

Week 1: Creation

Title: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth

Objective:

- Bible Study Method: Scripture Interprets Scripture
- The Beginning
- Participation of all Hypostases of the Trinity in Creation
- Minor Apologetics
- Memorize the order of creation
- Do not discuss the Making of Man in the sixth day or the Image of God - that will be covered in depth in week 2

Resources:

- Fr Daoud Lamei on the Character of Adam
 - Arabic with English notes below
 - <https://notes.morcous.com/books/genesis/page/character-of-adam-genesis-1-3>
- Fr Tados Yacoub Malaty - Genesis Commentary
 - <https://www.dropbox.com/s/zpat4ujj5q6p7o6/Genesis%20%28Small%29%20-%20Father%20Tados%20Yacoub%20Malaty.pdf?dl=0> (Short one)
 - <https://www.dropbox.com/s/f6o1ujr3kcj7wxm/Genesis%20-%20Father%20Tados%20Yacoub%20Malaty.pdf?dl=0> (More Details)
- See St Basil on the Hexaemeron
 - <https://www.dropbox.com/s/zfglzanla8t2jo/046%20St%20Basil%20-%20Exegetic%20Homilies.pdf?dl=0>

Reading:

- Genesis 1-2:7

Structure:

- Read Genesis 1:1
 - What is "the beginning"
 - This can be explained by talking about what did you do before Bible Study today? School. Before that? Sleep. Before that? Before that? Before that? Until the day of your birth... before that? Your parents birth... before that? Until the Creation of the world... before that? That's the beginning.

- God created time - even the word "before" or "after" only exist within time... before God created time, there was no "before" or "after" - this is the beginning.
- Since God created time, God is outside of time and not bound by time
 - Imagine it like a movie or a video - I can play, rewind, fast-forward, etc. I can even edit it. But when I rewind it, my life doesn't rewind with it. When I fast-forward, my life doesn't move with it. I live outside of that timeline.
 - God sees the universe like a timeline and He can see past, present and future.
- St Augustine:
 - "But even if we believe that God made heaven and earth at the beginning of time, we should certainly realize that there was no time before the beginning of time. For God also made time, and thus there was no time before he made time. Hence, we cannot say that there was a time when God had not yet made anything. For how could there be a time that God had not made since he is the maker of all time? And if time began to be with heaven and earth, there cannot be found a time when God had not yet made heaven and earth. When they say, "Why did He suddenly decide?" they speak as if some time passed during which God produced nothing. But a time could not pass that God had not already made, because he cannot be the producer of time unless he is before time."

- Who is "God"

- Hebrew

- Genesis, which was written in Hebrew, uses the Hebrew word "Elohim" which is plural (anything that ends in -im in Hebrew is plural like Cherubim and Seraphim)
- The verb for "created" is singular
- "God" refers to the Trinity Who is Three in One and One in Three

- Technique: Scripture Interprets Scripture

- The Father created all things through the Son in the Holy Spirit at the beginning
- Proverbs 8:22-9:5
- John 1:1-3
- John 5:17
- Colossians 1:15-18
- Hebrews 1:1-2
- John 8:25
- Revelation 1:8
- Some notes on these passages here:

<https://notes.morcous.com/books/genesis/page/genesis-11>

- Read Genesis 1:2

- This is the first symbol of Baptism: Water and Spirit

- The Spirit of God is the Holy Spirit
- Read Genesis 1:3-5 - 1st Day
 - What does it mean “God said?” Does God have a mouth or vocal chords? And who did God say to? Who was God talking to? “God said” is a way for us to understand that God’s creation was by the Word (and who is the Word of God?) God was not telling someone else “let there be light”
 - God gave the command and the command was itself the act (St Basil).
 - The word of God is His will. (St Ambrose)
 - What are "Days"
 - Evening and morning were the first day – scientists believe that there were millions of years of darkness followed by millions of years of light. Does the Scripture disagree? What is "Day"?
 - A day is 24 hours because that's how long it takes the earth to do a full rotation relative to the sun... but the sun was created in the fourth day... It was probably thousands or millions of years.
 - Remember what is written in 2 Peter: “One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” – God has different timing.
 - Even the Hebrew word for day here is ambiguous and could mean different time periods.
 - What came first? Water or Light?
 - Water and then Light
 - Science agrees with this!
 - What is the "Light" that God created?
 - How is there light without a sun? The real question is... where does the sun gets its light?
 - Did God make darkness? Darkness is the absence of light
- Read Genesis 1:6-8 - 2nd Day
 - What is the firmament? The Atmosphere
 - The waters below are oceans, seas, rivers, etc.
 - The waters above are clouds, evaporation, etc.
- Read Genesis 1:9-13 - 3rd Day
 - If you look at a map, it even looks like all the land came out from under the water (e.g. Pangea)
 - How did the grass, herbs, trees, etc. survive without the sun?
 - God's Creation happened in the beginning, but was setup to be fruitful and multiple (e.g. herb that yields seed, fruit tree that yields fruit whose seed is in itself)
- Read Genesis 1:14-19 - 4th Day
 - The first three days are complemented by the second three days... e.g.

- On the 1st day, God created light. On the 4th day, the Sun and Moon to reflect that light.
- On the 2nd day, the firmament and the waters. On the 5th day, the birds and the fish.
- On the 3rd day, the land and the grass/herbs. On the 6th day, animals and mankind.

- Many civilizations worshipped the sun and the moon, but Moses makes it clear that God created the sun and the moon and was before them and is greater than them
 - Many civilizations also named the sun and moon for their gods. Moses refrained from calling them sun and moon, but rather "two great lights in the heavens"

- "Let them be for signs and seasons"
 - Some people think this means horoscopes and astrology
 - The signs and seasons are night and day, seasons, years, feasts, weather, etc.
 - St Basil discusses this at length

- God's design is for sun and moon to teach us day and night - day is for work and play; night is for sleep

- Read Genesis 1:20-23 - 5th Day
 - Fish and sea creatures to populate the sea
 - Birds to populate the air
 - The animals are also called to be fruitful and multiply
 - God created each animal "according to its kind"
 - He didn't create one kind and let it go through an evolutionary process to form all the other kinds, but He created each one according to its kind

- Read Genesis 1:24-25 - 6th Day (Animals)
 - Same with the land animals - each one according to its kind, and called to multiply

- Read Genesis 1:26-31 - 6th Day (Man)
 - We will discuss the making of man in depth next week
 - For now, know that God made Man on the 6th Day AFTER all the rest of the Creation
 - Man is the most important of all of God's creation
 - Like when a husband and wife are expecting a baby - they spend 9 months preparing the house, the nursery, the sharp corners and the electrical, baby showers, gifts, diapers, etc. and THEN the baby finally comes.
 - God prepared the earth, sun, moon, stars, seas, plants, trees, fish, birds, animals, and THEN created Adam

- Read Genesis 2:1-3 - 7th Day
 - God rested doesn't mean that He went and shut the door and slept... But it means that He rested from Creation. But He never stopped working - watching over us, taking care of us. The whole Scripture, He is there and He is talking and He is doing stuff.

- God stopped the work of Creation and let the earth run itself. He made the trees, herbs, plants, animals and man able to multiply on their own
- Imagine a mother who after she gives birth, she finally gets to rest. To rest from pregnancy and carrying a baby and worrying about the pregnancy. But she now has to start motherhood. God did not rest from Shepherding His people.
- "But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." (John 5:17)
- Read Genesis 2:4-7 - Summary of Creation
 - Moses starts Chapter 2 by reiterating and summarizing the Creation account in Chapter 1

Key verse(s):

- "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1)

Review questions:

1. When did God create the heavens and the earth? **In the Beginning**
2. Who is Genesis talking about when it says "God" in verse 1? **The Trinity and all three Persons of the Trinity**
3. When God names things, what does this indicate? **His Sovereignty**
4. When God created the heavens and the earth and all things in them, what adjective is used to describe them? **Good**
5. What did God create on each day of Creation?
 - Light
 - Firmament that separates the waters
 - Land
 - Sun, Moon and Stars
 - Fish and Birds
 - Animals and Men
6. What is one proof that the days of Creation don't refer to 24-hour periods?
 - **The 24-hour period comes from a single rotation of the earth relative to the Sun. The Sun was made in the fourth "day"**
 - **Hebrew word for day here is ambiguous and could mean different time periods**
 - **"One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Peter 3:8)**
7. On the seventh day, what did God do? **He rested**
8. What does it mean that God rested? Did He stop working? **He stopped the work of Creation but continues to work in our lives as the Lord Jesus said "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working" (John 5:17)**
9. What day are we living in now? **The Seventh Day**

Homework:

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