

Bible Study Teaching Plan for March 5, 2017

Genesis 1:1-13 -- Creation by God's Word

Dr. Williamson

Create Interest

NOTE: Most of this lesson plan is lecture oriented. Class participation will need to come in the early activities, talking about “creativity.”

1. Bring to class something you (or a relative made) or a picture of it; (or ask a creative member of your class to bring an item). Something that took a long time to create. (I'm bringing the quilt my grandmother made me). Pass item around (if appropriate). Briefly tell the history of the item. Ask class to guess how long it took to make, start to finish. Ask the class to guess the steps involved in creating the item. Afterwards, briefly share what the item means to you.

Say: While we are ALL creative in some aspect, some of us are more “creative” than others. It's the way God made us. Allow 2-3 class members to share briefly about their “favorite thing they've made” (a creative hobby, or something they do at work).

2. Say: We are beginning a study in the Book of Genesis. In our study today, we will recognize and worship God because of His power, and for His purposefulness in Creation. Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning, GOD CREATED the heavens and the earth.”

ASK: How is OUR creativity (the things we do or make) SIMILAR to (or connected with) God's creativity? Discuss. Possible answers: God gave us our creative mind and skills. God gave us the raw material (or brain power) that we use to create something. We generally enjoy being “creative;” God probably enjoyed it, too. We like seeing our “creations;” God does as well.

ASK: In what ways is our creativity DIFFERENT from God's creativity? Discuss. Possible answers: God created out of nothing; we have to start with what He's already created. God's mind is so much greater than ours, that His creations are much more complex than what we could ever create. He is able to create “living” things; ours are generally inanimate. God created what He did for OUR benefit.

3. Say: God is a very creative God. He gave both His creation AND His creative nature to each of us in some way, big or small. He created the heavens and the earth for OUR benefit. We are ALL recipients of His creativity.

Bible Study

4. Introduce the book of Genesis. Include some or all of these points:

- The book of Genesis is one of five books in the Hebrew Torah, “The Books of Law.” These five books have traditionally (thousands of years) been associated with Moses, the dominant figure in all of them, except Genesis.
- The book is primarily divided in two parts: Genesis chapters 1-11 are focused on God's world. The second portion, Genesis 12-50, relates the beginning of the story of God's salvation, initiated through a promise made to Abram. One scholar (John Walton) says the theme of Genesis is “The Purpose of God.” (The first 11

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chapters show the need for a covenant, and Ch. 12-50 show the formation of the covenant). When Baptists study the book of Genesis, it usually follows these two divisions.

- Moses is not mentioned in the book of Genesis. The FINAL events recorded in Genesis happened 400 years BEFORE Moses.
- Exodus 24:4 says "Moses then wrote down everything the Lord had said." Some interpreters use this verse to support that God could have told Moses what had previously happened. But we certainly don't know; that's a theory.
- Technically, the HUMAN author of the Book of Genesis is unknown. (Several books in the Bible have unknown human authors (Hebrews; I & II Kings; among others))
- The phrase, "The Books of Moses" was a Jewish way of declaring the authority of the Torah as God's law. It meant this material was authorized or stood under the authority of God's servant, Moses. The AUTHORITY of Genesis is very important.
- **Whoever God used to record the words, this book is totally inspired by God! God is the ultimate "author" of this material, through the inspiration of His Spirit. Knowing that God is responsible for the book is much more important than knowing who the human instrument was.
- **2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV)** "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." This means God did it, and WE are the beneficiaries (we are corrected, trained, etc.)

5. SAY: Consider this question: How would you explain to a third or fourth grader how electricity works? Or how the internet works and came into being? These subjects are complicated, and difficult to explain. Even to adults, much less children. It doesn't mean we don't try, or that we avoid the topic.

SAY: Almost 2000 books have now been published under the "For Dummies" title series. Each is an attempt to provide introductory information about a complex subject.

TELL the following humorous story: A dad had a seven-year old son. One day the seven-year old son bounded through the front door and exclaimed, "Dad, where did I come from?" The dad sprang into action as he sat the boy down and began the informative lecture about human biology. At the conclusion of the story the father asked his son why he had asked the question. His son replied, "The boy in the new family that just moved in across the street said that he came from Arkansas, and so I wondered where I came from."

6. SAY: These three illustrations are good analogies of the circumstances God faced when he chose to communicate the complex nature of how he created His vast and complicated universe. God was communicating to:

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- The ancient, non-literate (and pre-scientific) shepherd.
- Each generation of humanity, knowing there would be an ever-expanding horizon of knowledge of the physical world to understand.
- Reach even the most modern, scientifically trained academic, in our day and time.

SAY: With all of these people in mind of who He was trying to love, God chose NOT to tell the details of "HOW" He created. Rather, He focused on "THAT" He created. One of our commentary writers said, "It is part of the intelligent genius of our God to inspire and account of the origin of the world and humanity that would be relevant and meaningful to every generation" (on-line commentary). And the fact that this subject is still relevant and discussed today shows God did a good job! While God chose not to focus on the details of His creation, He did create us with minds to take on that intensive search, if we are so inclined.

I. The Powerful Word and Work of God (Genesis 1:1-2)

7. Have a volunteer read Genesis 1:1-2. **Say:** These verses provide the OVERVIEW of the seven-day creation account. These words are also the beginning of Holy Scripture. The Bible is the written record of God's purpose and plan for humanity. GOD is the subject of the Bible's first sentence. And we are the "crown" of God's creation.

Say: The Hebrew word for God is "Elohim" (not "Yahweh") and is used throughout chapter 1. Elohim means Creator and Judge. The biblical account is a sharp contrast to the "creation myths" of Mesopotamia. According to those myths, the creation happened as a result of conflict or war between the "older gods" and the "younger gods." In contrast, the biblical account of the world comes through the powerful and purposeful word and work of the one living God.

Say: The word for "created" is the word "bara." This word means God was able to bring into existence something that did not exist before. People cannot create "out of nothing." We have to start with something (materials). But God can and did. This word for "creating out of nothing" is found 6 times in the creation account. Let's move to Day 1.

II. The Powerful Word and Work of Day 1 (Genesis 1:3-5)

8. Have a volunteer read Genesis 1:3-5. **Say:** God created by His spoken Word. Have volunteer read John 1:1-2: "In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was God. He was with God in the beginning." The New Testament, especially John's writings, allow us to parallel the original Creation account, and see Jesus in all creation, even though His name is not mentioned in Genesis. The Holy Spirit of God is mentioned in Genesis 1:2.

Say: As we read, note the "order" in God's creation. On the first day, God created light. Day One parallels with Day Four, where God will assign the role of light to give or reflect light. (We will look at that next week). John the disciple, however, after having

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been taught by Jesus, weaves the two stories together. John writes that God has given us His light (Jesus) so that we may use that light to point others to God.

Have volunteer read John 1:3-5. "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness but the darkness has not understood it."

III. The Powerful Work and Word of Day 2 - Sky (Genesis 1:6-8)

12. Have a volunteer read Genesis 1:6-8. **Say:** On Day 2 God created "expanse," to separate the waters from the sky. Day 2 parallels with Day 5, where God populated the waters and the sky with fish and birds.

IV. The Powerful Work and Word of Day 3 – Land (Genesis 1:9-13)

13. Have a volunteer read Genesis 1:9-13. **Say:** Once again we see God's "order" in His creation. Day 3 parallels with Day 6, with God creating dry land and then populating the earth with animals and humans.

14. Say: There is order and purpose in all of God's creation. And at the conclusion of each day, God says it was "good." It conveys thoughts of beneficial, beautiful, preferable, happy, and superior. God looked at His creation, like we do, and was pleased with what He saw.

15. Say: The word "day" has been interpreted by Christ followers in two major ways. Through "day" 3, the sun and moon have not yet been created. That will come on "day" 4, so we will talk more about it next week.

OPTION: Say: In our church (and in most Christian churches), people's beliefs fall in one of these two approaches: One interpretation is that the "day" is a 24 hour period of time. In this camp, people see it as a day as we know it, with sunrise, sunset, night, followed by another day. Christians in this camp say that God created this universe in six 24 hour periods. As you read, that is literally what the Bible says.

Say: In the other camp of Christ-followers are more people who believe the Bible. They look to the verses where the Bible says that "a day is as a thousand years in God's sight."
Have volunteers look up and read aloud Psalm 90:4, and 2 Peter 3:8.

Say: BOTH groups are Bible believers and are following what the Bible says. Both approaches are being taught in Bible study classrooms around our church today. Which ever camp you fall in, it is good!

Say: The bottom line is we do not know for certain HOW God created. What is most important is THAT God created!

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16. OPTIONAL: The issue of how God created is not an essential matter for Salvation. (What is meant by that is that when you are leading another person to Jesus, we don't typically go back to Genesis and say, "You must believe creation happened THIS way in order to receive Jesus' salvation.")

Rather, we talk about what sin is. And that Jesus lived a perfect life and therefore could be the final sacrifice to pay for sin. And that's what Jesus did some 2000 years ago. He died on the cross to pay for our sin, and if we believe and trust in Him to be our Savior, He will do that for us. We give our lives and hearts to Him. He becomes our boss. Our specific beliefs about HOW God created the world are not essential for salvation. God did not tell us exactly HOW He created, but He did tell us THAT He created!

Conclusion:

17. Say: In these first three days, God was creating a life-support system. He "spoke" all of this into being. And He did this so He could create human life, which we will look at next week.

Implications:

- God is the Creator of this world so He has the right to control His world. **Psalm 24:1 (NIV)** "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it."
- God the Creator is in a category all by himself in that He is the only being who exists apart from time and space, and that He created out of "nothing."
- God the Creator has committed himself to His creation. He is not a distant God. He will be irrevocably linked to and actively involved with his creation, all the way from the beginning to the end.

As Creator and the one who gave us life, He is worthy of our worship.