

# Unit 1: Creation in the Whole Bible

## Lesson 1 | September 5, 2021 God the Creator

**Study Text:** Genesis 1:1 through 2:3; Psalms 96:5; 139:13–18; Jeremiah 10:11

**Central Truth:** God is both Creator and Sovereign over all, yet He is intimately involved in the lives of His people.

**Key Verse: Genesis 1:1**

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (KJV).

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (NLT)

### Learning Objectives

- Students will know and understand that the universe is the creation of God, who reveals His power and glory in it.
- Students will develop a growing sense of awe and reverence for the God who created us, that we may better know Him as Creator and Redeemer
- Students will live as creatures of God in dependence on and relationship with Him.

## Introducing the Lesson

**Say:** This lesson begins a unit of study that examines the topic of creation as it is woven throughout the Scriptures. **Today, we are discussing the Agent of creation, God.** In our world, many believe creation to be a phenomenon that came about by some cosmic accident. As believers, it is important that our faith be firmly grounded in the conviction that God is Creator—a reality that will, in turn, establish that we are accountable to Him and can live in relationship

### Opening Activity—First Thoughts About Creation

*Ask: Did you ever as a child (or adult for that matter) lie out on a blanket on a clear starry night and look up at the stars? What do you remember about the thoughts and questions that you had when you first experienced the magnitude of creation?*

**Say:** As we observe God’s creation, common questions that come to mind are: **“Where did all those stars come from? How far are they away? What’s beyond what I can see? How big is the universe?”** For some it may not have been the night sky that caught your attention. Perhaps it was seeing the ocean for the first time. Others may have been deeply moved by viewing a magnificent mountain vista. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The psalmist David may well have been looking at a starlit sky when he wrote, **“When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you set in place—what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them?”**

## **Part 1—The Creator God God Has Always Existed**

Genesis 1:1–2

**[Gen 1:1 KJV] 1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.**

**Say:** If we look around us at the beauty and complexity of nature or at the miracle of birth, the obvious conclusion is that there is a God who created it all. Those who claim to believe in a natural, God-less origin of the universe are hard-pressed to explain how such complex systems could come into being without an intelligent Creator. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

### **Resource Packet Item 1: How Did It All Begin?**

Distribute the information sheet and discuss the content as time permits. Talk about some of the mistaken explanations students have heard for how the universe began, as well as why these would violate our belief in God as sole Creator. Note also that the concept of God as a passive Creator largely unconcerned with His creation also violates the teachings of Genesis 1.

The belief that the one true God exists and that He alone is the Creator of the universe is at the very foundation of a Christian worldview. This belief is ultimately what separates Christians from other religions, as well as from atheism. As we move on from Genesis 1, everything we learn, embrace, and submit to is predicated on the fact that an omnipotent (that is, all-powerful) and sovereign God created us and everything around us.

**Yet it all starts with that profound statement of Genesis 1:1–2 (KJV): “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”** When there was nothing else, God was there. Then, when He began to create, He was not a passive observer who simply set things into motion. He was entirely involved in the act and process of creation.

**Yet, do you realize that the Bible nowhere attempts to prove the existence of God? This reality is simply accepted as fact from the beginning: “In the beginning God . . . .”** However, the Bible also presents a humanity predisposed to belief in

some form of deity or even multiple gods (Psalm 96:5; Jeremiah 10:11). Humanity left to its own fallen self does not come to the conviction that there is no God (atheism) but instead tends to embrace a distortion or perversion of the God that reveals himself in creation (see Romans 1:20–32).

The Bible presents only the wicked and fools as having the audacity to declare that there is no God (Psalms 10:4; 14:1). Yet we also encounter the prophet Isaiah, who gave us the Lord’s response to pagan idolatry by saying, “**There is no other God**” (Isaiah 44:6; 45:5, NLT). The apostle Paul echoed these words when addressing the idolatrous Corinthians. **To the pagan there are many so-called gods and lords, but the Christian believer knows that there is only one God (1 Corinthians 8:4).** Moreover, the one true God is the Creator: “But for us, **There is one God, the Father, by whom all things were created, and for whom we live. And there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things were created, and through whom we live**” (1 Corinthians 8:6, NLT). Creation bears witness to the undeniable fact of God’s existence.

### ***Discuss***

? When was your earliest memory of being aware of God?

? Do you think belief in God is something within the human heart, or is it conditioned by something external? Explain.

## **God Is Distinct From Creation**

Psalm 96:5; Jeremiah 10:11–12

**[Psa 96:5 KJV] 5 For all the gods of the nations [are] idols: but the LORD made the heavens.**

**[Jer 10:11-12 KJV] 11 Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, [even] they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. 12 He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.**

**Say:** Our view of God greatly impacts our worship of Him. There is a tendency to make our view of Him too small. We may see Him as our Judge, our Provider, or our Friend, but He is so much more! He is more than we can comprehend, and we must be cautious not to limit our view of Him to the attributes we can grasp with our finite minds. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**Our one and only Creator-God must never be confused with or seen as part of His creation.** We must, then, be aware of a false teaching called pantheism, which identifies God as the sum total of all that exists in the universe. Another false teaching is animism, which makes God equivalent to all animate life in creation.

**But the Bible never equates the world nor anything in it as a part of God, not even the spiritual or non-material realities. Instead the psalmist declares, “The gods of other nations are mere idols, but the Lord made the heavens!” (Psalm 96:5, NLT).**

The term “idols” points to something that is worthless or good for nothing. **These objects did not create the heavens and earth, but idols instead will someday vanish from the earth (Jeremiah 10:11). By contrast, the one true God created all that exists by His power, preserves it by His wisdom (verse 12), and exercises sovereign control over all creation (verse 13).** God stands distinct from creation and is the sovereign Lord over it (see Acts 7:47–50; 17:24–26).

### ***Discuss***

? What does fallen humanity do naturally in response to the revelation that is seen in creation? (See Romans 1:18–25.)

? Humanity is religious by nature. So, why do you think people worship gods of their own making?

## **Part 2—Created With Order and Design**

### **God Provides the Necessities for Life**

Genesis 1:3–19

**[Gen 1:3-19 KJV] 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that [it was] good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. 6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. 7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which [were] under the firmament from the waters which [were] above the firmament: and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. 9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry [land] appear: and it was so. 10 And God called the dry [land] Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that [it was] good. 11 And God said, Let the earth**

bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, [and] the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed [is] in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. 12 And the earth brought forth grass, [and] herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed [was] in itself, after his kind: and God saw that [it was] good. 13 And the evening and the morning were the third day. 14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: 15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. 16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: [he made] the stars also. 17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, 18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that [it was] good. 19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

Say: God's incredible planning in creation reflects His love for humanity. It reveals His power. As we observe what God has made within and around us, we see that He is the powerful and sovereign God and thereby worthy of our worship. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**The creation account in Genesis 1:3–19, reveals that creation itself was intricately ordered and designed by God. The days of creation were not arbitrary or incidental, but a carefully planned progression that allowed for interdependent systems (biological, geological, ecological, etc.) to take shape, supporting all the elements existing within creation—both animate and inanimate, plant and animal.**

#### **Resource Packet Item 2: The Days of Creation**

Distribute the work sheet, and complete it together as a class as you move through the remainder of this Main Point. Note that there are clear relationships between the various days (i.e., days one and four encompass the creation of light and division of light and darkness, and then the creation of light-bearers).

Looking at verses 3–19, we see that God began creation with the basics of the earth itself, including the division of day and night. He then separated the land from the water and created vegetation to grow on the ground. Next, He placed the sun and moon in the

sky. All of this was in preparation for the remainder of His creation. Both animals and human beings would need what He created during these first four days.

### **Discuss**

? How does the complexity, order, and design that we observe in the world and universe not only confirm the existence of God, but also tell us what God is like?

## **Order and Design Reveal God's Glory**

Genesis 1:20–25

**[Gen 1:20-25 KJV] 20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl [that] may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. 21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that [it was] good. 22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. 23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. 24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. 25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that [it was] good.**

**Say:** Not only does the order and design of creation speak of the power of God. It also declares His glory and His worthiness of our worship. **An all-powerful God who created such a beautiful and orderly universe deserves to be glorified by humanity—His crowning achievement created in His image.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**After preparing the earth with light and darkness, water and land, plant life, and the sun and moon, God then created creatures to live on the earth, in the water, and in the air (Genesis 1:20–25). And, after this passage, He created the highest order: human beings. They were created in His image and would be a reflection of His glory.**

The psalmist invited his readers to look at the heavens as the work of God's fingers (Psalm 8:3) and marveled at how God stoops down to care for humanity in creation. As the handiwork of God, we can observe, "The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship" (Psalm 19:1, NLT). **Everything God made, culminating in humanity, reveals His power, splendor, and glory.**

### **Discuss**

- ? What parts of God's creation most powerfully declare His glory to you? Why?
- ? Do space exploration and other scientific studies increase your belief in God as Creator? Explain.

## **Part 3—Created in God's Image Humanity Reigns Over Creation**

Genesis 1:26–28

**[Gen 1:26-28 KJV] 26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his [own] image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.**

**Say:** Humanity is certainly unique in creation, in that God has created us in His own image. And, furthermore, **He has placed upon us the responsibility to “reign” over creation. Genesis 1 helps us better understand the meaning and significance of these two important realities.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

V (Play the video available at [RadiantLifeCurriculum.com/Adult](http://RadiantLifeCurriculum.com/Adult).)

**In Genesis we read that humankind is unique among God's creation because of this distinction:** “Then God said, ‘Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground’” (Genesis 1:26, NLT). **Thus, humanity shares in the dominion over God's creation—a creation that itself is a revelation of God's majesty and power.** Paul explained, “For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. **Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities— his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God**” (Romans 1:20, NLT). **This is what theologians call general revelation—the universal witness of creation, available to be seen by all humanity.**

But Genesis 1:26–27 also informs us of the nature of humanity as holding the highest position in all that God created. **This speaks to our role of stewardship in reigning over creation. Verse 28 states that humanity is to “subdue” (KJV) or “govern” (NLT) creation. Ruling over creation might be described as a responsibility to promote and protect the well-being of the rest of nature (much like a ruling governor would do for the kingdom he or she governs).**

To say that humanity is made in God's image points to human beings as being rational and morally responsible. This concept can also point to our spiritual relationship with God before humanity fell into sin and that relationship was fractured. The terms translated "image" and "likeness" are similar in the Hebrew language. "Image" makes reference to a close copy of something, and "likeness" is a word of comparison. In short, human beings are uniquely like God, but are not identical to God, and certainly they are not God.

### ***Discuss***

? In practical terms, what do you think it means to say that humanity rules over the rest of creation and has dominion over creation? What are some specific examples of how this happens?

? How does it make you feel to know that you have been created in the image of God, as described in Genesis 1:26–27?

## **God Knows Us Deeply and Completely**

Psalm 139:13–18

**[Psa 139:13-18 KJV] 13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully [and] wonderfully made: marvellous [are] thy works; and [that] my soul knoweth right well. 15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, [and] curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all [my members] were written, [which] in continuance were fashioned, when [as yet there was] none of them. 17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! 18 [If] I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.**

**Say:** Humanity has a uniquely close relationship with God because we are made in His image. This is both a great blessing and a great responsibility! The fall of Adam and Eve brought sin into this world, leaving us desperately in need of a Redeemer. But the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ made it possible for us to be restored into a proper relationship with God. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**Only humanity, unlike any other part of creation, is created in the image and likeness of God. Theologians refer to this as the *Imago Dei* (a key Latin phrase meaning the image of God). How is it possible to bear the image of God? The Genesis story tells us that mankind owes its existence to the creative "breath" of God. "Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living**



person” (Genesis 2:7, NLT). This fact alone distinguishes humanity from everything else in God’s creation. As a result, the breath of life given to us from God helps to explain why the psalmist was confounded when he wrote, “What are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them? Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority” (Psalm 8:4–6, NLT).

The high status God gives to humanity is unique and unprecedented. **The divine image certainly distinguishes us from all the rest of God’s creation, and the psalmist restated that humanity was given dominion and rule over God’s creation. This privilege also carries with it the unique potential to reveal God’s majesty and glory to an unparalleled extent and degree. Elsewhere the psalmist contemplated the Creator’s work in creating him. Human life is an incomprehensible work that spans from formation in the womb to every detail of earthly life (see Psalm 139:13–18). The contemplation of the Creator’s work floods our minds with praise and wonder.**

**Despite the grandeur of creation, the New Testament tells us that humanity’s privileged place in creation was greatly compromised by sin. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23, KJV). Sin has marred the image of God in humanity, and what is left is a corrupted distortion of what the Creator intended. Nevertheless, in salvation God has acted to remedy that situation. Through the sacrifice of Christ, fallen humanity has not only regained access to that glory, but through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, has put on a new nature and been renewed—enabling them to learn to know the Creator and become like Him (Colossians 3:10). Consequently, “all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image” (2 Corinthians 3:18, NLT).**

[2Co 3:18 NIV] 18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

[2Co 3:18 NLT] 18 So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord--who is the Spirit--makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

### ***Discuss***

? Read John 1:14,18. What do you think the Bible refers to when it makes reference to “the glory of God”?

? How would you describe the ways in which you, as someone made in God’s image, are different from the rest of creation?

### **Resource Packet Item 3: Biblical Creation: an Overview**

Distribute the information sheet and highlight the three different creations that are described. Encourage students to keep the sheet in their Bibles for reference during the remaining lessons of this unit.

## **What Is God Saying to Us?**

**Say:** When we read the Scriptures connected with this lesson, we should come away with one conviction: There is one true God who is the sovereign Creator of all things in heaven and on earth—a reality clearly revealed in Genesis 1. All other theories and philosophies regarding the origins of the universe are false. God is also a personal being, who has chosen to reveal himself in and through His creation. He has sought to reveal himself to humanity, which bears His image and thus experiences a unique relationship with the Creator. When we contemplate this special relationship, we are drawn to ponder the purpose for which we were created—to reveal the glory of God in all we undertake. This can only be done by those who have accepted His redemptive love and seek to respond in faith and love to their Creator and Redeemer.

## **Living in Out Ministry in Action**

- Look at yourself and others as special creations of God.
- Treat those around you as people created by God for His purpose.
- Choose one thing you can do this week to treat the world around you with respect and careful stewardship in response to our Creator.

## **Daily Bible Readings**

### **Monday:**

God Gave Order to Creation.

Psalm 8:3–8

**[Psa 8:3-8 KJV] 3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; 4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? 5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. 6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all [things] under his feet: 7 All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; 8 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, [and whatsoever] passeth through the paths of the seas.**

### **Tuesday:**

God Spoke Creation Into Existence.

Psalm 33:6–9

**[Psa 33:6-9 KJV] 6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. 7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. 8 Let all the earth**

**fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. 9 For he spake, and it was [done]; he commanded, and it stood fast.**

**Wednesday:**

God Alone Is Creator.  
Isaiah 45:5–8

**[Isa 45:5-8 KJV] 5 I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else, [there is] no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: 6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that [there is] none beside me. I [am] the LORD, and [there is] none else. 7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these [things]. 8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.**

**Thursday:**

God Is Above All Creation.  
Acts 7:47–50

**[Act 7:47-50 KJV] 47 But Solomon built him an house. 48 Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, 49 Heaven [is] my throne, and earth [is] my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what [is] the place of my rest? 50 Hath not my hand made all these things?**

**Friday:**

God's Image Renewed in Us.  
Colossians 3:9–13

**[Col 3:9-13 KJV] 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new [man], which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond [nor] free: but Christ [is] all, and in all. 12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also [do] ye.**

**Saturday:**

God Created All.  
Revelation 4:9–11

**[Rev 4:9-11 KJV] 9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that**

liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11  
Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for  
thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were  
created.