

# The Book of Genesis

*Genesis: (n.) "The act of producing, or giving birth or origin to anything; the process or mode of originating; production; formation; origination."*

## 6 Bible Studies on Genesis 1-3



GENESIS 1-3:  
CREATION TO FALL



# St Phil's



# STUDY 1: “IT WAS GOOD”

## GENESIS 1:1-26

Genesis is the introduction to God’s story. It leads us from the very beginning of creation through some of the more dense parts of Biblical history – from creation and the fall, Noah and the Flood, the tower of Babel, Abraham, Sodom and Gomorrah, Isaac, Jacob, all the way to the death of Joseph in Egypt.

Genesis appears as 2 major sections:

Genesis 1-11 is written in a very different, poetic prose-like form, whilst Genesis 12-50 reads as more of a historical narrative.

Theologian J. I. Packer speaks about the “poetic-prose mode of narration in Genesis 1–11, with its pictorial, imaginative, quasi-liturgical phraseology, its paucity of mere information, and its drumbeat formulae”. He speaks about Genesis 12-50 as an “ordinary narrative prose mode”. He also affirms Genesis 1–11 as “space-time history, although told in [Moses’s] chosen incantatory-poetic way.”

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/is-genesis-history-revisiting-an-age-old-debate>

To some, Genesis 1-11 is like ‘true myth’ – God telling the story of Creation as a way for humanity to be able to begin to understand more than a process, but a purpose. God shares his desire for a relationship with his creation. His poetic words speak to our heads *and* our hearts.

Struck by the complexity of these chapters, David Atkinson writes in the introduction of his commentary:

*“Yet these chapters of Genesis evoke wonder: wonder at the majesty of God in his creative power, loving mercy, terrible judgment and life-giving hope. And I have found that sense of wonder deepened as I have worked on this book. Genesis 1-11 is really an overture to the rest of the Bible and I pray that in playing it again, in this form, something of the majesty and love of the God who makes himself known in the Christ of the whole Bible will be heard.”* (The message of Genesis 1-11” Bible Speaks Today commentary series. Page 9)

Every part of the Bible is there to draw us into relationship with the God of Creation, who revealed himself to us in the person of Jesus, and who lives in his people by his Holy Spirit. If discussions take us away from that centrality, we should be careful to be drawn back to the core discussion of relationship. Relationship with God is the very reason God has given us the Scriptures, and is the very reason we take up the Scriptures and read.

### Think about this...

1. Are you a creative person? What makes a person creative?

### Read Genesis 1:1-26

### The big picture...

2. What is the theme of this chapter?

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3. How do you think this chapter helps us to relate to God?

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**The text...**

4. Verse 1: Look carefully at this first verse – what are all the things this verse tells us about God, us and the universe? When you run out of ideas, think a little more!

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5. Verses 10, 12, 18, 25: After God creates, why do you think he says: “it was good”?

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6. Verses 3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24, 26 – How does God create? What is the pattern? How is this significant in what it tells us about God the creator?

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7. What is the order of God’s creation?

Day 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Day 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Day 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Day 4: \_\_\_\_\_ Day 5: \_\_\_\_\_ Day 6: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you notice anything interesting about this pattern of creation?

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8. What do these chapters NOT tell us about the story of Creation? What DO these chapters tell us?

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9. What questions does this chapter raise for you as a Christian? Is it important for you to have all of your questions answered?

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## STUDY 2: “IT WAS VERY GOOD”

### GENESIS 1:26-31

Although we are only looking at 6 verses during this study, these are deeply important and meaningful verses. We need to relate back to the beginning of chapter 1, but also look forward to 2:1-3. Chapters 1-2 involve a telling and retelling of creation, with key shifts in focus. With such a swift pace in the beginning verses, the pace slows as God deepens his storytelling for the creation of humanity. Here we cut to the heart of the order and purpose of creation in a way that raises the question for us: “Why are humans so important to God?”

1. Why do you think God spends so much time explaining in more detail the creation of man and woman?

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2. Verse 31: After God creates man and woman, why do you think he says: “it was very good”?

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3. What is the role in creation that God has given to man and woman?

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4. 2:3 – Why did God rest on the seventh day? What are the implications for us?

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5. a. Read and compare John 1:1-5. How does this relate to Genesis 1?

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b. Discuss the role of Jesus in John 1.

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### Applying it to your life...

6. What does this passage teach you about your *humanity's* relationship with God?

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7. What does this passage teach you about your *personal* relationship with God?

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8. After reading this chapter, what is your response to God as you go about living in his creation?

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9. What questions do you have about this passage that remain unanswered? Is it important all your questions are answered?

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10. Why are humans so important to God? (You could also compare Psalm 8 here)

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## STUDY 3: YOU ARE FREE

### GENESIS 2:1-17

By the end of chapter 1, you can see the importance of humanity in God's purposes for creating the world. They are the culmination of all that God created. In Chapter 2, we zoom in to see the care and love that God puts into preparing a place for humans. Chapter 1 shows us that humanity is for God. Chapter 2 shows us that God is for humans. We see God's abundant provision for humanity, that they are free to eat from "any tree in the garden" – except one. The one prohibition prepares the ground for chapter 3 where the freedom to choose to trust in God's good commands is put to the test.

#### Think about this...

1. Most people think that humans are significant. What is it that makes you think that humans are important?

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#### Read Genesis 2:1-25

#### The big picture...

2. What is the theme of this chapter?

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3. How do you think this chapter helps us to relate to God?

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#### The text...

1. Spend a moment looking over verses 1-17 to find things that stand out to you or questions you have.

Share some of these as a group.

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2. Verse 4 uses a formula that is used 10 times in Genesis to introduce new sections and new characters (find them if you want!). If this is a new section, how is it different to chapter 1's account of creation?

Chapter 1	Chapter 2

3. Following on from question 2, what differences are there in humanity's relationship with God in these verses compared with chapter 1? What does this mean for us *personally*?

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4. Read verses 5-7. Discuss whether the garden is for God or for "the man"?

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5. Read verse 15. What kind of relationship to God's creation does the man have? What kinds of things does this verse mean for us today?

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6. Read verses 9 and 16-17. How would you describe God's provision for humanity?

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7. There are two trees at the centre of the garden and one that must not be eaten from (v16-17). What's so bad about eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (cf 3:4)?

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8. Verse 7 paints the picture of humanity being utterly dependant on God. Was Jesus dependant on God in the same way?

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### Applying it to your life...

9. Write down 2 things that you can take from this passage to help you in your life. Share some of these things as a group.

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## STUDY 4: IT WAS NOT GOOD

### GENESIS 2:18-25

In this section of chapter 2 we see the fundamental diversity of humanity begin to be explored. In its very nature humanity is both male and female. Along with chapter 1, this part of Genesis affirms the equality and the diversity of humanity within the order of the world that God has created. This has varied implications of how we view the world.

#### Think about this...

1. Gender Identity has been talked about a lot recently. What are some of the things that have been discussed in your circles or in the media?

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#### The text...

2. Spend a moment looking over verses 2:18-25 to find things that stand out to you or questions you have. Share some of these as a group.

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3. Read the poem in verse 23. What's going on for the man emotionally? Clearly, the woman is the right "helper". What makes the man and the woman such a good pair?

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4. What evidence in verses 18-25 is there for the equality of the sexes (cf Ch1:27)?

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5. What would you say to someone who used these verses to argue that women were inferior to men? What arguments might they use? How would you counter them?

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6. Read verses 21-23. One commentator suggests that “*the removal of a piece of man in order to create the woman implies that from now on neither is complete without the other*” (Atkinson, 1990). Thinking about humanity as a whole, how would you put the idea of the complementarity of the sexes?

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7. Genesis 2 indicates that God created humanity to be male **and** female, and that as a whole, humanity is complete *in its diversity*. Does this mean that single people are incomplete as humans (hint: the answer is no!)? What does Paul have to say about this in 1 Corinthians 7:8ff?

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8. Read verses 24-25. What kind of relationship do you think “naked and unashamed” points towards? What characteristics would a relationship like this have?

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### Applying it to your life...

9. Have you been challenged in your thinking by this passage? Write down how. Share some of these things as a group.

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## STUDY 5: DID GOD SAY?

### GENESIS 3:1-7

It doesn't take long for things to fall apart. Sin enters the world and changes it forever. Sin corrupts the relationships between mankind, creation and God. What was good, and very good, is no longer. But what is "sin"? What constitutes the "wrong" thing that Adam and Eve have done? And most importantly, how does mankind recover from this? We only have such a brief glimpse of life in the garden before it is destroyed. Yet that brief glimpse is so important because it has shown us what it was meant to be like.

If we summarise the theme of the Bible as "God's people, in God's place, under God's rule", chapter 3 shows us how that is destroyed, while the rest of the Bible shows how God seeks to restore that great picture.

1. What is sin?

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2. Satan is often called "the deceiver". He manipulates the truth. How does Satan deceive the woman and man?

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3. What did God actually say to the woman and man about the tree(s)?

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4. Is the woman more guilty than the man because she "went first"?

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5. What was the woman guilty of? What was the man guilty of?

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6. God knew good and evil. Adam and Eve then decided they wanted to know for themselves, because they didn't trust God's knowledge of good and evil. Do you agree?

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### **Applying it to your life...**

7. What part do we play in Genesis 3:1-7? Are we responsible for sin, or was it just passed down to us?

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8. What is "original sin"?

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9. How does Satan deceive us like he did Adam and Eve? How do we respond in the same way as Adam and Eve?

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10. If you have time: Where did Satan (the serpent) come from? You might like to read Revelation 12:1-12.

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## STUDY 6: DUST TO DUST

### GENESIS 3:8-24

The consequences of sin are difficult to listen to in this passage. So much falls apart. Primarily it is the good design and purpose of God's creation that has been corrupted. But God is good. What we find in the rest of chapter 3 is a God who shows judgment, but also mercy in the way he deals with his disobedient children.

Our God is gracious, kind and merciful, but he is also just. Chapter 3 not only shows God's kindness to Adam and Eve, but his kindness to humanity in his promised plan of deliverance.

1. What is the difference between justice and mercy? What happens if you have justice without mercy?

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2. What was the first response from the man and woman after they sinned? Why?

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3. What were the 3 consequences of sin for the serpent? Why was this judgment handed out first? How do these curses introduce the work of Jesus?

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4. What were the 3 consequences of sin for the woman?

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5. What were the consequences of sin for the man?

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6. When handing down his judgments, how does God show justice and mercy to the man and woman?

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7. In verse 22, who is “us”?

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8. What acts of mercy do we see from God in verses 21-24?

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### **Applying it to your life...**

9. What does this passage tell us about the character of God?

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10. How do these curses affect our relationship with God in our daily life?

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11. How do these curses affect the relationship between men and women in our daily life? What consequences do we see daily in our world?

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St Phil's is a community of believers in Eastwood, Sydney Australia.

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