

BIBLE STUDY - DAY 1

THE MAJESTY OF GOD'S CREATION (GENESIS 1:1-2)

The biblical account of creation begins so simply, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Though the statement is so brief, it speaks volumes about who God is, and by implication, who we are. The phrase "in the beginning" refers to the beginning of time as we know it. However, for God there was no beginning because He existed before the beginning. God is eternal and not bound by time. He not only created the universe but also the reckoning of what we call time.

God created. He made the universe and every living thing in it. That means that God is not only Creator but sovereign over everything and everyone He created. The apostle Paul wrote that God's "invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what He has made." (Rom. 1:20) Notice that Paul not only referred to God's "eternal power" but also to His "divine nature," His deity. Who else but God could create the heavens and the earth?

GOD'S FINAL ACT OF CREATION AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

(GENESIS 1:26-31)

As you read through Genesis 1, you see how God deliberately created a place that could sustain life. Then He created all kinds of living things—plants and animals—to live on the earth. He performed one final act of creation. He made mankind. Notice the plurals in verse 26: "Us ... Our ... Our." To whom was God speaking? Verse 2 says that the Spirit of God was present during creation. In Colossians 1 Paul wrote that Jesus "is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For everything was created by Him, in heaven and earth." (Col. 1:15-16b) All three members of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—were involved in the process of creation. The act of creation was that awesome.

While everything God created is wonderful and amazing, He created mankind in a unique way. God made man—both male and female (v. 27)—in His own "image" (vv. 26,27) and "likeness." (v. 26) Like animals, we have physical bodies. However, God made us unique from the animals in ways that make us like Him. Clearly, God did not mean that we resemble Him in some physical way since God is a spirit (John 4:24) and does not have a physical body. What makes us like God and unique from animals is that, like God, we have a spiritual nature. This spiritual nature allows us to connect to, relate to, communicate with, or to perceive God and His glory and truth. The thought of being able to communicate with the God who created us is mind-blowing. But the even more amazing thought is why He created us that way. God gave us spiritual natures because He wants to have a loving relationship with us—like a father with his children. (Jer. 3:19; Matt. 5:16; 6:9)

THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S PLAN FOR CREATION

(JOHN 1:1,14)

The fact that Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1 start with the same phrase—"In the beginning"—is worth noticing. The Holy Spirit led John to connect his gospel message about Jesus with God's act of creating "the heavens and the earth." (Gen. 1:1) John went on to emphasize Jesus' direct role in creation, "All things were created through Him." (John 1:3) John's point was to show his readers that Jesus was present before the creation of the world, which obviously means that Jesus, like God the Father, is eternal.

John referred to Jesus as "the Word" because he knew that term would suggest a deeper meaning to both his Jewish and Greek readers. In the Genesis account of creation God spoke the world into existence. Psalm 33:6 echoes this thought. Other Old Testament passages that refer to the power of God's Word include Psalm 107:20, Isaiah 55:11, and Jeremiah 23:29. John wanted to catch the attention of both Jews and Greeks and to show them that Jesus is the eternal Word of God because He embodies all the power and wisdom of God. Not only was Jesus "with God" before time began ("in the beginning"), but He "was God." He was (and is) fully God as much as the Father (and the Holy Spirit) are God—divine, eternal, sovereign.

John first wanted to show his readers that the man they knew as Jesus was another person of the Godhead. However, he also wanted them to know that Jesus was at the same time a human being. In Philippians 2, Paul wrote that before Jesus came to earth He existed "in the form of God"—in the complete likeness of God—but then left heaven to put "on the likeness of men." (Phil. 2:6-7) Why did Jesus do that? Why did He leave heaven and come to suffer and die on the earth?

John said when Jesus came, people were able to see His divine glory, "the glory as the One and Only Son from the Father." (1:14) How did people see Jesus' glory? They saw it in His miracles, heard it in His unique teaching, and watched it in His love, mercy and compassion demonstrated in the way He treated sinners. Though all the people who saw and heard Jesus had the opportunity to see His glory, some refused to see. However, many did receive Him and believed in His name. John said that Jesus gave to those who believed "the right to be children of God." (John 1:12) That was the relationship God intended when He created mankind. That's why God gave each of us a spiritual nature. And that's why God sent Jesus from heaven to be His agent "full of grace and truth."

ACTIVITIES

GOD CREATED

Instructions: List significant details you find about God and His creation in the passages.

Majesty of God's Creation—Genesis 1:1-2

Significance of God's Final Creation—Genesis 1:26-31

Fulfillment of God's Plan for Creation—John 1:1,14

THE WORLD NEEDED ONE OF YOU

How COOL is it that
the same God who
created mountains
and oceans
and galaxies
looked at you
and thought
the world needed
one of you, too.

-Unknown

How do you express your
gratitude to such a God?

How does observing His
creation encourage you to
worship Him?

How have you responded to
God's plan for you?