

## APPLICATION

Check in with each other. What is God doing in your life? Ask some of these questions in your small group.

- Where do you see God in creation?
- What do you think was before the beginning?
- What is the most interesting thing to you about creation?
- Many ancient cultures have their own creation accounts. If you are aware of any of these, how does Genesis 1:1-2 differ?
- What do we learn about God from observing the intricacies and wonders of the created world?

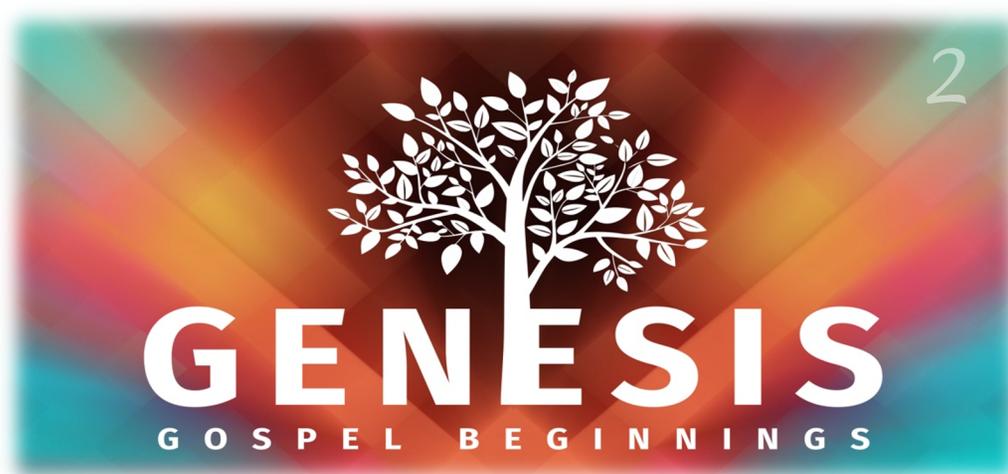
## Read Genesis 1:1-2

### Inductive Bible Study

- Circle, bold, or highlight the word “God”.
- Next, write in *beresit* above “In the beginning...”. This is the first Hebrew word of the Bible.
- Next, write in *Elohim* above “God” and write in the definition/meaning of *elohim* off in the margin. It is a plural word for Deity. Something like: “The divine community.” Quiet literally means “The ones from not this/our realm.”
- Lastly, write in the margin any corollary verses from elsewhere in the Bible that speak about the beginnings of creation. Ps 24:1-2, 19:1-6, Col 1:15-17, 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:3-7, Heb 11:3, etc.

### For Parents:

Genesis one is a great place to begin the *conversation* with your kids. Ask them, of any age, to look outside. Where do they think the trees and deer and sky came from? Ask them why they think it is all there? Why did God create a river? A tree? Or dung beetle? Etc. And then listen. Let them answer and encourage those answers, whatever they might be. Then say “you know we learned \_\_\_\_\_ in church today. What did you learn?” and then listen. For now, just start the conversation. Correction and explanation can take place a little later.



## “In the Beginning...” • Session 2

The Bible starts at the very beginning, with God as the Supreme Creator of all things. Before there was science and exploration, before there was humans or sin, before there was ground to stand on, before there was light itself, there was God! Genesis 1:1-2 sets the foundation for us to get started. It tells us that God is the one who is the focus and ultimate power. And it tells us that he moves and acts and creates. Even now God is doing new things in our world! Which means he will do new things in your life. Make him your focus, for he is the ultimate power, greater than anything that is against you and greater than the sin that is in you. He still acts. He is still on the move!

As we dive into the actual text of Genesis, the first topical category we come across is about *Creation* (chapters 1-2). This is the big picture theme to focus on in these first chapters. After all, we need things to exist for anything else to really happen, right? Thus, Genesis is an account of the origins of the earth, of us, of sin, of God’s response to all that, and of God’s choice of a covenantal family. Genesis will reveal the beginnings of these things. Let us also remember that this *account of origins* is more concerned with function and purpose than with process or properties. Genesis is going to tell us important things. Who did it all? Answer: God. When did he do it all? Answer: In the beginning. How did he do it? Answer: He spoke!

**MAIN IDEA: The focus is on the fact that God moved and acted! Everything begins with God.**

Accepting that fact over our own curiosities is what the Bible is directing us to do because this is what is good. **This is how God wants us to begin.**



*I. "In the Beginning..."*

Beresit בְּרֵאשִׁית This is the first word of the Bible. It's pronounced (bar-re-sheet) and means "beginnings." It tells us that the next few things we will read are going to be about "beginnings/origins/first things." Genesis 1:1-2 both starts the story of God with a firm foundational affirmation: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Yet it also acts like a snapshot of Genesis 1:3-2:1 "Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array." We can read vs. 1-2 as both the beginning of the story and as the distilled and compact form of the truth which is presented in verses that follow.

*II. GOD!*

In the beginning... **God!** Take a pause here. This is all about God! While it is true that Genesis is *about* the origin of things, particularly creation in this first chapter, its focus is always on God who created! If we come away from Genesis thinking it is all about the earth, and matter, and the existence of things, then we missed the mark big time! Genesis uses compact truth statements, poetry, and stories not to tell us about creation per se but to tell us about the God who created! The simple statements about creation which we find in the Bible are enough for this purpose. They don't exhaust the particularity of creation's "how," or "when," i.e., evolution or a cosmic poof or a big bang or some collision or expansion of energy and matter, because their mission is to tell us about *God* who is creating.

We also find that the existence of God is assumed right from the start. There are no arguments or evidence given since the creation itself will declare the truth of the existence of God. Psalm 19:1-4 "The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of his hands." These truth claims are what the Bible tells us. That's its goal.

Romans 1:20 explains that "since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities- his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." Thus, creation in its forms of order, design, harmony, and purpose, reveal to us a creative mindful power behind it all. Mankind is tasked with both recognizing this Deity and revering him, for he made everything, and it's all his.

The creation story refutes atheism because it declares (not explains) the existence of God; it refutes macro evolution because it states that God created all things; it refutes pantheism because it shows that God is separate from his creation; it refutes the eternality of matter and the universe because there was a beginning to creation; and it refutes fatalism because there is purpose imbued into all that God does and makes. He does not act without intention and meaning. This is his creation. This is his story.

*III. Created*

When God creates, he doesn't create like humans create. That is, he doesn't repurpose existing material for a new goal. Rather he, manifests the very material he is going to use. We call this process of creation, Creation Ex Nihilo, which means creation "out of nothing." This simple Latin phrase is a strong foundation upon which Christians understand God's special ability to create things. In the beginning, God **created** the Heavens and the Earth. This means he created it all; the whole universe! The Bible uses the language of "heavens and the earth" because these are the things most relevant to us as humans. The deep recesses of space that potentially hold mysteries beyond us are captivating but, as humans on earth, the essentials for us are life on this earth and life in heaven with God once this is all over. Genesis focuses our attention on what is most important for us here on earth.

*"A house testifies that there was a builder, a dress that there was a weaver, a door that there was a carpenter; So, our world by its existence proclaims its Creator God." -Rabbi Akiba Ben Joseph*