

THE Word For The Week

Creation: How we got here
(Genesis 1:1-2:3)

Monday – Creation and Genesis account

- When did God create the Heavens and the Earth? In the beginning of what?
- What was the state of the earth before God began to create?
- How did God create the things listed in Genesis 1:3-31?
- What does this say about our God? How has the secular world attempted to defame God of this attribute?

Tuesday – Creation and the Nature of God

- Read 1 John chapter 1 and list the attributes given to God
- When did sin, and consequently death, enter into the world? Romans 5:12-21
- What must happen for things to evolve?
- If death must happen for evolution and yet the scripture is clear that there was no death before Adam's sin, what does this say about the popular concept of evolution?

Wednesday – Creation and Central Biblical Teachings

- What does 2 Timothy 3:16 say about the Bible? Do you believe this? Why or why not?
- What does God say about creation in Exodus 20: 8-11? What concept in our world is based off this understanding?
- How does Jesus refer to the Genesis account in Matthew 19:4-5? What issue does Jesus teach about while using the illustration of Creation?
- See if you can find any indication in the Bible that the creation account should be understood in any other way than as a factual report. Why would this be important to know?

Thursday – Creation and our way to find God

- What role does the creation story play in our search for God and ultimately salvation?
- What explanations, from a non-Biblical standpoint, are given about the concept or reason behind death? How does this diminish the need for God and Jesus as Savior and Lord? (Luke 19:10)

Friday – Creation and Biblical Chronology

- Without a physical beginning of time (Genesis record) then what do you make of Jesus' words about a definite ending of physical time (Matthew 24:14) and ultimately Christ's return?
- How do we justify our 24 hour/day and 7 day/week calendar if not from the literal Biblical record?
- Does the Bible teach the age of the world to be thousands of years old or billions of years old like popular science states? Why does this matter to a Christian and to our faith?
- Many people, both inside the church and outside the church, have believed the false assumption that the literal Creation of the world, as recorded in Genesis 1, as either not true or as not important. But as you see, your understanding and belief of this event determines your thought process on everything else in the Bible and your understanding of God. So spend time today in prayer and contemplation of your understanding of Creation and the implications of that understanding. Thank God for being omnipotent and the author of Life!

INTERACTIVE TEACHING/LEARNING GUIDE

Week 1

SESSION TITLE: "Creation: How We Got Here"
FOCAL PASSAGE: (Genesis 1:1-2:3)

Central Teaching/Learning Aim: To help the learner discover that God brought order to chaos in creation and He does the same for individuals today.

I. Creating Interest in the Series (Hook)

A. List the various views of creation and briefly describe them:

1. Literal 6-day creation – must deal with the fossil account that indicates the earth is much older than 4000 years. Some explain this through the flood.
2. Evolution-
 - a. Major gaps in the fossil record.
 - b. No continuation of species progressing.
 - c. Mutations must tend to be positive which is contrary to evidence.
Example – if left alone a hybrid rose will revert back to a wild rose.
 - d. Still doesn't answer the question of where matter comes from.
 - e. Reduces the dignity of man.
3. Theistic Evolution – has the same problems as evolution.
4. Gap Theory – a gap in time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:3.
5. Progressive Creation – "There was morning and evening" refers to 6 days of creation being over large periods of time.
6. Age Theory – God created in 6 days, but days mean age.

State – All of these theories are interesting and could be debated for days, but our purpose today is not to prove the "how" of creation but the "who" of creation.

State – Today we are going to discuss how God created order out of chaos and He continues to do this for our lives today.

B. Optional Method – Ask – Does anyone have any New Year's Resolutions that you would like to share? (Allow time for responses)

Ask – What do you like about New Year's Resolutions? Resolutions allow us an opportunity for new beginnings. Resolutions can help us bring order out of chaos. The book of Genesis is a book of "beginnings". It is the story of God bringing order to chaos.

State – God is still in the business of bringing order to our lives.

State – Today we are going to discuss how God created order out of chaos and He continues to do this for our lives today.

C. Optional Method – Movie Clip “Joe Versus the Volcano”

Start: 01:17:00

Stop: 01:18:52

Synopsis: Joe (Tom Hanks) and Patricia (Meg Ryan) are on their way to a remote island and their boat sinks in a terrible storm. In this scene they are floating on four large pieces of luggage. Patricia is unconscious and Joe is weak due to hunger and thirst. He is revived when he sees the glory of the moon. He praises God for His awesome power and glory.

Ask – What scene or experience in nature causes you to praise God for His awesome power?

State – Today we are going to discuss how God created order out of chaos and He continues to do this for our lives today.

II. Book

A. Utilize the discussion guide to examine the Scripture passages.

III. Look

A. Distribute the handout “From Chaos to Order” and guide members to complete it.

IV. Took

A. Place members into pairs or groups and have them share their results from the handout “From Chaos to Order”. Have them close in a prayer of commitment.

B. **Optional Method – Share** the following example of the true order of creation.

In *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, Bill Bryson marvels at what makes up human life:

No one really knows, but there may be as many as a million types of protein in the human body, and each one is a little miracle. By all the laws of probability proteins shouldn't exist. To make a protein you need to assemble amino acids...in a particular order, in much the same way that you assemble letters in a particular order to spell a word. [For example, to make collagen,] you need to arrange 1,055 amino acids in precisely the right sequence....

The chances of a 1,055-sequence molecule like collagen spontaneously self-assembling are, frankly, nil. It just isn't going to happen. To grasp what a long shot its existence is, visualize a standard Las Vegas slot machine but broadened greatly—to about ninety feet, to be precise—to accommodate 1,055 spinning wheels instead of the usual three or four, and with twenty symbols on each wheel

(one for each common amino acid). How long would you have to pull the handle before all 1,055 symbols came up in the right order? Effectively forever. Even if you reduced the number of spinning wheels to two hundred, which is actually a more typical number of amino acids for a protein, the odds against all two hundred coming up in a prescribed sequence are 1 in 10^{260} (that is 1 followed by 260 zeros). That in itself is a larger number than all the atoms in the universe....

Yet we are talking about several hundred thousand types of protein, perhaps a million, each unique and each, as far as we know, vital to the maintenance of a sound and happy you.

Citation: Bill Bryson, "The Rise of Life", A Short History of Nearly Everything, pp. 288-289

State – God is in control. God is a God of order. Close by playing or singing a song about God's sovereignty like "God of Wonders" or "How Great is Our God".

DISCUSSION GUIDE
(Teacher's Copy)

1. What was the condition of the land when God created? (Gen. 1:2)
 - a. Formless
 - b. Empty
 - c. Dark
2. How was the condition of the earth similar to the condition of a man's heart without the Lord?
3. Why did Moses make God the central subject of the creation account?
(He was proving that there was only one true God not the many "Gods" that the people had heard about.)
4. Outline what God created in the following passages:

Passage	Creation
(vs. 3-5)	Light from darkness
(vs. 6-8)	Sea from sky
(vs. 9-13)	Land from sea
(vs. 14-19)	Light for day and night
(vs. 20-23)	Creatures for sea and sky
(vs. 24-25)	Creatures for the fertile land
(vs. 26-27)	Male and female

5. What is the significance of God giving man rule over creation? (vs. 26, 28-30)
(Man is to be the caretaker and ruler over all other creatures.)
6. a. Do some people today take the caretaker roll over-board? If so, how?
 - b. Do some not take the roll seriously enough? If so, How?
 - c. How can a healthy balance be found?
7. Why did God sanctify day 7? (Gen. 2:1-3)
(It was a day for celebration and worship for what God had accomplished.)
8. How do you set aside Sundays as a day of Sabbath rest?

DISCUSSION GUIDE
(Student's Copy)

1. What was the condition of the land when God created? (Gen. 1:2)
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

2. How was the condition of the earth similar to the condition of a man's heart without the Lord?

3. Why did Moses make God the central subject of the creation account?

4. Outline what God created in the following passages:

Passage	Creation
(vs. 3-5)	
(vs. 6-8)	
(vs. 9-13)	
(vs. 14-19)	
(vs. 20-23)	
(vs. 24-25)	
(vs. 26-27)	

5. What is the significance of God giving man rule over creation? (vs. 26, 28-30)

6. a. Do some people today take the caretaker roll over-board? If so, how?
 - b. Do some not take the roll seriously enough? If so, How?
 - c. How can a healthy balance be found?

7. Why did God sanctify day 7? (Gen. 2:1-3)

8. How do you set aside Sundays as a day of Sabbath rest?

From Chaos to **Order**

The account of the creation in Genesis 1 is an example of God bringing order to chaos. God does the same thing for individuals. Evaluate and make room for God to bring order to your life.

O rganization – Is my life orderly or out of control?
Time Management _____
Finances _____
Spiritual Growth _____
Relationships _____
Other _____

R edirection - What do I need to change to allow God to bring order to the above areas?

D iscipline - What will it take for me to be more disciplined in the areas where improvement is needed?

E valuation - What is my plan for evaluating progress?

Who can help me be accountable?

What is my strategy for consistent evaluation?

R econnection - How can I reconnect to the God of order?

How can I stay connected?

How will this year be different than last year?

THE Word For The Week

Fall: What Went Wrong

(Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-9, 24)

Monday – Before the Fall (Genesis 1:26-2:25)

- What day of creation was man created?
- How long did it take for God to create man?
- What responsibilities did man have?
- What kind of relationship and fellowship with God did man have?

Tuesday – Fall (Genesis 2:16-17)

- What warning did God give man after placing him in the Garden of Eden?
- Why would God create this boundary for man?
- What boundaries has God placed in your life as His follower?
- Why does this He do this?

Wednesday – Fall

- How did the serpent deceive Eve?
- How does Satan deceive you today?
- What was the result of the serpent's lies and Adam and Eve's disobedience?
- Why would a God who loves us have boundaries for us?
- Why would a God who loves us discipline His children and punish sin?

Thursday – Fall

- How did Adam and Eve respond to God's seeking them in the Garden?
- How do you react when you are "found out"?
- How did the sin of Adam and Eve affect everything and everyone?
- How has it affected you?

Friday – Read (Romans 5:12-21)

- How does Jesus fit into the story of the fall of man?
- How has God's ultimate plan to reunite His children with Himself affected you?
- How do you thank God for His plan? How do you thank Jesus for His sacrifice? How do you thank the Holy Spirit for His daily filling?
- Live a life of thankfulness today!

Ancient/Future - A Journey through Genesis

"Creation: How we got here"

Genesis 1:1-2:3

(Exegetical . . . What it meant Israel back THEN)

**THE MEANS BY WHICH ISRAEL'S GOD CREATED EVERYTHING
[A POLEMIC AGAINST THE "GODS" OF THE NATIONS],
BRINGING FORM AND FULLNESS OUT OF CHAOS,
RESULTING IN A "VERY GOOD" AND "FINISHED" CREATION
AND CULMINATING IN GOD'S BLESSED AND SANCTIFIED "REST,"
WAS BY HIS WORD.**

- I. The condition out of which God [Israel's YHWH – 2:4] created the entire universe (everything that was), in the beginning (before anything but God existed), as superintended by the Spirit (of God) was chaos (formless and empty), (1-2).
 - A. The time referent at which God [Israel's YHWH] created (out of nothing) the entire universe (everything that was) was "in the beginning" (of time, which would be completed/perfected "at the end of days" – Revelation 21 & 22), (1).
 - B. The condition out of which God created the entire universe in the beginning as superintended by the Spirit was chaos, (2).
 1. The condition of the land when God created was chaos.

Note: Moses recorded the creation of everything using the figure of "heaven and earth" to summarize all of it and all in it. The emphasis in chapter 1 was on the "land" (better than the usually translated "earth"). It was the land that God would give to His people; there they would live and be blessed by God (see Genesis 12, Deuteronomy 28-30).

 - a. The condition of the land when God created was formless (*tohu*).
 - b. The condition of the land when God created was empty (*bohu*).
 - c. The condition of the land when God created was "darkness and deep."
 2. The superintendent over the chaos and the creation was the Spirit.
- II. The means by which God created the formed (out of formless) and filled (out of emptiness) land was His spoken word, (3-25).

Note: Moses made God the central subject and agent of the creation account; clearly a polemic against the "gods" that competed for Israel's loyalty (Egypt's sun-god and Canaan's moon-god, etc.). What the other nations worshipped, Israel's "LORD God" had 1) created and 2) separated and 3) named and 4) declared "good." Creation revealed God's power and His right to rule over all the nations. The "redemptive" nature of creation (out of chaos came order) revealed God's goodness to bless those who would submit to His rule.

 - A. The means by which God created the good light that He named day which He separated from the darkness that He named night on "the first day" was His spoken word, (3-5).
 1. God created the light by His spoken word.
 2. God saw that the light was good (*tob* – contrasted to *tohu*).
 3. God separated the light from the darkness.
 4. God named both the light and the darkness.
 - B. The means by which God created the atmosphere that He named sky which He separated from the water below and the water above on the "second day" was His spoken word, (6-8).

1. God created the atmosphere by His spoken word.
 2. God separated the atmosphere from the waters.
 3. God named the atmosphere.
- C. The means by which God created the good fertile ground that He named land which He separated from the waters that He named sea on the "third day" was His spoken word, (9-13).
1. God created the good fertile ground by His spoken word.
 2. God separated the fertile ground from the waters.
 3. God named both the ground and the waters.
 4. God saw that the land and sea was good.
 5. God separated the fertile vegetation according to their kinds.
- D. The means by which God created the good greater light, lesser light, and stars to separate day and night, to signify time, and to give light to the land, on the "fourth day" was His spoken word, (14-19).
1. God created the greater light, lesser light, and stars by His spoken word.
 2. The purpose for which God created the greater light, lesser light, and stars was to . . .
 - a. . . . separate day and night,
 - b. . . . signify time,
 - c. . . . give light to the land.
 3. God saw that the lights in the sky were good.
- E. The means by which God created the various fish in the sea and the various birds in the sky, blessing them that they might reproduce and fill the land, on the "fifth day" was His spoken word, (20-23).
1. God created the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky by His spoken word.
 2. God distinguished between the various kinds of fish and between the various kinds of birds.
 3. God saw that the fish and the birds were good.
 4. God blessed the fish and birds that they might reproduce and fill the land.
- F. The means by which God created the various good animals upon the fertile land on the "sixth day" was His spoken word, (24-25).
1. God created the animals upon the fertile land by His spoken word.
 2. God distinguished between the tame animals, the small animals, and the game animals, all according to their various kinds.
 3. God saw that the animals were good.
- III. In contrast to the means by which God through His spoken word created order and fullness in the land, the means by which God created man in His image, to rule over the very good (ordered and filled) creation, blessing them that they might reproduce and fill the land and eat from its produce, on the "sixth day" was by direct creation, (26-31).
- A. God created man (male and female) by direct creation, (26-27).
 - B. God distinguished between man and the rest of creation by creating male/female in His Own Likeness/Image, (26-27).
 - C. God created man to rule over creation, (26, 28-30).
 - D. God blessed man that they might reproduce and fill the land, (28).
 - E. God provided food from the plants and trees to feed man and all living creatures, (29-30).

F. God saw that, with the creation of mankind in His image, the creation was very good, (31).

IV. The reason God blessed and sanctified the "seventh day" was because on the seventh day He ceased from the creative work He had finished, (2:1-3).

A. The result of God's creative work, as seen in the first six days, was the finishing of the heavens and the earth in all their form and fullness, (1).

1. As a result of God's creative work the heavens (sky) and the earth (land) were finished.

2. The sky and the land displayed God's creative forming and filling.

B. The reason God blessed and sanctified the "seventh day" was because on the seventh day He ceased from the creative work He had finished, (2-3).

1. The result of God's finishing His work of creation, which He had been doing for six days was that He ceased from all His work on the seventh day, (2).

a. God had finished His creative work by the seventh day.

b. Therefore, God ceased from all His work on the seventh day.

2. The reason God blessed and sanctified the seventh day was because on the seventh day He ceased from the creative work He had finished, (3).

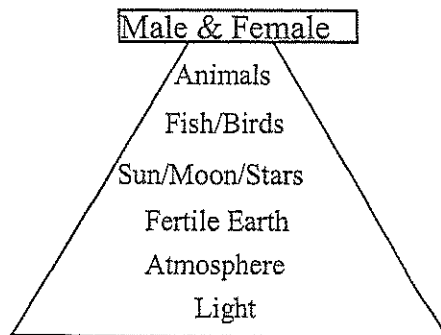
a. God blessed and sanctified the seventh day.

b. God had ceased from the creative work He had finished.

Note: Whereas in the beginning the land was *tohu/bohu* (unshaped and empty), God brought the land into form and fullness during the six days of creation. Ultimately His creation was *tob* (good), even "very good" (vs. 31).

<i>Tohu</i> – unshaped	<i>Bohu</i> - empty
object(s) created to form	object(s) created to fill
Day 1 – Light from darkness	Day 4 – Lights for day and night
Day 2 – Sea from sky	Day 5 – Creatures for sea and sky
Day 3 – Land from sea	Day 6 – Creatures for the fertile land

Note: Moses clearly distinguished between the other objects of creation, spoken into being by the word of God, and the creation of mankind, made "directly" and "in His own image." Mankind (male and female) was given authority over the land, the fish, the birds, and the animals. Mankind was the climax of creation, God's co-regent to rule the earth on God's behalf.



(Theological . . . What it means to believers ALWAYS)
**THE POWERFUL WORD OF GOD TRANSFORMS CHAOS
INTO A HOLY AND BLESSED CREATION.**

- I. God's creative Word/work transforms chaos into form and fullness, (1:1-2).
 - A. God's creative Word/work made everything that exists, (1).
 - B. The existence of chaos demands God's form (order) and fullness, (2).
- II. The sovereign God forms and fills everything by His Word, (3-25).
 - A. The sovereign God speaks, (3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26).
 - B. The sovereign God creates/makes ("and there was"/"and it was so"/etc.) (1, 3, 7, 9, 11, 15-16, 21, 24, 25, 27).
 - C. The sovereign God separates/divides/according to kind/in His image, as a sign of His purposeful rule (4, 6, 7, 9-12, 14, 18, 21, 24-27).
 - D. The sovereign God names, as a sign of His authority (5, 8, 10).
 - E. The sovereign God evaluates: "God saw that it was good/very good" (4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31).
- III. The very good (formed, filled, and finished) creation led to God's "Rest," (1:31-2:3).
 - A. God's work of creation was finished (complete and perfect), (1:31-2:1).
 - B. God's enjoyment/celebration of His creation established Sabbath rest, (2).
 - C. Sabbath rest was blessed and set apart by the God of creation (as a means of worshipping Him), (3).

(Pedagogical . . . What it means to us NOW)
MAKE A TIME OF "REST."

Note: There are many details in Genesis 1:1-2:3 that cannot be explored in an hour's lesson. Consult your commentaries to address the questions these verses raise and to provide avenues of further study. But be careful not to become distracted by "our" questions so that you miss Moses' point (i.e. Moses is not defending "creationism"). Moses was introducing Israel to who they were (the Creator's chosen people), where they had come from (out of chaos), where they were going (the promised land), and how they would get there (God's Word).

The passage clearly teaches that God is the Creator of all things and that all people live under His authority. God is not only as the great Creator, He is also the good Redeemer. The theological concepts, established in this literal creation account, introduce themes/motifs of God's work with Israel and the Church. As this passage is extremely complex and multi-layered (this is not allegory, but true meta-narrative), keep your teaching simple so as not to miss the main emphasis.

- I. Ours was and is a World of Chaos, (1:1-2).
 - A. The Earth was and is in Chaos.
 1. The Earth was in Chaos as a Result of Satan's Rebellion, (see Ezekiel 28:11-19; Isaiah 14:12-20).
 2. The Earth is in Chaos as a Result of Our Rebellion. (Man's Rule Over the Earth has not always been Wise).
 - B. Our Personal "Worlds" are often in Chaos.
- II. God Transforms Our Chaos into New Creation, (1:3-31).
 - A. God Transformed the Earth into Light, Form, and Fullness, (1:3-31).
 - B. God Transforms Our "Worlds" into Blessing, (see 2 Corinthians 5:17).
- III. Make a time of "Rest" to reflect on God's Power, Glory, and Authority, (2:1-3).