

*The* **Bible**  
**Storyline**  
*from Start to Finish*

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*from Start to Finish*

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### **DEDICATION**

To my wife and partner in ministry, Brooke Greening. Thank you for your support of this project. I love you!

To the members at Faith Baptist Church, Mason City, Iowa, who have helped me develop this study. Thank you for your questions and participation that helped me improve this project.

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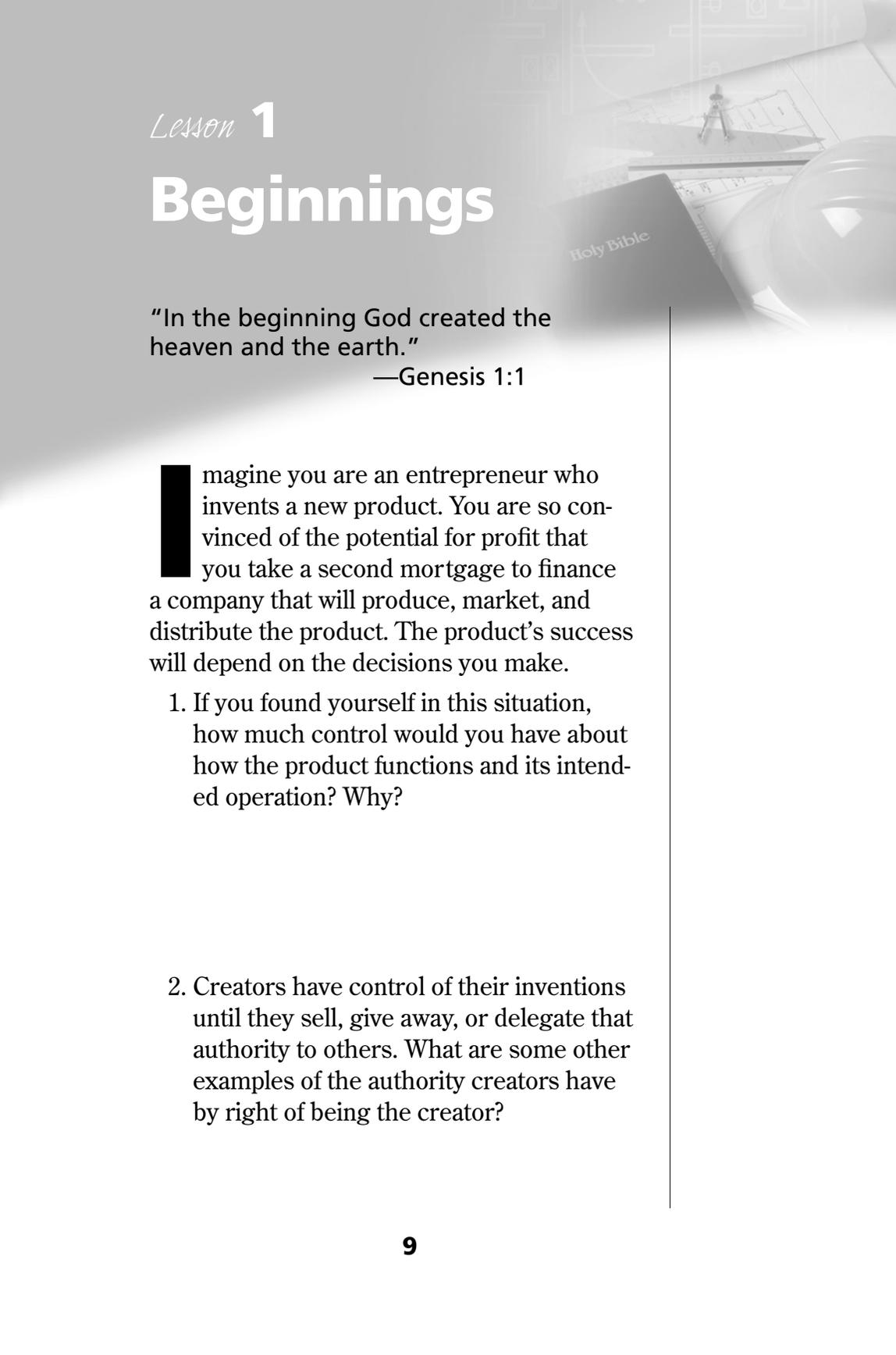
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# Introduction

The Bible is a unique book in human history for a number of different reasons. It is the best-selling book of all time. It is a collection of sixty-six books written by dozens of writers over thousands of years, and yet it is one book with a central message and unifying themes. It is the work of human writers, but its ultimate author is the God of the universe.

The Bible is the most important book you will ever read, but people often struggle to know where to start studying the Bible. It is my prayer that this Bible study will help you better understand the Bible and how the content you are studying fits into the overall storyline of Scripture. I trust that no matter how much knowledge and understanding of the Bible you have, this Bible study will be an encouragement to you.



Lesson 1

# Beginnings

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

—Genesis 1:1

**I**magine you are an entrepreneur who invents a new product. You are so convinced of the potential for profit that you take a second mortgage to finance a company that will produce, market, and distribute the product. The product’s success will depend on the decisions you make.

1. If you found yourself in this situation, how much control would you have about how the product functions and its intended operation? Why?
  
2. Creators have control of their inventions until they sell, give away, or delegate that authority to others. What are some other examples of the authority creators have by right of being the creator?

## Creation

The word “genesis” refers to the circumstances that surround the beginning of a particular event. That is why the first book of the Bible is titled “Genesis”; it describes the beginnings of creation, humanity, sin, and nations.

3. According to Genesis 1:1, Who created the world?

4. What rights does He have as a result?

5. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your level of respect for God’s authoritative rights as creator? How could you increase your level of respect?

Genesis 1 gives the general account of creation. The Bible records that the world was created in six literal days. There is no reason to question this assertion.

6. Read the rest of Genesis 1 and match the days of creation with the appropriate created objects.

*When the Hebrew word for “day” is used in connection with ordinal words (first, second, etc.) and “morning” and “evening,” it never indicates anything other than a 24-hour day. For information on the scientific evidence for a six-day creation, visit [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org).*

_____ Day 1	(a) Dry land; vegetation
_____ Day 2	(b) Fish; birds
_____ Day 3	(c) Light; dark
_____ Day 4	(d) The atmosphere, or expanse
_____ Day 5	(e) Land animals; humans
_____ Day 6	(f) Sun; moon; stars

When we think about the creation around us, one of the things that quickly becomes apparent is that humans are different from the rest of creation. While some people suggest that humans are simply the “highest evolved animals,” an intellectually honest person must admit that this explanation is lacking.

7. In your opinion, what is the difference between humans and animals?
8. What does Genesis 1:24–27 say is the difference between humans and animals?
9. Genesis 1:26 and 27 say that humans were created in the image of God. What do you think this means?



(b) Genesis 9:3

(c) Psalm 104:10–29

(d) Proverbs 12:27

(e) Romans 1:20

Sometimes when anatomy teachers begin a new class, they will explain the overall structures that comprise human physiology. They will explain that the body contains things such as muscles, nerves, a digestive system, an immune system. After explaining the overall structure of the body, they will begin again and explain in detail each system of the body. Similarly, Genesis explains the overall concepts of creation in chapter 1 and explains the specifics of human creation in chapter 2. Chapter 2 also tells us what rules God gave to Adam and Eve, the first human couple.

12. According to Genesis 2:16 and 17, what specific rules did God give Adam?

*When you study the Bible, it is good to follow the pattern of reflecting on all the experiences God gives you to enjoy and then consider the restrictions He gives for your protection.*

Many people assert that the Bible is focused on what people cannot do; i.e., “thou shalt not.” Genesis 2:16 and 17 show the pattern of God’s rules. God first stated that Adam and Eve *could* enjoy the fruit from any tree in the Garden. They were encouraged to have apples, bananas, oranges, or pineapples any-time they wanted. Only after God emphasized the scope of what Adam and Eve *could* experience did He put a restriction on their actions. God commanded Adam and Eve to *not* eat from only one tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God declared His creation very good (Genesis 1:31). When the world began, nothing displeased God. The stars, planets, fish, plants, animals, and humans were all just the way God wanted them.

13. Keeping in mind the goodness of God’s creation, summarize the teaching of Genesis 1 and 2 as it relates to the following categories.

(a) Family (Genesis 1:28; 2:18, 22–24)

(b) Work (Genesis 1:28; 2:15)

(c) Food (Genesis 1:29; 2:16)

(d) Living setting/environment ( Genesis 2:8–15)

(e) Rules (Genesis 2:16, 17)

## **Sin**

Adam and Eve lived in a perfect setting. This first human couple had a fulfilling marriage and rewarding work. Their every physical need was cared for. Their spiritual lives were also incredible; God literally walked and talked with them in the Garden of Eden.

Unfortunately, this perfect scenario did not last. Genesis 3 records the first negative thing in human history. Sin entered the world and brought along with it the destruction of broken relationships, perpetual struggles, and death.

14. According to Genesis 3:1–7, how did sin enter the world?

*The exact timing of Satan's rebellion against God and fall from Heaven is not recorded in Scripture. It must have happened between Genesis 1:31, where all of creation is described as "very good," and Genesis 3:1.*

15. How does Genesis 3:8–13 describe the changes in Adam and Eve's actions after they sinned?

Sin separates us from God. Before Adam and Eve sinned, they walked and talked with God; after their sin, they attempted to hide themselves from God. The Bible explains that because Adam sinned, everyone sins (Romans 5:12). Sin results in pain and problems for those who sin. God always judges sin; He cannot ignore it.

16. What judgments did God give to the individuals involved with the entrance of sin into the world?

(a) The serpent (Genesis 3:14, 15)

(b) Eve (Genesis 3:16)

(c) Adam (Genesis 3:17–19)

17. Describe a time when you were judged, or punished, for a sin you committed.

It does not take long to realize that sin is a reality in our own lives and in the world as a whole. When we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that we sin against God and other humans much more than we want anyone to know. Reading a newspaper and learning about the horrible events that happen in our community, nation, and world quickly remind us that sin is a reality in everyone's life.

Because of Adam's sin and our individual sins, we cannot in and of ourselves have fellowship with God. But the fact that we are sinners does not negate the potential for close fellowship with God; sinful humans are still made in the image of God. Instead of naturally having fellowship with God, humans must be restored to a loving relationship with God. Thankfully God provided a way to restore our relationship with Him.

18. How do non-Christian religions attempt to create or restore a relationship between individuals and god(s)?

Non-Christian religions all have suggestions for how to have a relationship with God; they all involve a person doing some sort of works in order to obtain this relationship. Only Biblical Christianity offers a different answer. The Bible's answer to restoring individuals to a personal relationship with God is sacrifice. The restoring sacrifice is never the life of the individual who sinned; it is always a substitutionary sacrifice.

19. According to Genesis 3:21, what was sacrificed to cover Adam and Eve's sin?

20. What was involved in the process of providing a covering for Adam and Eve?

The sacrifice of the animal restored Adam and Eve's relationship with God. This did not change the fact that they had sinned; they still faced consequences for their sin. They lost their innocence and required clothing to cover their nakedness. God barred them from the Garden of Eden. Their relationship with God was no longer natural but something that required constant maintenance. And although God deferred the death penalty through provision of a sacrifice, Adam and Eve now faced the inevitability of death. Nonetheless Adam and Eve had a restored relationship with God.

They could once again speak with Him, seek His counsel, and look forward to spending eternity with Him after death.

## Hope

Genesis 3 is a sad chapter in many ways. Sin and evil entered the world; God cursed humanity; and an innocent sacrifice was made to cover the sin of Adam and Eve. Despite all these negatives, Genesis 3 is also one of the most hopeful chapters in the Bible. This hope is found in God's curse of the serpent.

21. What does Genesis 3:15 tell us will happen to the serpent (Satan) through a descendant of Eve's?

Although Satan caused significant pain to Adam and Eve, the effects are not permanent. God gave Adam and Eve and all humans who followed them the hope, or certainty, that one day a descendant of Eve's will crush Satan. Genesis 3:15 tells us that Satan will bruise the heel of this descendant, but ultimately this descendant will destroy Satan's ability to impact the world with his evil agenda.

## Important Themes

1. God is the creator of the entire universe and therefore is the supreme authority over all His creation.

2. Humans are made in the image of God; therefore we are the most valuable part of God's creation and possess a unique ability to relate to God.
3. God's perfect design for His creation includes rules by which humans are to live. These rules—rather than being restrictive—are overwhelmingly positive.
4. Sin is in the world because of mankind. Death, evil, and separation from God are all results of human sin, not of a vindictive God.
5. God always provides a way to have a restored relationship with Him. This way involves a sacrifice.
6. While sin is a reality, there is the certainty that a descendant of Eve's will crush the instigator of sin, Satan.

### **Apply the Truth**

1. What level of respect are you manifesting toward God, your ultimate authority?
2. How can you demonstrate in your life God's high esteem for humanity?
3. What adjustments in your perspective toward God's rules do you need to make?
4. What are you relying on to restore your relationship with God?