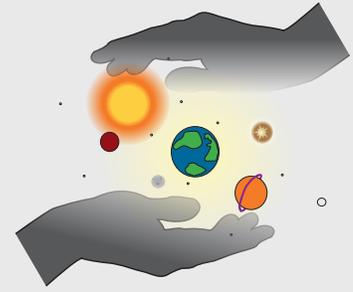


# Lesson 1: In the Beginning

## *Introduction: Where Do We Come From?*

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*<sup>1</sup> Such powerful words are the first ones recorded in the Bible. This is the first of many big questions the Bible answers: where do we come from? The answer is: we come from God.<sup>2</sup> The Bible begins with a book called *Genesis*. This is a Hebrew word that means *Beginnings*. Genesis explains the beginnings of our universe, humanity, and the great history of our common heritage. While it may be difficult to completely understand, we can know that God has always been and that He created life out of nothing.<sup>3</sup>



## *The Creation*

On the first day, God said, “Let there be light.” And there was light. He separated the light from darkness. On the second day, God separated the waters and put space in between them. This is how the sea and sky were formed.<sup>4</sup>

On the third day, God created land. He adorned it with all nature like trees, grass, mountains and valleys. On the fourth day God created the sun, moon, and the stars.<sup>5</sup> On the fifth day, God created all the animals that swim in the seas and fly in the sky. On the sixth day, God created all the animals that walk on land. He crafted each one just the way He wanted it.<sup>6</sup>

## *God’s Greatest Creation*



God then said, “Let Us make man in Our Image.” So God took dust from the ground and breathed into it the breath of life. Man became a living being.<sup>7</sup> This is what makes man so special in the world. There is no other thing in God’s creation that bears His image. Does this mean we all look like God with our skin and hair? No, it means we carry within us a spirit, an immortal part of our being that is made in the image of God. Our physical bodies will eventually waste away, but our spirit will remain.

Many people in this world will tell you that you are no better than any brute animal; that you are just a collection of flesh and bone that evolved from lesser animals. This mentality strips humanity of the holy place that we have in God’s creation. Bearing God’s image is an honor. You are special, unique, and crafted by the Almighty God. For this reason, He loves and cares about you. This special love is unique to all creation.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:1; See *Christian Basics: A Theistic Worldview*

<sup>2</sup> See *Christian Basics: God* <sup>6</sup> Genesis 1:24-26

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 90:2

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 1:27

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 1:6-8

<sup>8</sup> Romans 8:15-16

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 1:14-19

### Discussion Questions:

- *What part of creation would you like to see the most?*
- *How do you feel about God loving you?*

An inspired Bible writer named David praised God by saying:

*I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well.*<sup>9-10</sup>

After the sixth day, Creation was complete. On the seventh day, God rested. Genesis records God stating that His creation as good six times within the first chapter! In fact, when He has finished, He called it very good.<sup>11</sup> Man and God lived in a state of perfect fellowship and harmony. There was yet to be anything bad, for God is good and only created good things.

## *A Work to Do*



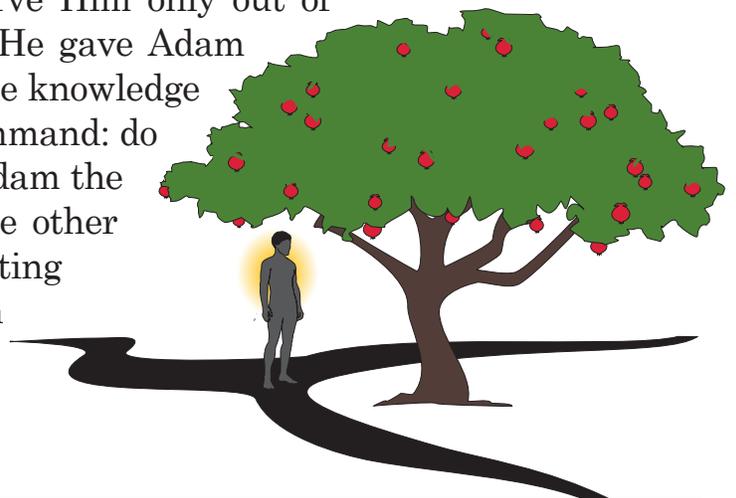
The man formed from dust was named Adam.<sup>12</sup> In the Biblical language of Hebrew, Adam means *man* or *humanity*. Adam was a real person.

He also serves as a type or example of all mankind. God put Adam in a beautiful garden called Eden. He was given a job to do. There were all sorts of trees and plants to care for. While some may look at work negatively, we should remember that work was given to Adam from God. God only creates good things. When done with a proper attitude, work can provide a sense of purpose and fulfillment.

## *Gifts of Life and Choice*

Within the garden were two special trees given as a blessing from God: the tree of Life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.<sup>13</sup> The tree of Life indicated God was willing to share the gift of eternal life with Adam. Genesis shows that Adam could enjoy a perfect harmony with God continually.

God did not want His creation to serve Him only out of a sense of duty, but out of devotion. So, He gave Adam another gift: *choice*. This was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. With this tree came a command: do not eat from it. In this way, God offered Adam the choice to obey God and deny himself. The other choice was to obey Self and deny God (by eating from this special tree). In essence, Adam could choose to submit to God's definition of good, or he could defy God's command and choose what he thought was good.



<sup>9</sup> Psalm 139:14

<sup>10</sup> See *Christian Basics: Why Should We Worship God?*

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 1:27-31

<sup>12</sup> Genesis 2:19

<sup>13</sup> Genesis 2:8-15

### Discussion Questions:

- *Do you enjoy work? Why or why not?*
- *Why did God not create humans to automatically love Him?*

This is how God offered Adam (and all of us) a relationship of love and harmony: through free-will.<sup>14</sup> To not allow the choice would deny God and man the opportunity to enjoy each other's fellowship and love completely. To allow the choice (and for man to choose to obey God) would complete the perfect relationship that God desired.<sup>15</sup>

With choices come consequences. If Adam chose to obey God, he would live in this state of harmony and life. If Adam chose to obey Self, he would die.<sup>16</sup> This is the first mention of death in the Bible. It indicates that there was not a problem with death yet. The consequence of death would be twofold: physical death (separation of body and spirit) and spiritual death (separation of spirit from God).

## *The First Family*

Adam grew lonely as he worked. All the animals had mates; they produced offspring; yet, Adam was alone. God took notice of this, and put Adam into a deep sleep. He took from his side a rib and fashioned a helper for the man. When the man awoke, he found this helper near him—a woman! The woman's name was Eve. Her name means *life* or *living*.<sup>17</sup> Like Adam, she was a real person and also a figure or example of humanity.



Eve was created to be Adam's perfect helper.<sup>18</sup> Genesis says that she was *comparable*, meaning she was his perfect counterpart. Eve was not created inferior. She was everything that Adam needed. God brought Adam and Eve together in marriage as husband and wife to become the first family. He gave them a principle of human nature: to become one flesh. This means that a husband and wife share a unique physical, emotional, and spiritual relationship that they are to have only together. God's gift of marriage was another wonderful blessing for man. God said:

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*<sup>19</sup>

With Adam and Eve, God gave another wonderful gift to His creation: the family. Bible students can observe the blessings of the first family and apply them to all families today. These universal principles can flow into any tribe or nation. The world's cultural diversity and beliefs about the family may vary from one person to the next. As one admires the various customs around the world, a simple truth is also evident. God's principles of the family were given for the benefit of all mankind. What universal principles can we learn from the first family?

<sup>14</sup> See *Christian Basics: Free Will: God's Gift of Choice*

<sup>15</sup> Romans 6:17-18

<sup>16</sup> Genesis 2:17

<sup>17</sup> Genesis 3:20

<sup>18</sup> Genesis 2:18-25

<sup>19</sup> Genesis 2:24

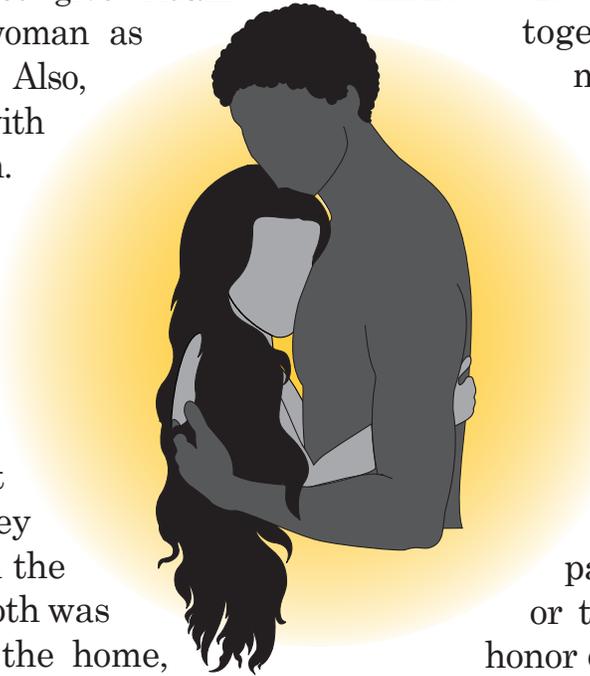
### Discussion Questions:

- Can you give some examples of the phrase: "with choice comes consequence"?
- What is so unique about the relationship of a husband and wife?

## *Principles Gained from the First Family*

**1** A family begins with one man and one woman. God did not give Adam another man, but a woman as the perfect counterpart. Also, Adam was complete with Eve, not multiple women.

**3** Man is the head of the family. Adam was first created and given a job. Eve was created as his counterpart and helper. While they have a different role in the family, God's love for both was supreme. As head of the home, Adam did not treat Eve poorly. He was grateful, as Eve was a gift of God.



**2** Woman was created as a helper, not a slave. Adam and Eve worked together. Adam did not make Eve do everything while he relaxed.

**4** Marriage creates a new family. Just like Adam and Eve, all new marriages demonstrate accepting responsibility for God's authority. A new family should not be run by the parents of either the husband or the wife. While we always honor our parents, each man and woman must accept responsibility of the new family when they marry.

### *In Review: In the Beginning*

Genesis shows the amazing power of the Creator God who crafted the universe and our world in six days. As God's image bearers, mankind should have the joy to know how special we are to God. God placed Adam in a special garden with a special work. The gift of choice was given to man in order to create a free-will relationship motivated by love and honor between God and man. As Adam grew lonely, God created Eve, a perfect counterpart and helper. It was a time of perfect harmony between God and man. The memory verse for this series of studies is as follows:

*"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."—John 3:16*

While we have yet to learn about God's only begotten Son in this series, we can appreciate this verse from what we have gained from this first study. We can appreciate that God loves us. He created us in His image. He desires that we have everlasting life without fear of death. What a comfort to know that the God of all creation sees us in such a special way!