

Creation, a Biblical Theme



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Genesis 2, Matt. 19:4–6, Psalm 8, Job 38:1–21, 42:1–6, Isa. 45:18, Acts 17:22–31.*

Memory Text: “Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water’ ” (*Revelation 14:6, 7, NIV*).

Genesis 1:1–2:3 is the foundation for many Creation texts found in Scripture. Some references to Genesis 1 are clear, others are more indirect. The more indirect references often involve a repetition of certain words or ideas without directly quoting the text, such as 2 Corinthians 4:6: “For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (*NKJV*). A direct reference, in contrast, is Hebrews 4:4: “For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: ‘And God rested on the seventh day from all His works’ ” (*NKJV*), a quote from Genesis 2:2.

This week we will look at various references that point back to the Genesis account and show how other Bible writers understood it as a literal depiction of human origins.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, January 26.*

Creation in Genesis 2

“These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens” (*Gen. 2:4*).

Genesis 1:1–2:3 is the first account of God creating our world. It forms the foundation of all the other truths that we, as Christians, believe.

But the Creation account doesn’t end there. From Genesis 2:3 to the end of the chapter, we are given more details, specifically regarding the creation of Adam and Eve. Thus, we should interpret Genesis 2:4 (above) as the introduction to a more detailed history of the creation of Adam and Eve, an act that is briefly summarized in Genesis 1:26–29. Some modern scholars have argued that a conflict exists between Genesis 1 and 2, but this would have been a surprise to Moses and the other biblical writers. If the stories were seen as conflicting, Moses would never have written them, especially so close together. The conflict isn’t with the texts; it’s with those who read a conflict into them.

Read Matthew 19:4–6. How does Jesus affirm the historical truth of Genesis 1 and 2?

In response to the Pharisees’ question about divorce, Jesus quoted from both Genesis 1:27 and 2:24, showing that He considered both to be discussing the same historical event, the Creation of the world and humanity. How much more proof do we need that Genesis 1 and 2 are harmonious accounts of Creation, the doctrine and teaching that forms the foundation of our existence and purpose? We are not here by chance, we are not here by fluke; we are beings made in the image of God—and the Genesis Creation account, as revealed in chapters 1 and 2, is God’s special revelation to us of our origins.

Read Genesis 2. How does it help us to better understand what it means to be human, to be made in the image of God, and to be given free will?

Creation in the Psalms

Read Psalm 8. What links do you find with Genesis 1?

Read Psalm 104. Note how this psalm praises God for His goodness as seen in both Creation and providence. Identify the links with Genesis 1 in the following verses from Psalm 104:

Vs. 2 _____

Vss. 5–7 _____

Vss. 7–9 _____

Vs. 14 _____

Vs. 19 _____

Vs. 25 _____

Note how the psalm’s topical sequence seems to be crafted to follow the topical sequence of Genesis 1. Poetic imagery is vividly presented throughout the verses, and its message clearly includes the power, wisdom, and goodness of God and the dependence of all the Creation on the Creator. Nothing in the psalm hints that the Genesis account was not to be taken literally.

Note the following examples from the Psalms that correlate with Genesis 1.

Ps. 24:1, 2 _____

Ps. 33:6 _____

Ps. 74:16, 17 _____

Ps. 89:11 _____

The Psalms are full of praise for the Creator. Sometimes this is expressed in language reminiscent of Genesis 1, other times the language is more general; but in all cases, the description of Creation is consistent with Genesis 1 and reminds us of the foundational role of Genesis in our understanding of our origins as sons and daughters of God.

Creation in the Book of Job

Read Job 38:1–21. Note the creation topics in the following verses.

Vss. 4–7 _____

Vss. 8–11 _____

Vs. 12 _____

Vs. 16 _____

Vs. 19 _____

It's important to remember the context of the book of Job. Great tragedy struck, and Job was struggling to understand how this could happen to him, a faithful follower of God. In chapter 38 up through chapter 41, the Lord continues to talk about His creative power, all in response to Job's pained questioning.

Read carefully Job's response to the Lord in Job 42:1–6. Why did Job respond as he did, and what can we learn from his response that could help us to trust God in our own personal tragedy?

Job's inability to explain features of the Creation led him to recognize the greatness of God and to trust Him, despite everything that had happened. We also find ourselves unable to answer many questions about the Creation, and Job's example should encourage us to trust God, no matter what. Many questions about everything in life will remain unanswered, at least for now. We will have an eternity to get explanations for what now seems incomprehensible.

The point is that through the marvels of Creation—which we today understand so much better now than Job ever could—we should learn to trust in God's incredible love and power.

We, today, living after the Cross, have a view of the Creator also as our crucified Redeemer, something that Job never had, at least not as clearly as we do. How much more, then, should we trust in the Lord's goodness toward us, knowing what He did for us?

Creation in the Prophets

“For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else” (Isa. 45:18).

Isaiah 45:18 emphasizes God’s intention to prepare a place for humans to live; thus, the fitness of the earth for life is not an accident.

Consider some of the features of Earth that make it a fit place for human life in contrast to the other planets in our solar system. First, water is present in abundance. There is some evidence of water activity on Mars, but there are no standing bodies of water on Mars or on any other planet aside from Earth. Another unique feature of Earth is the composition of the atmosphere, about 21 percent oxygen and 78 percent nitrogen. Other planets have atmospheres dominated either by carbon dioxide or by helium, but only Earth has an atmosphere suitable for life. The range of temperatures on Earth is suitable for terrestrial life, unlike any of the other planets in our solar system. This is due to a combination of factors, including our distance from the sun, the composition of our atmosphere, the mass of Earth, and the speed of its rotation—which determines the length of days and nights. All these features, and more, make Earth the only known planet suitable for sustaining life.

How do the following texts relate to the events described in Genesis 1?

Isa. 44:24 _____

Isa. 45:12 _____

Jer. 51:15, 16 _____

Amos 4:13 _____

Jonah 1:9 _____

Zech. 12:1 _____

Think through the implications of our origins and why getting them right is so important to our understanding of who we are, why we are here, and what we can hope for in a world that, in and of itself, offers no hope at all.

Creation in the New Testament

Read Acts 17:22–31. What were the circumstances of this sermon? After Paul had introduced his topic, what was the first topic he brought to these learned men? *Vss. 24, 25*. What does Paul say is the relationship between the Creator God and humans? *Vss. 26–28*.

The audience here no doubt included the two groups of philosophers known as Stoics and Epicureans. The Stoics affirmed the reality of design in nature, while the Epicureans denied it. Neither had a knowledge of the true God, but their arguments about design were similar to many of the arguments still discussed in our day.

The important point here is that, in his witness to these pagan thinkers and intellectuals, Paul reverts directly to the argument of the Lord as the Creator of all things and all humanity. Paul had little in common with these people; so, he went right to what they did have in common—the fact that they existed—and from that undeniable reality he sought to build his argument. Hence, we see Creation as, again, a crucial theme in Scripture.

Look at the following texts: Matthew 19:4–6, Mark 2:27, Luke 3:38, John 1:1–3, 2 Corinthians 4:6, Hebrews 4:4, James 3:9, 2 Peter 3:5, Jude 11, 14. What’s fascinating is that each one of these New Testament authors either directly or indirectly make reference to the Genesis Creation account, more evidence proving just how universally accepted the Genesis account of origins was to all the Bible writers.

Read Revelation 4:11 and 10:5, 6. What do the heavenly beings say about God’s creatorship?

Creation was not an accident but occurred by the will of God. The second passage contains a clear allusion to Exodus 20:11. Once again, as in John 1:1–3, John shows his familiarity with, and confidence in, the Creation story. How foolish for us to do anything less.

Further Study: The Bible is a book about God and His relationship to us humans and our world. The events of Creation week are unique and supernatural. They are outside the realm of scientific inquiry for at least two reasons. First, they are singularities. Singularities are events that occur only once. Science has a difficult time dealing with singularities because they cannot be repeated and tested under differing circumstances. Second, the Creation events were supernaturally caused. They were not the natural result of the way that God sustains the Creation; they were special, direct acts of God. Science deals only with secondary causes and does not—at least as now practiced—accept any explanation that depends on God’s direct action. Because the Creation events are unique and supernatural, they lie outside the reach of science.

One’s view of origins has important implications for one’s view of human nature and self-identity. Understanding our origins is so important that God had it placed as the first subject in the Bible, and the message of the Bible is based on the historicity of the Creation account. To claim that we can learn the true history of our world through science is to claim that it can be explained without appealing to any direct action by God, an error that has led to more error.

“Men will endeavor to explain from natural causes the work of creation, which God has never revealed. But human science cannot search out the secrets of the God of Heaven, and explain the stupendous works of creation, which were a miracle of almighty power, any sooner than it can show how God came into existence.”—Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 89.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 Creation is a dominant theme throughout the entire Bible. Is there any evidence that Bible writers had different views of Creation or that any of them had doubts about the veracity of any part of Genesis? Why is this answer important?
- 2 What reasons do you think someone might give to justify the rejection of the idea that nature is designed?
- 3 Jesus endorsed the authority of Moses (*Luke 16:29–31*), including the story of Creation (*Mark 2:27, 28; Matt. 19:4–6*). Given this background and the example of Jesus, what should be our attitude toward the story of Creation?

The Missionary Café

Sixteen-year-old Anya's heart raced as she and her father stepped into the small café in the heart of Krasnoyarsk, Siberia. Could she ask a complete stranger to turn a business over to some teenagers—even for a few hours?

The adventure for God had begun months earlier when Anya and her teenage friends had visited a sister church in Siberia. The teens there were running a successful café outreach. Anya and her friends returned home with a dream to start a similar outreach in their own city.

The youth prayed and planned. When they shared their dream with other church members, some tried to discourage them. "This will be expensive," one said. "No one will come," another added. "You're wasting your time," another protested. But Anya's father, the pastor, encouraged the youth to let God lead.

Anya and her father stepped into the café and greeted the owner. They sat together at an empty table. "We are Seventh-day Adventist Christians," Anya began. "Our youth group would like to use your café one Sunday morning a month to host a Christian program for about thirty young people. We can pay for food, but we can't pay rent."

Anya waited for the café's owner to respond. "Business isn't good on Sunday morning," the woman said as she considered the request. "Yes, you can use the café for two hours. Just put things back where you found them and don't make a mess."

Anya smiled. *God surely has gone before us*, she thought.

Anya and her friends prepared advertising for Café Orange, finalized their program, and prayed for a good attendance. The doors opened, and people streamed in. The youth had planned for 30 people, but 55 came, including 15 who were not Seventh-day Adventists.

Anya noticed that the café waiters and the few other customers were listening to the program too. She realized that their mission field stretched beyond those they had set out to reach. *How like God to give us more than we asked for!* she thought.

The youth invited those who came to Café Orange to attend youth meetings at the Seventh-day Adventist church, and several came.

Today the church supports the café ministry, though it is still operated by the youth. "We want others to know that Christians can have fun. We want to give them a chance to become children of God."

Anya cites one of her favorite Bible texts to sum up her philosophy of youth ministries: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers, in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity" (*1 Tim. 4:12, NIV*). "That's our goal," she says.

Your mission offerings are helping the Seventh-day Adventist youth in Krasnoyarsk, a city in the heart of Siberia, to reach out for Christ. Thank you.