

# In the Beginning



## SABBATH—JANUARY 7

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Matthew 19:4; Job 38:4–7; Deuteronomy 32:10, 11; Psalm 19; John 1:1–13; Romans 5:12; Isaiah 66:22.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “All things were created by him [Christ]. He created everything in heaven and on earth. He created everything that can be seen and everything that can't [cannot] be seen. He created kings, powers, rulers and authorities. Everything was created by him and for him” (Colossians 1:16, NIV).

**KEY (IMPORTANT) THOUGHT:** The doctrine (teaching; church belief) of Creation is very important to all that we believe. The Bible teaches that God created the heavens and the earth in six days. Each day lasted twenty-four hours. And God rested on the seventh day.

**IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE HOW TWO IDEAS ABOUT OUR ORIGINS<sup>1</sup> COULD BE** more different than Creation and evolution.<sup>2</sup> The Bible teaches that Creation was very carefully planned by God. He left nothing to chance (accident). Nothing. In contrast,<sup>3</sup> the evolutionary model (explanation) is all about chance. Second, the Bible teaches that everything was created for a purpose; God had an end goal. The Greeks have a word for this kind of goal: *telos*. So, *telos* means that God created the earth with a purpose. But evolution is based on the idea that there is no final goal to life or higher power or force that drives life forward. Finally, the Bible teaches that humans were made in the image of God. Evolution teaches that they are made in the image of whatever primate<sup>4</sup> happened to start the human race (group).

This week we will study the Bible doctrine of Creation and learn how it is the foundation of all the Bible truth that follows. If we get Creation wrong, we are all but certain to get a lot of other things wrong. That is how important this teaching is to what we believe as Seventh-day Adventist Christians.

1. origins—an explanation of how life on earth began.

2. evolution—a theory (unproved 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. in contrast—showing how two things are different from each other.

4. primate—any member of the group of animals that includes apes and monkeys.

**SUNDAY—JANUARY 8****CREATION WEEK (Genesis 1:1)**

**“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1, NKJV). How does this opening line show that the Bible and Darwinian evolution<sup>5</sup> disagree with each other?**

The book of Genesis opens with God already in action as Creator. There is no explanation for, or introduction of, God. None of the Bible writers thought that God needed an introduction. The closest thing that the Bible gives as proof that God is there is found in the words of the psalmist (a writer of the psalms), who said, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’ ” (Psalm 14:1, NKJV).

Bible thinkers have pointed to the beautiful skill of God in the making of His creation. They also point to how Creation is described in the Bible. Genesis 1:2 gives an introduction of how God organized matter: “The earth was without form [shape] and void [empty].” The first three days He “forms [creates]” what was “unformed [had no shape or form].” The next three days He “fills” what had been “void” or empty.

The light that was created on *day one* is filled or completed on *day four* with the great lights of the sun and moon (and “the stars also,” Genesis 1:16). The air and water that were created on *day two* are filled up

with the birds and fish on *day five* (Genesis 1:6–8, 20–23). The dry land was separated from the waters and then filled with plants on *day three* (Genesis 1:9–13). And dry land was completed with the land animals along with humans on *day six*. Finally, all was announced “very good” (Genesis 1:31) and then celebrated on *day seven* by God Himself (Genesis 2:1–3).



**The air and water created on day two are filled up with birds and fish on day five.**

The point is that these verses show that nothing happened by accident. Instead, these verses teach the opposite. Everything was planned very carefully.

**According to Matthew 19:4; Exodus 20:8–11; 1 Timothy 2:13; and Isaiah 40:26, who are some of the people in the Bible who also believed in the Bible story of Creation?**

Everything in the Bible points to the fact that the Lord created the world. He spoke it into life just as Genesis

<sup>5</sup> Darwinian evolution—this theory of evolution was started, developed, and introduced to people by a biologist named Charles Darwin in the early 1800s.

1 and 2 describe. The Bible leaves us no doubt on that matter. One can choose Creation, or one can choose evolution. But honesty does not let these two overlap (be mixed together). The verses themselves do not give us that choice.

## MONDAY—JANUARY 9

### THE HEART OF THE CREATOR (Job 38:4–7)

The drama of Creation week is wonderfully great. Day after day the Creator speaks into life all living things that continue to amaze (surprise) scientists. Even God speaks of the great joy of that time.

**According to Job 38:4–7, how does God show Job the excitement that was part of the earth’s creation?**

A hint of the joy in the Creator’s heart that first week also can be found in Genesis 1:2: “The Spirit of God was hovering [sweeping, flying, moving] over the waters” (NIRV). Notice again how Moses describes the Spirit of God as “hovering” over the face of the waters at the opening of Creation week. Moses chooses a word that he will use only one more time, and that is in Deuteronomy 32. That chapter is part of his farewell sermon to Israel.

**How does Moses use the word *hovering* this second time in**

**Deuteronomy 32:10, 11? (Read also Matthew 23:37.)**

Think of the way that mother birds lovingly prepare the nest for their babies. Then picture them hovering over (staying close to) their babies, bringing them food, and teaching them how to fly. Moses, who had taken care of sheep for 40 years, must have watched this miracle happen each spring. And it made him think of God’s loving care. With God’s leading, Moses pictured the same emotions (feelings) in the Holy Spirit’s heart as our human “nest” (the earth) was being made.

Everything in the Creation story shows a God who loves His creation and who purposely and carefully designed it. Love was there at the start of the Creation week. How different Creation is from evolution because of this! Evolution teaches that love somehow came forth only after billions of years of selfish violence.<sup>6</sup> The Bible teaches that love was the reason for Creation. And that love will be there when this damaged earth is created anew.



The way a mother bird hovers over her babies is how Moses pictured God’s love for us.

6. violence—the use of physical force to harm someone or something; great destructive force or energy.

**Think about the wonders of nature. How do you see the amazing love of God shown there?**

## TUESDAY—JANUARY 10

### THE HEAVENS DECLARE (ANNOUNCE) (Psalm 19)

In the Psalms there are many songs that praise the Creator. Regularly, and with great joy, the writers of the psalms speak of the “great works” of God.

**Psalm 19.** The line of thinking in this psalm is bold. First, David describes the beauty of the heavens and of outer space, including the flaming sun. He compares<sup>7</sup> the brilliant (very bright) energy of the sun to a bridegroom going to his wedding and also to an athlete in training (verses 1–6). He then likens (points out how two things are the same) this glory (great beauty) of the sun to the perfection of God’s law and the power of its commandments. The commandments of the law are connected with the greatness of God’s creative actions (verses 7–11).

**Psalm 92.** This “Song for the Sabbath” opens with praise from a thankful heart for God’s love, faithfulness, and the created works of His hands. It shows that the more a person learns about the created works of God, the more the amazing power of God’s creative work appears. For example, scientists continue to learn more and more about the different plants and animals God created. They also learn

more about how all systems of life connect with one another within the framework of life itself. And the more they learn, the more amazing it all is.



David compares the sun to a bridegroom going to his wedding.

**“[The] jaw is clearly not an example of God’s design. Rather, it is an imperfect natural change that has happened as a result of evolution. It is the result of working with the materials at hand to change and shorten the animal jaw into a face.”**  
—Adapted from Owen Gingerich, *God’s Universe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006), pages 98, 99. This Christian writer is mixing evolution with the teaching of Creation. What important point has he missed?

There is no question that the created world shows the love and power of the Creator. But our world has also been damaged (harmed) by sin and by the great war between Christ and Satan. The horrible results are all around us in sickness, death,

7. compares—to show how two or more things are alike.

and natural events such as earthquakes, storms, and floods. No part of the earthly creation has escaped. Certainly no human person has. But, even while we are surrounded by these terrible things that happen, we can learn about the love and power of the Creator. It is important not to think about the bad but about the good. For example, we might see a cherry tree infected with disease that destroys all the fruit. But the disease does not and cannot remove the love and goodness shown in the tree itself, a love and goodness that points to the love and goodness of the Creator.



Our world shows the love and power of the Creator.

## WEDNESDAY—JANUARY 11

### THE CROSS AND CREATION (John 1:1–13)

**In what ways does John connect (show how two things are related) Creation with the Cross in John 1:1–13? Why are the two teachings connected?**

In many places the Bible clearly con-

nects the Lord as Creator with the Lord as Savior. This connection gives more proof that evolution cannot be joined with Bible teachings. This is especially true with the teaching of the Cross. If evolution were true, then that would mean that the Lord put on human form that evolved<sup>8</sup> from an ape! And it would mean that He allowed the terrible changes of evolution to happen all in order to remove death, “the last enemy” (1 Corinthians 15:26). But how can death be the “enemy” if it were one of God’s chosen methods for creating humans according to evolution? If that were true, then that would mean the Lord must have “used up” a lot of dead humans in the process of evolution in order to finally get one human into His own image. This also would mean that Jesus came to save humans from the very method He, as Creator, used to create them in the first place. If that sounds foolish, then it is foolish!

**How does Romans 5:12 help us to understand how important the Genesis Creation story is to the whole plan of salvation?**

How can the people who try to mix evolution with the Bible story of Creation explain the idea of the Fall? Does God use methods of violence and selfishness? Does He give power to the strong to control the weak in order to create a perfect and unselfish human, who then “falls” into the hands of those who are selfish, violent, and controlling? If so, then how would this human be “rescued” from this violence?

8. evolved—to change or develop slowly, often into a better, more complex, or more advanced state.

Again, the foolishness of the theory of evolution rules this idea out. The only way to make sense of the Cross and of the need for the Savior to save humans is for them to have “fallen” into sin. The Fall suggests a downward slide. This means that we went from what was good to something that was not as good. That makes perfect sense from our understanding of Genesis. With evolution, it makes no sense at all. Indeed, the idea of evolution makes fun of the Fall and the Cross too.

## THURSDAY—JANUARY 12

### CREATION AND RE-CREATION (THE NEW EARTH) (Isaiah 65:17)

**What wonderful promises are found in Isaiah 65:17; Isaiah 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13; and Revelation 21:4? Also, how are they connected with the Bible story of Creation, as shown in the opening chapters of Genesis?**

The whole Christian hope depends on the promises of a new heaven and a new earth. They are a heaven and an earth without the damage of sin. Without that hope or that promise, we have no real hope at all. The promise of eternal life is wonderful. But we want that eternal life in a world without the horrors, sorrows, and disappointments of our present world. What could be worse: the eternal death that awaits the unsaved, or eternal life in a world full of misery?

All of these truths lead to some very interesting questions about beginnings

and about how the Lord worked on the first Creation in Genesis 1 and 2. The question is, will the new heaven and the new earth be re-created by the perfect command of God as shown in Genesis? Will God speak and then, within a very short time, all life appear on the earth fully developed? In this version, nothing is left to violence or chance.

Or, instead, will the process of creation mean that life will have to go through the evolutionary process for billions of years until a new perfect world (2 Peter 3:13) finally appears?

After all, if God chose to use evolution the first time around to create this world, why would He do something different the second time? If this was His chosen method in the original Creation, is it not good enough for the creation of the new earth in the future?

The foolish idea that God would use evolution to re-create the heavens and the earth is more proof of how foolish it would be for God to create the world that way to begin with. There is no question that the Cross, salvation, and the promise of a new heaven and a new earth are themes closely tied in with the Genesis story.

**Try to imagine what our world was like in its original condition and beauty. Imagine, too, what it will be like when it is created over. Our minds and hearts can understand very little of what that will be like. But we all can answer this question: why is nothing in this world worth having if we lose out on what God has promised us?**

**FRIDAY—JANUARY 13**

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Through all her ministry (work done for God), Ellen G. White stood strong in refusing to accept the theory of evolution.

She wrote, “It is the worst kind of unfaithfulness. For many who claim to believe the story of Creation but really do not, they are hiding their unfaithfulness.”—Adapted from *The Signs of the Times*, March 20, 1879.

“Suppose we wish to follow and accept our history of evolutionary changes from germs [simple life forms], shells, and apes? Then we would throw out this simple, but great Bible truth, ‘God created man in his own likeness. He created him [man] in the likeness of God.’ Genesis 1:27, NIV.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 130.

“The Lord declares [announces] that He made the world in six days and rested on the seventh day. He really means the day of twenty-four hours, which He has marked off by the rising and setting of the sun.”—Adapted from *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, page 136.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

❶ There is another problem that comes from trying to connect (show how two things are related) evolution with the Bible. This is the resurrection (return to life) of the dead at the end of time. Is that not going to be something quick, in the “twinkling of an eye” (1 Corinthians 15:52)? Some people

have been dead for thousands of years. And there is not much left to work with. But, if God can re-create them quickly, why did He use evolution to create them the first time around?

❷ Many people do not know that Charles Darwin worked on his theory (idea) of evolution from a religious point of view. Darwin wrote, “There seems to be too much suffering in the world. I cannot make myself believe that a kind and powerful God would have designed and created the [wasp] with the purpose of their feeding (eating) from within the living bodies of caterpillars. Or that the cat should play with mice.”—Adapted. Of course, a “kind and powerful God” did no such thing. What is wrong with Darwin’s argument? And how do you think it influenced Darwin to come up with such a wrong theory on human beginnings?

❸ As a class, spend some time in nature and admire the different wonders of the created world. As you do it, keep your mind open to the damage that sin has brought. How much difference can you find between the Creation and what sin has done to the creation? Why is it always important to remember this difference?

**SUMMARY:** Many people have tried to connect the theory of evolution with the Bible. But these two teachings are opposites. Christians must stand strong on the real Creation story. If they do not, the plan of salvation will not survive.