



In the beginning God....

Leaders Guide Week 1

Supplies/setup: To be determined by each group leader. For established groups, this most likely will not be necessary. For new groups, you may need to move chairs, tables, provide writing utensils, name tags, and so forth.

(Times are approximate)

Welcome - (~1 min)

- The leader should briefly welcome everyone for coming and how you look forward to doing the lesson with them. Learning from one another is a true blessing.

Sharing time – (~10 min)

- Decide on a single word for people to think about (i.e., snow, winter, outdoors, fireplaces, skating, etc.) and ask each person to spend no more than about 30 seconds telling what they like about that word. You might have to control the time a bit here as some people might want to get into a long story. Before asking people, you might remind them to try and keep it to 30 seconds or less. Be sure that everyone shares. This is a time for the group to get to know one another better. It is a part of our churches mission called "community."

Opening prayer – (~1 min)

- As a leader, you have probably prayed audibly in a group before. If not, it is just as simple as talking with God as you would a good friend. If you want to put some structure to your prayer you might do something like this:
 - Begin with praise – praise is met to recognize who He is – for example a good way to do this is to think of one or more of His attributes (i.e., He is: holy, accessible, gracious, just, loving, sovereign, etc.) and then when you praise Him you identify how He demonstrates that/those attributes.
 - Next thank Him for being Him and all He has done (identifying a couple of things related to the Genesis study)
 - Petition Him – that is ask Him to help the group today/tonight to better understand Genesis, ask that the Holy Spirit reveal new truths and challenges, etc..
- This sound like a lot but with some practice and speaking from the heart, one can say a lot in one minute.

Opening Comments – (~3 min)

- Share these comments from our Pastors. They were asked for a summary statement of their thoughts regarding our all-church study of Genesis 1-3.
- "Genesis, for me speaks not only of beginnings, but also of relationships, highlighting those between God and man, man and man, God and nature." - **Pastor Ron**
- "This first book begins famously with, "In the beginning..." How very appropriate for in its lines and teachings are our own origins and the very source of this great wellspring, then river of mercy, that runs throughout our most precious and sacred book, the Bible. Beginning in this first great surge, its course then traces what it means to be created, loved, to fall away, and to be forgiven by the God and Father of us all." - **Pastor David**

Genesis Leaders Guide Week 1

- "If we are ever to understand the grand narrative of God that surrounds our lives, we have to understand the beginning of the story and what God intended for his creation (and eventual new creation). Genesis details this beginning and postures us to live a life that reveals His power and glory." - **Pastor Kevin**
- "Everything the Bible teaches about sin and salvation relies on the foundation established in Genesis 1-3. To misunderstand or depart from the literal truth of this passage undoes the entire body of Christian faith." - **Pastor Malcolm**
- With all this in mind, let's go through the first Study Lesson - Week 1 of Genesis:

Discussion of the Study Lesson – (~43 min)

Day 1 – Overview read Genesis 1:1 *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."*

(4 min) 1. A good place to start on this study is to get a better understanding of some of the words used in this verse.

Using a dictionary, write down the definitions for the following words:

God – the supreme or ultimate reality; the Being perfect in power, wisdom, and goodness whom men worship as creator and ruler of the universe (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary)

- The Creator and sustainer of the universe who has provided humankind with a revelation of Himself through the natural world and through His Son, Jesus Christ (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

Nothing – something that does not exist; the absence of all magnitude and quantity (Webster's)

Beginning – the point at which something begins; origin, source (Webster's)

- A title for Christ which describes His existence before time began. The Gospel of John declares that Jesus was present with the Father in the "beginning," and, therefore the Creator of all things (John 1:2) (Nelson's)

Create – to bring into existence (Webster's)

Heaven – the expanse of space that seems to be over the earth like a dome; the dwelling place of the Deity and the joyful abode of the blessed dead (Webster's)

- A word that expresses several distinct concepts in the Bible: 1) As used in a physical sense, heaven is the expanse over the earth (Gen. 1:8); 2) Heaven is also the dwelling place of God (Gen. 28:17; Rev. 12:7-8); 3) The word heaven is also used as a substitute for the name of God (Luke 15:18, 21; John 3:27). (Nelson's)

Earth – the fragmental material composing part of the surface of the globe (Webster's)

- The planet on which mankind lives. "The earth is the Lord's," wrote the Psalmist, "and all its fullness" (Psalms 24:1). All its living creatures, including mankind, are subject to His rule. (Nelson's)
- This seems like a simple exercise but we sometimes lose the meaning of words and it's good to occasionally look them up to refresh our memories.

(2 min) 2. How many words are contained in this very profound statement? Here are some other verses that are the same length as Genesis 1:1. Read them and then comment on what this tells you about God:

- **1 Chronicles 16:11**- *“Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.”*
- **Psalms 56:3** – *“When I am afraid, I will trust in you.”*
- **Proverbs 10:12** – *“Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs”*
- **Philippians 4:13** – *“I can do everything through him who gives me strength”*
- **1 Peter 2:3** – *“now that you have tasted that the Lord is good”*
- The creation story in Genesis One has ten instances where the Bible says, “And God said.”

(1 min) 3. Describe the who, what, and when of Genesis 1:1.

- When: "In the beginning"
- Who: "God"
- What: "Created"

(1 min) 4. As we study Scripture, it is important to think about God's view of things. Is the main teaching here that the creation events are to be focused on God? Explain.

- God began with that part which was closest to Him and then progressed toward creating the earth and people.
- This shows us God's view of things as opposed to people's view of things.
- For instance, most people speak of the body, soul and spirit.
- However, an example of God's view of these three primary topics is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:23:
- **1 Thessalonians 5:23** *“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
- He places them in the order of spirit, soul and body.
- When God describes the articles in the tabernacle and its court in Exodus, He begins with the items in the Holy of Holies, proceeds out to the Holy Place and finally goes to the laver and brazen altar outside the tabernacle.
- You may have noticed that most teachers start teaching about the tabernacle by describing the articles outside and then going inside, leaving the Holy of Holies for last.
- This is only one example of God’s ways not being our ways
- **Isaiah 55:8-9** *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

(1 min) Application: In preparation for maximizing your understanding throughout this study of Genesis, will you pray for the Holy Spirits leading, revealing, and teaching? Will you pray for that right now before you start or end your day?

Day 2: Doctrinal importance of Genesis 1:1 – Genesis 1:1

(9 min) 1. Use a dictionary and write the definitions for the following words. Then explain in your own words, how Genesis 1:1 refutes these doctrines:

Atheism (see also Psalms 14:1) – disbelief in the existence of deity (Webster’s)

- One who denies the existence of God. The only occurrence in the New Testament of the Greek word *atheoi* – *“atheists”* or *“godless ones”* – is in Ephesians 2:12 where those who are separated from Christ

are described as “having no hope and without God.” The early Christians were often called “atheists” because they refused to worship the pagan gods of their neighbors. (Nelson’s)

Pantheism (see also Isaiah 45:5-9) – a doctrine that equates God with the forces and laws of the universe; the worship of all gods of different creeds, cults, or peoples indifferently; toleration of worship of all gods. (Webster’s)

- Its interesting to note the word ‘pantheism’ is not in Scripture and thus there is no biblical definition found the Nelson’s dictionary.

Polytheism (See also Deuteronomy 6:4) – belief in or worship of more than one god. (Webster’s)

- Another word not found in Scripture nor Nelson’s Bible dictionary.

Dualism [The idea that good and evil co-existed before creation and will continue to exist eternally] (see also Revelation 20:7-10) – a doctrine that the universe is under the dominion of two opposing principles one of which is good and the other evil. (Webster’s)

- The word is not found in Scripture.

Humanism (see also Psalms39:4-6) – a doctrine, attitude, or way of life centered on human interests or values. (Webster’s)

- The word is not found in Scripture.

(Macro) Evolutionism (see also Psalms33:6-9; Genesis 1:24) – a process of continuous change from a lower, simpler, or worse to a higher, more complex, or better state; the historical development of a biological group (as a race or species).

- Its interesting to note here again that in a Biblical dictionary there is no mention of evolution.
- The word is not in Scripture!

Refutes Atheism - Psalms 14:1 *“The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. “;*

- Everything begins with God!

Refutes Pantheism – Isaiah 45:5-9 *“I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things. “You heavens above, rain down righteousness; let the clouds shower it down. Let the earth open wide, let salvation spring up, let righteousness grow with it; I, the LORD, have created it. “Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherd on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you making?’ Does your work say, ‘He has no hands’? “*

- God created. Therefore, He transcends His creation.

Refutes Polytheism - Deuteronomy 6:4 *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. “*

- There is only one God.

Refutes Dualism [the idea that good and evil co-existed before creation and will continue to exist eternally]

- This doctrine is the idea that good (God) and evil (Satan/demons) co-existed before creation and will continue to exist eternally.

- Genesis 1:1 refutes that because of its foundational statement 'In the beginning' that means before anything existed including Satan.
- Satan was an angel that rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven with one-third of the angels.
- That one-third of the angels are the demons who do Satan's work for him.
- Psalms 148:2, 5 refutes that Satan existed as God did in the beginning.

Psalms 148:2,5 – *"Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created."*

Revelation 20:7-10 – *"And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever."*

- **Leaders** be careful you don't get bogged down in discussion on this topic. If the group begins to go that way, a suggestion would be to hold off that discussion until after you get through all the material.

Refutes Humanism – Psalms 39:4-6 *"Show me, O LORD, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life. You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath. Selah Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro: He bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it."*

- God, not man, is the ultimate reality!

Refutes (Macro) Evolutionism – Psalms 33:6-9 *"By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; He puts the deep into storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere Him. For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm."*

Genesis 1:24 *"And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so."*

- God created by the word of His mouth
- A few words about evolution might needed here.
- Scientifically speaking, there are two basic forms of evolution: micro and macro.
- Micro evolution is evolution within a class/species.
- For example, we evolve species of roses into other species of roses. They have different colors, petal shapes, and so on. But they are still roses, they don't become birds.
- We see other examples with how breeding of animals. Horses are bred to become faster, dogs are bred to look different. Cattle are bred to produce more meat, and so on.
- Macro evolution, on the other hand, is where evolutionists say that species can evolve across classes.
- An example would be a fish becoming a bird, or a horse becoming an tree.
- There is absolutely no scientific proof that any class has evolved to make a new class.
- Not even in fossil finds.
- There is much speculation, but without any concrete evidence.
- **Leaders again**, be careful you don't get bogged down in discussion on this topic. If the group begins to go that way, a suggestion would be to hold off that discussion until after you get through all the material.

(1 min) Application: This has been a lengthy study for one day, but what will you share with another believer today, that has strengthened your faith today?

Day 3: The Trinity is present in the beginning – Genesis 1:1-3

(1 min) 1. What portions of these three verses identify the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the Son (see John 1:1-3)?

- **The Father - Genesis 1:1** “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” – God/Father created
- **The Spirit – Genesis 1:2** “Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”
- The Spirit of God (the Holy Spirit) was hovering over the waters.
- **The Son – Genesis 1:3** “And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.”
- “And God said”; Christ is the Word of God John 1:1-3 “In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.” 2.
- In 1:1, the Hebrew word translated "God" (*elohim*) is plural though the verb in the sentence is singular.
- The writer (whether he was conscious of it or not) was laying the foundation for our understanding of the **Trinity**--plural designation=Father, Son, Holy Spirit; singular verb=the **unity** of the God-head;
- All that lends punch to the issue of creation by divine fiat: He spoke and it came into being.
- It also enables us to more easily understand Jesus as the Word (logos) of God in John 1:1-5 and in 1 John 1:1-4.

(1 min) 2. What creation method did God use?

- God created by His word
- **Psalms 33:6** – “*By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.*”

(1 min) 3. What do you learn about God in the Work of Creation from the following verses?

- **Genesis 1:1** – “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*”
- **Exodus 20:11** – “*For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*”
- **Isaiah 40:28** – “*Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.*”

(1 min) 4. What do you learn about the Son in the Work of Creation from the following verses?

- **John 1:3** – “*Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*”
- **1 Corinthians 8:6** – “*yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.*”
- **Ephesians 3:9** – “*and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.*”
- **Colossians 1:16** – “*For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.*”

(1 min) 5. What do you learn about the Holy Spirit in the Work of Creation from the following verses?

- **Genesis 1:2** – *“Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”*
- **Job 26:13** – *“By His breath (“His breath” is often referred to as the Holy Spirit) the skies became fair; his hand pierced the gliding serpent.”*
- **Psalms 104:30** – *“When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.”*

(1 min) Application: How will you praise God today for revealing these wonderful mysteries to you?

Day 4: The spiritual application of Genesis 1:1-2

(1 min) 1. What is unique about God’s method of creating?

- He didn’t need matter to create but created “by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Hebrews 11:3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. See All...).

(2 min) 2. What is the purpose of His creation (see Revelation 4:11)?

- He is the beginning and therefore the purpose of all things.
- **Revelation 4:11** – *““You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they were created and have their being.”* “
- Nothing is completed or fulfilled until God has His proper place.
- God’s preeminence in Genesis, chapter one. The name God is mentioned 32 times in this chapter.
- That is more than in any other chapter in the Bible.
- A principle for us is: **All things must begin and end with God.**

(2 min) 3. What was the order of Creation (see Genesis 1:1)? Why do you think He did it in that order?

- Heaven was created and, then, the earth
- As has already been mentioned this week, God works from within to without. From things close to Him to things concerning us.
- Note the order of **1 Thessalonians 5:23** again – *“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole (1) spirit, (2) soul and (3) body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.”*
- People generally refer to body, soul, and spirit because that is from our point of view.
- God refers to man’s spirit, soul, and body – in that order – because that is His point of view.

(2 min) 4. Using the following verses, identify the things which matter most to God. What does this say to you?

- **Matthew 6:33** – *“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*
- **2 Corinthians 4:16-18** – *“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”*

- **Colossians 3:1-2** – *“After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea. Tell Archippus: “See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord.” I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. “*
- Taking care of the things which matter the most to God will result in the rest of our lives following in a proper order.

(1 min) Application: What have you learned from this lesson that you can and will apply to your life today?

Day 5: God’s Word is sufficient – Genesis 1:1-2

(2 min) 1. Identify several aspects regarding all Scripture that are found in 2 Timothy 3:15-17?

2 Timothy 3:15-17 – *“and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. “*

- They are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.
- All Scripture is God breathed.
- All Scripture is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.
- All Scripture can be used for thoroughly equipping for every good work

(1 min) 2. Read 2 Peter 1:20-21 and describe in your own words the process God used to communicate His revelation.

2 Peter 1:20-21 – *“Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. “*

- No prophecy of Scripture was the prophets own interpretation.
- No prophecy originated in the will of man.
- Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
- This is why prophecy is so important to read and understand. It gives us another insight to the magnificence of God!

(1 min) 3. Read Psalms 19:7-10 two or three times. Try to understand how David viewed the accuracy of Scripture. Then document your thoughts.

Psalms 19:7-10 – *“The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.”*

- We see here that David is praising God for His perfect Word.
- There seems to be no sign of David worrying about errors in Scripture. That’s probably because he knows there aren’t any.

(4 min) 4. Compare the following verses and write in your own words how the Scriptures support the view that the Bible is God's Word. As you read these passages, identify the person(s) who quotes the Old Testament verses.

- | Scripture says | God says |
|----------------|----------------|
| • Genesis 2:24 | Matthew 19:4-5 |
| • Psalms 95:7 | Hebrews 3:7 |
| • Psalms 2:1 | Acts 4:24-25 |
| • Isaiah 55:3 | Acts 13:34 |

Genesis 2:24 – *“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”*

Matthew 19:4-5 – *“‘Haven't you read,' he replied, 'that at the beginning the Creator `made them male and female,'⁵ and said, `For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh' ? ”*

- **Jesus** quoted from Genesis 2:24.
- In fact, Jesus quotes or refers to the Old Testament 180 times.
- He knew the Old Testament was without error.

Psalms 95:7 – *“for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if you hear his voice”*

Hebrews 3:7 – *“So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice ”*

- The **author of Hebrews** quotes the Old Testament.

Psalms 2:1 – *“Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? ”*

Acts 4:24-25 – *“When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: " `Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?"*

- **Peter and John** quoting from the Old Testament.

Isaiah 55:3 – *“Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.”*

Acts 13:34 – *“The fact that God raised him from the dead, never to decay, is stated in these words: " `I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.' ”*

- **Paul** quotes/paraphrases the words of Isaiah 55:3.
- What can we take from doing an exercise like this?
- It demonstrates to us several things: first, what the Bible says... God says and visa versa; second, it reinforces the extent of confidence those in the New Testament held for the Old Testament; third, it demonstrates the Old and New Testaments form one book, one story, one thread of redemption from Genesis to Revelation.

(2 min) **Application: How might you share with someone today that the Bible is God inspired and true?**

Closing Comments – (~1 min)

- Encourage your group to do the studies daily.

- It will be best if they select a place they can be alone.
- Be sure to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten their understanding.

Closing Prayers – (~1 min)