

“In the Beginning . . .”



SABBATH—OCTOBER 7

READ FOR THIS WEEK’S STUDY: Genesis 1.

MEMORY VERSE: “The heavens were made when the Lord commanded it to happen. All of the stars were created by the breath of his mouth. . . . He spoke, and the world came into being [life]. He commanded, and it stood firm” (Psalm 33:6, 9, NIV).

A FAMOUS SCIENTIST WAS DISCUSSING THE TOPIC OF HUMAN BEGINNINGS. He wrote: “We are here because one odd group of fishes had specially designed fins that could change into legs to become land animals” (adapted).

The Bible, especially Genesis 1 and 2, gives a completely different story of our beginnings: We are here because a loving Creator-God created life in six real twenty-four-hour days.

It is clear that the theory of evolution¹ and the Bible story of Creation do not agree. As we will study this week, the Bible shows that God did not let Creation happen by accident. Let us take a look at what the Bible says about beginnings. We will see for ourselves that the reason we are here has nothing to do with some fish fin that could turn into a leg. Our study will show that we are here because God spoke the world into existence (life).

¹theory of evolution—the idea that we became humans by slowly changing from a lower form of life to a higher form of life.

SUNDAY—OCTOBER 8**“IN THE BEGINNING, GOD . . .”
(Genesis 1:1)**

In many ways, the most important verse in the Bible is Genesis 1:1. Out of this verse flows everything we believe as Christians. Our basic teachings do not make sense without this verse. Genesis 1:1 becomes more and more useful in our day, when so many people believe in false science. False science explains that Creation came from natural developments which, by accident, changed into life on this earth. But the first verse of the Bible denies that idea.

What is the common message in all of the following verses? Exodus 20:11; Job 38:4; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:2; Revelation 14:6, 7.



**Worship God, our Creator!
(See Rev. 14:6, 7.)**

Nature’s Creator remains the important focus in the rest of Genesis 1. The

word *God* appears 32 times in the 31 verses of Genesis 1. This shows that God played an important part in Creation. Genesis 1 seems to try hard to remove any idea of chance (accident) in Creation. Also, Genesis 1 shows only one God as the ruling Creator.

The verb² translated “created” in Genesis 1:1 (*bara*) appears in the Bible only when it shows God is at work. The other common word used when human beings or even God makes or does things is *asah*. Only God can do the kind of creating that made the heavens and the earth. We can work within that Creation and do (*asah*) things with it. But only God could create (*bara*) it itself.

One fundamental (basic) law says that nothing created can be greater than its creator. (Try to think of an example of this law.) Think about all of creation, not just the earth. Then think about how the God who created everything is greater than His creation. What does that tell you about God’s power? What does it tell you about the sacrifice of this God, who became a human to die in your place the death you deserved?

MONDAY—OCTOBER 9**THE CREATION (Genesis 1:1, 2)**

Genesis 1:1 says that God created heaven and earth. Some believe that “heaven” means the entire universe.

²verb—a word that shows action.

A study of the word “heaven” in the rest of Genesis 1 shows that this is not true.

See how the word “heaven” is used in the rest of Genesis 1, especially verse 20. What is the meaning of “heaven” in Genesis 1?

What does Genesis 1:2 tell us about the condition of the earth at the beginning of Creation?

“Without form, and void” shows an environment (surrounding) without shape, form, and light, and without plants and animals. This means the earth could not support life. God created life by using a commanding word. Read Genesis 1: 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24. Compare³ Psalm 33:6-9. He also created by using the matter He already had created before He created life on earth. These verses do not show that God created something out of nothing. But God was not dependent upon already-made things in order to create the earth. Whatever He used to make the earth, He had already at some point in the past created out of nothing. According to the Bible, God created everything.

How does John 1:4 help us understand Genesis 1:1, 2?

In Genesis 1:1, 2, read the basis of our beginnings: A Creator-God made us from a formless and void earth.

Much else remains a mystery we will never understand now. It is a miracle we are here at all. Think about the miracle of Creation, and about all we owe to God. Write your thoughts and bring them to class on Sabbath.

TUESDAY—OCTOBER 10

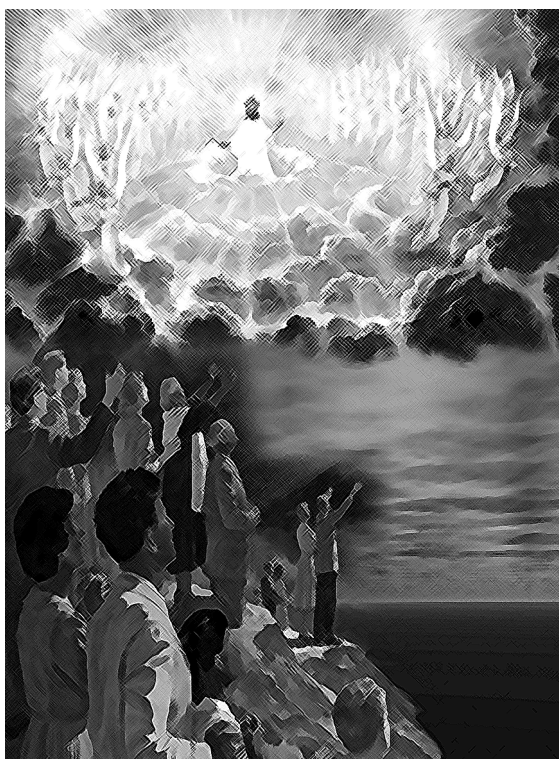
THE CREATION DAYS (Genesis 1:4, 5)

No part of the Creation story comes under more attack than the time frame it shows for the creation of life on earth. Almost throughout the Christian world, the Bible is greatly respected. But few accept the Genesis time frame as it reads, with its clear description of six real twenty-four-hour days of Creation. Clearly evolution⁴ denies everything the Bible stands for and has had a strong influence on the Christian community. In talking about His second coming, Jesus said, “When the Son of Man [Jesus] comes, will he find people on earth who have faith?” (Luke 18:8, NIV). If there is no great change, He certainly will not find much faith in the Bible’s story of Creation!

What proof can you find in Genesis 1 that shows the six days of Creation were twenty-four hours long? What other verses can you find in the Bible that show the six days were twenty-four hours long? (Read, for example, Exodus 20:8-11.)

³compare—show how things are the same.

⁴evolution—slowly changing from a lower form of life to a higher form of life.



Will you be among the faithful believers when Christ returns?

Read Genesis 1:4, 5. These two verses are talking about a single day. We understand that a day is half light and half darkness; (1) “day” and (2) “night.” Genesis 1:4, 5 show that “day” and “night” made up “the first day.” These verses show the creation of the twenty-four-hour time period. “There was evening and, there was morning. It was day one” (Genesis 1:5, NIV). Now read Genesis 1:8, 13, 19, 23, 31. So we see in Genesis 1 that God meant six, twenty-four-hour days when the Bible says that “in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth” (Exodus 20:11, NIV).

⁵eternity—life without end.

⁶events—things that happen.

WEDNESDAY—OCTOBER 11

THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG?

The Creation story is not simple. But this should not surprise us. The earth and life on earth are not simple. The Bible explains Creation in about 56 verses. Most manuals on how to fix a bicycle are longer! No doubt the Bible does not include everything about Creation. How fortunate that we will have eternity⁵ to learn more.

But there is still plenty of information in the Bible for us to think about now.

Read Genesis 1 again. Focus on the series of events.⁶ What pattern do you see? How does this pattern make sense in connection with our understanding of the nature of life on earth?

Genesis begins by saying that the earth was “without form, and void” (Genesis 1:2). God then went ahead to give our earth form and to remove the “void.” At first, there is darkness. Then there is light. This leads to the separation of day and night. Next, there is an atmosphere, a “firmament” called “heaven.” Water was already there when God created the earth. Life needs water. God then created dry land. Then upon the dry land came vegetation: grass, herbs, trees, all of which needed land first in order to live and grow (Genesis 1:11). Next came the sun, the moon, and the

stars. With all these things in place, God was able to bring forth creatures (living things): land and sea animals that fly, swarm, and move throughout this part of God’s creations. These living things were to “be fruitful, and multiply” (Genesis 1:21). So God followed a sensible pattern that resulted in the creation of life on earth.

Keeping the Genesis story in mind, answer this question: Which came first, the chicken or the egg? Explain your answer. Why is your answer important to your own understanding of who we are and why we are here?

THURSDAY—OCTOBER 12

THE CREATION OF PEOPLE (Genesis 1:24; Genesis 2:7, 19)

Compare the creation of the animals to the creation of Adam. What things were almost the same? Genesis 1:24; Genesis 2:7, 19.

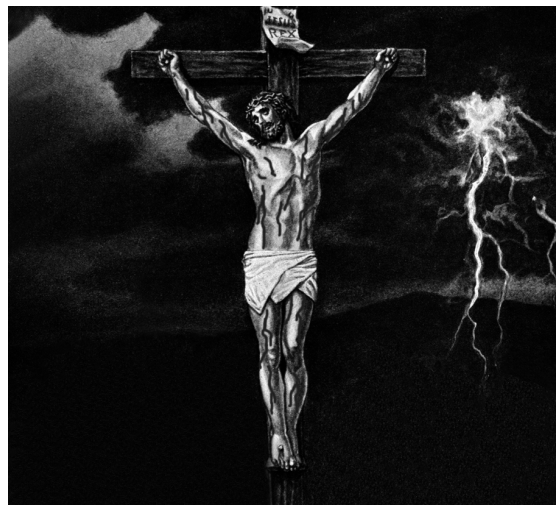
What things were different? Genesis 1:26, 27; Genesis 2:7.

How was Eve created? Genesis 2:21-24.

There is so much about creation the Bible does not show. But the Bible explains enough to show the special place of people in the Creation story. (In Genesis 1:27, the word *man* included both male and female.) God had everything perfectly in place. Then He created Adam. (Adam’s name in Hebrew is very closely related to the word for “ground.”) After Adam, God

created Eve. There are some things almost the same between these humans and the beasts (animals). But the Bible also shows a clear difference between them. As with the creation of everything else, Genesis knows nothing about chance (accident) in the making of people. Instead, the orderly pattern of creation follows a series of plans (“and God saw,” “and God said,” “Let there be”) in a time frame (“and there was evening and morning . . .”). These lead to the act of creating both the man (Genesis 2:7) and the woman (Genesis 2:21-24).

Read Genesis 1:26, 27. What does being made in God’s image mean? What are the differences between human beings and other living things on earth? These differences help us better understand the special place we have. Also, think about Jesus as a human and about His death for us. How does the Cross help us understand our special place in Creation? How should this understanding influence how we see others and ourselves?



FRIDAY—OCTOBER 13

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 44, 45; *Education*, pp. 15–18; *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, comments on Genesis 1.

“When Adam came from the Creator’s hand, he was almost the same as his Maker physically, mentally, and spiritually. . . . It was His [God’s] purpose [plan] that the longer people lived the more fully they should show His [God’s] image. In this way, he should more fully reflect [show] the Creator.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 15.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

❶ Most of us were taught that atoms are made up of tiny particles (“cells”) such as protons, neutrons, and electrons. Atoms are the smallest building blocks of the universe. A new idea explains that atoms are actually

made of tiny moving strings. This is still only an idea. But think about these moving strings (different movements bring about different particles) as part of the teaching that God “spoke” the world into life.

❷ Read Genesis 1:28. What does it mean that God has given us “dominion” (control) over the earth? What responsibilities does this control involve? How can we as a church and as persons fulfill this responsibility?

❸ The Bible teaches how God Himself created our world. How does this help us better understand that the Second Coming also will be real?

❹ Plan a trip with your class to go out in nature to explore (study) the wonders of the creation. Bring along some people who do not know Jesus and the wonderful plan of salvation. See what you can learn about God through His created works.