

Beginnings Study and Discussion Questions

Lesson Two: Creation: The Beginning of Human History – Genesis 1:26-2:3

Overview

- 1) Read Genesis 1:26-2:3 carefully. The New Testament describes God as being one in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), also known as the Trinity. Which words in Genesis 1:26-2:3 seem to suggest the plurality of God? **“Us” and “Our” (1:26)**
- 2) List the phrases in the following passages that describe the involvement of the different persons of the Trinity in creation: Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30; Malachi 2:10; John 1:1-3, 10; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:15-16; Hebrews 1:2. **The Spirit of God hovered over it (Genesis 1:2); the Spirit creates and renews the earth (Ps 104:30); we are all created by one Father (Malachi 2:10); all things were made through “the Word” (Jesus), and without Him, nothing was made (John 1:1-3, 10); all things came through one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 8:6); all things in heaven and on earth were created by and for Jesus (Colossians 1:16); God made the universe through His Son (Hebrews 1:2).**
- 3) According to the New Testament, every individual who receives Christ as Savior by faith is made a “*new creation*” (2 Corinthians 5:17).
 - a) Which persons of the Trinity are involved in regenerating a believer in Jesus Christ? See John 3:8 and Ephesians 2:5 with Colossians 2:13 (assume “God” refers to the Father). **The Holy Spirit (John 3:8) and God the Father (Ephesians 2:5 and Colossians 2:13)**
 - b) Do you see evidence in your own life that “the old has gone, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17)? If so, what has changed? **Personal sharing**

Reread Genesis 1:26-28.

- 4) What clues does Genesis 1 give about the implications of mankind being made in God’s image? In other words, based on Genesis 1 alone, in what ways are we like Him? **The statement, “Let us make mankind in our own image” (my emphasis [1:26]) suggests that God is a relational being. Likewise, man is relational. Secondly, God is the sovereign Ruler of the universe and He said that He was making man in His own image “so that they may rule...” (my emphasis [1:26]). Third, God’s creativity proves His vast intelligence and His proclamation that it was “good” reveals that He is a moral being. Likewise, He made us intelligent, moral beings. More generally, Genesis 1 indicates that mankind was created with nobility.**
- 5) Use any general knowledge about God that you have from the Bible to suggest other ways in which human beings are created in God’s image. **In a limited and imperfect way, we share God’s “communicable attributes (life, personality, truth, wisdom, love, holiness, justice), and so have the capacity for spiritual fellowship with Him.”¹**
- 6) How does God’s command to man in verse 28 differ from His command to the animals in verse 22? **Man is additionally instructed to “subdue” and “rule over” the earth.**
- 7) Read Psalm 8. What is your present domain (area of influence)? Considering that you are made in God’s image, how can you better “rule” over it? Be as specific as possible. For example, are there people on whom you can pronounce words of blessing this week, specific decisions or tasks for which you need to look to God, etc.? **Personal sharing**

Reread Genesis 1:29-31.

- 8) How do these verses describe the diet of the man in the Garden of Eden? **Originally, man ate seed-bearing plants and seeded fruit from trees (a vegetarian diet). Some Bible students believe that God also gave meat as food for mankind from the beginning. Others believe that man's diet did not include meat until after the Flood (Genesis 9:3).**
- 9) Verse 31 says, "God saw all that He had made, and it was very good."
- a) According to the following passages, what does God *see*? Genesis 6:5; 2 Chronicles 16:9, 24:22; Job 38:41-39:2; Psalm 17:1-3, 94:1-11, 139:7-24; Jeremiah 23:23-24 **God sees mankind's sin (even our secret sins) and the inclination of the thoughts of our hearts (Genesis 6:5). God sees the hearts of those who are committed to Him (2 Chronicles 16:9) and (judges) men's actions (2 Chronicles 24:22). God sees all that is happening in the wilds of the earth (Job 38-39). God sees and examines our hearts (Psalm 17). The Lord sees the wickedness of those who oppress His people (Psalm 94). God sees our physical location wherever we are. He also "sees" our emotional, mental, and spiritual condition at every moment. He saw our unformed bodies inside our mothers' wombs and sees all the days ahead of us before they come. He sees our thoughts and our sin (Psalm 139). God sees us wherever we are; no secrets are kept from Him (Jeremiah 23).**
- b) In light of this information, what can you deduce from God's declaration that everything as He originally made it was "very good"? **As originally created, the world and all that was in it were unmarred, in their visible and invisible parts. The implication of this for human beings is purity of soul (thoughts, knowledge, and intentions), freedom from illness and heartache, and unlimited potential for intellectual growth and moral development.**
- 10) Creation is presently fallen from its original state. We will read about how this happened in Lessons 4 and 5.
- a) What is God's ultimate plan for His creation (see Acts 3:21, Romans 8:18-22, Ephesians 1:9-10, and Revelation 22:1-5)? **Restoration (Acts 3:21, Romans 8), bringing all things in heaven and on earth under Christ's authority (Ephesians 1), and God's children living in His physical presence (as in Eden) and reigning with Him forever (Rev 22)**
- b) What is God's ultimate plan *for you* (see Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:4, 12; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 2:20-21; and Hebrews 13:20-21)? How does this encourage you today? **God's ultimate plan is to restore our nobility and equip us for everything good by making us holy and Christ-like, so that we will be useful to Him and prepared for any good work, to the praise of His glory. Personal sharing**

Reread Genesis 2:1.

- 11) Consider the "vast array" ("all the host" or "all the details") of God's creation.
- a) Which parts of His creation do you enjoy most? Why? **Personal sharing. Make sure those who share follow up by explaining why they answered as they did.**
- b) How does pondering and enjoying the wonders of God's creation influence your thinking about who God is and who you are? **Personal sharing**
- 12) Is there anything you have consciously (or subconsciously) considered God incapable of changing or helping you with? Allow God to speak to you about this as you read Genesis 2:1 and Isaiah 51:12-16. Then write out your response to Him about whatever you hear Him telling you (sharing your answer in your discussion group will be voluntary). **Personal sharing**

Reread Genesis 2:2-3.

- 13)** Read Colossians 1:16-17 (especially 17b) and Hebrews 1:3a. Considering the complete and ongoing dependence of God’s creation on Him, in what sense did God “rest” on the seventh day? **God never ceases from “holding all things together” (Col 1:17). God rested on the seventh day in the sense that He ceased His creative activity and enjoyed what He accomplished. He did not rest because He was weary. He rested because His creation was complete (“Sabbath” means “cessation” or “to sit still”).**
- 14)** What do you learn about the purpose of the Sabbath from Genesis 2:3, Exodus 20:8-11, Isaiah 58:13-14, Matthew 12:1-12, Mark 2:27-28, and Hebrews 4:1-11? **The Sabbath is a day to set apart (make holy) by ceasing from our usual activities and work (Genesis 2:3). We should also give those under our authority freedom from their usual work (Exodus 20:10). It is not a day to do as we please. The Lord promises to bless us with joy if we delight in it and honor it (Isaiah 58). The Sabbath was not made to burden (enslave) us, but given to us as a gift (Mark 2). Jesus said that we ought not to withhold good from others or stop feeding ourselves on the Sabbath. God cares more about our attitude toward the Sabbath than about our activities on that day (Matthew 12). The Sabbath is to serve as a symbolic reminder of God’s gift of salvation, in which we cease from striving to save ourselves by works and from looking for meaning in life apart from God. It reminds us that we can only enter a relationship with God through Christ. We rest in the provision Jesus has made for our eternal life (Hebrews 4).**
- 15)** How could you make the gift of the Sabbath more meaningful for yourself and anyone else in your household? **Personal sharing**

ⁱ Ross, Alan P. (1983). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Ge 1:24–31). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.