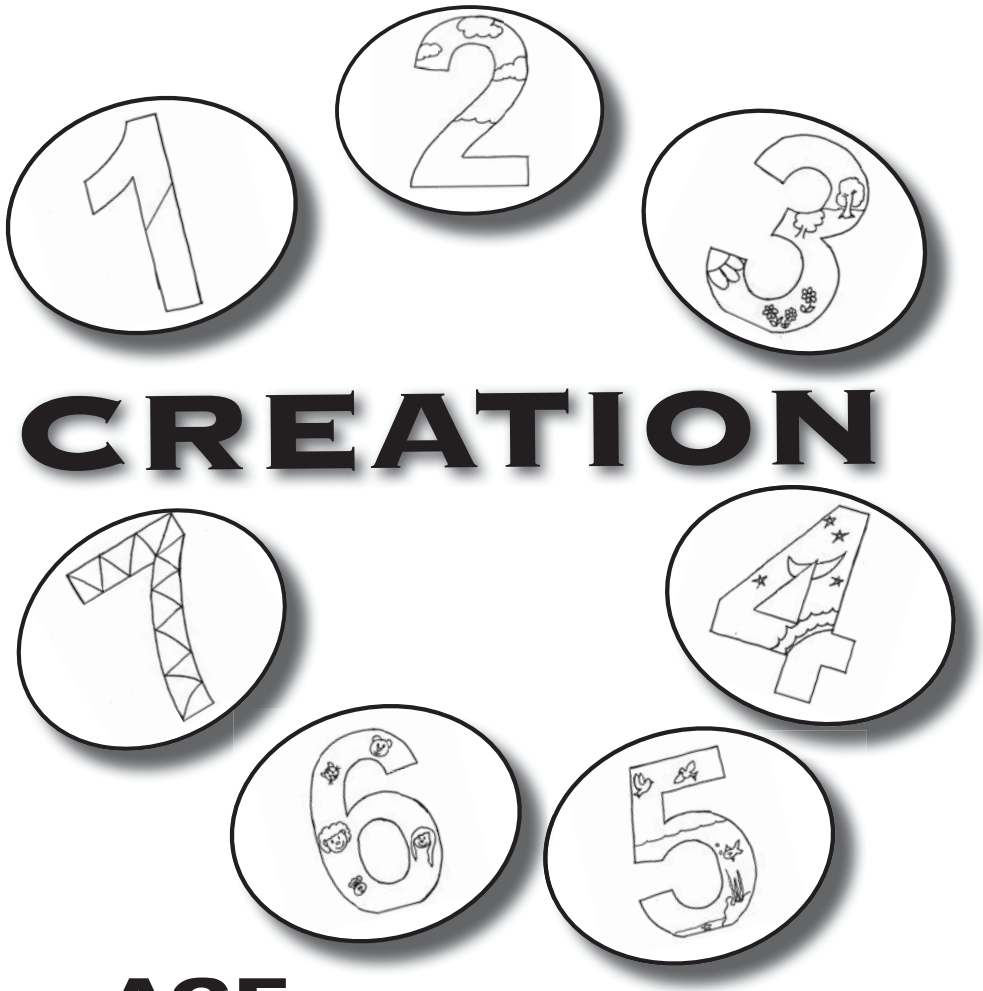

CREATION

AGE 10-13

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Hebrews 11:3

The Missionary Baptist
Vacation Bible School Literature Committee presents

CREATION

Vacation Bible School Lessons for 10-13
Written by Sister Megan Carter

Table of Contents

In The Beginning 4
The Heavens Declare 9
Be Fruitful And Multiply 14
In His Own Image 18
God Ended His Work 23

Chairman:
Brother Cory Glass

Chairman Elect:
Brother Rick Williams

Contributing Editors:
Elder Mitch Glasscock
Elder Jerry Miller
Elder Brad Wheeler
Elder Stephen Skinner

Proofreaders:
Sister Laura Beavers
Brother Danny Hayes
Brother Randall Henson
Sister Ashley Murphy

Booklet Design and Layout:
Brother Cory Glass

Written and published by the authority of Mount Lebanon Missionary Baptist Church

In Cooperation with Fairview Memorial Missionary Baptist Church, Faith Missionary Baptist Church, and Old Union Missionary Baptist Church

Price Per Booklet: $1.60

Treasurer
Brother Randall Henson
10022 Woodburn-Allen Springs Rd.
Alvaton, KY 42122
270-842-4526

©2013 Missionary Baptist Bible School Literature/
Mt. Lebanon Missionary Baptist Church

LESSON ONE

In The Beginning ...

LESSON TEXT
Genesis 1:1-13

WRITTEN BY
SISTER MEGAN CARTER

Genesis 1
1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.
5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.
6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.
7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.
8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.
9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.
10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.
11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.
12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.
13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

Since these lessons begin at the beginning, not much of an introduction is needed, but because this is such a hotly debated subject, I wanted to briefly address my stance. I am a young-Earth creationist. I believe that God created the universe, the Earth, and everything in it exactly as it is related to us in Genesis. I believe all of this took place around 6,000 years ago. Why do I believe these things? Because of biblical evidence and much prayerful consideration. After all, if we wish to know something that happened in the past, we attempt to seek out as close to a first-hand account of those events as possible. When I was 13 years old, I first got to know the One who has that first-hand account. It's easy to doubt things you haven't seen with your own eyes or about which you can't find an eye-witness report and that's why many people have trouble believing the biblical account of creation. There is so much information out there that *sounds good* and may even seem to make sense, but conflicts with the biblical framework God has given us. If you have questions about creation vs. evolution, find someone to answer those questions, but remember to *let God be true, but every man a liar* (Romans 3:4)! In other words, seek your answers in the light of God's word and His wisdom and guidance. Seek God and search His word for your answers. Measure all of your information against His standards. It's not the most popular way to go, but it will *always* be the truest!

WITHOUT FORM AND VOID

It's nearly impossible for us to imagine non-existence. All of our thoughts are based upon the first and most simple foundation that we exist. We all likely have proof through pictures and the memories of our parents and others that there was a particular day when our visible existence began, but it's still hard to wrap our minds around the idea that there was a time when we weren't here. Even more difficult to imagine is a time when there were no humans at all. Take a step back and try to imagine no life at all. Go one step farther and consider before the beginning, before there was even an Earth. As impossible as it seems to our limited minds, this is where our lesson begins.

The very first verse of the Bible lets us know that the first things God created were the heaven and the Earth, but the Earth at the beginning didn't look like the Earth that we know today. Verse 2 says that the Earth was without form and void. In other words, the Earth had been created, but it was empty. It existed, but it was completely vacant. What does that mean? If we read through the complete lesson text above, we see what we might picture as an empty Earth – land, seas, grass and plants, but nothing and no one else living here. Since the scriptures call the Earth void, or empty, *before* God did those other things, though, it must have been something much different. The only familiar things we can grasp are darkness and water.

"…and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

The limitations of our human minds prevent us from picturing something that doesn't have a definite form. God's creation of a formless Earth is the very first thing at which we can marvel. We can try to imagine what it looked like and ponder over how He did it, but there are elements of it that we just can't understand. And so with those first two verses, God sets the marvelous precedent…

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

LET THERE BE LIGHT

In keeping with the idea that God's

ways are higher than our ways, is the "method" by which God created light. Mankind's version of creating something involves using one's hands and muscles. Some creations require more work from our minds while some others don't take much thought but require toil and strain on our bodies. We aren't told in the scripture *how* God made His very first creation, the heaven and the Earth. The very first verse just says, "*…God created…"* Beginning with this second creation, though, God begins to *speak* things into existence.

We know that at first the formless Earth existed in darkness. Have you ever been in a completely dark place? In some cave tours, after reaching some remote part of the cave, the tour guide will turn off every light to show how completely void of light it is. When the lights go off, you can feel your eyes trying and trying to adjust and searching for something they can fix on. It's so dark that the darkness almost feels thick. The original darkness at the beginning of time may have been somewhat like that. No light anywhere to be seen… just darkness. The next part of that cave tour usually consists of the tour guide lighting a match and that one tiny little source of light lights up the whole huge room. At the beginning of time, God simply spoke those simple words and suddenly there was light. The light was everywhere all at once and God was pleased with that.

This next point is something else that we can't fully understand. In verse 4, after seeing that the light was good, it says that God divided the light from the darkness. Does that mean that before He divided things out the two were all mingled up together? Perhaps. We can reach the conclusion that light and darkness was somehow different from the complete division we know at this point. So, not only did God speak light into being, He effectively *moved it around* to the place He wanted it. Yet another thing we can't wrap our minds around. Sure, humans have figured out how to harness light. You can carry a flashlight around with you, but no one can simply move the light of the sun from one place to another. The idea doesn't even make sense to us, but God did it. And all with a few words.

Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me? (Jeremiah 32:27)

THE FIRST DAY

As a quick side note, we should take a closer look at the word *day.* Some argue that we don't really know how long God's creating work took, and try to somehow shape the creation week into billions of years. In the original Hebrew text, the word for *day* is *yom*. If *yom* is considered to be a literal 24-hour day in other parts of the Old Testament, why wouldn't we assume that *yom* in the creation week also means a literal 24-hour day? If we believe that God can simply speak things into existence, why wouldn't we believe that He could do it in as short a time as a day? At one time, theologians puzzled over why God took so *long* to create everything. Indeed, God could have created the universe, the earth, and everything therein in just a moment, but it was His pleasure to use the span of a week. You might notice sometime that our days, months, and years are all based upon natural occurrences (more on that in lesson 2), but our 7-day week is based solely upon the precedent set by God during His creation work. He made time for us and He used His creation week to divide time for us. We'll discuss this more in our last lesson.

In the first day, God accomplished the following things:

- Created the heaven and the formless Earth
- …*said, Let there be light: and there was light and saw the light, that it was good*…
- Divided the light from the darkness, calling the light "day" and the darkness "night"
- Established what makes a day: … *the evening and the morning were the first day.*

A FIRMAMENT IN THE MIDST OF THE WATERS

Having ended the work of the first day, God began the work of the second day with the creation of a *firmament*: the sky. Verse 6 is a little confusing at first glance… *And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.* Water, water everywhere! What are all of these waters? If you look ahead at verse 7, it says that God divided the waters *under* the sky from the waters which were *above* the sky.

A common belief is that the waters below the sky would become our seas and those above the sky would become our atmosphere – the band of gases that surrounds our planet, including clouds, which are made of water vapor. Much later, the Psalmist writes, "*Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens (Psalm 148:4)*," suggesting that these "above waters" weren't unique to the young-creation and still existed thousands of years later.

As it was when God divided light from darkness, this second division He made brings up another puzzle. God created the sky *first* and divided the waters above from the waters below *next*. Does this mean that even the sky was covered with or filled with water before God divided it? This is another wonder that our minds can't process and we can't absolutely know how it was, but it certainly is awe-inspiring to imagine what this Earth might have looked like in its earliest stages.

So, God made the sky, and He called it Heaven. This word is used to describe a few different "areas." Some like to think of it in a sort of 3-layered composition:

1. Terrestrial heaven: the visible sky
2. Celestial heaven: the entire universe (where the planets and stars are)
3. Heaven where God resides: where saved people go when they die

The "heaven" that God created on day 2 is the terrestrial heavens. The celestial heavens already existed at this point, albeit empty as of yet, as did Heaven where God resides (which was quite populated, by the way, with hosts of angels).

In the second day, God accomplished the following things:

- Made the firmament
- Divided the waters above from the waters below the firmament
- Named the firmament *Heaven*

LET THE DRY LAND APPEAR

We can assume up to this point that the Earth was covered with water. Whatever its form was, we know it was wet. Having completed the work of day 2, God began day 3 by gathering the waters under the sky into one place and letting dry land appear. Finally, things are beginning to look familiar! Except that probably all of the land was together in one big chunk. Many creationists believe that God created one giant land mass; they call it Pangaea. When the dry land appeared, God named it. *Earth!* And He called all of the waters surrounding it *Seas*.

We can suppose that at this point, the dry land was nothing but empty soil, but the very next thing God did was to tell that empty soil to produce. *Let the earth bring forth grass,* He said. But not only grass. He also called into existence every other plant and tree, specifying that each kind of plant should put forth seeds of the same kind of plant. In doing this, God not only provided a lush landscape for the current Earth, but also insured that all of those plants could reproduce and propagate themselves for all future landscapes.

In the third day, God accomplished the following:

- Gathered the waters below the sky into one place
- Let the dry land appear
- Made the land produce seed-bearing plants and trees of every kind and found pleasure in it

GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD

To wrap up this lesson, let's consider why we chose to group days 1, 2, and 3 of the creation week together. A quick re-cap of the bullet points of God's "accomplishments" in these days paints a familiar picture of our home planet. In these first 3 days, God took a blank and empty Earth and made it into a habitable place. At this point, there is light, there is water, and there is vegetation. Humans could have lived on Earth just as it is at the end of this lesson. But there are still more days left than we've covered so far! What wonders God has wrought in these first 3 days! It's exciting to consider that even though our Earth would have sufficed as a home, God wanted more for us. He wanted to give us even more reasons to praise His power and wonder at the things He has done.

In our next lesson, we'll explore beyond the realms of our planet and find out what the celestial heavens have to say about their Creator.

LESSON TWO

THE HEAVENS DECLARE ...

LESSON TEXT
Genesis 1:14-19

WRITTEN BY
SISTER MEGAN CARTER

Genesis 1
14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:
15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.
16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.
17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,
18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.
19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

INTRODUCTION

Surely all of God's creation inspires wonder and the celestial heavens are no exception. The scale and size of the stars and planets, the perfect placement of our sun and moon, and the distances involved are nothing short of mind-boggling. Nothing else in our physical universe comes so close to illustrating the infinity of God. When you consider that mankind has not travelled and *cannot* even travel to the far reaches of our own home galaxy and that the universe reaches much farther even than that, it seems to our human minds that the universe must surely go on forever. Although it's impossible to imagine the seeming emptiness of space being brought into existence, we know that it has not always existed and that God created it along with the formless Earth on the first day. In this lesson, we will observe the manner in which God chose to "decorate" this empty space and wonder at the reasons why it pleases Him to show His creativity and might even in those places largely hidden to human eyes.

LET THERE BE LIGHTS IN THE FIRMAMENT

Early in our first lesson, we discussed God's first and simple spoken command on day 1: "Let there be light." Then, to begin day 2, He created the firmament, or sky. So, we know that He had already created light and He had already created the sky, but now – beginning day 4 – He is creating lights in the *firmament of the heaven.* This terminology makes a distinction between our *sky* (the atmosphere; where the clouds are) and *the heavens* (what we might call "outer space"). So, after having created light on day 1, God is now going to create sources of light *in* "outer space." Had you ever

considered that the light God called into existence on the first day had no physical source? As far as we can understand, light didn't seem to have a starting place at that point. It was just there. This is yet another part of God's creating work at which we humans can only marvel. We can't think of any light that just exists without a source. We have candles, light bulbs, flashlights, and TV and computer screens from which we get light in our homes. When we step outside, day or night, the light we see comes from some heavenly body. All the light we know has a source. The light that God created on the first day did not. It's only now, on the fourth day, that He creates a "starting point" for that light.

FOR SIGNS, AND FOR SEASONS

Now, before God actually makes those light sources, He explains as it continues in verse 14 *why* He is putting those *lights in the firmament.* First, obviously, they are to make a distinction between day and night. Lastly in verse 15, He simply says that they are to give light to the Earth. It's the reason He gives in the middle that is most interesting. *Let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.* We briefly touched on this in our first lesson. Many of the ways in which we measure time is based upon astronomical occurrences. First, and most obviously, is the length of a day. For thousands of years, people have marked time by use of a sun dial, which uses the angle of the Earth's axis and the shadow cast by the sun as the Earth rotates. Likewise, the "official" beginning of seasons are actually on the dates of equinoxes and solstices, which mark particular positions of the Earth in relation to the Sun. Our approximately 30-day months are based on the motion and phases of the moon. We measure our years by the revolution of the Earth around the Sun. We use these lights that God gave us to measure our time, just as He intended.

God has also used these heavenly bodies as *signs,* or a means by which He speaks to us or shows His power. One of the most familiar instances would be the mysterious star which led the wise men to Bethlehem to find the young Savior (Matthew 2:2, 9-10). In other places, God prevented nightfall to allow the children of Israel to claim His victory against Gibeon (Joshua 10:12-14) as well as preventing the light as a plague upon the slave-holding Pharoah (Exodus 10:21-23) and as His Son died on the cross (Matthew 27:45). Likewise, we know that God plans to still use those lights as signs. Matthew 24 speaks of the return of our Lord. Verse 29 says that the sun and moon will cease to give light, the stars will fall from the sky, and *the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.*

Over the course of time, scientists, Christian and secular, have certainly come to a greater knowledge of our universe. When we attempt to consider, however, the expanse

of it, we quickly come to see how little we truly know and even *can* know. Based on this alone, it makes sense that God would use this part of His creation to so vividly showcase His might. Mankind has travelled into space, but has not and *will not* harness the sun and moon and change them at will as God has done. Our Lord was clear concerning His power exceeding anything man can do when He questioned Job concerning the constellations:

Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? (Job 38:31-33)

TWO GREAT LIGHTS

As was mentioned in the previous section, the lights in the sky were to make a distinction from day and night or to divide them. We are all quite aware that the night sky looks much different than the daytime sky, each having its own "great light" – our sun and moon. It was no accident that God placed the sun and moon in their exact positions. He positioned them to perfectly suit the needs of His most important creation so far, the Earth, and the needs of what would soon be the crowning jewel of His creation, mankind.

The sun is an incredible 93,000,000 miles away from Earth. One article[1] suggests that if it were possible to make a sound loud enough to reach us from the sun (and there was air to support it), it would take over 14 years for us to hear it! That same article also says that it would take a high-speed train over 100 years to travel that distance. Despite this great expanse, however, the sun hangs at the perfect position to light and heat the Earth, without either burning it up or letting it freeze. Re-Positioning the sun even a small amount closer or farther away would change our weather drastically.

To recognize the importance of the placement of the moon, we need look no further than the ocean tides. The moon essentially "pulls" the tide in and the gravitational force associated with the tides "pull" right back on the moon. It's a great partnership that cleanses the shores and helps out sea life. Moving the moon even 30% closer to or farther away from the Earth, would respectively half or double our tides' effects[2].

Interestingly, our wise Creator not only made the sun and moon perfectly suited in relation to the Earth, but also perfectly suited in relation to each other. You may have never considered that, despite a major size difference, the sun and moon appear to be about the same size from our vantage point. The moon is 400 times smaller than the sun, but is 400 times closer to the Earth! This design is unique to our solar system and provides another reliable method by which mankind is able to mark the passage of time

– the lunar eclipse. Another article states the following, concerning why this is important: "The significance of eclipse data for Biblical studies is great, for it provides confirmation that the chronological systems employed by Old Testament scribes were perfectly accurate."[2] And so we see that God's plan for the sun and moon did not just include providing for our physical needs, but also as a proof for His word and a witness to His truth.

It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven (Psalm 89:37).

HE MADE THE STARS ALSO

As a further illustration of God's power, here are a few interesting facts concerning the stars we see in our night sky:

- Our local Milky Way galaxy is said to hold some 200,000 *million* stars![3] Although, it's impossible for us to truly know the exact number, we do know that it is astounding and ultimately beyond the capabilities of our human minds.
- The star closest to Earth is called Alpha Centauri. Approximately 4,278 of our solar systems could lie between us and our nearest star.[4]
- If it were possible to stand on Alpha Centauri and look back toward our solar system, our sun would appear as just another star in the constellation Cassiopeia. [4]
- The sun is the largest heavenly body we can imagine, but some of the brighter stars are much larger. The star Pollux is 10 times larger than the sun. The center star in Orion's belt, Alnilam, is a blue super giant; 25 of our suns could be lined up across its disk. Another blue super giant, Rigel, is 70 suns across. [4]
- Another star in the constellation Orion, Betelgeuse, is a red super giant so large than if it replaced our sun at the center of the solar system, the Earth would be inside it! As it stands, Betelgeuse is around 2,400 *trillion* miles away, so it appears to us as nothing but a faintly red speck. [4]

These distances and proportions are all but impossible for us to imagine, but it certainly does give us reason to glorify the Creator when we consider the wonders He has done. And all of this is described by the seemingly insignificant phrase *he made the stars also*.

GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD

In the fourth day, God accomplished the following:

- Placed sources of light in the *firmament of the heaven*
- Placed two great sources of light in "outer space" – the sun and moon
- Made the stars
- Found pleasure in the day's creations

The question might be raised as to why God chose to place all of these things so far from our reach. It's likely that many people will never even know that such amazing things exist. The first few verses of Psalm 139 offer praise to God for being everywhere; the psalmist marvels that no matter where he goes, God knows all about it before it even happens. Perhaps we are to assume that no matter how far human knowledge goes, we will always find wonders that inspire our praise of an all-powerful Creator. Perhaps the possibility that there are wonders even beyond our reach should inspire even more praise. Remember that when God looks at His creations, *He* deems them good. God allows us to enjoy and marvel at His creation, but in the beginning, it was God alone who took pleasure in these things and, of course, He can see it all. When we consider our smallness in relation to the vast universe and the numerous stars, planets, and galaxies, David's observation becomes much more understandable:

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? (Psalm 8:3-4)

[1]Unruh, J. Timothy. The Greater Light to Rule the Day – Ladies and Gentlemen – The Sun! Retrieved from http://www.icr.org/article/392

[2]DeYoung, Donald B. The Moon: A Faithful Witness in the Sky. Retrieved from http://www.icr.org/articles/view/150/344

[3]Gitt, Werner (1 March 1997). The Vastness of the Universe Is Cause for Joy, Not Loneliness. Retrieved from http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/cm/v19/n2/counting-the-stars

[4]Lisle, Jason (Coordinator). (2007). Created Cosmos [DVD]. United States: Answers In Genesis.

LESSON THREE

Be Fruitful And Multiply...

LESSON TEXT
Genesis 1:20-25

WRITTEN BY
SISTER MEGAN CARTER

Genesis 1
20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.
21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.
22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.
23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.
24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.
25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

INTRODUCTION

We have made it all the way up to the fifth day. The Earth is completely prepared to host life. The atmosphere is full of air to breathe, the seas have been separated from the land, and there are multitudes of plants growing and ready to be eaten. As we have discussed previously, the Earth looks familiar at this point, but since it is untouched by sin, it's perfect and more beautiful than we can even imagine. God has prepared everything up to this point first and foremost for His glory and also to support the living creatures He is about to make, beginning on day 5.

BRING FORTH ABUNDANTLY

God brought living creatures onto the Earth by first creating fish and other sea life as well as birds on the fifth day. He finished His work concerning animal life during day 6 when He created all the land animals. Like the rest of creation up to this point, the animal kingdom showcases the creativity, power, and wisdom of our Creator. In this part of the world, we live among cats, dogs, fish, birds, maybe livestock, and the occasional wildlife that might cross the road in front of us or wander through our backyard. It may be easy to forget how wonderfully varied the entire animal family is. Think for a moment of how many different kinds of creatures live in the sea. How many kinds of birds can you picture in your mind? Consider the animals that live in the jungle or in the mountains. Most of us could surely name a long list, but there are far more than we even know.

One marvelous part to consider is that not only did God create so many living creatures, but He gave them the innate ability to become even more varied. The dog, for instance, most likely did not start out like the ones we keep as pets now. On the sixth day, there was likely one pair of dogs, possibly wolf-like animals, and in their genetic makeup was all of the information needed for every breed of dog that exists today. In other words, God didn't originally create a beagle and a collie and a Labrador retriever. He made the dog *kind* and "programmed" them with variety so that every dog that came after them would be just a little bit different.

We know that God loves all of His creation and has, up to this point, found it good. Matthew 10:29 says that a sparrow *shall not fall on the ground without your Father,* so we know that He cares for the animals He has created. However, we also know that God did not create animals to be like Himself and does not hold them under His law. The only instruction that God gave forthrightly to animal life was to *be fruitful and multiply*. Based on this, we can see God's primary plan for animals: that they should fill the Earth. And why would He want them to fill the Earth if He didn't have some kind of plan for them? We'll touch on this a bit more later in this lesson as well as in our next lesson.

BRING FORTH THE LIVING CREATURE

As mentioned before, the variety within the animal kingdom is nothing short of astounding. Even if God did just create the different *kinds* on days 5 and 6, that is still a huge number of different kinds of animals. Now, most people know that there is quite a bit of argument concerning creation in general. There are specific arguments concerning a favorite part of creation: *dinosaurs!* Books, magazines, TV shows, and some museums suggest that dinosaurs lived a long time before mankind. If we believe that the Bible is true, we cannot possibly agree with that. There were creatures that we now call dinosaurs that flew in the sky, swam in the waters, and walked on the land. Our scripture lesson clearly states that God made flying and swimming creatures on day 5 and that He made land creatures on day 6. So, what we know to be the true account of creation implies that some of the dinosaurs were created on the *same day* as Adam and Eve!

As further proof, you can read what the Bible says about dinosaurs. Remember that the word *dinosaur* was made by a man thousands of years after the Bible was written, so you won't find that word in the Bible, but we can find some descriptions of 2 creatures who sound very similar to what we now call dinosaurs. Job 40 describes Leviathan, a creature who breathed fire and had scales and terrible teeth! Job 41 discusses

a creature called Behemoth, whose tail was like a cedar tree. He is described as being *chief in the ways of God*, which probably means he was the largest of all the creatures.

As long as we're discussing dinosaurs, let's consider another piece of the puzzle that doesn't fit if you remove them from the biblical creation week. What do dinosaurs eat? Movies and other popular media make us think of terrifying monsters with impossibly big teeth, like T. rex, for instance, who go around eating everything and everybody they meet up with. We know, based on biblical creation, that death did not occur until *after* man disobeyed God (more on that in the next lesson!). So, T. rex couldn't have possibly been created to be the ruthless killing machine he's made out to be now, because he wouldn't have been going around eating other animals and people if nothing had even ever died yet! So what did they eat at the beginning? The only other option would have been plants. Yes, even T. rex with all of his terrible teeth, even sharks, even lions, even hawks and other modern-day meat eaters were designed to be vegetarians!

And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so (Genesis 1:30).

GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD

On the fifth day and the first part of the sixth, God accomplished the following:

- Created life in the waters
- Created *winged fowl*
- Found pleasure in them
- Instructed them to have babies and fill the Earth with their kind
- Created land animals
- Found pleasure in them

As it has been with the previous days' creating work, God was pleased with the creatures He made on days 5 and 6. There is so much beauty for us to enjoy when we look at the animal kingdom and God enjoys the beauty He placed there as well. His enjoyment wasn't the only reason he created so many animals, however. God created the animals for the use of mankind. He intended for us to enjoy and use them to help us. Remember, though, that at this time, animals were not a food source for humans or for each other. Animals that we consider to be predator and prey at this time lived in peace together and did not threaten one another. What wonderful evidence of the perfect peace that existed at that time! This peace was also pleasing to God. Perhaps what pleased God most about the animal life He created is their knowledge and declaration of Him. Job 12:7-9 says, *But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?* Likewise, Isaiah 43:20 says that *the beast of the field shall honour me… because I give waters in the wilderness…* Although they cannot know God in the way we can, each animal knows that it was created, is cared for by their Creator, and praises God's creativity, providence, and wisdom through their very existence.

When we consider the amazing creative design involved in the many kinds of creatures, we can again marvel at the power and wisdom of our Creator. He is able to make creatures like Behemoth, who was likely much bigger than a bus, and yet He is able to make insects so tiny that they are no more than a speck to our unaided eyes. He is able to make wild geese who know the perfect time to fly south for the winter and bears who know when to start preparing for each year's hibernation. God undoubtedly loves the animals He created and takes great pleasure in the honor they bring Him. Indeed, He is ever more worthy of our praise for taking such great care of each part of His creation.

For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine (Psalm 50:10-11).

LESSON FOUR

...In His Own Image

LESSON TEXT
Genesis 1:26-31

WRITTEN BY
SISTER MEGAN CARTER

Genesis 1
26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.
27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.
28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.
29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.
30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.
31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

INTRODUCTION

Having reached the sixth day, we can now picture a nearly complete creation. Everything we know to be a part of our world has been created. *Almost.* In one way, we could say that God's creating work was 99% finished, but then again, like a puzzle, it all just seems kind of pointless if the last piece is missing. Through the days we've already studied, we have witnessed God's artistry. God has showcased His power and wisdom throughout the universe, creating land and sea and hanging stars and planets in their places. He showed us His intelligence and creativity through the enormous variety of plants and animals. The world and the space in which it rested were truly glorious and undoubtedly brought God great pleasure, but something was still lacking. Although we can see the touch of His hand on each piece of the creation, God had yet to place a reflection of Himself in the world. And that brings us to the last and greatest work of our mighty Creator.

LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE

If we look at our lesson text, we find these simple words: *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.* It seems awfully small, doesn't it? Just a few little words to describe the thoughts of God concerning our creation. We have to look into the next chapter to find more detail, so let's discuss that briefly.

Genesis chapter 1 and Genesis chapter 2 both include the creation account. The pattern these 2 chapters follow imitate the method by which the Hebrew people sometimes told their stories. They would first give a generally outlined overview followed by a more detailed account. Genesis 1 gives us a chronological list of the things God did, day by day. Genesis 2 "zooms in" on the creation as a whole, centering on the creation of man. Remember, though, that the original written versions of the scriptures weren't divided into chapters and verses. So, if you ignore the divisions, it's just one long account with an "outline" first that flows directly into a more detailed version of the same story.

The creation of man was quite different from the creation of other things up to this point. Most things were simply spoken into existence and even though chapter 2 says that both man and land animals were "formed," mankind's creation is still set apart. Why? Because God chose to make us *in His own image*. God used Himself as the model by which He formed the first man, Adam. While we can't know for certain what God looks like physically, we can find several other similarities between ourselves and God. Some things differ at this point since we now must contend with sin, but at the time of Adam's creation, He was very much like God.

Perhaps the most obvious way in which Adam was like God was his perfection. He was untouched by sin and completely flawless. A part of his perfection was his holiness. God made Adam to be *good*, just as He is good. Because he was perfect and without sin, which is the root cause of aging, disease, and general affliction, Adam would never die, also imitating God. God made Adam to rule with Him forever, having dominion over all other creation.

Perhaps sweetest of all, though, is the fact that Adam truly lived by the breath of God. Genesis 2:7 says that after God had formed Adam from the dirt, He "*breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*" You see, Adam's body was important and God obviously put great care into molding it, but without God's breath, the body would have still been just dirt. *God's breath made Adam a soul, an eternal being… just like God.* And really, all the rest of Adam's likenesses to God are contingent upon this one. Because without that spiritual component, that "piece" of God that came to live inside of Adam, he couldn't have been perfect and holy. He couldn't rise above the rest of creation to rule over it. He couldn't live forever. He couldn't live at all! All of the other good gifts that God gave mankind – like the ability to love and learn, intelligence, rational thought, reasoning skills, and the list goes on – would be impossible without this breath of God.

MALE AND FEMALE

Finally, we have reached the

culmination. Everything has been leading up to and setting the stage for God's most precious creation. The newborn Earth is now home to a person, one man. Next, God gives this man something to do. He places Adam in the garden "*to dress it and to keep it,"* according to Genesis 2:15. So, here is one thing with which God blessed mankind prior to the entrance of sin: work. God intended work to be a blessing. Everything has changed, obviously, since that time, but Colossians 3:23 says, "*And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."* If we follow that advice, whatever our work is can still be a blessing to us as well as to those around us.

After giving Adam the general assignment of tending the garden, God gave Adam a more specific task. Genesis 2:19 says that God brought the animals to Adam, one by one, and he named them. The many different kinds of animals were now present and named, but there wasn't one that would be a suitable helper and companion for Adam. So, since God saw that he shouldn't be alone, He made Adam go to sleep, removed one of his ribs, and made him the perfect companion from it – Eve.

Eve wasn't formed from dirt like Adam was. She was literally made out of Adam. They belonged to each other because they were made of the same flesh. Thus, we have the second gift God gave to us before sin came: marriage. Adam and Eve were the perfect example of what God intended marriage to be – a perfect partnership in which each participant complimented the other perfectly. With this first marriage came the institution of the family, which God intended to be just as He created it – one man and one woman, whom He expected to have children, populating the Earth with more humans.

AND GOD SAID UNTO THEM

Now, we just heard one of God's instructions for Adam and Eve after having created them, but He had a few more for them as well. He also told them to *subdue the Earth* and to *have dominion over* all other living creatures. "Subduing the Earth" likely means that God intended mankind to use the Earth and everything in it to fulfill their needs or desires. Perhaps God also wanted Adam and Eve and their offspring to "study" His creation and to enjoy it as He did. As for the animals, God created them for the use and enjoyment of mankind, but He created man to be superior. Earlier in the lesson, we discussed how God created man to rule over creation as He does. We know that God loves all of His creation and cares for it greatly. He intended for mankind's rule over the rest of creation to be just the same. God did not make humans to be dictators who would use up, wear out, and mistreat the Earth and the creatures therein, but gentle caretakers who would make use of the resources God gave them in ways that were both respectful and resourceful.

Even in the now-sinful world we can follow these good instructions. God prepared this Earth and everything in it for us and it is ours to use, but we should always strive to be good stewards of His abundant blessings on us. In other words, it's okay to chop down a tree to get lumber to build a house, but it would be poor stewardship to chop down every tree you see just because you like to chop down trees.

So, we know that God has given these instructions to have children and to make use of the Earth and the things in it, but are these the *only* instructions God delivered? Indeed, these *are* the only instructions He gave to both Adam *and* Eve directly, but if we look farther into Genesis 2, we will find that one most important command that God spoke to Adam:

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Genesis 2:16-17).

Yes, God gave this sobering command to Adam alone… but that didn't mean that it applied to Adam alone. Remember that Adam and Eve were of one flesh and any children they had would be products of that one flesh, so this singular command applied to all of humankind *through* Adam at that point. Adam, the father of humankind, became the responsible party when he received the one rule that, if broken, resulted in death. This is why sin came into the universe and upon all humankind only after Adam disobeyed God, even though Eve partook of the tree first.

IT WAS VERY GOOD

In the final part of the sixth day, God accomplished the following:

- Created mankind, male and female, in His own image
- Blessed them
- Instructed them to have children, to subdue the Earth, and to have dominion over the animals
- Instructed them to eat any plant except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, under penalty of death
- Also instructed the animals to eat only plants
- Saw that all of His creation was very good

Genesis 1:31 says that God not only looked at the creatures He had made on day 6, but that He *saw every thing that he had made, and, behold,* ***it was very good.*** We've seen on the previous days how God has found pleasure in each of the things He created, but now at the end of His creating work, He looks out over everything working together, all for the use and pleasure of His last and most beloved creation – mankind – and He finds that it's not just good, it's *very* good!

Imagine how beautiful it must have been. No sickness, no death, no wilting, no fear, no hatred, no war, no violence… just peace. Two perfect little pictures of God – Adam and Eve – who loved Him and each other and all of creation perfectly, living in the loveliest of landscapes. And that's how it was for a while. There's no way of knowing how long they lived in perfection and peace, having

perfect communion with God and enjoying their work in the garden. How precious to consider how much God must love us that, even though He is so powerful that He absolutely could have spun the whole universe, Earth, and its contents into existence in less than the blink of an eye, He worked day by day painstakingly designing each component with such great care and attention to detail. Surely, He wanted everything to be *just* so before He introduced His final creation into the world. Surely He is more worthy of our praise than we can even comprehend for the wonders He has wrought.

Even though Adam did disobey God, it doesn't end there, fortunately for us. Our wise Creator made a plan, more intricate and glorious than all of the wonders of creation, to allow us to come back to that perfect communion with Him that Adam and Eve enjoyed at the beginning. Though we are devastated by sin, God has given us a Savior, and when He died on the cross He conquered that sin and the death that accompanies it. And through our Christ, we who are saved share in that victory and will someday be with Him (and be *like Him*) in Heaven! And that, we can all agree, is *very good*, too.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us (Romans 8:37).

LESSON FIVE

God Ended His Work

LESSON TEXT
Genesis 2:1-3

WRITTEN BY
SISTER MEGAN CARTER

Genesis 2
1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.
2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.
3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

INTRODUCTION – THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH WERE FINISHED

We have reached the end. After 6 days, everything is here. What started as formless nothing became light and air, clouds and sea, land and grass, sun and moon, creatures great and small, and, the crowning jewel of creation, mankind – God's very own children, Adam and Eve. We know that God created everything for the use and enjoyment of mankind and that He also blessed us with the institution of marriage (and therefore the family) and by giving us work to do. That's everything. Right? Our loving Creator has provided for us perfectly. We couldn't possibly need one more thing, but God had one more thing to add… one more gift to give us, one more way for us to honor Him.

HE RESTED

Imagine the dawn of the seventh day. For the first time, human eyes witnessed the colors of a sunrise. We can't know what it was like to experience the beauty of God's creation through eyes untainted by sin, but surely it must have been glorious. It was the beginning of Adam and Eve's first full day to enjoy their new home, explore their surroundings, and perhaps begin the work that they had been instructed to do. God had different plans for that day, though. God had ended His work and, as we discussed in lesson 4, found it all very good. So, since He was finished, He rested.

Why did God rest? Certainly not because all of His creating work had tired Him out and He needed a break! If we look at verse 3 of our lesson text, we can see that God's rest on the seventh day set that day apart. *God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.* That's what "sanctified" means: "set apart." So, because God rested, this day was special.

Although the scripture doesn't implicitly say so, we can assume that Adam and Eve followed God's precedent on that day and also rested. Again, since they were like God and without sin, they did not *need* rest. Getting tired and wearing out after working hard

are symptoms of sin. Adam and Eve could work without getting tired. They could explore all of creation as much as they liked without slowing down. They could praise God with all their hearts without the physical limitation of fatigue or distraction. They didn't need a day to rest, but God gave them a day to rest anyway. He gave them six days to work in the garden and He gave them one special day for nothing but communion with Him. So, the three blessed gifts God gave to man before he sinned were work, marriage, and rest.

REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY

Sometime after the seventh day, we know that things changed drastically. The day that Adam disobeyed and partook of that forbidden fruit was indeed the saddest day in our history. Everything changed… including those three good gifts we received prior to the fall. Work became difficult and tiring. The marriage relationship was no longer an equal partnership, the husband taking a dominant position (Genesis 3:16). And rest was no longer a choice, but something we needed to live. The rest of the seventh day became the ceremonial sanctification of the sabbath. God's intentions were still the same, however: that mankind should set apart one day as a holy day, a time in which they might worship Him.

Later, in Exodus, we see that God formally commanded us to do this, making it very clear that He intended for us to follow His example of resting after 6 days of work:
Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it (Exodus 20:8-11).

So, if the human body now needs rest each day, and each person is most likely resting for some amount of time during each 24-hour period, then why should we still take an entire day of rest? The most obvious reason is that we are to obey God's commandments. When we honor the sabbath day, we honor God through our obedience, recognizing that He is above us and that we are His servants. Our act of setting apart the sabbath not only honors God, but also lets everyone else around us know that we honor Him. Our obedience is an example to a sinful world. Furthermore, an entire day of rest is different than a fraction of a day of rest. Taking an entire day, truly gives our minds time to quiet down and we become much more able to meditate on things of God and to hear Him speak to us.

RIDING UPON THE HIGH PLACES

Keeping the sabbath holy has become much more complicated, unfortunately. Imagine how simple Adam and Eve's lives were at the beginning, resting simply because they wanted to, not because they needed a break and not because they disliked their work. Through the years, people have treated their sabbath day rest differently. Before Moses brought the 10 Commandments down from the mountain, God commanded the children of Israel to rest and refrain from gathering food on the seventh day. They were to gather enough food for 2 days on the sixth day and to remain in their tents on the seventh. If we look back at early Americans, we can see that they spent their Sundays first listening to sermons at church and then reading their Bibles and meditating once they came back home. They cooked extra on Saturday and ate a cold meal on Sunday, believing they shouldn't even heat up the stove on their sabbath. Children weren't allowed to play as they might have normally, but were expected to sit quietly. Of course, it wasn't too many years ago that most businesses closed on Saturday evening and didn't reopen until Monday morning. Very few businesses do that now.

Many people continue their lives as usual on Sunday. Some attend a church service, maybe two, but keep their regular pace the rest of the day. Most likely, very few actually use our sabbath to truly rest. The pace at which our modern-day world moves makes it quite difficult. We are promised a reward, though, if we do keep God's commandment to rest.

Isaiah 58:13-14 says that if we take that one day to turn away from doing whatever we want, if we delight in our day to rest, and choose to honor God in this way instead of choosing to do those things that only bring us pleasure… then *we will find happiness in God and He will cause us "to ride upon the high places of the earth!"*
Stepping back from those things which entertain us is easily viewed as a punishment. "Why wouldn't God want me to do the things that make me happy?" we might wonder. If we go all the way back to the beginning when it was only a loving God and two people who loved God perfectly, we see that God wanted to give them a day when they didn't have to think about anything other than loving Him. He wanted a day with them with no distractions. And even though sin has significantly changed the picture, this holds true.

We may not be able to love God perfectly anymore. We may not be able to worship and honor Him in the unrestrained way that Adam and Eve could. **We are still the crowning jewel of His creation**. We are still the most precious to Him. He still wants us. The Creator of all the universe wants us! And He gives us a day in which it's okay to rest from the work we're commanded to do. He gives us a day in which it's okay to lay aside our worldly responsibilities and focus solely upon Him. He wants to give us some quiet and He wants to be with us.

He doesn't want us to lay aside the things that make us happy; *He wants to be everything that makes us happy.*

On the seventh day, God gave us rest. He didn't describe this day as good, as He had the previous days because He didn't rest for His own pleasure. When we choose to take this rest for which God has given us the example, *He finds pleasure in us.* And that… is *extremely* good.