

Does It Matter Where We Came From? (God, the Perfect Creator)

Biblical Passages: Genesis 1:1–2, 26–31; Hebrews 11:3

Supporting Passages: Psalm 8:3–8; John 1:1–3; Colossians 1:15–17; Revelation 4:11

Memory Verse: Genesis 1:27

Biblical Truth: God created the world from nothing and made people in His own image.

Context: The creation account serves as the beginning point of the entire Bible. How people understand their origin shapes their entire worldview. Genesis 1 describes the beginning—the movement from chaos to a perfectly ordered world. Humanity is God’s crowning achievement in all creation. God created both man and woman in His very image. He created humankind for a purpose: to worship and fellowship with Him, and to rule over His wonderfully created world. This passage marks the starting point for a study of the Old Testament. God’s divine encounters with people began with Adam and Eve.

INVESTIGATION

The Bible begins by assuming God’s existence: “In the beginning God” (Gen. 1:1). God spoke the universe and world into place. During the six days of creation, God gave the universe order, purpose, and life. God applauded His completed creation by declaring it “very good” (v. 31). The most important creation was human life, made in His “image” (vv. 26–27). All people have unique value. People are created in God’s image and therefore enjoy a special relationship with their Creator.

Because people are made in God’s image, they can know their Creator in personal ways. People can take pleasure in Him and the world He made. God gave people a great responsibility,

too. He commanded them to take care of creation. He crowned humanity with glory and honor by making people in His image and putting them in charge of everything He created. The Bible says the Lord made the world for people to use, not abuse. People are not creation’s servants but its stewards.

IMPORTANCE

These passages of Scripture are important for followers of Christ to grasp because they provide an answer to one of life’s most foundational questions, “Where did we come from?” The answer to this question has implications for all for life. In fact, a person’s entire worldview is shaped by how he or she answers the question of origin.

In these passages, Scripture provides the answer to our origin. The first chapter of Genesis teaches that **God Is** and that He is our Creator. Genesis 1:1 gives five powerful words: “In the beginning God created . . .” God not only exists but also has spoken to people through His Word. God created everything out of nothing—from only the words of His mouth (Heb. 11:3). He created the world and has a plan for our lives. Scripture does not spend time arguing for proof of God’s existence; it simply states the reality of God, and that He is the Creator and Architect of the universe. It is not surprising that Scripture takes this approach. The Apostle Paul asserts in Romans 1:19–20 that God has clearly made Himself known to humankind through creation itself. The reality of God is revealed to all, even to those who repress and deny this truth.

Believing God exists is foundational to our faith. Knowing His character as revealed by His creation is essential as well. If believers do not understand God’s imminence and purposes in creation, they will not understand His purpose for their lives or His purpose for His world.

This passage also touches on another key truth: **People are God’s Treasure.**

INTERPRETATION

Genesis 1:1 No greater words on the origin of life has a human being ever read: “In the

beginning God . . .” This statement does not refer to the beginning of God; it refers to the beginning of His creation. God the Creator made “the heavens and the earth” on the first day. God provided a master plan for His creation. He spoke “the heavens and the earth” into existence with absolute authority. “The heavens and the earth” is an expression for all that exists. The terms “heavens” and “earth” contrast one another. The expression means God created the totality of the universe. This expression is similar to the expression “the long and short of it.” Many use this expression to indicate all of something.

God created everything out of nothing, an act totally different from how people create from something that already exists. People have clay; they make pots. People have trees; they make houses. People can only use what already exists.

God is not part of or dependent on the material universe; He is above and beyond it. Everything depends on His creative, sustaining Word. As powerful as He is, God wants people to know Him personally. People know Him through His perfect Word, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:1–5).

Genesis 1:2 When God declared, “Let there be light” (v. 3) the earth existed as a wasteland. It sat submerged under seawater. It was dark and unable to sustain life. However, the Spirit of God hovered over the waters. God controls even the uncontrolled. God’s creative words brought about change. The formless, lifeless earth became fertile, blooming, and full of life.

The six creation days have a natural division. On the first three days of creation God established light, the sky and waters, and the land and seas (vv. 3–13). Three days resulted in the appearance of vegetation (v. 12). The unproductive became productive. The second group of three days provided life (vv. 14–31). God created the luminaries, the fish and fowl, and the beasts and human life. The lifeless became full of teeming life.

Genesis 1:26 After the impersonal, formal commands, “Let there be . . .” God gave a personal command, “Let us make man in our image.” Man refers to humankind, not man

versus woman. As the “image of God” (v. 27) they were special creations.

The surprisingly plural words “us” and “our” challenge interpreters. The ancient writer of Genesis 1 did not yet fully understand the doctrine of the Trinity. Yet the pronouns “us” and “our” indicate plurality within the Godhead. Since verse 27 includes the singular “his own image,” we understand God as both a plurality and a unity. The Spirit of God moved over the face of the deep in verse 2, so it seems a divine conversation took place within the Triune God. The Apostle John wrote that the pre-incarnate Christ made all things (John 1:1–3). The Apostle Paul wrote that Christ existed before God made anything and holds all creation together (Col. 1:16–17). Moreover, Psalm 104:30 implies that the Spirit, too, had a role in creation: “When you send your Spirit, they are created . . .”

God’s crowning creation was human life. He saved it for last. Although this verse says people are created in God’s image, it does not describe that image. People clearly have differences from the animal kingdom; people have the ability to think abstractly and to form relationships. The commands that follow indicate two things: humanity represents God on earth, and humanity rules the earth in His place. This means people must subdue the land, oversee the animals, and care for everything in the earth.

With the privilege of this command comes a great deal of responsibility. People should fulfill this responsibility without waste or greed. The command had enough importance for verse 28 to repeat it.

Because of human sin (Gen. 3:6–8, 17–19), people struggle to tame the environment, and then eventually die. But Jesus is the perfect Man. On behalf of all humanity He achieved the eventual victory over death (Heb. 2:5–9).

Genesis 1:27 This verse is actually a short poem consisting of three lines. Lines A and B are parallel and inverted. This highlights the central idea of image.

- A So God created man in his own image
- B the image of God he created him
- C Male and female he created them

Line C explains lines A and B by showing that the creation refers to both genders (“them”). God created both man and woman in His image. The references to humanity as “him” and “them” indicate unity and diversity. So as creations in God’s image all humanity is a unity, but humanity is also diverse by virtue of different gender roles. Yet they have the same status as “human” in the Creator’s eyes. No person has more importance than another (Acts 10:34). The phrase “male and female” anticipates the blessing of procreation in verse 28. Every person is valuable to God and has a creation purpose.

Also, the word *created* occurs three times. This gives the verse special recognition in the creation account.

Genesis 1:28 God blessed humans with the capability to have children and the responsibility to rule over the earth. Human sexuality is part of God’s plan to enrich His creation and people’s lives as husband and wife. People must follow God’s plan for proper sexual relations—between a man and a woman who in marriage produce a family. Also, humanity serves as the earth’s caretakers (Gen. 2:15). The psalmist marveled that the Lord crowned human life with “glory and honor” to exercise rule over creation (Ps. 8:5–8). In the Bible’s view an upright person shows concern for the earth’s welfare. Proverbs 12:10 gives an example of this truth when it states, “a righteous man cares for the needs of his animal . . .”

Genesis 1:29–30 God both provides and sustains life. He ordered that plants serve as food for people and animals. He fed man and woman with a wonderful variety of fruits and vegetables.

Genesis 1:29–30 describes a vegetarian diet. Here’s some food for thought: After Adam and Eve sinned, the abundance and variety of vegetation for both animals and humans declined. Adam had to work the ground (Gen. 3:17–19). Noah’s descendants received specific permission to eat meat (Gen. 9:3–4). This implies that humans initially were allowed only a vegetarian diet. Or if meat was permitted at creation Genesis 1:29–30 did not specifically say so. When humans did consume meat, they

had to drain the animal’s blood before eating it. This indicated a proper respect for life. Life was God’s choice, and needlessly killing animals was improper.

God shows generosity by giving “every” plant. Consider the variety He provides! Humans can see, taste, and smell different kinds of delicious fruits and vegetables. God causes His creation to nourish people. Verse 30 ends with “And it was so,” revealing God’s divine authority.

Genesis 1:31 God looked at the completion of creation over six days, and “it was very good.” The Creator approved the entire creation—fully organized and teeming with life. His creation had no ruin, tarnish, or death.

Hebrews 11:3 Through faith we understand the world had a beginning point. Out of nothing God created an ordered universe by the power of His “command” (Bruce, 1964). This view contradicted the popular Greek idea at the time. They believed the world came from preexisting eternal material. What proves that Genesis is right? One does not figure out creation by human logic alone. A person must have faith in the power of God’s creative Word. People live by the human senses God gave humanity: sight, smell, taste, sound, and touch. But faith requires people to look beyond their senses to the great Creator. He lovingly provides His creation with life and purpose.

IMPLICATIONS

Our worldview has an impact on all we believe and everything we do. Acknowledging that **God is** and that He is our Creator affects every area of our lives. Because He made us as well as the universe, we are fully and completely accountable to Him for our actions.

As believers, we acknowledge that God is our Creator and that He has a plan for our lives. We also acknowledge that we are accountable to Him for our actions. We are especially accountable for how we treat other people, all of whom God made in His image. When we fully grasp that every human being is created in God’s image (*imago dei*), we must consider our feelings and actions toward others. When we mistreat another human being, we show

contempt for God, because He made people in His Image.

Human beings have special worth in God's eyes, so we should protect human life from the womb to the grave. How would you describe your responsibilities toward other people? Toward males and females? Toward the unborn and the aged? Toward the healthy and the handicapped? Toward the beautiful and the so-called "ugly"? Toward the rich and the poor? Toward the people like you and the people of different ethnic backgrounds? Encourage your group to value other people.

ROOM SET-UP

Create a “mini-world” in one corner of the room. On one wall, create a “day” scene with a sun, clouds, and blue sky. On the neighboring wall, create a “night” scene by draping a black sheet or tarp and hang a moon and stars. On the floor in front of the focal walls, include a variety of plants and stuffed animals representing the different types of plant and animal life God created. Display male and female dolls or stuff male and female clothing to represent God’s creation of human life.

COMPLETE SUPPLY LIST

Connect . . .

- **Fun: Lego® Creations** — Ziploc bag containing 10 Lego® bricks for each learner; bell
- **Discussion: Survey Says** — Copies of “Survey Says”
- **Current Event: Google Earth** — Laptop; projector; Internet access; free Google Earth program
- **Visual: Creation in Creation** — *Yahweh* DVD; TV; DVD player
- **Relational: Because You’re Mine** — No supplies needed

Explore . . .

- **Interactive Core Study: God, Creator of All** — Copies of the Bible Study Worksheet; pens; several small paper bags; Internet screen shot of the **God Is** essential truth
- **Master Teacher Core Study: God, Creator of All** — Copy of the Master Teacher Outline; copies of the Bible Study Worksheet; pens; poster of the **God Is** essential truth
- **Context Study: The First Week** — Dry erase board; markers
- **Closer Look: What’s in a Word** — Two pre-enlisted volunteers; Copy of “What’s in a Word” for each volunteer
- **Comparative Study: In Other Words** — Copy of “In Other Words;” scissors

Transform . . .

- **Discoverers: Value Auction** — Four items with sentimental but not monetary value; two items of monetary value; tablecloth; large bag of peppermints
- **Owners: What is Worldview?** — Several types of lenses (such as reading glasses, sunglasses, bifocals, binoculars, a magnifying glass, and a microscope)
- **Servants: Let Me Serve You** — Two phone books or laptops with Internet access; copies of your church’s bulletin (if it lists service projects); two large sheets of butcher paper; markers
- **Shepherds: Help My Unbelief!** — Copy of “Help My Unbelief!”
- **Prayer Option: Praise the Creator** — Leaf, pen, and blank paper for each learner

Learning Goals:

- Learners will understand the significance of God creating all things.
- Learners will articulate the implications of God creating all human beings in His image.

Connect . . .

Connect activities get everyone ready to learn. Use the activity below to introduce this week's lesson.

Discussion

SURVEY SAYS

(8–10 minutes, easy set-up)

Click here to access “Survey Says.” Provide a copy for each learner.

Distribute “Survey Says.” Ask a volunteer to read it aloud. Discuss: **What do you think about the statistics? If your neighbors took part in this poll, how do you think they would answer? What about you? What does a person's view of creation have to do with the rest of life?** (*How one views creation impacts how he or she understands human existence and purpose.*) Conclude by explaining that today's lesson will focus on the biblical account of creation.

Explore . . .

Explore activities lead people to study Scripture. Teach the Core Study to focus on the Biblical Truth. If you choose, support the Core Study with the following activity.

Interactive Core Study GOD, CREATOR OF ALL

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

Click here to access the Bible Study Worksheet. Provide a copy for each learner. Also provide pens. Seal several empty small paper bags and label with these words: light; sky; oceans; land; sun, moon, and stars; plants; fish; birds; mammals; reptiles; and humans. Display a poster of the essential truth **God Is**.

1. God is, and He is the Creator of the universe (Gen. 1:1–2; Heb. 11:3).

Ask a learner to read Genesis 1:1–2. Distribute paper bags. Ask learners to use the contents in the bags to create the object listed on their bags. Allow reactions. Say: **God created our entire universe with the power of His spoken Word. He used no raw materials to make something new. He began by creating the raw materials.**

Ask a learner to read Hebrews 11:3. Ask: **What role does faith play in how someone views creation?** (*No human witnessed creation. It is by faith that we accept God as Creator.*)

Tell learners to write *God is* in the first blank. Direct attention to the poster of the **God Is** essential truth. Discuss: **How does God's role in creation reveal that He exists eternally?**

2. God created human beings in His own image (Gen. 1:26–27).

Ask a learner to read Genesis 1:26–27. Tell learners to write *own image* in the second blank. Discuss: **Since God is spirit—without a physical body—how can we be created in His image?** (*We are created with a spirit so that we can connect with God. We are created to live in relationship with others. Of all God's creation, only humans have the ability to reason and think abstractly.*) **How does this implication influence the way we view life?** (*We should view others and ourselves as God's treasured creation. It should affect our value of human life.*)

3. As God's most important creation, humans have a cultural mandate (Gen. 1:28–31).

Ask a learner to read Genesis 1:28–31. Discuss: **What do verses 28–29 say about the roles of men and women?** (*Both have equal value. They have the same status as “humans” but have unique gifts for specific purposes, especially in procreation.*) **What does it mean for us that God gave responsibility to humans?** (*We must rule over His created world and multiply, filling and subduing the earth.*) **If we truly believe God is Creator, how does that influence our worldview?** (*We should value and appreciate all of His creation.*) Lead learners to discuss the worksheet questions and analyze the implications of God as Creator for daily living.

Closer Look

WHAT'S IN A WORD

(5–8 minutes, easy set-up)

Click here to access “What’s in a Word.” Before class, provide two volunteers with a copy of “What’s in a Word.” Assign each one of the words to report on.

Ask the first volunteer to explain the importance of *creatio ex nihilo*. Ask: **Why is it important to understand that God began His creation work with absolutely no physical materials?** (*Because God existed before all things were created, it shows His power and authority over all things. Only He could create abundant life where once nothing existed.*) Ask: **How does this truth reassure those who struggle with God’s purpose for their personal lives?** (*It reassures us He has a plan. He created the world from nothing, so He can bring about good in our lives.*)

Ask the other volunteer to explain the importance of *imago Dei*. Say: **Only humans were created in God’s image; no other living creature has this honor. How is this truth significant in our lives?** (*Only humans can have a relationship with God. The value we place on human life relates to our understanding of creation.*) Ask: **Based on this knowledge, how should we treat others?** (*We should treat them with value, love, and purpose.*) Ask: **In our world today, what major issues are affected by understanding the value God places on human life?** (*Abortion, population control, assisted suicide, euthanasia, stem cell research, and human cloning all demonstrate different importance science and God place on human life.*) **What about common, everyday issues?** (*The way we value people, pray, read Scripture, watch the news, read books, and perform many other tasks are influenced.*)

Transform . . .

Transform activities challenge your group to live differently. Choose one or two activities based on the spiritual growth of your group. Keep in mind the Spirit ultimately brings about change, so help people draw near to Him.

Discoverers

VALUE AUCTION

(5–8 minutes, moderate set-up)

Place four items with no monetary value but rich in sentimental value and two items rich in monetary value on a table, and cover them with a tablecloth. Bring a large bag of peppermints.

Give each learner 10 peppermints. Explain that they will use peppermints to bid in an auction for some of your favorite things. Uncover the items and allow them to bid with their peppermints. Go through the bidding process with each item, allowing learners to react. When finished, explain why each item has value to you, even if others may not value that item. Ask learners to share one item they consider valuable and why. Collect the items, but let learners keep their peppermints.

Discuss: **Why is it sometimes easier to see others as valuable in God’s eyes, but not yourself?** (*We know our mistakes, struggles, and sins. Others may have told us we are worthless.*) **What does God base your value on?** (*God does not value us because of who we are or what we have accomplished, but because He created us.*) **What words would you use to describe how you see yourself? Based on what you have learned today, what words would God use to describe you?**

Close in prayer, asking God to help everyone in your class realize their worth in His eyes.

Prayer Option

PRAISE THE CREATOR

(5–10 minutes, easy set-up)

Gather leaves from outside, one for each learner. Provide pens and blank paper.

Say: **The more we recognize God as the Creator of the world, the more we change the way we worship God.** Give one leaf to each learner. Mention how the leaf can serve as a symbol of God’s care in creating the world. Tell them to examine the leaf’s intricacies and to spend time praising God for creation. Give them about two minutes. Then, distribute pens and paper. Direct learners to write a prayer that expresses thanks for the things God has created in their lives. Encourage them to think about the details of the leaf . . . and the details of their lives

as they write. Instruct them to tell God their delight in His creation.

When they finish, allow volunteers to share their prayers. Conclude by reading Psalm 139:14.

Yahweh Lesson 2

DOES IT MATTER WHERE WE CAME FROM? (GOD, THE PERFECT CREATOR)

BIBLICAL PASSAGE Genesis 1:1–2, 26–31; Hebrews 11:3

MEMORY VERSE Genesis 1:27

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:27

TABLE TALK QUESTION

Can evolution and creationism both be true?

GOD, CREATOR OF ALL

1. _____, and He is the Creator of the universe
(Gen. 1:1–2; Heb. 11:3).

2. God created human beings in His _____ (Gen. 1:26–27).

3. As God's most important creation, humans have a _____
(Gen. 1:28–31).

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does God's ordered creation demonstrate His intentional plans for the world?
- What does it mean for humanity to be created in His image?
- If God created all people in His image, how should I treat others?
- What responsibilities do we have to care for our natural resources?
- How does this knowledge change my worship of God and my relationship with Him?

FREE THOUGHT

"If God created all of finite reality, then every aspect of that reality must be subject to him and his truth. . . . Because creation includes the whole scope of finite reality, the Christian worldview must be equally comprehensive, covering every aspect of our lives, our thinking, our choices."

(Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?*, page 98.)

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