

Genesis Lesson 1: Genesis 1:1 – 2:3

**For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them,
but he rested on the seventh day. Exodus 20:11**

1. Read Genesis 1:1-2. Some authors have described these verses as the prologue to Genesis.
 - a. According to verse 1, how did creation begin?
 - b. Who created?
 - c. According to verse 2, what was the earth like?
 - d. According to verse 2, who else was present at creation?
 - e. Read John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:15-17, and Hebrews 1:1-3. According to these verses, who else was present at creation? What was his role?
 - f. The word for “God” used in Genesis 1:1 – 2:3 is Elohim. This is a plural word, but when used in the Bible to describe God’s actions, the accompanying verb used is singular. How does the word Elohim help your understanding of the persons present at creation?
 - g. Polytheism means the worship of many gods. Think about nations you know about which practiced polytheism, such as the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Greeks, and the Romans. How is the Genesis 1 creation account unique?

2. Read Genesis 1:3-2:1. Describe what God created each day.

a. 1st day:

b. 2nd day:

c. 3rd day:

d. 4th day:

e. 5th day:

f. 6th day:

3. What words are used to describe how God created on each day? Consider also Psalm 33:6,9.

4. How did God describe each completed creation?

5. Look at the order of creation. What is important about this order?

6. How would you describe God's creation?
7. What is unique about God's creation of human beings? How do you interpret Genesis 1:27?
8. How does this uniqueness affect how you view yourself and other people?
9. What function did God assign to human beings? What does this mean for us today?
10. What other instructions did God give to human beings?
11. What do you think is meant by the word "subdue" in verse 28?
12. How did God make provisions for his creation in verses 29-30?
13. On the 6th day, how is God's description of his creation different than for other days? Why?

14. Read Genesis 2:2-3. What did God do on the 7th day? Why?
15. What is unique about the 7th day?
16. The 7 days of the Genesis 1 creation account serve as a model for mankind. How do God's commands to Moses in Exodus 31:12-17 explain this model?
17. Reviewing the Genesis 1 creation account, what insights do you have about God's attributes, God's nature, and his creation?

Genesis Lesson 2: Genesis 2:4 – 2:25

Who cuts a channel for the torrents of rain, and a path for the thunderstorm, ²⁶ to water a land where no one lives, an uninhabited desert, ²⁷ to satisfy a desolate wasteland and make it sprout with grass? ²⁸ Does the rain have a father? Who fathers the drops of dew?

Job 38:25-28

1. How do the verses of Genesis 2:4-6 describe the state of the earth?
2. How did God create man?
3. What is the implication of “from the dust of the ground” (Genesis 2:7)?
4. What is your understanding of God breathing the breath of life into man (Genesis 2:7)?
5. Read Genesis 2:8-14. Describe the place where God put man.
6. Genesis is part of the Torah (the first 5 books of the Old Testament) which was written by Moses. Think about the arid nature of Egypt (outside of the Nile itself), the Sinai Peninsula, and the land of Canaan. What do you think the Israelites thought when they heard the description Moses wrote in Genesis 2:8-14?

7. According to Genesis 2:15, what role did God give man?
8. What does this role suggest about the expectation of work in our lives? (For context, read Ecclesiastes 5:18-20.)
9. What permission did God grant to man in verse 16?
10. What restriction did God make in verse 17?
11. Why did God make a restriction?
12. Read Genesis 2:18-20. The Genesis 1 account had declared days 1 to 5 of creation “good” and day 6 as “very good”. What do we learn about God’s opinion of his creation of man from verse 18?
13. What does this statement suggest about human beings?
14. How do you interpret the statement “a helper suitable for/fit for him?”
15. How do Psalm 33:20 and Psalm 70:5 offer context about a helper?

16. What duty did God give man?
17. After man completed this duty, what was the result?
18. Read Genesis 2:18 along with Genesis 1:28a. What is the connection between the verses?
19. Read Genesis 2:21-23. How is the creation of woman described?
20. Why would woman be considered a suitable helper for man?
21. According to Genesis 2:24, what was God's plan for marriage?
22. What was the name of the first man?
23. How does Genesis 2:25 describe the condition of Adam and his wife?
24. What word or words would you use to describe this condition?

Genesis Lesson 3: Genesis 3

**Evildoers foster rebellion against God; the messenger of death will be sent against them.
Proverbs 17:11**

1. Read Genesis 3:1-7.
 - a. How is the serpent described? Look up the description in other translations.
 - b. Do you think the description connotes good or evil, or is it ambiguous?
 - c. Refer to Genesis 1:24-25. How are God's living creatures described?
 - d. What does the serpent say to the woman?
 - e. What do the serpent's words suggest to you about the serpent's intent?
 - f. What was the woman's reply?
 - g. Were the woman's words true? Hint: see Genesis 2:16-17.
 - h. What does the serpent say next?

- i. What tactics did the serpent use to tempt the woman to eat the forbidden fruit?
 - j. What did the woman do next?
 - k. What did her husband do?
 - l. What happened after the couple ate the fruit?
 - m. Compare verses 5 and 7. In your opinion, was the serpent telling the truth?
2. Read Genesis 3:8-13.
- a. What did Adam and his wife do after they heard the Lord God walking in the garden?
 - b. Why?
 - c. Comparing Genesis 2:25 to Genesis 3:10, how has Adam's relationship with the Lord God changed?

- d. What does God ask Adam?
 - e. What does Adam reply?
 - f. Does Adam answer God's questions directly? How does he answer God's questions?
 - g. What does God ask the woman and what is her reply?
3. Read Genesis 3:14-19.
- a. What curse did God pronounce on the serpent?
 - b. What consequences of sin did the woman face?
 - c. In the original Hebrew, the word for pain used in verse 16a is not the usual one for childbirth pangs. With that in mind, how else might you interpret verse 16a?
 - d. What does verse 16b suggest about the relationship between Adam and his wife after they have sinned?

- e. What consequences of sin did the man face?
 - f. Do you think Adam and Eve were relieved at this point?
4. What did Adam do next, according to Genesis 3:20?
5. How did God extend grace to Adam and Eve according to Genesis 3:21?
6. Read Genesis 3:22-24.
- a. Adam and Eve had never been restricted from eating from the tree of life before they sinned. Why do you think God prevents them from doing so after they sinned?
 - b. What does God do next?
 - c. Read Revelation 2:7. What does this passage say about the tree of life?
7. What does Genesis 3 teach you about sin, temptation, and God?

Genesis Lesson 4: Genesis 4

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey —whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? Romans 6:16

1. Read Genesis 4:1-2.

- a. Who was the first child born to Adam and Eve?
- b. What does Eve say about this birth?
- c. Referring to Genesis 3:15, what might Eve have been thinking when this first child was born?
- d. Who was the second child born to Adam and Eve?
- e. What occupation did each child have?

2. Read Genesis 4:3-16.

- a. What did Cain and Abel do with the fruits of their labor?
- b. Why do you think they brought offerings to God?

- c. Which man had the more acceptable offering? Why? (Hint: see Hebrews 11:4.)
- d. What does God say to Cain?
- e. What is God offering to Cain?
- f. Using verses 3 to 9, what steps do you note about Cain's downward spiral into sin?
- g. What does the account of Cain teach us about the inevitable results of spiraling into sin?
- h. Do you think God's question to Cain in verse 9 is a rhetorical question?
- i. What was Cain's punishment for his sin?
- j. What is Cain's reaction?

- k. What do you think is Cain's biggest regret and his biggest fear?
 - l. How does God show mercy to Cain?
 - m. What do you learn from 1 John 3:11-12?
 - n. What do you think Adam and Eve were thinking at this point in their lives?
3. According to Genesis 4:17-24,
- a. What happened after Cain went out from the Lord's presence?
 - b. What cultural changes took place during this period?
 - c. What societal change does Lamech introduce?
 - d. What is the nature of Lamech's sin in verse 23? How would you characterize this sin?
 - e. Read Leviticus 24:17-20. What was God's judicial penalty for personal injury?

- f. Read Matthew 5:38-42. How did Jesus define dealing with personal injuries?
 - g. How do you interpret Genesis 4:24?
4. What significant event occurs in verse 25? What might have been Adam's and Eve's hopes at this point in their lives?
 5. What is your understanding of "calling on the name of the Lord" from verse 26b?
 6. Comparing Genesis 4 to Genesis 3, how would you characterize the progressive nature of the sins?

Genesis Lesson 5: Genesis 5:1 – 6:8

So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.¹⁸ I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me.

Ecclesiastes 2:17-18

1. What is important about the words “in his own likeness, in his own image” from Genesis 5:3?
2. Refer to Genesis 4. List the descendants of Cain.
3. From Genesis 5, list the descendants of Seth.
4. What names do you notice in common between the lines of Cain and Seth?
5. What do you note, in general, about the age of fatherhood and the age of death of these men?

6. Lamech is the 7th from Adam in the line of Cain. Enoch is the 7th from Adam in the line of Seth. (Note: there may be intervening generations which are not listed in Genesis 4 and 5. Lamech and Enoch are each the 7th men *listed*.) Contrast Lamech and Enoch. (Hint: see Genesis 4:19-24 and Genesis 5: 21-24.)
7. What is unique about the Enoch in the line of Seth?
8. How do you interpret Genesis 5:24?
9. What do you learn about Enoch from Hebrews 11:5-6?
10. What do you learn about Enoch from Jude 14a?
11. Why do you think Jude refers to Enoch as “the seventh from Adam?”
12. Contrast Lamech in the line of Cain and Lamech in the line of Seth.
13. What is unique about Methuselah?

14. What does Genesis 5 say about Noah in verse 29?
15. What do you think is mean by verse 29?
16. What do you notice about Noah's age when he became a father?
17. What do you think Noah thought about this situation?
18. Who were the sons of Noah?
19. Except for the Enoch in the line of Seth, what does Genesis 5 say about the other named men?
20. Why do you think that Genesis 5 does not list the daughters of the named men?
21. Read Genesis 6:1-8.
 - a. Looking at Genesis 6:1-2, what command from God to mankind in Genesis 1 is illustrated here?

- b. Also looking at Genesis 6:1-3, what does this passage suggest from a sexual perspective?
- c. How does God respond to the situation of mankind on earth, according to Genesis 6:3?
- d. Who were the Nephilim?
- e. Moving on to Genesis 6:5-7, what is the situation of mankind on earth?
- f. What does God feel and what does he resolve to do?
- g. Who alone has found favor with God?

Genesis Lesson 6: Genesis 6:9 – 9:17

As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹ and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Matthew 24:37-39

1. According to Genesis 6:9, how is Noah described?
2. What do you think “walked with God” means?
3. What do you learn about Noah from 2 Peter 2:5?
4. Read Genesis 6:11-22.
 - a. What is the situation on earth?
 - b. What does God tell Noah he has decided to do?
 - c. What does God instruct Noah to do?
 - d. Whom and what will God spare from the coming destruction?

- e. What is Noah's response to God's commands?
 - f. What do you think Noah's neighbors were thinking?
5. Read Genesis 7:1-9.
- a. What instructions does God give Noah next?
 - b. When will it begin to rain and how long will the rain last?
 - c. How old was Noah when the flood started?
 - d. How long do you think Noah *could* have been building the ark? (Consider Genesis 5:32 and Genesis 7:11 together.)
 - e. What is Noah's response to God's commands?
6. Read Genesis 7:10-24.
- a. Why do you think the dating is so precise in verse 11?
 - b. How does God protect those on the ark?

- c. How extensive was the flood?
 - d. What happens to life on earth, outside of the ark?
 - e. How long do the flood waters prevail?
7. Read Genesis 8:1-19.
- a. What actions does God take next on earth?
 - b. How long does this period last?
 - c. What happens to the ark?
 - d. What actions does Noah take in verse 6-12 and why?
 - e. According to verse 13, what does Noah see?
 - f. When had the earth fully dried out from the flood?
 - g. What were God's instructions to Noah?

8. Read Genesis 8:20-22.

- a. Once on dry land, what does Noah do?
- b. Why do you think Noah did this?
- c. What does God specifically promise?

9. Read Genesis 9:1-7.

- a. What does God do to Noah and his sons?
- b. How do verses 2-7 parallel Genesis 1 and 2? What is new?
- c. What is the purpose of God's statements in verses 5 and 6?
- d. Why does God make this pronouncement?

10. Read Genesis 9:8-17.

- a. Look up "covenant" in a dictionary.

- b. What was the covenant that God made with Noah and his offspring?
- c. What was the sign of the covenant?
- d. Why do you think a sign of this covenant was needed?

Genesis Lesson 7: Genesis 9:18 – 9:29

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God Romans 3:23

1. Which people does God use to populate the earth after the flood?
2. How does their effectiveness fulfill Genesis 9:7?
3. What was Noah's occupation after the flood?
4. What societal change did Noah's post-flood occupation mark? (Hint: contrast with Genesis 3:18.)
5. What happened to Noah?
6. How do Noah's actions post-flood compare to the description of Noah in Genesis 6:9?
7. How do Proverbs 23:20-21, Isaiah 28:7, and Habakkuk 2: 15-16 offer context?

8. Who discovers Noah's situation?
9. What does he do?
10. What would have been the proper course of action?
11. Who next handles Noah's situation and in what manner?
12. How does Noah react later?
13. Why do you think Canaan is cursed and not Ham? (Hint: see Genesis 9:1.)
14. Genesis 9:25b reads "a servant of servants" or "a slave of slaves." How do you interpret this phrase?
15. In verse 26, why is the Lord blessed and not Shem?
16. How might verse 26 foreshadow the importance of Shem's descendants? (Hint: read ahead to Genesis 11:10-31. What important person do you note there?)

17. What does Noah say about Japheth?
18. If Shem's descendants will be important, what does verse 27 suggest about Japheth's descendants?
19. What is the overall inference about the descendants of Canaan?
20. When the Bible speaks of Canaanites, what religious practices do you associate with them? (Hint: see Psalm 106:34-38.)
21. How old was Noah when he died?

Genesis Lesson 8: Genesis 10

These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood. Genesis 10:32

1. Read Genesis 10: 2-5.
 - a. How many sons did Japheth have? What were their names?
 - b. How are the descendants of Japheth described in verse 5?
 - c. How does Ezekiel 27:13 add context?
2. Read Genesis 10: 6-20.
 - a. How many sons did Ham have? What were their names?
 - b. What names stand out to you in verses 6-7?
 - c. How do verses 8-12 describe Nimrod?
 - d. What were some famous places which are associated with Nimrod?

- e. What famous prophet did God send to Nineveh?
 - f. According to verse 13, what famous enemy of the Israelites was a descendant of Ham's son Egypt?
 - g. Which people groups are associated with Canaan's descendants?
 - h. Where did the Canaanite clans settle? (Hint: also see Exodus 3:8 and Numbers 13:29.)
3. Read Genesis 10: 21-32.
- a. What general name is given to the descendants of Shem?
 - b. How many sons did Shem have? What were their names?
 - c. Peleg, a son of Eber, is described as "in his time the earth was divided." How might this relate to Genesis 11:9b?
 - d. Where did the clans of Shem settle?

4. Using your Bible's cross-references for the verses in Genesis 10, locate some other verses associated with the clans and places associated with the descendants of Noah. When you read these verses, what does that tell you about the nations of Genesis 10?

5. Read Acts 17:24-27.
 - a. How does this passage relate to Genesis 10?

 - b. Why did God ordain the time and place in which people live?

 - c. How does this passage make you think about the time and place in which Jesus lived?

6. According to Psalm 86:9 and Philippians 2:9-10, what is God's ultimate plan for the nations?

Genesis Lesson 9: Genesis 11: 1-26

The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. ¹¹ But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

Psalms 33:10-11

1. Read Genesis 10:5, 19-20, 31 along with Genesis 11:1-9.
 - a. What clues do you see from Genesis 10 that the content in Genesis 11 may not be placed chronologically in Genesis?
 - b. How does Genesis 11 describe the world?
 - c. Where did the people settle? What ancient country would we associate with this land?
 - d. What did the people do?
 - e. Why?
 - f. How would you describe the people's opinions about themselves?
 - g. How would you describe their relationship to God at this point?

- h. According to Deuteronomy 6:5, Micah 6:8, and Ephesians 4:24, what should be our attitude towards God?

- i. According to Genesis 12:2, 2 Samuel 7:9, and Jeremiah 32:20, who has the prerogative to make someone's name great?

- j. According to Genesis 1:28b and 9:1, what instructions had God given to Adam and Eve and to Noah and his sons?

- k. How did the people's plans in Genesis 11 differ from God's instructions?

- l. How did God react to what the people were doing?

- m. Carefully read Genesis 11:4-5. Who or what were the people trying to reach? What clue do you read that they were not successful in this endeavor?

- n. What did God do?
- o. Why?
- p. What other plans do you think mankind might have contemplated if God had not intervened?
- q. What did God's actions accomplish?
- r. According to verses 8-9, what name was given to the city where the people had attempted to build their tower? How does that relate to the word "babble?"
- s. How does Genesis 11:9b relate to Genesis 3:23-24?

2. Read Genesis 11:10-26.

- a. What do you notice about the ages of fatherhood in this passage?

- b. What are your thoughts about Genesis 6:3 as it relates to Genesis 11:10-26?
 - c. What do you think are the purposes for this detailed genealogy?
- 3. What do the detailed names and places in Genesis 10-11 tell you about God's plans for mankind?
- 4. Consider Genesis 3-11. How does sin advance across the chapters?

Genesis Lesson 1: Genesis 1:1 – 2:3

Lecture

- When teaching or discussing the book of Genesis, it would be easy to get mired into discussion about several topics upon which there is no general agreement in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) or in other Reformed churches. Examples of such topics are:
 - Old earth vs. young earth
 - The length of creation days
- Dating back to the 4th century AD, there have been more than 130 written works about the length of creation days.
- The Westminster Divines were a group of 121 English clergymen, 30 laymen, and a contingent of non-voting Scottish Presbyterians who drafted the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1646.
- Regarding the days of creation, the Westminster Confession of Faith says the following in Chapter 4, Item 1:
 - “It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the display of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make out of nothing, the world, and all things in it whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good.”
- Only 6 Westminster Divines wrote brief commentaries on Genesis 1. These 6 held to a view of 6 24-hour days of creation. While it is very likely that other Westminster Divines held to this same view, the fact that the Westminster Confession of Faith is not more specific on the topic suggests to some scholars that there was a difference of opinion on the subject.
- To this end, in 1998, the PCA commissioned a Creation Study Committee to study the subject and make recommendations. The Committee made its recommendations to the 28th General Assembly on June 21, 2000. A copy of their report and recommendations has been included in my Google Drive to which you have been granted access.
- Here is the recommendation of the Creation Study Committee, as adopted by the 28th General Assembly about creation days:

- “That since historically in Reformed theology there has been a diversity of views of the creation days among highly respected theologians, and, since the PCA has from its inception allowed a diversity, that the Assembly affirm that such diversity as covered in this report is acceptable as long as the full historicity of the creation account is accepted.”
- I leave this topic now with one more quote from the Westminster Confession of Faith from Chapter 1, Item 7:
 - “All things in Scripture are not equally obvious, nor equally clear to everyone”
- Before moving into a deeper discussion of Genesis 1:1 to 2:3, we need to cover a topic which you have already encountered in your lesson questions this week. This is the concept of progressive revelation.
 - Progressive revelation refers to the way the full scope of divine truth unfolds gradually over the course of Scripture.
 -
 - Earlier stages of biblical history present foundational truths, while later portions of Scripture add clarity, depth, and finality.
 -
 - God’s communication of His character, law, and purpose adapts according to humanity’s capacity to receive it at different times in history.
 -
 - The Biblical teachings are consistent.
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 - In your lesson this week, you learned from Genesis 1:1-2 that both God and the Holy Spirit were present at creation. You then read John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:15-17, and Hebrews 1:1-3 which attest to the fact that Jesus Christ was also present at creation. This is an example of progressive revelation.
 - As we continue our study of Genesis, you will also learn more examples of progressive revelation from God’s holy Word.
- One of the lesson questions this week asked you to contrast what you knew about the polytheistic beliefs of ancient civilizations such as the Egyptians and the Canaanites. Let’s take a few moments to look at the creation stories of a few ancient civilizations.
 - The *Enuma Elish* is an ancient Babylonian creation myth. Here’s how creation unfolds:
 - Swirling waters birth the gods.

- Mankind was created to do menial work for the gods so that the gods could rest.
 - Marduk cuts Tiamat into 2 pieces, which results in the creation of the world.
- The *Atrahasis Epic* tells the story of the Sumerian gods.
- The lesser gods decided to rebel against the greater gods because they felt over-burdened with work.
 - Their solution was to create mankind to do the work.
 - They killed the god Aw-ilu, mixed his flesh and blood with clay, and created mankind.
- In Egypt, the creation stories are place-oriented, based on the main cult god at that place.
- In Heliopolis, the god Atum is said to have created himself.
 - Atum then rises from Nu, the primordial waters. From his bodily essence, he created Shu, god of the air, and his sister Tefnut, the goddess of moisture and rain.
 - Shu and Tefnut produced Geb, god of the earth, and Nut, goddess of the sky.
 - Geb and Nut produced Osiris, god of fertility and regeneration; Isis, goddess of motherhood; Set, god of chaos; and Nephthys, goddess of protection.
 - The Egyptian creation myths say little about the creation of animals and mankind. Some Egyptian texts show Khnum or Ptah, the god of craftsmen, fashioning people out of potter's clay.
- Recapping, how do these creation stories differ from Genesis?
- These stories are polytheistic whereas Genesis is monotheistic.
 - The multiple gods typically represent an aspect of nature, such as the sun, moon, or sky.

- Humankind was made from the same substance as the god and his role was to do the menial work the gods rejected and/or to serve the gods.
 - In Genesis, humankind is created ex nihilo (out of nothing) in God's image to tend His creation. God is self-sufficient; he has no needs.
- Let's move into a further study of this week's passage on creation.
- Genesis 1:1 opens with the words, "In the beginning, God." These 4 words make a profound statement:
 - Before anything existed, God was.
 - Genesis 1 does not even make an argument for God's existence.
- The 6 days of creation all follow the same format of creative work during the day followed by evening and then morning.
 - Scholars suggest that God has laid down a pattern for our own daily lives. We too are to have a period of creative work each day followed by a period to rest and recharge ourselves.
 - The one exception to this, as we have seen from Genesis 2:2-3, is the 7th day of creation on which God rested. God is modeling a day of rest for mankind which he will later ordain in Scripture in Exodus 31:12-17.
- It's helpful to look at the days of creation from a functional perspective.
- On Day 1, God spoke light into existence.
 - 1 John 1:5 tells us this:
 - This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.
 - In speaking of the New Jerusalem, Revelation 21:23 tells us:
 - The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.
 - Light is an expression of God Himself. And here we have a 2nd example of progressive revelation.
 - Note that this light was not the sun, as it was not created until the 4th day.

- We see that by separating the light he created from the darkness which existed, God created time itself on the 1st day.
- We also note that God declared that the light he was created was good. As light is an expression of God himself, we see here a characteristic of God's nature.
- On Day 2, God created a vault or firmament to separate the waters above from the waters below it.
 - God called this vault "sky."
 - It's tempting to overlay our modern understanding of the atmosphere against this passage in Genesis. We know that the atmosphere is not solid.
 - A better way to understand this passage is to consider it in functional terms.
 - Functionally, God created a space where birds, animals, and mankind could live.
 - Further, God has created a mechanism for how precipitation was controlled and for how weather operated.
 - Without such a mechanism, too much of the cosmic waters would destroy all life, which is what happened when the heavens opened and precipitated the Flood.
- On Day 3, God gathered the waters below the sky into one place so that dry ground appeared.
 - There is a 2nd act of creation on this day and that is vegetation.
 - Functionally, God has created the mechanism of agriculture.
 - All the plants and trees have seeds.
 - There is dry land, water, light, and precipitation for growth and reproduction.
 - More importantly, the vegetation will be a source of food for the remaining living creatures.
- On Day 4, God created the sun, the moon, and the stars.
 - The sun governed the day, and the moon governed the night.
 - Notice however, that God does not give the sun and moon names. They are referred to as the greater light and the lesser light.
 - These 2 created bodies are not gods being brought into existence, as neighboring cultures' creation stories record.

- What are the functional aspects of the Day 4 creation?
 - There is a socio-religious aspect, since the lights in the sky mark sacred times, days, and years. Think of later religious festivals such as the Sabbath, and the First fruits (from the first grain harvest).
 - The lights gave light on the earth, and they governed time. We can think of this function in terms of a calendar. The Hebrew calendar is lunar based, but also adds a leap month to align with the solar year.
- On Day 5, God created living creatures in the water and the birds of the sky.
 - The Hebrew word used here for water creatures is *tannin* and the ancient Israelite audience would have associated this with the chaos monsters of the deep.
 - Psalm 74:13-14 uses the exact same word, *tannin*, in describing the sea monsters:
 - It was you who split open the sea by your power; you broke the heads of the monster in the waters. ¹⁴ It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan and gave it as food to the creatures of the desert.
 - Near Eastern cosmology had chaos monsters of the sea. According to John Walton, “They were viewed as threats to order, as they inhabited the region that was itself outside the ordered system.”
 - God, on the other hand, turns this cosmology on its head. Notice that, like other days, God declared these creatures of the air and the sea as good.
 - Like mankind, these creatures have the quality of life.
 - Did you pick up that God blessed all these creatures and told them to be fruitful and multiply?
 - After the Flood, God told Noah that everything that moves would be food for him. So, here in Genesis, God has made provisions for that eventuality.
- Day 6 of creation is the momentous day when God creates the pillar of all his creation: mankind.
 - First, God creates livestock, wild animals, and creatures that move along the ground.
 - Notice that while God does not specifically bless these animals and crawling creatures, God does declare all these creatures to be good. This will apply to the serpent who speaks to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3.

- Next, God says in Genesis 1:26-27:
 - Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”
²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
- How should we understand the words “us” and “our” in verse 26?
 - As Christians, it is easy for us to put a Trinitarian interpretation on this verse.
 - However, that is not a concept that the Israelites would have understood from Moses’ writings.
 - Most, but not all scholars think this refers to God’s heavenly court of angels. When angels appear in the Old Testament, they are frequently described as men. They point to Genesis 18-19, where Abraham sees 3 men, 2 of whom are angels and 1 is the Lord, and to Job 1:6 where angels are called “sons of God.”
 - Nevertheless, verse 27 is quite clear when it states that it was God alone who created mankind.
- What does it mean to be created in the image of God?
 - Verses 26-27 are silent on the topic.
 - The term “image of God” is only used 4 times in the Bible: here in Genesis 1 verses 26-27 3 times and once in Genesis 9:6.
 - Verse 26 is careful to state that mankind was created in God’s likeness. Man is not God on earth. God has shared some of his qualities with mankind.
 - Both male and female are created in God’s image and likeness.
 - So, one might understand that we can know something of God by studying his image.
 - According to John Walton, in the Near Eastern world, an image, an idol, carried the essence of the god it represented. The idol was not the god, but the idol accomplished the god’s work. What was man’s work to be?
 - Now it is helpful at this point to again return to the functional, as expressed in verses 26 and 28.

- Man is given the authority to *rule* over God's living creation. We could think of man as God's representatives or vice-regents on earth.
 - Not only that, man and woman are charged with subduing the earth.
 - The Hebrew word for subdue is *kabash*, which means, according to the ESV study Bible, "to bring a people or a land into subjection so that it will yield service to the one subduing it."
 - So, God has shared his quality of authority with mankind.
 - The other point to note here is that only mankind was created in God's image.
 - We will leave the topic of image of God here for now. As you read further in Genesis, see if you notice other verses which help us understand what this phrase means.
- On Day 7, God rested from his creative work.
 - God was not exhausted. Isaiah 40:28 tells us:
 - Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. **He will not grow tired or weary**, and his understanding no one can fathom.
 - Rather, God's resting will serve as an example for God's covenant people. God will later formalize the day of rest, the Sabbath, in Exodus 31:12-17.
 - And Hebrews 4:9-10 reminds us:
 - There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; ¹⁰ for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.

Genesis Lesson 1: Genesis 1:1 – 2:3

**For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them,
but he rested on the seventh day. Exodus 20:11**

1. Read Genesis 1:1-2. Some authors have described these verses as the prologue to Genesis.
 - a. According to verse 1, how did creation begin?
In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1
 - b. Who created?
God
 - c. According to verse 2, what was the earth like?
Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, Genesis 1:2
 - d. According to verse 2, who else was present at creation?
and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. Genesis 1:2
 - e. Read John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:15-17, and Hebrews 1:1-3. According to these verses, who else was present at creation? What was his role?
 - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. John 1:1-3*
 - *The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Colossians 1:15-17*

- In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. ³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. Hebrews 1:1-3
 - Jesus, the Son of God, was present at creation.
 - Through Jesus, all things in heaven and on earth were created.
- f. The word for "God" used in Genesis 1:1 – 2:3 is Elohim. This is a plural word, but when used in the Bible to describe God's actions, the accompanying verb used is singular. How does the word Elohim help your understanding of the persons present at creation?
Elohim describes the 3 persons of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit of God.
- g. Polytheism means the worship of many gods. Think about nations you know about which practiced polytheism, such as the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Greeks, and the Romans. How is the Genesis 1 creation account unique?
- God created out of nothing.
 - No other gods engaged in creation.
 - God created the heavens and the earth, meaning God created everything.
 - In the polytheistic cultures, the gods personified aspects of nature. For example, the sun and the moon were gods.

2. Read Genesis 1:3-2:1. Describe what God created each day.

a. 1st day:

And God said, "Let there be **light**," and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning —the first day. Genesis 1:3-5

b. 2nd day:

And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.”

⁷ So **God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it.** And it was so. ⁸ God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day. Genesis 1:6-8

c. 3rd day:

And God said, “Let the **water under the sky be gathered to one place**, and let **dry ground** appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

¹¹ Then God said, “Let the land produce **vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.**” And it was so. ¹² The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day. Genesis 1:9-13

d. 4th day:

And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶ **God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.** ¹⁷ **God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth,** ¹⁸ to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day. Genesis 1:14-19

e. 5th day:

And God said, “**Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.**” ²¹ So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.” ²³ And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day. Genesis 1:20-23

f. 6th day:

And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. ²⁵ God made the **wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds.** And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

²⁷ **So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.** ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground. ”

²⁹ Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. ³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. Genesis 1:24-31

3. What words are used to describe how God created on each day? Consider also Psalm 33:6,9.

- God created by his spoken word, except for humankind.
- By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth....⁹ For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. Psalms 33:6,9

4. How did God describe each completed creation?

- It was good.
- After he had made everything, including humankind, God described all his creation as very good.

5. Look at the order of creation. What is important about this order?

- Light is created first. Light is necessary for things to grow.
- God separated the waters to create the sky. Now there is a future home for the creatures of the sea and the birds of the sky.
- God gathers the water to one place so that dry ground appears. Dry ground needs to exist for the creatures of the land and for mankind. Further, he creates vegetation on the land, so that there will be food for his future creation.
- God creates the sun, the moon, and the stars to govern time and the seasons. The moon will control the tides of the seas. The seasons will govern the growing and fallow periods for vegetation.
- God creates living creatures in the waters and the birds of the sky.
- God produces living creates on the land.
- God creates humankind to rule over all the other living creatures of his creation.

6. How would you describe God's creation?

- Unique
- Powerful
- Orderly/methodical
- Intrinsically good
- Everything has a function and a purpose.
- God makes a provision for everything before the need arises; example: vegetation for food.

7. What is unique about God's creation of human beings? How do you interpret Genesis 1:27?

- God created human beings in his own image.
- Human beings were created, not spoken into existence.
- Man is unique, special, and not just another animal.
- Being created in the image of God means that we share certain characteristics of God such as reason, morality, and creativity.

8. How does this uniqueness affect how you view yourself and other people?

- All of God's people are created in his image.
- We should see God in others and respect everyone.

9. What function did God assign to human beings? What does this mean for us today?

- Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." Genesis 1:26
- Rule over implies stewardship and care for the rest of God's creation. It does not imply destruction of it.
- We should not exploit, waste or despoil God's creation.

10. What other instructions did God give to human beings?

Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Genesis 1:28

11. What do you think is meant by the word "subdue" in verse 28?

Humankind is charged with developing the earth to make it useful.

12. How did God make provisions for his creation in verses 29-30?

- Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. ³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” Genesis 1:29-30
- God makes provisions for food for his creation.

13. On the 6th day, how is God’s description of his creation different than for other days? Why?

- God declared all his creation as *very* good.
- Creation was complete. (Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. Genesis 2:1)
- Humankind, created in God’s image, was created on day 6.

14. Read Genesis 2:2-3. What did God do on the 7th day? Why?

- By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. Genesis 2:2-3
- God rested.
- God had finished all his creative work.

15. What is unique about the 7th day?

- God blessed the 7th day.
- God made the 7th day holy.

16. The 7 days of the Genesis 1 creation account serve as a model for mankind. How do God's commands to Moses in Exodus 31:12-17 explain this model?

Then the LORD said to Moses, ¹³ "Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy.

¹⁴ "'Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it is to be put to death; those who do any work on that day must be cut off from their people. ¹⁵ **For six days work is to be done, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, holy to the LORD.** Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day is to be put to death. ¹⁶ The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. ¹⁷ **It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed** Exodus 31:12-17

17. Reviewing the Genesis 1 creation account, what insights do you have about God's attributes, God's nature, and his creation?

- God pre-existed his creation. God always was.
- God is inherently good and so is his creation.
- God is all powerful. With the exception of mankind, everything came into existence through God's spoken word.
- God cares about his creation.
- God sustains his creation.
- God is orderly.
- God is relational.
- God is other-worldly.
- God is not physical. God is spirit.



Genesis Lesson 1

Genesis 1:1 – 2:3

Genesis 1 Interpretation

- Easy to Get Mired Into Discussion About Topics with No General Agreement
 - Old Earth vs. Young Earth
 - The Length of Creation Days
- Over 130 Written Works About the Creation Days Dating Back to the 4th Century AD
- Westminster Divines
 - 121 English Clergymen; 30 Laymen; a Contingent of Non-Voting Scottish Presbyterians
 - Drafted the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1646

The Westminster Divines



John Rogers Herbert; 1847

Westminster Confession of Faith

- Chapter 4, Item 1: “It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the display of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make out of nothing, the world, and all things in it whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good.”
- Only 6 Westminster Divines Wrote Commentaries on Genesis 1, Holding to a View of 6 24-hour Days of Creation
- Others Likely Held the Same View
- The Wording of This Item Suggests to Some Scholars That There Was a Difference of Opinion on the Subject

PCA Creation Study Committee

- Commissioned in 1998
- Recommendations to the 28th General Assembly on June 21, 2000
- Recommendation on the Subject of Creation Days: “That since historically in Reformed theology there has been a diversity of views of the creation days among highly respected theologians, and, since the PCA has from its inception allowed a diversity, that the Assembly affirm that such diversity as covered in this report is acceptable as long as the full historicity of the creation account is accepted.”
- Westminster Confession Chapter 1, Item 7: “All things in Scripture are not equally obvious, nor equally clear to everyone..”

Progressive Revelation

- The Manner in Which the Full Scope of Divine Truth Unfolds Gradually over the Course of Scripture
- Earlier Stages of Biblical History Present Foundational Truth
- Later Portions Add Clarity, Depth, and Finality
- God's Communication of His Character, Law, and Purpose Adapts According to Humanity's Capacity to Receive It
- The Bible Teachings are Consistent
- Your Example from This Week: God, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ Were All Present at Creation

Ancient Civilizations' Creation Stories

Babylon

Swirling waters birth the gods; mankind was created to do menial work for the gods so that the gods could rest; the god Tiamat was cut into 2 pieces, resulting in the creation of the world

Sumeria

The lesser gods rebelled against the greater gods because they felt over-burdened with work; mankind was created to do the lesser gods' work; mankind was created from a dead god's flesh and blood mixed with clay

Egypt

The god Atum created himself; gods/goddesses of air, rain, earth, sky, fertility, motherhood, chaos, protection; the god Ptah fashioned people out of potter's clay

Marduk



Marduk; copyright: the
Wellcome Collection;
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Sumerian/Akkadian gods



Akkadian cylinder seal, circa 2300 BC depicting the deities Inanna, Enki, and Utu, 3 members of the Anunna; copyright: wikimediacommons.org

Egyptian gods



Horus, Osiris, and Isis; 22nd Dynasty; copyright: Louvre Museum, Paris, France

Ancient Civilizations' Creation Stories vs. Genesis

- Polytheistic vs. Monotheistic
- Multiple gods Represent an Aspect of Nature, Such as the Sun, Moon, or Sky
- Humankind Made from the Same Substance as the god; His Role Was to Do the Menial Work or to Serve the gods
- In Genesis, Humankind Created *Ex Nihilo* (Out of Nothing) in God's Image to Tend His Creation
- God is Self-sufficient; He Has No Needs

The Genesis Preamble

- “In the Beginning, God”
- Before Anything Existed, God Was
- Genesis 1 Makes No Argument for God’s Existence

The 6 Days of Creation Format

- Creative Work During the Day; Evening; Morning
- Scholars Suggest God Has Laid Down a Pattern for Our Own Daily Lives
- The One Exception is the 7th Day of Creation When God Rested
- God is Modeling a Day of Rest for Mankind
- Later Ordained in Exodus 31:12-17
- Look at the Days of Creation from a Functional Perspective

Day 1

- God Spoke Light into Existence
- 1 John 1:5
- Revelation 21:23
- Light Is an Expression of God Himself; Progressive Revelation
- Not the Light of the Sun (Day 4)
- The Separation of Light from Darkness = God Creating Time
- God Declared Light Was Good; a Characteristic of God's Nature

Day 2

- God Created a Vault/Firmament and Called It Sky
- It's Tempting to Overlay Our Understanding of the Atmosphere Against This Passage; We Know the Atmosphere Is Not Solid
- Functionally, God Created a Space Where Birds, Animals, and Mankind Could Live
- God Created a Mechanism for Controlling Precipitation and Weather
- Otherwise, Too Much of the Cosmic Waters Would Destroy All Life, As It Did When the Heavens Opened and Precipitated the Flood

Day 3

- God Gathered the Waters Together; Dry Ground Appeared
- A 2nd Act of Creation: Vegetation
- Functionally, God Created the Mechanism of Agriculture
- All the Plants and Trees Have Seeds
- Dry Land, Water, Light, and Precipitation for Growth and Reproduction
- The Vegetation Will Be a Source of Food for the Living Creatures

Creation Day 3



Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, woodcut circa 1851-60; Die Bibel in Bildern, 1860; copyright: commons.Wikimedia.org

Day 4

- God Created the Sun, Moon, and Stars
- The Sun Governed the Day; the Moon Governed the Night
- God Does Not Give the Sun and Moon Names; Instead, the Greater Light and the Lesser Light
- These 2 Bodies Are Not gods Being Brought into Existence
- Functional Aspects:
 - Socio-religious; the Lights Mark Sacred Times, Days, and Years; Think Later Religious Festivals of the Sabbath and First Fruits
 - The Lights Governed Time; Think of a Calendar; Hebrew Calendar Was Lunar Based With a Leap Month to Align with the Solar Year

Day 5

- God Created Water Creatures and Birds
- Hebrew Word for Water Creatures Is *Tannin*; Hebrew Audience Would Have Associated This with Chaos Monsters of the Deep
- Psalm 74:13-14
- Near Eastern Cosmology Had Chaos Monsters of the Sea, Viewed as Threats to Order (John Walton)
- God Turns This Cosmology on Its Head; These Creatures of the Air and Sea Are Good; They Have the Quality of Life
- God Blessed All the Creatures and Told Them to Be Fruitful
- God Has Made Provisions for When He Told Noah That Everything That Moves Would Be Food for Him

Day 6

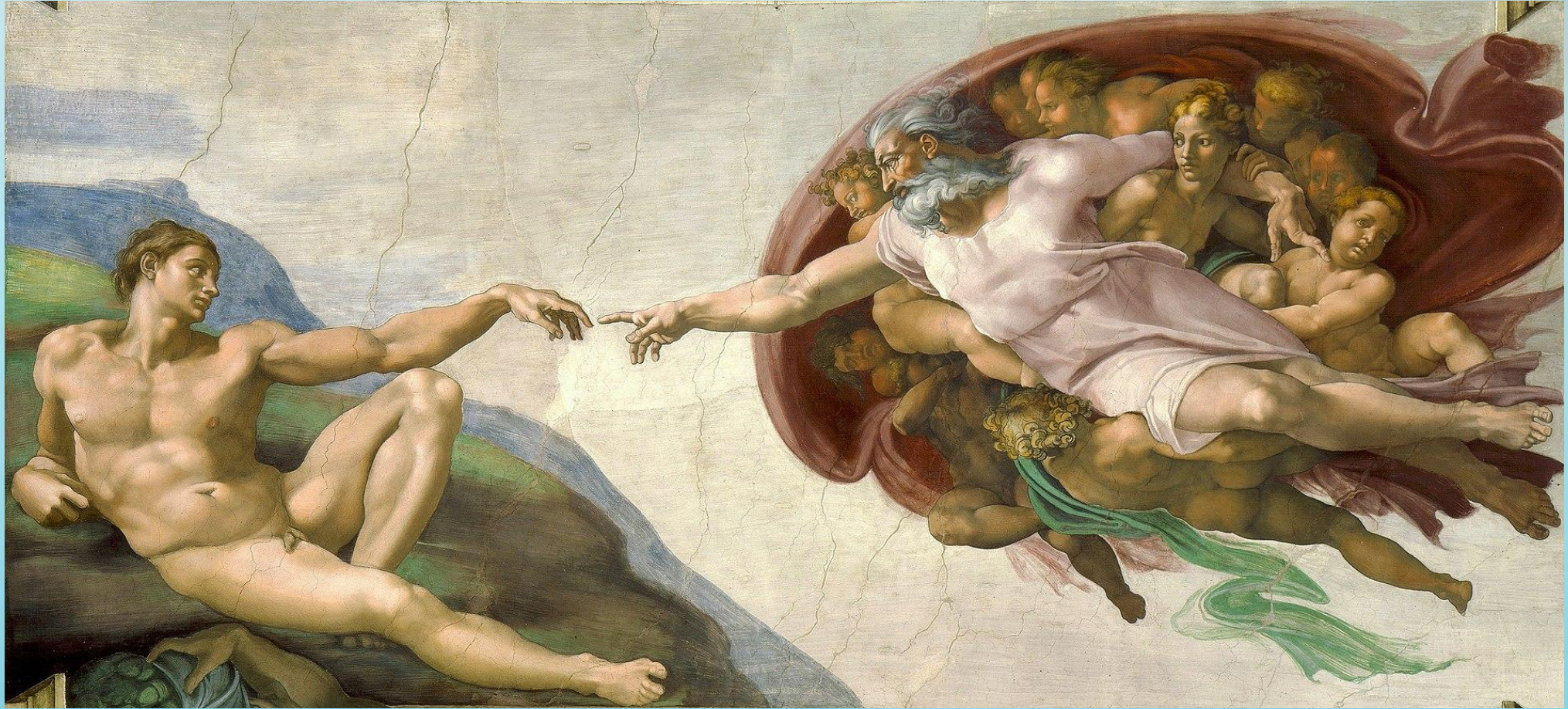
- First, God Creates Livestock, Wild Animals, and Creatures That Move Along the Ground
- Though There Is No Blessing, All These Creatures Are Good; Applies to the Serpent of Genesis 3
- Genesis 1:26-27
 - “Let Us Make Mankind in Our Image, in Our Likeness”
 - “God Created Mankind in His Own Image”
 - “Male and Female He Created Them”

God Creating Heaven and Earth



Rafaello, undated, circa 15th/16th century; Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia; copyright: meisterdrucker.de

God Creating Mankind



Day 6 – Understanding “Us” and “Our”

- As Christians, We Want to Put a Trinitarian Interpretation on This Verse
- Not a Concept the Israelites Would Have Understood
- Most Scholars Think This Refers to God’s Heavenly Court of Angels
- Angels in the Old Testament Are Frequently Described as Men
- Genesis 18-19; Job 1:6
- Genesis 1:27 Is Quite Clear; God Alone Created Mankind

Created in the Image of God

- Verses 26-27 Are Silent
- This Term Used Only 4 Times in the Bible; Genesis 1:26-27 (3 Times); Genesis 9:6
- Created in God's Likeness; Man Is Not God on Earth
- God Has Shared Some of His Qualities with Mankind
- Male and Female Are Created in God's Image and Likeness
- John Walton: A Near Eastern Image/Idol Carried the Essence of the god It Represented; It Accomplished the god's Work

Created in the Image of God

- What Was Man's Work to Be?
- Functionally
 - Man Given Authority to Rule Over God's Creation
 - Think of Man as God's Representatives or Vice-regents on Earth
 - Man and Woman Charged with Subduing the Earth
 - Hebrew Word for Subdue is *Kabash*; Bring a People or a Land Into Subjection So that It Will Yield a Service to the One Subduing It
 - God Has Shared His Quality of Authority with Mankind
 - Only Mankind Was Created in God's Image

Day 7

- God Rested from His Creative Work
- God Was Not Exhausted
- Isaiah 40:28
- God's Resting Will Serve as an Example for God's Covenant People
- Formalized as the Sabbath in Exodus 31:12-17
- Hebrew 4:9-10