

Bible College Lesson: Genesis Chapters 1 & 2

Lesson Title: "The Foundations of Creation: A Study of Genesis 1 & 2"

****Students are encouraged to read the assigned chapters before beginning this lesson to gain a deeper understanding of the material.****

Objective: Students will gain an understanding of the biblical account of creation as found in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. They will explore the theological significance of these chapters, their structure, and how they lay the foundation for the rest of the Bible. By the end of the lesson, students should be able to explain the major themes of God's creative work, the nature of mankind, and the relationship between creation and the Creator.

Introduction

The first two chapters of Genesis introduce us to the story of creation. These chapters are foundational to understanding God's power, wisdom, and purpose. They reveal not only how the world and humanity came into being, but also how God relates to His creation. Genesis 1 and 2 set the stage for the entire biblical narrative, from the fall of man to the redemptive work of Christ.

Let us begin with a detailed examination of the text, verse by verse, exploring its rich theological implications.

Genesis Chapter 1: The Creation of the World

Day 1: The Creation of Light (Genesis 1:1-5)

Genesis 1:1-2: *"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."*

The opening verse of the Bible declares that God is the Creator of all things. Before anything existed, God was. The heavens and the earth were formless and empty, symbolizing chaos or a lack of order. The Spirit of God moving upon the waters shows His active presence in creation, beginning to bring order out of chaos.

Genesis 1:3-5: *"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."*

Here, we see the first instance of God's spoken word bringing creation into being. "Let there be light" introduces light into a dark and formless world, symbolizing God's sovereign authority. Light is good, and God separates it from darkness, establishing the first day.

Key Theme: The power of God's word in creation. God's word is authoritative and powerful—what He commands comes into existence.

Days 2-6: The Ordering of Creation (Genesis 1:6-31)

- **Day 2 (Genesis 1:6-8):** The firmament is created, separating the waters above from the waters below. God names the firmament "Heaven" (or sky), and it marks the second day.
- **Day 3 (Genesis 1:9-13):** God gathers the waters together, allowing dry land to appear. He also causes vegetation to grow—herbs, grass, and trees yielding fruit. This shows God's provision for sustaining life.
- **Day 4 (Genesis 1:14-19):** God creates the sun, moon, and stars to give light upon the earth, to divide day from night, and to mark time—days, seasons, and years. These celestial bodies serve God's purposes and provide structure to life on earth.
- **Day 5 (Genesis 1:20-23):** God fills the sea with fish and the sky with birds. He blesses them and commands them to multiply, showing His care for His creatures.
- **Day 6 (Genesis 1:24-31):** God creates land animals and, finally, mankind. Humanity is created in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27), making them distinct from all other creatures. They are given dominion over the earth and commanded to "be fruitful, and multiply."

Genesis 1:31: *"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."*

The climax of chapter 1 is the creation of man and woman. Everything God created is declared "very good," showing the perfection and intentionality of His work.

Key Theme: The order and goodness of God's creation. Each act of creation is purposeful, revealing God's wisdom and design. Humanity, as the pinnacle of creation, reflects God's image and is tasked with stewarding the earth.

Genesis Chapter 2: The Creation of Man and Woman

Genesis 2 focuses more specifically on the creation of humanity, providing additional details that were not included in Genesis 1. While Genesis 1 gives a broad overview of the six days of creation, Genesis 2 zooms in on the creation of Adam and Eve, revealing God's intimate relationship with His human creation.

The Formation of Man (Genesis 2:7)

Genesis 2:7: *"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."*

This verse emphasizes the special care God took in creating man. Unlike the rest of creation, which was spoken into existence, God formed man from the dust and personally breathed life into him. This act shows the close relationship between God and humanity—man is not just another creature; he bears God's image and has a living soul.

Key Theme: The unique creation of man. Humanity's creation is both physical (dust) and spiritual (breath of life), illustrating the dual nature of human existence—both body and soul.

The Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8-17)

God plants a garden in Eden and places Adam there to "dress it and to keep it." The Garden represents a place of abundance, beauty, and fellowship with God. In the middle of the garden are two significant trees: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:16-17: *"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."*

God's command to Adam establishes a moral framework. The prohibition against eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents the principle of obedience to God's will, which will be tested in the next chapter.

The Creation of Woman (Genesis 2:18-25)

Genesis 2:18: *"And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."*

For the first time, God declares that something is "not good"—Adam's solitude. God creates Eve from Adam's rib to be his companion, showing the importance of human relationships and the institution of marriage.

Genesis 2:24: *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."*

This verse establishes the biblical foundation for marriage—an intimate, lifelong union between man and woman. Marriage reflects God's design for companionship and partnership in fulfilling His purposes.

Key Theme: The sanctity of marriage and human companionship. Man and woman are designed to complement each other, and their union is part of God's plan for human flourishing.

Conclusion and Theological Significance

Genesis 1 and 2 provide crucial insights into the nature of God and His relationship with creation. Several key themes emerge from these chapters:

1. **God as Sovereign Creator:** Everything exists by God's will and for His purpose. He is all-powerful, wise, and good.
2. **Humanity in God's Image:** Humans are unique among God's creation, bearing His image and entrusted with the care of the earth.
3. **The Goodness of Creation:** Everything God made was good, and the created order reflects His perfect design.
4. **The Sanctity of Human Relationships:** Marriage and community are foundational to human life and reflect God's relational nature.

These foundational truths will be essential as we study the unfolding story of Scripture, from the fall of man in Genesis 3 to the ultimate redemption through Christ.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean for humans to be created in the image of God, and how does this impact our view of human life?
2. Why did God place the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden, and what does this teach us about free will and obedience?
3. How does the creation of Eve and the establishment of marriage in Genesis 2 inform our understanding of relationships today?

This lesson serves to equip Bible college students with a deep understanding of the creation narrative in Genesis and its implications for theology, human dignity, and the created world.