**SDG – Lesson #2**

**Genesis – Chapter 1**

As we begin our study of Genesis we need to understand that the first two verses are a source of much debate and controversy. Some contend that the first two verses describe a creation of the universe at some point in ancient time. They then contend that God did nothing with what He had created for a period of time that was in the billions of years. Then, after this gap in time, He began the process of ordering what He had made. This action was completed with the creation of man. This viewpoint is known as the “gap theory.” It came about as a result of the teaching of Darwinian evolution. It was an attempt to reconcile the bible with modern science. There are a variety of explanations within the gap theory to try to explain the hypothetical premise that the earth and universe are billions of years old.

The second view of verses one and two is that these verses serve as a prologue or introduction to how God made the cosmos. This has been the historical interpretation of both the Jewish and Christian faith. It is also consistent with what Moses would have been taught in Egyptian academics. It was customary to introduce major concepts with a general prologue of what was coming. This is the approach that we will follow and some of the questions, notes, and focus components will give the rationale for following this viewpoint. Let’s begin!

1. What is meant by the phrase, “In the beginning?”

In the beginning tells us that the cosmos had a point of origin. Not only did the cosmos begin, this also tells us that time, as we know it, had a starting point.

2. “In the beginning, God …” Think about what these four words are saying. What do we learn about God from these four words?

God predates the beginning. He was there before the beginning. God stands outside of time.

**Word Study: Elohim** – Hebrew / God – English

El is the singular form of God in the Hebrew. El is used more than 200 times in the Old Testament. When used, it is always used in conjunction with an adjective such as:

 El Roi – El = God; Roi = sees - God who sees me

 El Shadday – El = God; Shadday = almighty – God the Almighty

 El Olam El = God; Olam = eternal – God the Eternal One

 El Kanna El = God; Kanna = jealous – God the Jealous One

 \* Kanna/Jealous – this is a jealous love. That is He loves us so much that He will not share us with anyone else. This is the love a husband is to have for his wife.

Elohim is the plural form of El. This can be interpreted as both the Trinitarian plurality of the One God as well as the God of all the adjectives used to describe God. His is Almighty, Eternal, Jealous, All-Seeing…God. Elohim expresses the fullness of His deity.

3. “In the beginning, God created…” What is meant by the word created?

Created is a singular verb. At the beginning point of time, God made the cosmos from nothing. Created means to make from nothing.

4. What did God create? What does this mean?

**Word Study: Ex nihilo** – Latin / Created – English / bara – Hebrew

The term “ex nihilo “ is what the early translators of the Bible used when they came to the fifth word of our translation. Ex nihilo means, “out of nothing.” It is a phrase that has been embraced by those in the Creationist camp that accept a literal reading of Genesis and believe in a six-day creation.

God created the heavens and the earth. This is the Hebrew way of saying “everything” or “all that exists.”

5. “The earth was without form and void.” Ponder this statement for a moment. What does this say about the earth?

If the earth had no form or shape and was void or empty, it didn’t exist.

6. “And darkness was over the face of the deep.” Again, ponder on this statement for a moment. What is the definition of darkness? What does this bring to the meaning of what has already been said?

Darkness is the absence of light. If there is no light, nothing can be seen.

7. What is meant by the face of the deep?

The face of the deep is the edge and top surface of a deep hole. If darkness is over the face of the deep nothing can be seen in the hole. No sides can be seen. No depth can be seen. There is nothing!

8. “And the Spirit of God was hovering.” What is the image that this phrase evokes?

The image is that of God hovering at this place of nothingness. It is a picture of imminent action.

9. “And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” Considering everything that we’ve already explored, what do you think “the face of the waters” means?

This is simply a restating of, “the face of the deep.” To the Hebrew people the depths of the ocean was beyond comprehension. It was a great unknown. These depths of unknowingness are what God was going to work with.

10. This is the prelude to what is now going to unfold through the rest of the account. Our hearts and minds have been prepped to see what God did at the beginning time. He had nothing tangible to work with, and God said…” What was the only thing that God had to work with?

The only thing that God had to work with was His Word.

11. Some have said that this is the real “Big Bang Theory.” God spoke and bang, things appeared. What do we know about God’s Word at this time? (John 1:1-14)

Jesus was/is God’s Word. He was with God at the beginning and all that exists was made through Him.

12. What was the first thing that God created? What do we know about it?

God first created light and it was good.

13. This immediately causes those with a scientific mind to raise their eyebrows. Not only is it a miracle to create something from nothing, what other challenge does this account of the first thing created pose for us. What is the answer to this challenge? (Luke 2:9; Revelation 22:5)

The big challenge is that light needs a source, and the sun was not yet created. Yet, God’s glory is expressed or revealed in this physical world as light. God is the ultimate source of light.

14. Light was created and God separated it from darkness. What was the result of this? (Be careful! This is a more difficult question that it may appear.)

The obvious answer is that He created Day and Night. The deeper understanding is that God created a measurement of time. With Day and Night, we have a way to keep track of time. This is truly the first day or recording of time.

15. “And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.” Some would say that the word day could mean a long period time. How is the word day used in modern language?

Day can mean:

1. A 24-hour period
2. A period of history – “back in the day.”
3. The time when the sun is up.

16. How do we separate and know what version of day is meant by an author in the English language?

We can know what is meant by looking at the context in which the word is used. If the author uses terms like evening, morning or first, we know it refers to a 24-hour period. Therefore, the only interpretation that can come from this reading is that it refers to a 24-hour period because the rules of the Hebrew language are the same as those for the English.

17. What was created on the second day?

It would appear that God created water and an expanse called heaven or the sky/atmosphere. There was both water below the sky and above it. Many Creationists believe this to be a vapor canopy that would:

1. Act as a thermal blanket that would promote an even temperature throughout the world.
2. Block UV light.
3. Increase air pressure, which in turn would make our bodies super efficient at carrying oxygen.
4. Would inhibit mass air movement that is caused heating/cooling.

This would provide for laboratory like conditions that would be highly conducive to life and longevity.

Our present understanding of the physics of the atmosphere do not allow for a vapor canopy. Mathematically, there is not a known force that is capable of holding this canopy in place.

Creationists counter that there was a force, made by God that was able to sustain it. This force was removed by God and caused the flood.

18. What was the first thing God created on the third day?

God created the land and the seas. It would appear that the land was originally created on the second day but that it was submerged. On the third day He caused it to rise up and the waters to recede from it.

19. What was the second thing God created on the third day?

God created all the vegetation that is found on land.

20. What is meant by the term “kind?”

This term is most closely related to our term family. There was probably a fern family, conifer family, etc.

21. “Each according to its kind.” What challenge does this simple phrase make for modern biological beliefs?

By saying “each according to its own kind,” the Bible sets up a level of discrimination or selectivity. God created distinctive kinds that were separate from each other. Modern biology relies on the ability of one kind to form another. It contends all plant life came from one source/original plant. This cannot be demonstrated genetically and has never been observed.

22. Is there any other wording that supports the idea of exclusivity within a kind/family?

When Moses records, “in which is their seed,” it again denotes that the seed of one type of plant will only grow into that kind of plant.

23. What was created on the fourth day? What is the scientific challenge that this presents? (Hint: Consider that light travels at 186,000 miles/second).

God created the sun, moon, and the stars. The challenge is that the stars are light years away. If they were created at one point in time it would take years for their light to get here, so, they couldn’t be seen. However, if God can create light (day one) and stars (day four) there is no reason to doubt that He created the stars and the beams of light from them to the earth at the same time.

24. What was created on the fifth day?

God created both the birds of the air and all the creatures of the sea.

25. What was the first thing God created on the sixth day?

God created all the land animals on the sixth day.

26. Verse 26 takes us back to the Word Study of the title of God, “Elohim.” As we saw, it is plural and can refer to the fullness of His deity. How does verse 26 support the doctrine of the Trinity?

God said, “Let us.” Us is also plural. So, God must necessarily be more than one.

27. “Let us make man in our image.” What is meant by “our image?”

This phrase is open to debate. It could mean:

1. A relational being. God is relational in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Man is relational in the Husband, wife, and children. This is sometimes called the divine imprint.
2. That man can think rationally like God. Man has reason and intellect and can apply it to be creative.
3. Man is moral and ethical.
4. Man has dominion over the plants and animals like God has dominion over all creation.

28. What commands did God give to the man and woman?

God told the man and woman to:

1. Be fruitful and multiply
2. Have dominion over the fish, birds, and land animals
3. Eat from the seed-bearing plants and fruit bearing trees

29. What were the animals created to eat?

All the animals that had the breath of life were also given the green plants as their food.

30. What did God say about all that He created?

It was all very good.