

# Bible Study 1: In the Beginning: God's Powerful Word

GENESIS 1:1-25



**Think it through.** What do you think of the following quotes about the story of our world?

“For, after all, put it as we may to ourselves, we are all of us from birth to death guests at a table which we did not spread. The sun, the earth, love, friends, our very breath are parts of the banquet. [...] Shall we think of the day as a chance to come nearer to our Host, and to find out something of Him who has fed us so long? (Rebecca Harding Davis)

“The biggest challenge humanity faces in carving out a better future is to reimagine how we perceive the world, our place within it, and our highest priorities. By creating a vision of what must be, we then determine the way we act.” (David Suzuki)<sup>1</sup>

## Read Genesis 1:1-25

1. How does Genesis 1:1 split everything-that-is? What alternatives does it speak against? (Read also Hebrews 11:3. See below)
2. Genesis 1 is not Hebrew poetry, but it does contain highly structured prose. What patterns can you see in each days account?
3. What questions are raised?
4. What can you learn from Genesis 1:1-25 about:
  - a. the original state of creation (Genesis 1:2 etc..)
  - b. the power of God's word
  - c. the orderliness of God's creation
  - c. any hints at who creation is made for
5. Genesis 1 is an introduction to God, through his works. What do we learn about him through these works?

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<sup>1</sup> Both quotes were found in Provan, “Seriously Dangerous Religion: What the Old Testament really says and why it matters”. The quotes were at the beginning of chapters 3 and 1 respectively.

**Read, discuss and learn these memory verses<sup>2</sup>**

“Our Lord and God, you are worthy to receive glory and honour and power, because you have created all things, and by your will they exist and were created.” (Revelation 4:11)

“By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.” (Hebrews 11:3)

6. Pulling together what you have discussed and all you know from scripture, how does a right understanding of Genesis 1:1-25 affect:

a. the way we worship God

b. the way we listen to God’s word

c. the way we determine the big picture story of “the world, our place within it, and our highest priorities”.

**Praise God for what he has done, confess your failings, and ask for what you need.**

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<sup>2</sup> All memory verses will be taken from the CSB (2017) which is the new edition of the HSCB.

# Bible Study 2: In the Beginning: God's Good World

GENESIS 1:1-31



**Think it through.** What are you favourite places in the world? AND/OR What are you favourite nature documentaries? Why to both of these questions.

## Read Genesis 1:1-31

1. What features of the creation are highlighted? Do you notice any patterns and development? What questions do you have?

Day One	Day Four
Day Two	Day Five
Day Three	Day Six

2. Read the memory verse, Psalm 104:24. What parts of God's creation do we tend to forget about? What parts particularly show God's wisdom?

How countless are your works, LORD!  
In wisdom you have made them all;  
the earth is full of your creatures. (Psalm 104:24)

3. How true do think the following statements are:

- a. Creation is bigger than us, yet it is largely for us (from Genesis 1)
- b. Even so, much of it is beyond our sight and for God's pleasure (Job 39:1-4; notice the answer to the question)
- c. Yet, it is a good thing to know as much as we can about God's creation (1 Kings 4:29-34)

4. How are each of the following points made clear in Genesis 1.

**a. Creation is not god/full of gods**

**b. Creation is good**

5. Therefore, we must maintain the following. Think through the alternatives.

**a. Creation is not to be worshipped as god/gods.** What examples does Paul give? (Romans 1:18-25) What dangers do we face in worshipping creation rather than the creator?

**b. Creation is to be received as good.** What examples does Paul give of challenges to this view? (Read 1 Timothy 4:1-5) What limits are there? What examples can you think for us?

6. Turn what you have been encouraged and warned by into praise, confession and prayer.

# Bible Study 3: In the Beginning: Men and Women In God's Image

GENESIS 1:26-31



**Think it through.** What do you think about the following quotes?

"What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god!"  
- Hamlet, in Shakespeare's Hamlet

"Man was made at the end of the week's work, when God was tired." - Mark Twain<sup>1</sup>

"For it was you who created my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I will praise you because I have been remarkably and wondrously made. Your works are wondrous, and I know this very well." - David. Psalm 139:13-14

## Read Genesis 1:26-31

1. How are humans highlighted as unique and special in God's account of creation? What special roles are they given?
2. What do you think is meant by image of God? What questions do you have about it?
3. How do you read Genesis 1:26-31 a little differently since we know what happened to humanity? (ie. our current state of sin, suffering and (without Christ) facing God's judgment)
4. How do you read Genesis 1:26-31 a little differently since we know that Christ Jesus ultimately came as a human being and the future God has for all of Christ's people?

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<sup>1</sup> These quotes were from chapter 4 of Iain Provan, *Seriously Dangerous Religion*.

5. Read Genesis 9:1-7. This is after God saves Noah and his family.

a. What is said about humanity's role and responsibility in the world?

b. What is taught about God's image and the consequences for 'messing' with other image-bearers?

6. From what we've already read, why is it important that we treat humans as more special than animals? (see also Luke 12:6-7; Mark 12:29-31)

7. Why is cursing others such a big problem?

With the tongue we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in God's likeness. (James 3:9)

8. What do you think of the following quote? How is it not just the Nazi's who employ this tactic?

"When the Nazis described Jews as *Untermenschen*, or subhumans, they didn't mean it metaphorically, says Smith. "They didn't mean they were *like* subhumans. They meant they were *literally* subhuman."<sup>2</sup>

9. What difference will it make if we treat all humans as being the image of God

a. racism

b. sexism

c. abortion

d. euthanasia

e. looking down on those poorer than ourselves (James 2:2-4)

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.npr.org/2011/03/29/134956180/criminals-see-their-victims-as-less-than-human> quoting *Less Than Human* by David Livingstone Smith.

# Bible Study 4: In the Beginning: Men and Women At Work and Rest

GENESIS 1:26-2:25



**Think it through.** What do you think of the following?

“God designed people to: worship God, work at a job and play at recreation. Most people today have missed this plan. Instead, they: worship their work, work at recreation and play at worship.”<sup>1</sup>

## Read Genesis 1:26-2:25

1. How do you think Genesis 1 and 2 fit together? What questions do you have?

### Work

2. By the seventh day, what work has God done?

3. What work is humanity commanded to do in Genesis 1 and 2? How is it related to/or an extension of God's work?

4. What do you make of Eve's role alongside her husband? (same word “help” as Psalm 121:1-2, 146:5)

5. Can you come up with a good definition of work from the creations accounts?

6. Read Genesis 3:17-19. How is work affected by the fall of Adam?

7. What implications are there for your daily work:

a. how do you see it as part of God's original creation mandate?

b. how do you see it as working for Lord?

c. how do you see it affected by “thorns and thistles” and pain?

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<sup>1</sup> R. Bereit, “In His Service: A Guide to Christians Serving in the Military”, page 190.

## Work and Rest

6. What place does rest have in the creation of the world and plans of God? What does this teach you?

7. For the Israelites under the Old Covenant of Moses they had the law of Sabbath (rest days). Read Exodus 20:8-11.

a. what is the principle here? how is it tied to God's creation?

b. who is this command for and why is that important?

c. is there a principle for us too? (bearing in mind that we are not bound by the mosaic law.  
Colossians 2:16-17; Romans 14:5-8)

8. Some Christians see that we are in the sixth day of creation waiting for the seventh day of rest. Others see this as a pattern pushing us to a bigger rest arriving. In the end they lead to the same conclusion. What do the following passages say about God's rest to come?

Revelation 14:13

Hebrews 4:1-11

9. How can we enter God's rest now?

"Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-29

10. What place does enjoying God's rest have in:

a. your life goals

b. your daily patterns

c. your approach to work