

God Creates Everything

HOW DID THE WORLD BEGIN?

Focal Verses • GENESIS 1:1–13

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will ACKNOWLEDGE God as the creator of the universe, APPRECIATE the created world, and ADMIRE the beauty of the heavens and the earth God created.

In Focus

Breana had always wanted to be a scientist. As a child, she would take her telescope outside with her father and look at the stars through it with wonder. Her father, a physicist, was part of her inspiration for pursuing natural science as a major in college.

However, as she approached her senior year, she started having doubts about science after hearing a classmate say that he believed in science so he didn't believe in God.

Breana decided to talk to her dad about her dilemma. "How can you be a scientist and still believe in God, Dad?" she asked nervously.

Her father responded, "Breana, science helps us understand our world, not give it meaning. I started doing physics because of my faith in God. I wanted to understand how this amazing world we live in works. I don't think that wondering and investigating how creation works bothers God. But at the end of the day, science is about asking questions and getting an understanding of what we see. It does not try to understand the meaning of life or the things that matter most to me, like the love I have for you and your mom. I have faith in God for those things."

Breana was in awe. She decided that with her faith in God she could stay on her path to becoming a scientist and understanding God's creation.

What do you appreciate most about God's creation?



Keep in Mind

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:1–2, KJV).

Focal Verses

KJV **Genesis 1:1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

The People, Places, and Times

Creation. God's act of creation is the process by which the universe and humanity came into being. (Genesis 1:1–2:3). Genesis tells of the sole, sovereign Master of the universe directing the work of creation by verbal command. God makes the world in six days and rests on the seventh. Bible scholars differ on whether the “days” were 24-hour days or more extended periods. God's act of creation is unlike other ancient Near Eastern stories depicting gods fighting or the creation of man from the blood of a rebellious god.

Background

Genesis is the first book in the Bible. Genesis sets the foundation for understanding the rest of the Scriptures. Genesis 1 records God calling

creation into existence. He creates from nothing all creation. In addition, God exists apart from creation as God alone. God does not sleep and wake up. He is self-existent, all-powerful, and eternal. God establishes cycles and patterns that make up nature and assigns the functions of each aspect of creation from time to growth. Through creation, God shows that He is both orderly and creative. Each day, God creates and affirms that what He has created is good. God establishes relationships for the created order. The introduction of sin challenges the goodness and order of these relationships in the created world.

Is there a story of how something started or ended unexpectedly that has particularly interested or impacted you?

At-A-Glance

1. God is Creator (Genesis 1:1–2)
2. God creates light (vv.3–5)
3. God Creates Heaven (vv. 6–8)
4. God Creates Earth (vv. 9–13)

In Depth

1. God is Creator (Genesis 1:1–2)

God is eternal, limitless, and creates all that exists. (Isaiah 57:15). The book of Genesis begins with the account of God's creation. The beginning here is humanity's history, as eternity does not have a beginning or end. God is Spirit and is the source of everything. God created the world and goes through the process of bringing order to formless chaos. The earth was undifferentiated nothingness, as the Scripture says, "without form, and void" (from v. 2, KJV). God is also revealed here as Spirit. God is not a created being but the Creator of the universe by His Spirit. The Spirit of God moved over darkness before speaking light into manifestation in verse 3.

How does knowing about God's creativity impact your understanding of creativity?

2. God Creates Light (vv. 3–5)

God speaks Creation into existence. The power of God's Word is that whatever God commands must be. God speaks, and creation obeys. The first thing God speaks into the visible world is light. We know from science that nothing is visible to human eyes without light. God creates light and says it is good; God is pleased with His creation. Then God separates light from darkness and calls the light day and the darkness night. God creates the night and day cycle to define how time will be viewed on earth. Therefore, God gives purpose to the night and day cycle.

What roles have light and darkness played in your life?

3. God Creates Heaven (vv. 6–8)

God speaks heaven into existence as a firmament or barrier. The word for heaven here refers to the space between the ground and the upper atmosphere, typically called the sky, but it could also mean more than that. The sky separates the earth and its waters from waters in the earth's upper atmosphere and the vast expanse of space beyond it. This continues God's pattern of separating and establishing order, creating boundaries between things in the created world so that the world can exist in established relationships instead of chaos.

How can natural boundaries be seen as good on the earth?

4. God Creates Earth (vv. 9–13)

In earth-shaking fashion, God calls the waters on the earth together—and the land up from the waters. God gives them a purpose by naming them seas and earth and calling them good. God's creative intentionality is on full display. Then, God creates plant life; He calls it to grow from the earth and allows each plant to reproduce using its seed. Each plant is produced according to its kind; that is to say, a peach tree produces peaches instead of oranges. There is intentional diversity in God's creation. Not every plant is the same, but they all reproduce according to their kind. God again calls these creations and their relationships with the rest of the earth good.

How does knowing that God created diversity influence what we consider differences in life?

Search the Scriptures

1. Why do you think the Scripture keeps repeating the phrase "God saw that it was good" after God created each part of the universe (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12)?

2. Why do you think God calls plants to grow from the earth instead of speaking them into existence (v. 11)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. God creates by speaking everything into existence. What impact does that have on how we view the power of God's Word?

2. How do you reconcile your understanding of science with your faith as a Christian? Do you believe in any aspects of evolution? Why or why not?

Liberating Lesson

The Bible makes it clear that God is the Creator of the universe. God not only is the source of everything created, but He gives everything purpose and function. Yet God is distinctive in making different parts of creation unique, even allowing the earth to produce plants that naturally reproduce. God is purposeful and intentional in establishing diversity and boundaries in nature. As a result of the perfect wisdom of God, the visible world has good relationships with all created things despite their differences. We can observe this and conclude that humans should also value and appreciate the purpose of all things in nature, from plants to animals, day and night, and water and land. We can also use God's example of setting boundaries, which may benefit us.

Application for Activation

Pause a moment to take in nature. Go for a walk, look at the sky, tend to a garden. Be intentional this week about engaging the natural world and thanking God for creation. Understand that God is the source of your life;

everything that exists gives important meaning to what you can experience with your senses—sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Reflect on beginnings. What good is there at the beginning of something in your life? How can you work with people in your community to begin something new for everyone's benefit, such as a community garden? How can you show your appreciation for God's goodness in nature?

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

Sources:

Achtemeier, Paul J, ed *Harper's Bible Dictionary*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1985 192–93, 377
"Seasonal Affective Disorder," American Psychological Association
<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/seasonal-affective-disorder>

Say It Correctly

Firmament. **FUHR**-muh-ment.
Genesis. **JEH**-nuh-ses.

Daily Bible Readings

DAY 1

Genesis 1–3
Psalm 1

DAY 2

Genesis 4–7
Psalm 2:1–6

DAY 3

Genesis 8–11
Psalm 2:7–12

DAY 4

Genesis 12–15
Psalm 3:1–6

DAY 5

Genesis 16–18
Psalm 3:7–8

DAY 6

Genesis 19–21
Psalm 4:1–5

DAY 7

Genesis 22–24
Psalm 4:6–8

Notes
