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Introduction

In the Beginning of the Beginning

Open the Bible to the first book (Genesis) and read the first line of the first chapter. Notice that it says nothing about Christ dying for our sins. It says nothing about the Second Coming. Nothing about His return to life from the grave. It says nothing about the state of the dead, the Day of Atonement,¹ or even the seventh-day Sabbath.

The first words of the Bible do not talk about these teachings. This is because these teachings are meaningless without the truth that the first words of the Bible teach. These words are, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Creation is the basic truth of the Bible. All other biblical teachings (God becoming Man, the Cross, the Second Coming, and every other biblical teaching) are based on the truth that our world was created by the Lord.

That is why Creation appears in the first pages of the Bible, in the first five books of Moses, in the writings of the prophets (special messengers from God), in the Psalms, in the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), in the letters, in Acts, and in Revelation. The Bible clearly requires that Creation be taken as real.

For example, Paul wrote, “Death ruled from the time of Adam to the time of Moses. Death ruled even over those who did not sin as Adam did. He [Adam] broke God’s command. But he also became a pattern of the One who was going to come” (Romans 5:14, NIV). Paul connects a real Adam to a real Jesus. And his theme in Romans 5 ties that link between Adam and Jesus to the plan of salvation. This is a very important doctrine (Bible teaching) that we need to understand in the most real way. This is because we are sinful beings who face eternal death or eternal life.

Here is Jesus Himself quoting from Genesis 1 and 2: “Jesus replied, ‘Haven’t [have not] you read that in the beginning the Creator “made them male and female”? (Genesis 1:27). . . . “That’s [That is] why a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. The two will become one” (Genesis 2:24). “ ‘They are no longer two, but one. So a man must not separate what God has joined together’ ” (Matthew 19:4–6, NIV). If Jesus taught the Creation story as real, how foolish it would be for us to think differently!

1. Day of Atonement—an event that took place once a year when the earthly sanctuary (the house of God on earth) was cleansed by the high priest. Day of Atonement services symbolized (stood for) cleansing from sin and a renewed relationship with God.

Our name, Seventh-day Adventist, itself bears direct witness to a six-day creation. Some may want us to include evolution² into our theology.³ But Seventh-day Adventists know that is impossible because to do that would destroy everything we believe. A “Seventh-day Darwinian” is not, and cannot be, a Seventh-day Adventist.

So, this quarter’s lessons study the doctrine of Creation as shown in Genesis 1 and 2. They also study the connections between those chapters and many of our beliefs, such as morality (righteousness; holiness), sin, marriage, stewardship,⁴ and more. We are starting with the belief that the story is real. And the quarter will show, again and again, why it must be accepted as real. If not, many of our most basic teachings would be meaningless.

Take, for example, the gospel. According to Scripture, when humans were created they were better than we are now. Jesus came to rescue us from the death brought by the sin of Adam and Eve. Suppose through evolution, the Lord became an ape, going through many stages of change and growth to get rid of death, “the last enemy” (1 Corinthians 15:26). If so, how can death be the “enemy” if it was one of God’s chosen methods for creating humans? The Lord must have used up many primitive (of early times) humans, who died, before He could finally get one perfect human in His own image (*Homo sapiens*). If evolution were true, then Jesus came to save humans from the method that God used to create them in the first place.

We can understand here that mixing biblical truths with nonbiblical ideas leads to foolish thinking that should worry the honest seeker of truth. As we go through this quarter, we will understand even more reasons why a real, six-day Creation is very important to all that we believe. We will also understand why, when we betray our belief in Creation, we betray all that makes us what we are.

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2. evolution—the theory (unproven idea) that the differences between modern plants and animals exist because of changes that happened by a natural process over a very long time.

3. theology—the study of religious faith, practice, and experience; the study of God and His relation to the world.

4. stewardship—the activity or job of protecting and being responsible for something (such as this earth).