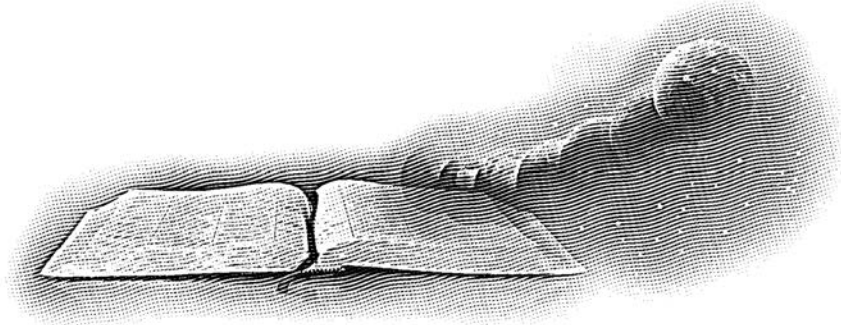


When God Made the Earth: Bible Truth and Genesis—Part 1



SABBATH—MAY 16

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 1:1; Genesis 1:3–5; Genesis 2:1–3; Genesis 1:26–28; Genesis 1:31.

MEMORY VERSE: “The Word (Christ [Jesus]) was in the beginning. The Word was with God. The Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. He made all things. Nothing was made without Him making it. Life began by Him. His Life was the Light for men” (John 1:1–4, NLV).

THE FIRST CHAPTERS OF GENESIS are important. They show us the most important teachings in the Bible. We see the Father, the Son (John 1:1–3; Hebrews 1:1, 2), and the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:2). They work together to make the earth and humans (Genesis 1:26–28). We learn about the Sabbath (Genesis 2:1–3) and how evil started (Genesis 3). We learn about the Savior and God's plan to save us (Genesis 3:15). We learn about the worldwide Flood (Genesis 6–9) and God's agreement (Genesis 1:28; Genesis 2:2, 3, 15–17; Genesis 9:9–17; Genesis 15). Genesis also shows us why people started talking in different languages (Genesis 10; Genesis 11). The family lists in Genesis show us Bible history from the time God made the earth to Abraham's time (Genesis 5 and Genesis 11). Finally, in Genesis we see the power of God's spoken Word (Genesis 1:3; 2 Timothy 3:16; John 17:17). We learn about marriage (Genesis 1:27, 28; Genesis 2:18, 21–25), taking care of God's gifts (Genesis 1:26; Genesis 2:15, 19), and God's promise of a new earth (Isaiah 65:17; Isaiah 66:22; Revelation 21:1). All these topics start in Genesis. Genesis will be our study this week and next week.



In Genesis, we learn about the worldwide Flood (Genesis 6–9).

IN THE BEGINNING . . . (Genesis 1:1)

Read Genesis 1:1. What deep truths do we see in this verse?

The Bible starts with the most beautiful and powerful words. True, they are simple words. But they are deep too. Do you see that this verse answers all the big questions that we humans have about who we are, why we are here, and how we got here? Yes, all these big questions get answered in the first sentence of the Bible!

We are here because God made us at a certain time in the past. We did not come from nothing. We did not start to live because of luck or chance. We are here because God has a plan! Modern science's teaching about why we are here goes against the Bible in every way. Christians who try to make the Bible agree with this false science are silly.

God made us at a clear time: "in the beginning." This verse shows us that God lived before this. That is, God lived before time was made. We can read about our beginning in other parts of the Bible. The Bible shows again and again that God made us (John 1:1–3).

Read about how the earth was made in John 1:1–3 and Hebrews 1:1, 2. Who made the earth? Think about what it means that He also died on the cross.



The Bible teaches that Jesus made the earth and all that is in it.

The Bible teaches that Jesus made the earth and all that is in it. The Bible says that "He made all things. Nothing was made without Him making it" (John 1:3, NLV). "God gave His Son everything. It was by His Son that God made the world" (Hebrews 1:2, NLV). Jesus made everything. That gives us hope that He will finish what He started. He will save us and make us new. He will make the sky and the earth new too. We can trust Him to do this because He is " 'the First and the Last, the beginning and the end of all things' " (Revelation 1:8, NLV). Again, our Lord says: " 'I am the Alpha [the First] and the Omega [the Last]. I am the First and the Last. I am the Beginning and the End' " (Revelation 22:13, NIV).

How does it make you feel to know that God made you? What if you did not believe that? How would you view yourself and other people? Why?

GOD MADE THE EARTH IN SIX DAYS (Genesis 1:3–5)

Today, many people think that God did not make the sky and the earth in six days. They say that the story in Genesis about how life got started is not true. They believe in evolution. Evolution teaches that life on earth came from changes in nature that happened in the past over a very long time.

What does the Bible teach us about how life got started? How do we know that the “days” in Genesis 1 are real days, and not word pictures for hundreds and hundreds of years?

Read Genesis 1:3–5 and Exodus 20:8–11. What does the word “day” mean in these verses?

The Hebrew word for “day” is “yôm.” “Yôm” means a real 24-hour day. Moses uses the word “yôm” in Genesis when he talks about how God made the earth. Moses shows us in Genesis that he is talking about real 24-hour days. He does not mean anything else. Of course, many Bible thinkers do not believe that the days are real days. But even so, they agree that Moses meant to show that the days in Genesis are real 24-hour days.

It is interesting that God Himself gives us the word “yôm” for “day” on the 1st day of the week that He made the earth. “God named the light ‘day [yôm],’ and he named the darkness ‘night.’ There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the first day” (Genesis 1:5, ERV). The word “yôm” means only one day. It does not mean more than one day at all.

So, “yôm” shows us that the days that God made the earth are seven real days. The Hebrew language shows us that the first day was day one (“echad”), or one real day. After day one, we read about what God made on the other six days, starting with the second day, then the third day, then the fourth, and so on. The Hebrew language does not show us that there is any delay in time between the days. Each day ends and then another starts right after that. So, we can see that the seven days when God made the sky and the earth are real 24-hour days.

The Ten Commandments show us the same thing. God wrote with His finger the fourth commandment. That commandment shows us that the reason we keep the 7th day holy is because God made the earth in six real days and rested on the 7th.



The Sabbath commandment shows us the reason we keep the 7th day holy. It is because God made the earth in six real days and rested on the 7th.

WHEN GOD MADE THE EARTH AND THE SABBATH (Genesis 2:1–3)

Today, religious communities and nonreligious groups attack the 7th-day Sabbath. We see this attack on the Sabbath in the work schedules of businesses worldwide. These businesses say that their employees must work on the Sabbath. Also, in many countries in Europe, the calendar has been changed. In the new calendar, the first day of the week starts on Monday. So, Sunday is now the 7th day. We also see the attack on the Sabbath in the pope's message about the global warming. Global warming is the name for hotter temperatures on earth and in the ocean because the air, earth, and water are not clean. The pope's message also names the 7th-day Sabbath as "the Jewish Sabbath." Then the pope tells everyone on earth to keep a day of rest to help stop global warming. (Read Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2015, pages 172, 173.)

Read Genesis 2:1–3; Exodus 20:8–11; Mark 2:27; and Revelation 14:7. What is the connection between the Sabbath and the week that God made the earth? How are these two ideas also tied to the Three Angels' Messages?

The Bible says, "God finished the work he was doing, so on the seventh day he rested from his work" (Genesis 2:2, ERV). Also, Ellen G. White says, "God rested on the 7th day. Then God made the 7th day holy. He separated the 7th day from the week as a day of rest for people."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 47, adapted. This is why Jesus can say, "The Sabbath day was made to help people. People were not made to be ruled [controlled] by the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27, ERV). Jesus can say this because He rested on the Sabbath. It is an everlasting sign of God's covenant, or special agreement, with His people. The Sabbath was not only for the Hebrew people but the Sabbath also is for all humans.

Genesis shows us that Jesus does three things after He makes the Sabbath day. (1) He "rested" (Genesis 2:2, ERV). When Jesus rested on the Sabbath, He showed us that He wants to rest with us too. (2) He "blessed" the 7th day (Genesis 2:3, ERV). He also blessed the animals He made (Genesis 1:22) and Adam and Eve (Genesis 1:28). But the only day that Jesus blesses is the 7th day. (3) God "made it holy" (Genesis 2:3, NIV). No other day in the Bible is holy, blessed, and a day of rest. We see these three ideas in the 4th Commandment (Exodus 20:11).



When Jesus rested on the Sabbath (Genesis 2:2), He showed us that He wants to rest with us too.

WHEN GOD MADE THE EARTH AND MARRIAGE (Genesis 1:26–28)

In the last ten years, we have seen big changes in the way that people view marriage. Many countries have passed laws that now make same-sex marriages legal. Same-sex marriages are between two people of the same sex. The new laws replace old laws that protected marriages and families with a man and woman at the center. The new laws have not been passed before. The laws cause us to ask questions about the power of the church and government to decide what is right. They also cause us to ask questions about what the Bible says about marriage and the family. Are marriage and the family holy?

Read Genesis 1:26–28 and Genesis 2:18, 21–24. What do these verses teach us about God’s plan for marriage?

On the 6th day, God makes humans. In Genesis 1:26, we see that the plural word for “God” is written in the Bible: “Then God said, ‘Let us make human beings so that they are like [the same as; copies of] us’ ” (Genesis 1:26, NIV). “So God created [made] humans in his own image [a copy of Himself]. He created them to be like [the same as] himself. He created them male and female” (Genesis 1:27, ERV). Adam says that Eve’s “ ‘bones have come from my bones. Her body has come from my body’ ” (Genesis 2:23, NIV). Adam names her “ ‘woman’ ” (Genesis 2:23, ERV). In marriage, “a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife. In this way two people become one” (Genesis 2:24, ERV).

Next, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit give humans the gift of marriage. The Bible shows that marriage happens between a man and a woman only. God makes this idea clear when He tells Adam and Eve: “ ‘Have many children. Fill the earth and take control of it’ ” (Genesis 1:28, ERV). In the 5th Commandment, God commands children to honor their father and their mother (Exodus 20:12). Children can do this only if they come from a family with a mother and a father. So, we see that God does not accept same-sex marriage.

Read Jesus’ words about marriage in Matthew 19:3–6. What do they teach us about marriage? We always must remember that God loves all people, even if they do not obey Him. So, we should be loving and kind to everyone too. At the same time, how should we take a firm stand on the Bible truth about marriage?



In the 5th Commandment, God commands children to honor their father and their mother (Exodus 20:12).

GENESIS, THE FALL, AND THE CROSS (Genesis 1:31)

The Bible connects the start of life on earth, the Fall, the Savior, and God’s plan to save humans. Everything God does to save us is built on these Bible truths.

Read Genesis 1:31; Genesis 2:15–17; and Genesis 3:1–7. What happened to this perfect earth after God made it?

God said everything He made “was very good” (Genesis 1:31, ERV). “God finishes making everything on this planet. . . . The Garden of Eden blooms on the earth. Adam and Eve can freely eat from the tree of life. There is no sin or death to make anything ugly.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 47, adapted. God warns Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If they do, they will die (Genesis 2:15–17). The snake started his talk with Eve with a question. The snake’s next words go against everything God said: “ ‘You will not die’ ” (Genesis 3:4, ERV). Satan tells Eve that she will become very smart and wise. She will become the same as God. Clearly, Eve believes the snake.

Paul talks about sin in Romans 5:12 and Romans 6:23. How do Paul’s words show us that what God says about sin in Genesis 2:15–17 is true? How are these teachings a warning against theistic evolution? Theistic evolution is the false idea that God started life on earth and let it change slowly over a long time into the plants and animals we see now.



The snake’s words go against everything God said: “ ‘You will not die’ ” (Genesis 3:4, ERV).

In Romans 5–8, Paul writes about sin and about the beauty of God’s plan to save humans from sin. Paul says: “Sin came into the world because of what one man did. And with sin came death. So this is why all people must die—because all people have sinned” (Romans 5:12, ERV). Evolution teaches us that there was death on this earth long before there were humans. The Bible teaches that this idea cannot be true. Death came because of sin. But if death did not come from sin, then we cannot say that sin’s paycheck is death (Romans 6:23). If death did not come from sin, Jesus did not need to die for our sins. So, we can see that the history of how life started, the story of the Fall, and the Cross are all connected. But a belief in the false idea of theistic evolution destroys the foundation of Christianity.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Creation,” pages 44–51; “The Literal Week,” pages 111–116, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*.

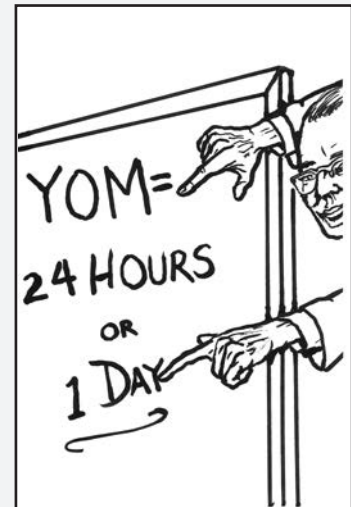
“When we look at the Hebrew language, we see clear proof that the word “yôm” in Genesis 1 shows us one real, 24-hour day.

“Moses chose language in Genesis 1 to show us without a doubt that the days in Genesis show us real, 24-hour days.” —Gerhard F. Hasel, “The ‘Days’ of Creation in Genesis 1: Literal ‘Days’ or Figurative ‘periods/Epochs’ of Time?” *Origins* 21/1 [1994], pages 30, 31, adapted.

“Very smart people must be led by the Bible. If they are not, then their minds will become confused when they try to understand how science connects with the Bible. God and His works are beyond their understanding. The laws of science and nature cannot explain God or His works. And because of this, men will say that Bible history cannot be trusted.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 8, page 258, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Look at the Ellen G. White quotation above. How often, even today, do we see members of our church become confused about the Bible and science? That is, how often do we see Christians believing science and not the Bible? How does this belief show that they feel the Bible cannot be trusted?
- 2 Do you know a Christian who believes in evolution? You will remember that evolution is the belief that life on earth came about because of changes that happened very slowly over a long time. Why not ask him or her to explain what Paul wrote about the Cross in Romans 5? Paul shows a clear connection between Adam’s sin and death and Jesus’ death on the cross. What explanation does he or she give you?
- 3 How can we help other people who are having questions about same-sex marriages? In John 8, we see an example of a woman who was guilty of sex sins. She was brought to Jesus to be killed with stones. What does Jesus’ example show us about how we must show love to people who are guilty? Why must we **not** “throw stones” at them?



“The word ‘yôm’ in Genesis 1 shows us one real, 24-hour day.”