

GENESIS

The Book of Foundations

Creation and the Worship of God

- Is all of mankind obligated to worship God? Why or why not?
- Is the non-Christian who never heard of God liable for his knowledge of God? Explain.

Man's perspective of God, the world and man is largely formed from the truths of Genesis 1 to 2:3. By studying these major concepts in light of the great works of God, our worship of God will deepen and inspire greater obedience and personal evangelism.

Objectives:

- Understand what the scriptures say about the creation of the world.
- Show why every person is responsible to worship God.
- Give evidence that the healthy Christian is consciously leaning upon God for both his physical and spiritual needs.
- Recognize that God is free to use creation to serve His own purposes.

Introduction and Review
 A) The Worship of the Creator
 B) The Meaning of Creation
 C) Creation Lessons on God.
 D) God and the World's Religions Assignment



A) Worship of the Creator

The glorious attributes of God are clearly projected into a permanent record in the Genesis creation account: God's power and eternal nature, His love, beauty and goodness, His order and purposes. No doctrinal statement is as powerful as the record of God's mighty works in Genesis 1. Let's note three special reasons we should worship Him with our whole heart, mind and soul.

• God is our Maker, Designer and Provider

God is interested in our lives. He desires the increase of blessing in our lives and has created a world to provide fulfill that goal (God does have other goals as well).

- As our Maker, God brought us into existence.
- As our Designer, He has seen through all the details of our lives.
- As our Provider, He adequately provides for all our genuine needs.

• God is our Purpose

Man is expected like the rest of creation to completely follow along with God's plan. Genesis 1 breaks through the many barriers man has put up excusing his obedience by presenting how intimately He is involved in our lives.

God is not just an abstract thought. He is deeply involved in our lives by first equipping us for His mission and then calling us to fulfill His purpose.

Our life's purpose is to conform to His purpose. This intimate relationship with man is extended much further by the special way man was made able to communicate and closely relate with God (more in Genesis 2). God designed man to live according to His will not against it.

• God is our Deliverer

The problem of man's discontent with God's will does not appear until Genesis 3. There man fell and was cast from God's presence. Everything good was stripped from him. One would think their fall would end everything. After all, God did say that man would die.

Instead we find God providing clothes for man. We see that God made a promise to them for some kind of deliver. We see that God still patiently worked with man through early history – all to our complete amazement. This is what the rest of Genesis records, indeed, even the whole of scriptures until The Deliverer would come, the Promised Messiah, even Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Man's greatest knowledge will come from understanding his life in relationship with God's purpose for him.
 Man's greatest peace will come from living in harmony with God's purpose for his life.**

THE MEANING OF CREATION

The glorious creation account is a record of God's works. All of it was and remains to be good.

"The LORD is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works." (Psalms 145:9).

Wherever we turn, we see the awesome power and design of God. Only in later years with powerful telescopes, satellites and precise computer-enhanced microscopes are we beginning to see the true magnificence of His works. All these marvelous designs swirl about our lives providing more and more evidence of the glory of God.

FORMED	FILLED
<p>Day #1 LIGHT (Genesis 1:1-5)</p> <p>Created light. Separated light from darkness (4).</p>	<p>Day #4 LUMINARIES (Genesis 1:14-19)</p> <p>Created great (sun) and lesser light (moon). Created stars also.</p>
<p>Day #2 SKY & SEAS (Genesis 1:6-8)</p> <p>Created an atmosphere. Separated waters from waters (6). (Expanse seems to be atmosphere or sky).</p>	<p>Day #5 BIRDS & FISH (Genesis 1:20-23)</p> <p>Filled the sea with creatures . Created sea monsters. God created sky creatures.</p>
<p>Day #3 LAND (PLANTS) (Genesis 1:9-13)</p> <p>Creation of dry land (continent). Separated waters from land (sea). Earth sprout vegetation/trees with seeds.</p>	<p>Day #6 ANIMALS AND MAN (Genesis 1:24-31)</p> <p>Created land creatures: walking/crawling. Created man in God's image. Created male and female. Charged man to rule the sky, seas and land. God's provision for man and animal alike.</p>
<p>Day #7 THE SABBATH REST (Genesis 1:2:1-3) God completed the heavens and earth (form) and their hosts (fill). God rested on 7th day from His work. God blessed and sanctified the 7th day.</p>	

Four theories that have to do with creation.

~~■ **Gap Theory**~~

The Gap theory states there is a gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 explaining long ages. Genesis 1:1 starts a whole section up to 2:3. Every verse begins with the same popular Hebrew conjunction (waw- see right).

■ **Literal days**

- (1) Usage of the Word Day
- (2) Day before Light
- (3) The Sabbath Command
Exodus 20:8-11

Whenever the ordinal number is used with day, it is always the 24 hour day referred to

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work"

~~■ **Framework Hypothesis**~~

The days acts as literary markers which in turn form a framework in which they understand the whole creation passage. But Jesus didn't say it was make believe! Mark 10:5-6.

■ **Modern Science**

Modern science is based upon three principles. Interestingly, all three had its origin in or were consistent with Christian teachings.

- 1) The world is real and the human mind is capable of knowing real nature.
- 2) The structure of science is based upon cause and effect.
- 3) Nature is unified.

CREATION LESSONS ON GOD

Our understanding of God, the world and man largely comes through the Genesis creation account. We are not saying there are no other teachings, but when we think of the overall picture Genesis 1:1 - 2:3 is invaluable to our clear understanding. We will look at six lessons:

-1) God's Name

The word 'God' is used 34 times alone in Genesis 1:1-2:3. Some suggest this plural Hebrew word 'Elohim' is used to indicate the Trinity (plurality in unity). Others suggest it is a plural of majesty.

-2) God's Word

God is separate from nature. God is not creation. The universe was something He created. The creation did, however, come from God's Word. God spoke, and it came into being. The phrase 'Then God said, Let ...' occurs eight times; the phrase 'God said' occurs ten times.

-3) God's Thoughts

Five times we see the phrase 'God called.' He was aiding us in our understanding of things. Once He calls something in its descriptive way, man is obligated to use this understanding to think and define those objects.

God's thoughts become our thoughts. Man is called to shape his thoughts after God's.

We need to note, though, that in 2:19 and 2:23, God actually gave man the authority and privilege to 'call' the animals their own names. In 2:23 man actually names 'woman.' This granting of man such authority should caution us to the power and influence of words.

-4) God's Power

Nothing awes us so much as God's ability to do what He says. This is real authority and power. Two words stand out in this Genesis 1:1-2:3 passage: created (barah) and made ('asah). Create gives us the sense of 'out of nothing' while 'made' speaks more of form and shaping.

When we understand our mighty God, it humbles us that this same powerful God would deal so graciously and kindly with His creatures.

"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9).

-5) God's Goodness

Seven times the phrase, 'God saw that it was good' is used to describe what God thought of His work. (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). If what a person produces characterizes his inner self, then we can truly say that God is good. God is good because He does good things. He sees His work as that which is absolutely wonderful. Non-Christians confirm this by saying that the only problem with this world is man (by man is meant fallen and sinful man). Creation is not mother-nature; it is God's goodness made manifest.

-6) God's Wisdom

Lastly we must note that God was perfectly satisfied at the whole of creation. Everyone always has another project around the yard to make it better. God however used the seventh day to rest. This thought of taking a day off because everything is done to its completion is beyond our comprehension. God knew everything was complete. Nothing was lacking. The world and His redemptive plan was set in motion.

"And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made." (Genesis 2:1-3).

The pattern for us, then, is never to rush about completing singular projects while missing the beautiful completeness of what has been done. Never rush about life so that we do not pause. Never operate as a cog in a machine for we were designed to reflect, enjoy and worship. We must dare not move through a series of seven days without resting for one for then we violate God's pattern and insist on the priority of the things we do over God's.

"Genesis 1, the most amazing composition in all the world's literature, using only 76 different word forms fundamental to all mankind, arranged in a wonderful poetical pattern yet free from any highly colored figures of speech. It provides the perfect opening to God's book and establishes all men really need to know of the facts of creation. No man could have invented it: it is as great a marvel as a plant or a bird. It is God's handwork, sufficient for Hebrew children or Greek thinkers or Latin Christians; for medieval knights or modern scientists or little children .. rich or poor, simple or learned ... sufficient for all! Only God could write such a chapter ... and He did."

*Frederick Filby,
professor of Chemistry in England.*

GOD AND THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

We have discussed the purpose of Genesis' creation account in our own worship. As a person mixes with people of different religions and persuasions, however, he finds that people think differently of God. Let's focus on two issues regarding creation.

(1) Creation: A Polemical Account – A God above gods

Firstly, we would like to think through what the ancients might have thought about Genesis. It is proposed that the Genesis is written as a defensive treatise for God. In other words, the Genesis creation account was specifically designed to show God's power over the gods of the ancient world. Moses, for example, well understood the Egyptian's tendency to turn virtually everything into a god to be revered.

One God

In the ancient times before Judaism, we do not know of monotheism, the acknowledgment of only one God. The ancient cultures were dominated by polytheism (many + gods). The introduction of only one God would astound those in those big cities. Today with Christianity, Islam and Judaism, we take monotheism for granted, but back then it was a startling suggestion. The creation account is remarkable. As we read on through the creation account, we can imagine that the objects that are listed as created or made by God are worshiped by people in those times. They worshiped fish, people, sun, moon and all kinds of animals. God made everything, however. The creation account in one blow cripples the case for polytheism. The names of the luminaries are perhaps not mentioned because they were names for gods that were then worshipped.



God Unrivaled

God's origin is never mentioned. Everything is said to come from Him, and thus there are no rivals to His power or authority. The Greeks for example believed that the gods came into existence the same time as the world. Genesis teaches that time and matter all come into being at His supreme command and do whatever He desires. God is not dependent upon the world, but the world and everything in it including man is totally dependent upon Him. He is the self-existing one. Matter is different from God. God is a personal God; He has a will and thus is not some mere encompassing power.

God and Man Differ

In the Chaldean myth, we find that Bel cuts the woman and makes heaven and earth by the two halves. He then cuts his hand and from the drops of blood man is made. Genesis tells us that God creates man from the dust. He is not made from God but from matter.

In many ancient accounts, man is said to be the slaves of God whereas in the biblical account men are stewards or viceroys of God's world.

"That they may know that Thou alone,
 whose name is the LORD,
 Art the Most High over all the earth.

(Psalms 83:18, NASB).

GOD AND THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS (cont.)

(2) Creation, Religions and Philosophies

How are we to understand God in relation to the many religions and philosophies in the world? Even though we may think of the major religions of the world, we should remember that there are many variations within every religion. We find four major groupings of perspective.

1• God is above the world

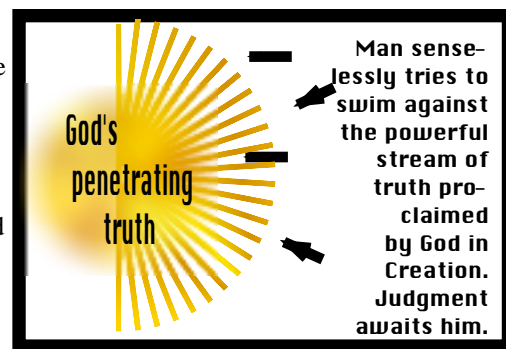
When we categorize the different religions, we perhaps could do this by discerning whether they acknowledge a Creator or not. Those that do will be called monotheistic religions which affirm one true transcendental God separate from and in control over the world and man. This includes Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They all grew out from the Hebrew scriptures.

Their worldview generates worship toward this God but because God is holy, man must seek reconciliation because of their sins. Compromise is not tolerated but only obedience. They see the world as God's gift. Unfortunately, many seek a way of reconciliation through works rather than through God's provision in Christ Jesus.

2• Many gods

Polytheism associates special godlike spirits attached to different parts of the world. There might be the sun god or tree god. The creation account would scoff at such an image of god or the world as totally inadequate. Their worldview generates fear and suspicion of the world. They are busy trying to appease whatever god that might cause them trouble. Another form of this polytheism is humanism where man exalts himself as the sole determiner in what he does in life. Again, the God of creation would laugh at a man who dares claims self-determination.

*He it is who reduces rulers to nothing,
Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. (Isaiah 40:23).*



3• Impersonal God

These religions such as proper Hinduism or Christian Scientists recognize that the power of the universe has no personal nature or will. Man's job is to align himself with this impersonal power. For the most part, they see matter as evil and spirit as good. They want to link their immaterial part (soul) with the Great Spirit or Force. Their worldview asks them reject the world as evil and tends to asceticism or philosophical religion.

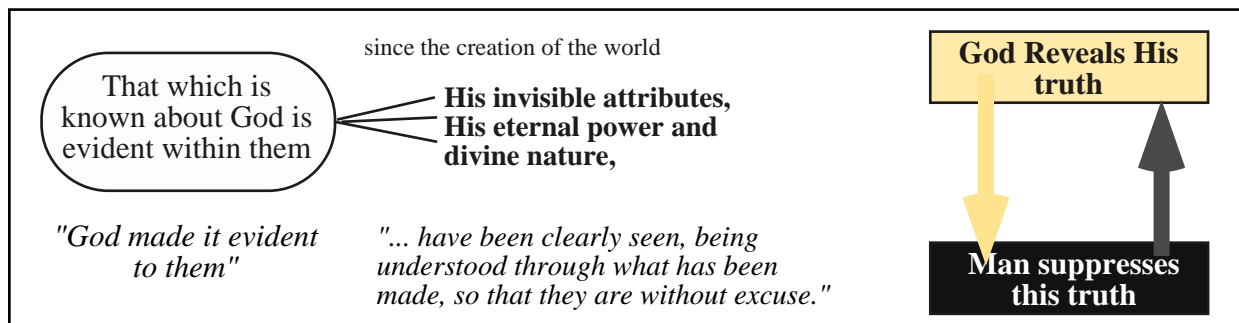
4• No God

A large group of people deny the existence of God or gods. Secularism flagrantly denies the supernatural world. Instead it comes up with a solution of man's problem by political means (e.g. Marxism, communism, socialism), scientific means (science and evolution) or other means (e.g. ecology). These people live by the religion called humanism where man is exalted as the chief. In this case, they worship themselves and belong in category #2. After this creation presentation, we understand what Psalm 53:1 means when it says the fool said in his heart there is no god.

"The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God,"

Summary of Man's Responsibility

The world is a stage of meeting and understanding God so that man's place in the future world will be determined. Each person is personally accountable for what he or she does, and it will impact their future. The Apostle Paul explains in Romans 1:18-21 that the creation provides such a powerful display of God's that man is inexcusable for His supposed lack of knowledge. God is revealed in creation (Romans 1) and man's conscience (Romans 2). Although man tries to prove his irresponsibility towards God's presence and commands, everything fights against him. He suppresses the truth, but it faithfully keeps springing up.



Assignment

1) How is the seventh day of creation different from the other six days? Why do you think God rested? After reviewing Exodus 20:8-11, express what you think is God's view on whether or how a Christian should keep the sabbath (literally 'rest' or 'ceasing'). Would a non-Christian be expected to keep the sabbath? Explain.

2) Write down the verses that God says "it was good" from this section. Write down your thoughts in reflection of God's goodness on these two views.

(If you are exceptionally busy, choose one from below).

- Lots of people make it their major goal in life to indulge in happiness? With Genesis 1 in mind, explain what is wrong with this thinking. Are we not suppose to enjoy life?!
- Many people do not think their bodies are good. They treat their bodies poorly because they think negatively about their bodies. Did you ever hear anyone say, "I hate my?" What could we briefly say to them about God's love shown in His goodness in creation?

Bonus

Apologetics and the Atheist - Natural Theology

Read the following excerpt with Genesis 1 in view. Keep in mind natural theology is what a person knows about God from studying nature. Biblical theology are those things that can be found about God from the scriptures. Sometimes the term 'theology' is expanded to refer not only to the study of God, but also to the study of man, the world, etc.

- What does he suggest on using arguments to prove the existence of God? Why?
- What does He suggest to say instead?

"What then is the status of natural theology in the Bible? Firstly, it has nothing to do with proving the existence of God. This is not a biblical question. There is nothing in the Bible remotely resembling the cosmological and teleological proofs of scholastic philosophy. God is simply there, and this is the axiomatic starting-point of biblical thought. The Bible does not even attempt to prove that it was He who created the world; it simply states it. It is a matter of faith (Heb 11:3) not discerned by scientific observation. This the Bible gives no warrant for telling an atheist to look at the world around him, and then chiding him for not believing in God. What it does suggest is that we can rightly tell a theist to look at the world, and chide him for having too low an idea of the God he believes in, for denying His almighty power and transcendence, or His wisdom and care.

... For it is the man who knows God who can then turn to the world around him and learn about the God he knows. Now he has a point of reference, and what was previously an obscure and confusing revelation becomes an open book.

... It boils down to this: you cannot expect an atheist to reach a personal knowledge of God through looking at nature; but you can expect a Christian's observation of nature to lead him to worship with greater understanding and reverence the God who has revealed Himself to him. "

R.T. France in The Living God, p. 36.