

The Creator and His Work

Key Verse:
“The Heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands.”
 Psalm 19:1

Extra: Research which has the most evidence to support it: creation (God-acting) or evolution (chance-action).

Level 5 lesson 1

Read: Genesis 1:1-31
Further Reading: Psalm 19

IN THE BEGINNING — GOD: “How did we get here?” and “Why are we here?” These two big questions have fascinated mankind for centuries! Modern scientists have several theories on how we came into being, the main one being evolution. Today however, even many secular scientists find the theory that ‘everything came into being by chance’ to be unsatisfactory. To believe this theory removes every possible answer to the second question! This is because a ‘chance’ happening, by definition, rules out any reason or purpose behind it. What a dilemma this proves to be for supporters of evolution!

The ‘experts’ claim we are just a “cosmic fluke,” with no greater purpose than “to pass on our DNA” (as Professor Dawkins once said). Yet as many people observe life in all its complexity and wonder, they cry, “There must be a reason!” In Genesis (the first book of the Bible and inspired by the Holy Spirit) we read about our origin, “In the beginning, GOD created the heavens and the earth.” All that we see, around, above, and below us, originally came into existence by the power of God, out of nothing physical! God continues to sustain and uphold it by His own power, in order to fulfil His sovereign purposes. He is at the beginning of everything! This raises another question: “Who made God?” The answer is nobody; because, by definition, God is infinite and unlimited in His being, knowledge and power, and He is eternal, i.e. without beginning or end.

Genesis continues to describe the work of God in fitting the world to be the home and habitation of mankind. This great work took six days to accomplish. As you read the passage in context, the recurring expression “the evening and the morning were the day” (verses 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31), imply that normal days were being referred to here. Indeed, until the development of Darwin’s ‘Theory of Evolution’ which challenged the validity of the Biblical text, this has been the view of most Christians for nearly two thousand years. Sadly, it has now become something of a contentious issue between Christians, some of whom now believe that these ‘days’ could refer to millions of years.

It is significant that in Exodus 20:8-11, God Himself clearly equated these days with normal days. Moses was commanded to work for 6 days and make the seventh a day of rest, just as God had worked for 6 days and rested on the seventh.

LIGHT: After bringing into existence the ‘raw material’ (v2), God began working to create further order and form. Firstly, light was introduced to dispel the darkness (v3). This light was independent of the sun, which was created at God’s command later in the scene. Next, God created the atmosphere, by separating the waters covering the earth into two parts; some above the ‘expanse’ and some below it. Now there was the earth with water on the surface and a watery layer above the atmosphere (sky).

LAND: Then God gathered the waters together in one place (the sea) and caused the dry land to appear. Then God produced plant life, herbs, and trees to grow and reproduce on the land. Incidentally, this is a development for which evolution has absolutely no answer. HOW COULD lifeless rocks and minerals turn into living roses and maple trees by themselves? For the evolutionist who denies the work of Almighty God, the origin of life remains a most profound mystery! Following the vegetation, God made the sun, moon, and stars, and fixed them in the exact places to give light on earth, to rule over the day and the night, and to govern the four seasons.

LIFE: On the fifth day, bird and fish life were created, with each kind also able to reproduce ‘after their kind.’ This is important because like could not produce unlike. Fish could not produce birds or vice versa. There was room for varieties within the ‘kinds,’ but not outside their own species.

Finally, we come to the last day of Creation. Again, God simply spoke a command and “living creatures, cattle, creeping things and beasts of the earth” came into being. One more work remained that day — the creation of man — but we will look at that next lesson. In conclusion, note a few points about this creation narrative:

1. God created on an ascending scale - that is, from the lower to the higher.
2. The creation order in Genesis fits in with present day scientific knowledge.
3. Living things reproduced ‘after their kind.’
4. God said that His works were good.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. How would you reply to the first two questions at the start of this study?	.....
2. What presents supporters of evolution with a dilemma?	.....
3. Why does evolution’s “by chance” theory remove the purpose for human existence?	.....
4. What remains a profound mystery for those who believe in evolution?	.....
5. Do you believe God created everything? Why or why not?	.....

My Name is Age

Man's Creation and Trial

Key Verse:
“Remember your Creator in the days of your youth.”

Ecclesiastes 12:1a

Extra: Obedience or disobedience: how is this still an important lesson for us?

Level 5 lesson 2

Read Genesis 1:26-31, 2:1-17

Further reading: Psalm 104

MAN'S CREATION: God said, “Let us make man in our likeness” (v26). Previously we’ve read “Let there be,” but here it is, “Let us.” You may ask, “Who is the ‘Us’?” Could it refer to God and the angels? No, this cannot be, because the angels are created, lesser beings who worship and serve God. Man was not made in the image of the angels, but was created in the image of God alone (v27). The correct answer is that “Us” refers to the three Persons within the Godhead (the New Testament clearly reveals that these Persons are God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit). Hence, this verse shows their unity in perfectly agreeing to make mankind in Their Own Image!

Verse 26 is the first reference in Scripture to the Triune nature of God (the doctrine of ‘the Trinity’), and because man was made “in the image” (or after the likeness) of the Triune God, he is therefore a distinct and separate creation from the animals around him. We all have a moral nature designed for enjoying communion with God and discerning His moral standards (unlike animals), an intelligent mind enabling us to think and reason, along with a will enabling us to choose and take correct actions (superior to animals).

Mankind came directly from the Creator’s hands and was made with both a physical and a spiritual component. Genesis 2:7 makes this very clear, “and the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” Adam was given a material body at the touch of the Creator’s hand, and then spiritual and physical life through the breath of the Creator. When Adam named all the animals he could not find a suitable companion. So God gave Adam a female companion created from his own side, whom Adam later called Eve. This is another proof of man’s distinction from, and superiority to, the animals!

MAN'S POSITION: In keeping with the dignity of being ‘made in the image of God,’ mankind was given dominion over all the earth. He was to, “Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it; then rule over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves on the ground” (v28). So man ruled over the entire earthly creation, enjoying fellowship and communion with God and with God’s clear blessing upon him.

This of course is a very different perspective from that of the evolutionists, who claim man has evolved — “from goo to you” — purely by chance! You must firstly realise that creation and evolution are diametrically opposed and irreconcilable. Both cannot be true! They are also hugely important in deciding your relationship, standing, and accountability before God. God’s Word is clear: you were created by God and are therefore accountable to Him. As we will see shortly, our fellowship with God was broken by our wilful disobedience, and so we came under the righteous condemnation of Holy God. Thankfully, Jesus Christ (God the Son) came to earth to be the Saviour of mankind, to take man’s rightful punishment through His sacrificial death; to rise from the dead, and so offer forgiveness and salvation to all who repent and believe in Him.

Now obviously, if evolution were true and God never existed nor created us, then the Bible would become irrelevant and the gospel of salvation in Christ would be nonsense! You must not underestimate the implications of being deceived by this unreliable theory of evolution. All Christians need to be convinced of the truth and validity of the Genesis account, for it forms the basis of our Christian belief.

MAN'S HOME: In Genesis 2:8,9 we read that God planted the beautiful Garden of Eden for man, with all kinds of trees that were “pleasing to the eye and good for food,” and it was well-watered by a magnificent river. This delightful paradise was Adam and Eve’s home. What a home of delight! Their sole occupation was to care for the garden (without weeds, pests, or disease); and best of all, they enjoyed perfect fellowship and communion, both in their marriage and with God.

MAN'S TRIAL: Man however, as we alluded to earlier, is not simply a robot. God created him with a will and the ability to choose. He could please or displease his Creator. He could obey or disobey. So God imposed a simple test to assess the love and loyalty of man to Himself. Amongst the trees of the garden He set two very special trees; one, “the tree of life” and the other “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” God gave specific and clear instructions to Adam, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (vv16-17)! This simple test promised that obedience to God is life, but disobedience to God brings death.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. When God said, “Let US make man,” who does “US” refer to?	.....
2. How is man distinct from the rest of the creation God made?	.....
3. If evolution were true, how would it affect the Gospel of salvation?	.....
4. Why is the Genesis account of Creation so important?	.....
5. What great promise did God’s simple test of Adam and Eve hold?	.....

The Entrance of Sin

Read Genesis 3:1-7

Further reading: Romans 1:18-32

Key Verse:

“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.”

Romans 5:12

Extra: If you had been Adam or Eve, what would you have done when tempted?

Level 5 lesson 3

HAPPY CONDITION: In our last lesson, we saw that Adam and Eve lived in their garden paradise — a paradise made for them by God - without problems, disease, or sorrow. They even enjoyed constant companionship and fellowship with God. Can you imagine that? In fact, God in His goodness supplied everything Adam and Eve needed for health and true happiness!

Now, there in the middle of the garden stood a tree, providing them with a constant, simple test. God had forbidden them to eat of the fruit of that tree! Surely, with abundant fruit of every kind available, God’s command would not be hard to obey? We don’t know how long they lived in this wonderful condition, but we do know that one day tragedy struck, a tragedy known as “the fall of Man.”

HATEFUL CREATURE: One day, a shiny-looking creature suddenly started talking to Eve. Genesis 3:1 calls this creature “the Serpent.” The term “serpent” means “shining one,” and whatever he was, he was no ordinary snake! This creature was “more subtle (crafty) than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made”! We get a clearer idea of his true identity as the narrative continues.

This spirit-being took his opportunity and sliding up to her he asked silkily, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” Eve replied, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but of the fruit from the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You must not eat of it and you must not touch it, lest you die.’” Eve’s answer provides us with the first recorded example of God’s Word being misquoted! Compare verses 16 and 17 of chapter 2 and see what God actually said. You will see at once that she altered God’s Word by omitting the word “freely” in referring to the other trees. She also added the words “and you must not touch it,” in reference to the forbidden tree. Worst of all, she changed a certainty into a chance by saying “lest you die,” (KJV) instead of “you will surely die” (vv 2-3).

The serpent’s reply then reveals his real identity as Satan himself, the enemy of God. He categorically denies the truth of God’s words. “You will not surely die!” he confidently lied to Eve.

“God knows,” he continued knowingly, “that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil!” This was a blatant attempt to malign God’s Holy character. Satan wanted Eve to doubt that God was good, and he insinuated that God had been restricting their pleasure; in effect, keeping something special from them. We can often perceive Satan doing the same thing today. “Don’t believe God and be a Christian!” whispers the tempter, “That will hold you back and spoil all your fun!” It was a lie back then and it still is today!

HORRIBLE CONSEQUENCES: Eve of course had no reason whatever to doubt that God was anything but good and true; she had only ever known His complete goodness, kindness, and provision for her every need. However, instead of immediately challenging the truth of the creature’s words, she listened to them all and dwelt on the thought that he had planted in her mind. At some point in time, noticing that the fruit DID look very enticing, and thinking of the serpent’s words that it would make her wise, Eve made the most terrible decision ever made. Reaching out her hand, she picked some fruit and ate. Then turning to Adam who was with her, she gave some to him and he ate it, too.

What a terrible tragedy! What a triumph for Satan! God’s creature-man had chosen to doubt the goodness of God and to act in independence of his Creator. How terribly foolish — they openly disobeyed Almighty God’s clear command! The effect of their sin was immediate; their purity of mind and innocence was lost. Mankind had become sinful by nature. Feeling suddenly guilty and ashamed of their nakedness, they sewed fig leaves together to cover up. But even this didn’t change the heavy feelings of guilt and distance from God, which they now felt! They were unworthy to be in His holy presence.

Adam and Eve had ‘died spiritually,’ had become mortal beings, and would soon to die physically too, just as God had warned. They were now spiritually separated from Him, and instead of running joyfully to meet with Him in the cool of the evening, they hid from Him in the trees as best as they could. What a terrible price to pay for not trusting or obeying their wonderful Creator, and deciding to act in independence! Ever since this time, all of us humans have inherited a depraved character and we have continued to sin in every imaginable way. Thankfully God sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to save us and offer new life!

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. How did mankind start off on his earthly life?	.....
2. (a) Who was the serpent. (b) What did he deny?	.....
3. How did Satan attempt to malign God’s character and what did he want Eve to do?	.....
4. Explain the terrible tragedy of man and the triumph of Satan.	.....
5. What has characterised mankind ever since Adam and Eve first sinned?	.....

Expulsion from the Garden

Key Verse:
“And Adam was not the one deceived, it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.”

1 Timothy 2:14

Extra: How has Jesus brought victory over Satan?

Level 5 lesson 4

Read Genesis 3:8-24

Further Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45

That evening, following their disastrous decision to disobey God’s commandment, Adam and Eve hid themselves amongst the trees in the garden because they heard the Lord God walking around. What a difference to their normal fellowship with God! Instead of joyful anticipation and excitement, there were now only feelings of guilt, fear, and dread — a sure indication that they deserved to be punished. So this was part of the ‘death’ God had promised — death of the relationship they had once enjoyed.

The fig-leaf clothes they made had not taken away their sense of nakedness, and so they had fearfully hidden in the trees. With nerves tingling, they cowered behind the leaves as God came closer. Hearing His penetrating voice calling, they no doubt both felt a strong urge to flee further from His presence. With the Lord God calling out to Adam, “Where are you?” they must have realised the futility of trying to hide from His all-seeing eyes. Ashamed and guilty, Adam tried to explain his strange and different behaviour toward God. “I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid,” he blurted.

“Who told you that you were naked?” asked God. “Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” Oh, how Adam must have been dreading that question! His diversionary reply shows the effect sin was already having on his heart and mind. “The woman YOU put here with me; SHE gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it!” he said defensively (v12). Not only did he try to shift the blame onto Eve, he also insinuated that God was responsible since He gave him the woman! Turning to Eve, God asked, “What is this you have done?” Concisely she answered, “The Serpent (Satan) deceived me, and I ate.” While this was true, she displayed the same tendency as her husband to shift the blame and justify her sinful choice.

If you are honest with yourself, you can probably easily identify with Adam and Eve. Like them, each of us will try to make excuses when getting found out, and if possible, we will try to put the blame for our sinful actions onto someone else. We do this in order to look better and to try and avoid the punishment we deserve.

Lastly, God turned to the serpent (who was probably smirking) and instead of questioning him God pronounced a terrible curse on him. The serpent’s triumph was short-lived, and his apparent victory sealed his own fate. God cursed him more than any other creature and forced him to grovel on his belly forever. Ultimately, Satan would receive a fatal blow from a descendant of the woman, leading to the complete defeat of all his evil schemes!

As for the woman, God decreed her punishment would be to experience pain in child-bearing, and to long after her husband who would instead rule over her. To the man, God stated that his punishment would be to endure hard, sweaty labour to produce his food from the ground, now dominated by weeds and thorns.

Then God pronounced the final result of their sin: “dust you are, and to dust you will return” (v19). Along with Adam and Eve, we are all destined to die. Even a brief glimpse at modern history confirms the tragic results of all God’s just punishments — we suffer, labour, and die all too soon!

In perhaps the saddest moment imaginable, God drives His dearly loved Adam and Eve from their beautiful home in the garden. How this act must have torn at His very heart! Yet His complete holiness demanded nothing less than removing sinners from His presence. To prevent re-entry to the garden and so guard the way to the Tree of Life, God placed angelic Cherubim and a flaming sword at the garden’s entrance. In conflict with his Creator and fellow-man; sinful, fallen man’s black and hateful history had begun!

Sad as this reading is, there is a bright ray of glorious hope in the prophecy concerning the “Seed (or offspring)” of the woman (v15). This “seed” is a described as a “He,” who is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, which we read about in the New Testament Gospels! This prophecy points to Jesus’ virgin birth because, in a unique way, He was “the Seed of the woman” (Jesus was not conceived by Joseph, the man who married Mary, but by the Holy Spirit). Jesus was born to “crush” (defeat) Satan’s “head”, but in doing so Jesus’ “heel” would be struck, which refers to His death on Calvary’s Cross. This was comparatively minor, because Jesus rose from the grave to majorly defeat Satan and triumph over death!

Although mankind had lost his earthly paradise, in God’s wondrous, amazing grace; ruined man’s restoration to another Heavenly and Eternal Paradise was already planned. God promised redemption, through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Praise God!

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. What did Adam and Eve do after their decision to disobey God’s commandment?	.....
2. What did Adam imply in answering God’s question, “Have you eaten from the tree?”	.....
3. List some practical effects on mankind from Adam and Eve’s sin.	.....
4. In what unique way was Jesus “the seed” of the woman, but not the man?
5. What does Genesis 3:15 indicate was already planned and promised?

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