

Genesis



GOD'S PLAN BEGINS

REGULAR BAPTIST PRESS

The Doctrinal Basis of Our Curriculum

A more detailed statement with references is available upon request.

- The verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures
- Only one true God
- The Trinity of the Godhead
- The Holy Spirit and His ministry
- The personality of Satan
- The Genesis account of creation
- Original sin and the fall of man
- The virgin birth of Christ
- Salvation through faith in the shed blood of Christ
- The bodily resurrection and priesthood of Christ
- Grace and the new birth
- Justification by faith
- Sanctification of the believer
- The security of the believer
- The church
- The ordinances of the local church: baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper
- Biblical separation—ecclesiastical and personal
- Obedience to civil government
- The place of Israel
- The pretribulation rapture of the church
- The premillennial return of Christ
- The millennial reign of Christ
- Eternal glory in Heaven for the righteous
- Eternal torment in Hell for the wicked

Alex Bauman, Editor

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Preface

God's plan is from eternity past. We are first introduced to it in the book of Genesis. It begins well with a perfect creation, including man, God's crowning creation. But almost immediately sin enters the world. Along with sin comes the need for humanity's redemption.

God planned for redemption. He didn't have to scramble and hold a meeting to figure out what to do next. His plan continued exactly as He knew it would.

So Genesis is not so much a book about how good or bad the characters were as it is about our great God. It records how He began to work out His plan that would one day lead to providing redemption for humanity through Jesus Christ. That is the focus of this study.

God's faithfulness is the underlying theme throughout this study. His faithfulness shines brightly against human failures. Other themes include God's infinite power, all-encompassing knowledge, unfathomable grace, comforting presence, generous mercy, and sovereignty.

As you study the characters and accounts of Genesis, look for God so you might grow in your understanding of Him. Respond to God's revelation of Himself with humility.

God's Self-Revelation through Creation

Scripture Focus

Genesis 1; 2

Theme

Our Creator God deserves our gratitude and devoted worship.

Memory Verses

“By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. . . . Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast”
(Psalm 33:6, 8, 9).

GETTING STARTED

A person's earliest memory is usually from between the ages of three and four. That means most people are completing oblivious to a significant portion of their lives. Even events that happened before age of seven are usually sketchy and disjointed. That is, unless you were born in the digital age. Then you probably have more of your life recorded than you would ever watch.

1. What is your earliest memory?

2. What do you know about the day you were born?

God's memory of you is perfect. But His goes back to before you were even born. It is mindboggling to think that God's plan is from eternity past and that everyone was part of that plan. This lesson focuses on the first seven days of God's plan and what we learn about God as He created the universe.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

What a wonderful opportunity we have to know the Creator of all things. This brings understanding of the past and gives meaning and order to life in the present and the future. The person who does not believe in the Creator God but trusts in mysterious, unknowable forces as the source of all things has no certainty about the past, no stability in the present, and no expectancy for the future.

3. Read Genesis 1:1–5. What does God expect you to believe about His work of creation?

Days of Forming

Genesis 1 opens without any hint of an alternative to the revealed testimony of God's creative work. God condescended to share with Moses how He made the universe. The details are presented as real, factual history in which Moses denoted days, events, and the specific evidence of God's creation.

4. Try to comprehend eternity past when the Father, Son, and Spirit communed together without any created object or being. What are your thoughts about such an exercise?

The human mind cannot comprehend the nature of reality before God began to create. Suffice it to say that His creation of the universe was the beginning of history—the origin of time, space, and matter.

On the **first day** of creation, we see the beginning of the universe, in-

cluding a formless, empty, and still darkened earth (1:1). God was present and active in His creation through the activity of His Spirit (1:2).

God also created light (1:3–5), thus revealing the character of darkness and beginning the cycle of evenings and mornings. The fact that these were normal, literal days is clearly seen from this evening and morning formula used to define them. In addition, the numerical adjectives describing the days, for example the *first* day (1:5), mean the days must be literal 24-hour days. To say the days are long ages breaks consistent, strict rules of Hebrew grammar. Furthermore, evolutionary geology includes death taking place long before man came onto the scene. The Scriptures are unified on death entering the world after the fall of man (Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12).

The **second day** of creation was marked by the division of water in the atmosphere from water on the earth through the creation of a *firmament* and the naming of the firmament as *Heaven* (1:6–8).

Many believe that the firmament was a water vapor canopy that rested in the earth's sky. Dense moisture covered the entire globe.

On the **third day**, God separated the water on the earth, which was now distinct from the water in the atmosphere, into specific bodies called seas, leaving dry land where creatures designed for the earth could function beginning on the sixth day.

God also created grass, trees, and vegetation—the first elements of creation that had the ability to reproduce. The earth was starting to take the shape necessary to fulfill the purposes for which it was created.

5. What aspects of God's creation do you enjoy?

6. What plants cause you to scratch your head and wonder what God was thinking when He created them?

7. When observing the many variations of vegetation, what must you conclude about their origin?

Days of Filling

Having engineered the world and prepared it according to His perfect plan, God worked to fill it in harmony with His wise design.

On the **fourth day**, God placed *two great lights* (the sun and the moon) and an innumerable host of others in the sky (1:16–18), which He had distinguished on the second day. He thus illuminated the heavens that He created on Day 1 and installed the permanent light of the sun to replace the temporary light (1:3).

Beyond providing light for the earth on a continuous basis, these lights would separate light from darkness, day from night, and one day from another (1:14).

As if to emphasize the magnitude of God’s infinite creative power by means of brevity, Moses recorded simply that God *made the stars also* (1:16; cf. Gen. 15:5; Jer. 31:37; 33:22). If you started counting stars at three per second, you would not even get through all the stars in one galaxy in one thousand years! And the number of galaxies is in the billions!

8. Read Psalm 147:4, 5. How would you describe God’s abilities based on this passage?

Just as God had divided the water in the atmosphere from the water on the earth on the second day, on the **fifth day** He filled both the sky and the seas with the very first moving creatures (1:20). God created birds to *fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven*, and He made sea animals to *fill the waters in the seas* (1:22).

Three days after gathering the water to create dry land, God filled that land on the **sixth day** with cattle, creeping things, and beasts of the earth (1:24). This would include all animals designed to live primarily on land. Like the sea creatures, these animals would have the ability to reproduce *after their kind*.

We can be certain that dinosaurs were among the various types of beasts of the earth created on the sixth day. Scripture makes this point clear in recording how God challenged Job to consider the awesome spectacle of *behemoth, which I made with thee* (Job 40:15–24). This impressive animal fits the description of a dinosaur.

Later on the sixth day God created the crowning inhabitant for His world when He made man in His own *image* and *likeness* (1:26, 27). The *image* and *likeness* of God relate to man being moral and designed to live forever (Gen. 5:1–3; James 3:9; cf. Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). In distinction from animals, humans also have personality, including intellect, emotion, and will. All of these characteristics are derived from God, their source, Who possesses them in infinite perfection. Understanding this leads us to consider the inestimable value of every human life (cf. Gen. 9:6).

The creation of man on the sixth day includes both *male and female* (1:27), showing that Genesis 2:18–25 is an expansion on this text, not an account of later events.

The man and woman, as moral beings, were commanded not only to reproduce and pervade the earth but to take *dominion* over the creation, showing the complete distinction between them and all other kinds of life (1:28).

Ten times in this chapter God limits the procreation of plants, animals—and by implication, man—to *their kind* (cf. Gen. 6:20; 7:14). While the exact definition of a *kind* may be debatable, it is ultimately restricted by the ability to reproduce. This strikes a fatal blow to the theory that animals evolved.

Creation was entirely perfect at the end of the sixth day. There was no sin and no death.

On the **seventh day** God rested both to mark the completion of His unique work of creating the world and to establish a pattern that would later be incorporated into the law of Moses.

9. Read Psalm 33:1–5. Give some examples of the *goodness of the Lord* that you see in creation.

10. Read Psalm 33:6–9. How should you respond to God, your Creator?

The remainder of Genesis 2 offers insights that shed further light on Genesis 1, including details that remained in effect until the Fall in Genesis 3.

God Sustains the Earth

Apparently the water canopy over the earth kept the earth at a warm temperature and kept rain from forming. God caused a mist to water the earth instead (2:4–6). He took care of the earth because it was where He planned for man to live. It was beautiful, pleasant, self-sustaining, and abundant with opportunities for creativity. It also was completely inhabitable. Not something we could say about our sin-cursed earth today.

11. Would you want the responsibility to care for a multi-acre garden? Explain.

The earth was not yet cursed. Man could be creative with plants, flowers, trees, and shrubs without having to worry about weeds, diseases, destructive insects, floods, storms, or droughts. God took care of the earth perfectly so it would be the perfect place for man to live.

God Gives Adam Life

All life comes from God because life cannot come from non-life. God gave Adam life after He created him from the dust of the ground. God simply breathed into Adam's lifeless body the breath of life (2:7). Adam immediately became a living, eternal being. God's breath gave animals life too (7:22), but God did not create them in His image.

12. Imagine you are Adam and you've just come to life. What do you suppose you would think, do, and say first?

Not only did God give Adam life, but He also planted a special garden for Adam called Eden (2:8). Eden had lots of fruit trees and rivers. The

fruit trees were for Adam's enjoyment. No doubt the fruit was particularly delicious in the perfect growing environment.

13. Read Genesis 2:15. What did God reveal about Himself to Adam by planting the Garden of Eden to take care of Adam's needs?

It is likely that Adam actually watched God plant the Garden of Eden. Perhaps nothing sends a message of love and care more to someone than laboring on behalf of that person. No doubt Adam would have sensed how special he was to God.

God then gave Adam the *keys* to the Garden of Eden. God told him to tend it and keep it. This was Adam's first job. As mentioned already, Adam didn't have to worry about the curse on the earth. So his work was thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding. Perhaps God would come by frequently to see what Adam had done with the place and what choices he had made in tending the Garden.

Choice was actually an important concept for Adam to learn. For God built into the Garden of Eden an opportunity for Adam to choose to obey Him. He planted two trees in particular among the many fruit trees: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:9). God offered to Adam the choice to eat of any tree in the Garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:16, 17). In fact, God never told Adam which fruit He wanted Adam to eat at any particular meal. His only restriction was not eating the forbidden fruit.

God did not create people as robots that were preprogrammed to obey. Robots can neither give nor receive love. There has to be a choice in order for love to be real. Adam had real choices to make in the Garden. The next lesson deals with Adam's fateful choice to disobey and the terrible consequences it brought on all of humanity. It also considers the tree of life and what the solution to Adam's sin is.

God Makes Eve

God gave Adam another great opportunity to be creative. He brought Adam *every beast of the field and every fowl of the air* for Adam to name. What a privilege for Adam!

14. Read Genesis 2:19. What character qualities did God model by having Adam name all the animals and birds instead of naming them all Himself?

Most artists name their own works of art. God allowed Adam to have the final say on what to name the animals, God's living works of art (2:19).

In the process of naming the animals and birds, Adam realized that he had no female counterpart. Adam felt the need for a wife to complete who he was (2:20). God actually intended for Adam to come to that realization. He even said it was not good for Adam to be alone (2:18).

God, of course, had always planned to create a female (cf. Gen. 1:27; Mark 10:6). The Lord created her in the most amazing way: directly from one of Adam's ribs, rather than from the dust as He had made Adam and all the animals.

15. Read Genesis 2:21, 22. Why would God create Eve in such a unique way?

The strong connection between Adam and Eve made them one flesh (2:24; cf. Eph. 5:28–31). Adam was to love Eve as he would his own body.

God gave Adam the authority to name the woman. Adam named her *woman* because God had taken her out of man (Gen. 2:23).

This is the end of the perfect beginning of all things. God had revealed Himself to and through the first human family, who were living in unbroken fellowship with Him in the beautiful Garden He had planted for them. Adam and Eve were living unashamed and apart from any sin (2:25). Life was as God intended it to be.

MAKING IT PERSONAL

Thousands of years removed from the creation of the world, we tend to live as if the world has always been. We forget that God created this world for us and that the universe has some loud and clear messages

about God's greatness despite being under a curse.

16. When was the last time you showed appreciation to God for His creation?

17. What could you do to keep your appreciation for creation fresh?

Add to the following list:

- Take time to observe it.
- Thank God when you see its beauty.
- Praise God when you experience its benefits.

Genesis 1 and 2 remind us that everything we have in life is provided by our Creator God Who made all things to reveal both His Person and His goodness. He wants us to know Him and have a relationship with Him.

18. How might you learn more about God?

19. What is one truth you learned or were reminded of through your study of Genesis 1 and 2? Focus on that truth this coming week.

20. Read Psalm 135–150 for additional help in getting started in your worship of God. Plan to read and think on one or two of the Psalms in that section over the next couple of weeks.