

Bible Stories for Adults

Creation

Genesis 1-2

Opening

Gathering: Give an example of something in life that can only be explained through faith in God.

Today's Focus: To recognize God's powerful and loving hand through His creation of the universe, our world, our selves and each other.

Key Verses: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* Genesis 1:1

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our own likeness, ... and let them rule ... over all the earth." Genesis 1:26

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Bereishit

Tanach - Acronym for *Torah, Nevi'im, Kesuvim* = Law, Prophets, Writings

Why did the Jews call the five volume set of books the *Torah*?

Luke 24:44 = The Law of Moses - Hebrew for Law is *Torah*

Pentateuch - Greek for *five-fold* = Greek name for first 5 books

Septuagint - Latin for *seventy* = OT translated Hebrew to Greek in 300 BC by 70 (or 72) scholars

Bereishit - Hebrew for *In the beginning* = Jew's name for Genesis, Title is first word

Genesis - Greek for *origin, coming into being* = Title describes contents

Originated from Greek word for generation = 10 generations in book: 5 of all people, 5 of Jews

Genesis 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 37:2

Who Wrote Genesis?

Jews and Christians have historically named Moses as author & compiler of the Pentateuch

Most of Genesis clearly originated around 2000 BC (time of the patriarchs)

What are some examples where the Bible implies that Moses wrote the Torah?

John 5:46 (Exodus 17:14; Joshua 8:31-32; Acts 15:1) = Jesus said, *Moses ... wrote about Me*

What are a couple of examples that point to possible involvement in Genesis after Moses' time?

Genesis 35:20 = *... to this day that pillar marks Rachel's tomb*

Genesis 36:31 = *... before any Israelite king reigned*

Some scholars over the last 300 years have divided the Pentateuch into 4 sources, 3 in Genesis

J - 50% of Genesis, J sections use YHWH as name for God (Jehovah or Yahveh)

E - 35% of Genesis, E sections use Elohim as name for God (God)

P - 15% of Genesis, P sections added to J & E and used to merge into our current Genesis

Recent scholars have argued for one skillful author who purposely used repetition & variation

Does it matter who wrote Genesis and when?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 = No, God breathed (inspired) it for the purpose of teaching us

Should we be concerned that some parts might have been added or changed?

2 Peter 1:20-21 = No, it was written by God as He wanted it despite who & when

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In the Beginning (*Genesis 1:1*)

What do the first few words of Genesis tell us?

- **In the beginning** = There was a beginning
- In the beginning **God** = One divine God, not gods; God was already there at the beginning
- In the beginning God **created** = Purposely originated, no random chaos or evolution
- In the beginning God created **the heavens and the earth** = Everything we know

The Song of God's Creation (*Genesis 1*) = Prelude to God's Story, Opening song

What is the literary style of Genesis 1? (see page 6) = Poetic prose; not pure poetry, not narrative

What is the message of each verse part?

- "*And God said*" (Psalm 33:6-9, John 1:1-3) = All it took was God's Word
- "*Let there be*" (Isaiah 55:11) = God wanted what he was creating
- "*And it was so*" (Jeremiah 10:12-13) = No question of God's power
- Particulars are restated
- God gives names or blessings (Psalm 145:17) = God loves & owns his creation
- "*And God saw that it was good*" (Psalm 135:6) = Creation is good, God is pleased
- "*And there was evening and there was morning*" (Isaiah 25:1) = God's plan steps

The Days (*Genesis 1:1-25*)

Where did God get the original matter for creation?

Genesis 1:1 = He created it

How is the earth described in its beginning?

Genesis 1:2 = Formless & empty

How did God give form to the chaos to create order? = Complete days 1-3 of chart

Genesis 1:3-5 = Separated light from darkness

Genesis 1:6-8 = Separated sky from waters

Genesis 1:9-13 = Separated land from sea

How did God fill His creation? = Complete days 4-6 of chart on board

Genesis 1:14-19 = Populated lights in day and night

Genesis 1:20-23 = Populated birds in air & fish in sea

Genesis 1:24-25 = Populated animals on land

<u>Forming From Chaos</u>	<u>Filling the Empty</u>
1 = Light / Darkness	4 = Lights in Day / Night
2 = Sky / Waters	5 = Birds in Air / Fish in Waters
3 = Land from Sea	6 = Animals on Land

What does this pattern say about God and His creation?

Isaiah 14:24 = He had a plan, didn't just haphazardly put things together

Was the order important?

Psalm 104:13-14 = Yesterday supports today's creation; created laws of nature

What is significant of "*according to its kind*" in verses 11, 21 and 24?

1 Corinthians 4:7 = God made diversity on purpose

How long were the days in Genesis 1? (see page 5 on *Science and God* for example explanation)

Psalm 90:4 = Depends on from whose perspective - 24 hours from God's perspective

Why did God allow this to be a confusing mystery?

Ephesians 3:4-5, 10-12 = God's mysteries are accepted by faith, revealed as He desires

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Man (*Genesis 1:26-30*)

What else did God create on the sixth day?

Genesis 1:26-30 = Man, the crown of His creation

What does it mean to be created in God's image?

Ephesians 4:24 = *be like God in true righteousness & holiness*

Why is man's life so sacred?

Genesis 9:6 = *for in the image of God has God made man*

Why did God say "Let **us** make man in **our** image"? = Ideas include: Triune God; royal "we"; angels

Isaiah 64:8 = God our Father is the potter, we are the clay

John 1:1-3 (Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16) = Christ was with God, through him all were made

Genesis 1:2 = The Spirit of God hovered over formless earth

Creation Completed (*Genesis 1:31-2:3*)

What responsibilities did God give to ...

- the sun and moon (16-18)? = Govern day & night

- the animals (22)? = Be fruitful & increase

- man and woman (26, 28)? = Be fruitful; fill, subdue & rule earth

- plants (29-30)? = Provide food for man & animals

How did God feel about His creation after it was finished?

Genesis 1:31 = It was very good, perfect, as He desired

How did God celebrate His creation?

Genesis 2:1-3 = He rested – Sabbath is Hebrew word for rested or ceased, verb form

Twice states this was work He had done = Stresses that God did it, didn't just happen

How do we remember this today?

Exodus 20:8-11 = We rest on 7th day just as God, Keep it holy in remembrance

What is missing from the last stanza? = *there was evening & morning*

Why? = There is not a 2nd week of creation. Creation is complete.

Purpose of Genesis 1

Is Genesis 1 intended to explain the details of creation?

Ecclesiastes 3:11 = No, man cannot fathom or begin to understand what God did

What is the purpose of Genesis 1?

Deuteronomy 3:24 = To show God's majesty and supreme power & love

How is Genesis 1 used to dispel beliefs of other religions?

- There are many gods

= One God

- There are male and female gods

= One God, no gender

- Gods evolved or were created by other gods

= God always existed

- Creation resulted as offspring from gods

= God created

- Creation occurred violently

= Created carefully in love

- Creation is chaotic

= Chaos was put into order

- Creation is evil

= It was good, very good

- Sun, moon & stars are gods or are holy residences of the gods

= Only parts of God's creation

- Man was an afterthought of creation

= Crown of God's creation

- Man was made to be slaves, servants or pawns of the gods

= Made in image of God

- Man "worships" to influence the gods

= We worship to thank and praise God

- Order relies on man's rituals to encourage gods

= God created laws of nature in love

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Crown of God's Creation (*Genesis 2:4-7*)

What is the literary style of Genesis 2? = Same phrase starts new family histories in Genesis (10)

Genesis 2:4a = Narrative; Belongs more with Chapter 3 than Chapter 1

How much of the creation story does Chapter 2 repeat? = No crop yet tilled by man, other plants lived

Genesis 2:4b-6 = None, defines point of reference during creation

If not creation, then what is the focus of Genesis 2?

Genesis 2:7 = Creation of the Crown of God's Creation – man

What is the only other thing we see God putting His breath into?

2 Timothy 3:16 = His Word

Garden of Delight (*Genesis 2:8-17*)

How do we see the special love and concern that God had for this creature?

Genesis 2:8-9 = Built a garden just for man, *Eden* is Hebrew for *delight* or *enjoyment*

Where was this beautiful garden? = See map - Other two rivers likely wiped out by the flood

Genesis 2:10-14 = Probably where Tigris & Euphrates begin in southern Turkey (a real place)

Was this man that God created supposed to just sit back and *delight* in what God gave him?

Genesis 1:28; 2:15 = Had responsibilities to multiply, make use, take charge & take care

Was this man given "free rein" over what he did in God's Garden and how he did it?

Genesis 2:16-17 = He was given "free rein" up to a specific limit - freedom within limits

Man is a Social Creature (*Genesis 2:18-25*)

What was missing in God's perfect creation?

Genesis 2:18 = A partner for mutual support and companionship

How did God show the need to Adam (the man) before just filling it?

Genesis 2:19-20 = Paraded all of the animals before him to be named

Adam is Hebrew for *man*. *Adamah* is Hebrew for *ground*.

How did God make a helper that Adam would accept as equal and not just another animal?

Genesis 2:21-23 = He made Eve from Adam - flesh of my flesh, same as me

What are the three parts of God's plan for man and wife? = 1 flesh to 2 to 1

Genesis 2:24 = *Leave his father & mother; Be united to his wife; Become one flesh*

How did these partners relate to each other at the beginning?

Genesis 2:25 = There was no shame because there was no sin

Closing Prayer

Response

1. How is God's almighty and creative hand evident in the world around me?
(*Job 38-41; Psalm 19:1-6; Jeremiah 10:12-13; Romans 1:20*)
2. How should I respond when others say that the Bible has been proven false by science?
(*Job 36:24-26; 37:5; Proverbs 3:5-7, 19; 8:22-31; 1 Corinthians 1:19-25*)
3. Do I take serious my responsibility as the crown of God's creation? How should I change?
(*Genesis 1:26, 28; 2:15; Psalm 8:3-8; Micah 6:8*)
4. What freedoms have God given me to enjoy within what limits?
(*Genesis 1:16-17; John 8:34-36; Romans 6:15-23; 1 Corinthians 6:12; Galatians 5:1, 13-25*)
5. How do the Bible's comments on marriage affect my relationships with my spouse and others?
(*Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 7:1-17; Ephesians 5:21-33*)

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Dr. Gerald Schroeder (physicist), *The Science of God*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1997

Moses Maimonides (medieval philosopher): *Conflicts between science and the Bible arise from either a lack of scientific knowledge or a defective understanding of the Bible.*

Schroeder's Golden Apples

A word well spoken is like apples of gold in bowls of silver. Proverbs 25:11

“Seen from a distance, only the silver bowl [Bible text] and its beauty are noticed. With closer inspection [deep study] the more valuable apples of gold [quiet truths] are discovered within.”

First Golden Apple - **The Six Days That Preceded Adam and Eve**

Genesis 2 and rest of Bible count days from creation of Adam and Eve
Genesis 1 counts 6 days from the creation of the universe

Second Golden Apple - **Understanding Time**

Einstein's Law of Relativity - Flow of time at a location is a function of its gravity (G) and velocity (V)
The duration between clock ticks in a high-G or high-V environment is longer than in low-G or low-V

Third Golden Apple - **The Many Ages of Our Universe**

The age of anything (including the universe) will differ per the location where it is measured

Fourth Golden Apple - **A Universal Clock**

Archaeology confirms that dates given in Bible (Genesis 2 and on) are from the earth's perspective
Genesis 1 cannot use earth-based time because there was no earth during the first two days
The only perspective available for the entire Six Day period is that of the total universe

Fifth Golden Apple - **When the Universe Was Small**

The “big bang” produced tremendous energy which allowed matter to form ($E = m c^2$)
For each doubling of universe's size, relative time halves (distance between radiation wave crests)

Sixth Golden Apple - **The Ages of Our Universe**

Redshift factor (z) is ratio of observed stretched wavelength relative to its emitted wavelength
Redshift observed today is 10^{12} - Works out to 15.75 billion years looking *back* from today
Genesis 1 states time looking *forward* from the creation - 15.75 billion years works out to 6 days

Bible's Perspective <u>Looking Forward</u>		Earth's Perspective <u>Looking Back</u>		<u>Main Events of the Period</u>	
Since Creation Duration (days)	(hours)	Before (billion) (years)	Duration (billion) (years)	<u>Bible's Description</u>	<u>Scientific Description</u>
1	24	15.75	8	Creation of the universe Light separates from dark	Universe created in big bang Electrons bond to nuclei, emitting light Galaxies start to form
2	24	7.75	4	Heavenly firmament forms	Milky Way disk forms; Sun forms
3	24	3.75	2	Oceans & dry land appear First life (plants) appear	Earth cools & liquid water appears First life immediately appears (bacteria and photosynthetic algae)
4	24	1.75	1	Sun, moon & stars become visible	Atmosphere becomes transparent Oxygen from photosynthesis
5	24	0.75	0.5	First animal life abundant Reptiles Winged animals	First multi-cellular animals Waters swarm with animal life Winged insects appear
6	24	0.25	0.25	Land animals; mammals Humankind	Massive extinction; Land repopulated Hominids and then humans

Fossil record shows that all animal phyla appeared almost simultaneously 530 million years ago. All further development was confined to variations within each phylum. No new phyla have appeared since that explosion of life.

This burst of life can only be explained by God creating it.

There were no “billions of years” for the amino acids to combine randomly into life.

Genesis 1

In the beginning	1	And God said,	20
God created the heavens and the earth.		"Let the water teem with living creatures,	
Now the earth was formless and empty,	2	and let birds fly above the earth	
darkness was over the surface of the deep,		across the expanse of the sky."	
and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.		So God created the great creatures of the sea	21
And God said,	3	and every living and moving thing	
"Let there be light",		with which the water teems,	
and there was light.		according to their kinds,	
God saw that the light was good,	4	and every winged bird	
and he separated the light from the darkness.		according to its kind.	
God called the light "day",	5	And God saw that it was good.	
and the darkness he called "night".		God blessed them and said,	22
		"Be fruitful and increase in number	
		and fill the water in the seas,	
		and let the birds increase on the earth."	
		And there was evening,	23
		and there was morning -	
		the first day.	
And God said,	6	And there was evening,	23
"Let there be an expanse between the waters		and there was morning -	
to separate water from water."		the fifth day.	
So God made the expanse and separated the water	7	And God said,	24
under the expanse from the water above it.		"Let the land produce living creatures	
And it was so.		according to their kinds:	
		livestock,	
		creatures that move along the ground,	
		and wild animals,	
		each according to its kind.	
		And it was so.	
		God made the wild animals according to their kinds,	25
		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.	
And God said,	9	Then God said,	26
"Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place,		"Let us make man in our image,	
and let dry ground appear."		in our likeness,	
And it was so.		and let him rule	
		over the fish of the sea	
		and the birds of the air,	
		over the livestock,	
		over all the earth,	
		and over all the creatures that move along the ground."	
		So God created man in his own image,	27
		in the image of God he created him;	
		male and female he created them.	
Then God said,	11	God blessed them and said,	28
"Let the land produce vegetation:		"Be fruitful and increase in number;	
seed-bearing plants		fill the earth and subdue it.	
and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it		Rule over the fish of the sea	
according to their various kinds."		and the birds of the air	
And it was so.		and over every living creature that moves on the ground."	
		Then God said,	29
		"I give you every seedbearing plant on the face of the whole earth	
		and every tree that has fruit with seed in it.	
		They will be yours for food.	
		And to the beasts of the earth	30
		and all the birds of the air	
		and all the creatures that move on the ground	
		- everything that has the breath of life in it-	
		I give every green plant for food."	
		And it was so.	
		God saw all that he had made,	31
		and it was very good.	
		And there was evening,	
		and there was morning -	
		the sixth day.	
And God said,	14	Thus the heavens and the earth were completed	2:1
"Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky		in all their vast array.	
to separate the day from the night,		By the seventh day	2
and let them serve as signs		God had finished the work he had been doing;	
to mark seasons and days and years,		so on the seventh day	
and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky	15	he rested from all his work.	
to give light on the earth."		And God blessed the seventh day	3
And it was so.		and made it holy,	
		because on it he rested	
		from all the work of creating that he had done.	
		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.	
		God set them in the expanse of the sky	17
		to give light on the earth,	
		to govern the day and the night,	
		and to separate light from darkness.	18
		And God saw that it was good.	
		And there was evening,	19
		and there was morning -	
		the fourth day.	