of Genesis as accurate (2 Pet 1:21; 2 Tim 3:16.)

**3. Read Genesis 1:1. This is a short, but profound verse. What do we learn about God in this verse?**

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<sup>2</sup> Smith, James E. *The Old Testament Survey Series (Electronic Edition)*. Joplin, MO: College Press.

<b>WHAT GOD MADE ON EACH DAY OF CREATION (GENESIS 1:3-2:3)</b>	
<b>Day 1</b>	
<b>Day 2</b>	
<b>Day 3</b>	
<b>Day 4</b>	
<b>Day 5</b>	
<b>Day 6</b>	
<b>Day 7</b>	

C.C. Crawford defines creation as “*that free act of God by which in the beginning He made, without the use of preexisting materials, the whole visible and invisible universe.*”<sup>3</sup> God created something from nothing. This act of creating matter from nothing is sometimes referred to by the Latin term *ex nihilo* which means “out of nothing” (Heb. 11:3).

Creation *ex nihilo* means that man and everything else in Creation is dependent upon God. Without God, nothing could exist. The Hebrew verb *bara* is used in Gen 1:1 and translated as “created.” This word is only used only with God as the agent of creation. *Bara* is used five times in Genesis (1:1, 21, 27 (3 times); 2:3-4; 5:1-2; 6:7).<sup>4</sup>

**4. What words besides “created,” demonstrate the power of God in Genesis 1? (1:7, 16, 25, 26; 1:4, 6, 7; 1:17)?**

<sup>3</sup> Crawford, C.C. *Survey in Christian Doctrine*, Vol. 1. Joplin, MO: College Press, 1977. p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> Mounce, William D. ed. *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006, p. 145.

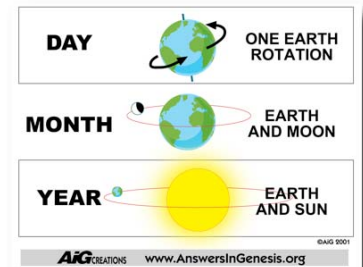
The phrase, “*in the beginning God*” indicates God’s priority in **time** and **position**. God *existed* before anything else and as Creator, He is greater than any part of His creation. As Creator, He *named* His creation again showing His priority in position over what He made. God created by the spoken word. We understand that this does not mean that God had to speak in any human language, but that He is a God who communicates. God broke the silence of nothingness to bring this world and everything in it into being (Ps. 33:9).

It should also be noted that God created by a command of His own free will. God was not compelled to create. God did not lack anything that required Him to create. God created because God wanted to create. He is sovereign in all his decisions. In Genesis 1, God simply says, “*let there be*” and then we read, “*and it was so.*” God created effortlessly (Heb 11:3; 2 Pet 3:5; Ps 33:6,9; Ps 148:5?)

### 5. For what reason or reasons do you think God created?

God speaks nine times in Genesis 1. In His speech God accomplishes four things: 1) He reveals His heart, desire, and will. 2) God gives evidence of His intelligence. 3) God demonstrates His authority and power. 4) God establishes that He can and will communicate with man.<sup>5</sup>

The Hebrew word for day in Genesis 1 is *yôm*. Not only does Genesis use this Hebrew word for day, but it is coupled with the phrase: “*there was evening, there was morning*” indicating that a normal 24 hour day was in view. The word *yôm* literally means “*the period of light in a day and night cycle*” or “*the normal designation of a 24-hour period of time.*”<sup>6</sup>



The importance of the word *yôm* is that it must mean that the Creation took place over six 24 hour periods of time while on the seventh 24 hour period, God rested. When Moses commented on the creation in Ex. 20:11, he uses the plural word *yamin* which always refers to natural days.<sup>7</sup>

### 6. If God created in six twenty-four hour days, only a few thousand years ago, how do we account for fossil and geological data which seem to indicate the earth is millions of years old?

<sup>5</sup> Smith, James E. *Biblical Protology*, p. 109.

<sup>6</sup> Mounce, William D. ed. *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006, p. 157.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, Ibid. p. 102.