



GENESIS

PART I: Genesis 1-4

Setting the Scene

In the book of Genesis we discover the origins of everything. Here we first discover God, and his extraordinarily powerful word. We find the origins of the universe, our world, and ourselves. We see the reason for our identity, our role, and our relationships. We discover why the world now is not the way it was first made—the origins of sin.

As Genesis draws all these together we start to see that nothing can possibly stand in the way of God's plans and purposes. If we want to understand the world we live in, if we want to understand what humanity is like and what our purpose in the world is, if we want to understand why the world is in the mess it is in and – most significantly – if we want to understand why God sent his son Jesus into this world, Genesis has the answers.

Genesis is the story of the star-maker, the promise-giver, the one who can turn darkness to light, can turn chaos to beauty, can turn barrenness to a great nation, and can turn rebellious sinners into those who are righteous in his sight.

Genesis **sets the scene**, for everything.

The basic narrative structure of Genesis

Genesis 1-11: The Beginnings of the Cosmos

Genesis 12-50: The Beginnings of God's People

 Genesis 12-25: Abraham

 Genesis 25-36: Isaac

 Genesis 27-50: Jacob

Genesis 1.1-2.3

"Planet earth is a trillion-to-one cosmic accident. We're all the product of random chance and evolution. Life's meaning and purpose is whatever you want it to be!" Has anyone you know said anything like this? What might your response be?

Read Genesis 1.1-2.3

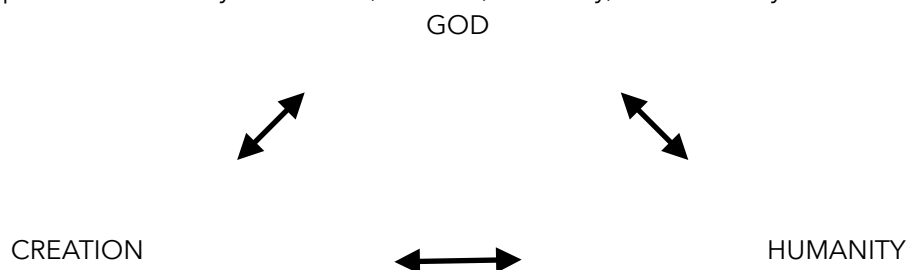
Where do you notice **structure**, **order**, and **purpose**, in this section?

Fill in this table...

What is not created (Genesis 1.1-2)?	
What is created on day 1?	What is it filled with on day 4?
What is created on day 2?	What is it filled with on day 5?
What is created on day 3?	What is it filled with on day 6?
What happens on day 7?	

Did you notice the pattern of Genesis 1.3-25? How does the pattern break in Genesis 1.26? Why might this be significant?

What does this part of Genesis say about God, creation, humanity, and how they relate to one another?



How does Genesis 1.27 help us understand God? How does it help us understand ourselves?

Is Genesis 1 more concerned with **how** God created or **why** God created?

Read John 1.1-14

Who is John talking about?

How does this resonate with what we read in Genesis? How does this add to our understanding of God, creation, and ourselves?

Think it over

How does this shape our view of God?

What is the purpose of creation?

What is the purpose of *your* creation? What does God's purpose in making you mean for how you live?

Choose one of these statements and think about how you might respond in a way that invites people to discover Jesus:

- "There is no god."
- "There are many different gods, it doesn't matter which one you believe in."
- "I believe in God, I just don't believe he can do anything for me."
- "Humans are the peak of the food chain. We can do what we want."
- "Humanity, together, can discover how to live well in the world."
- "We're just animals, no more or less special than any other creature."
- "I'm a Gemini. I believe the Bible, but I also think we should pay attention to the stars."
- "There's no reason to care for the planet, it's physical and God is spiritual."

Prayer ideas

Praise God for creating a world of structure, order, purpose, and goodness through Jesus and for Jesus.

Thank God for creating humans. Thank God for creating you.

Pray that we would worship the creator, not the things he has created.

Genesis 2.4-25

Relationships can be complicated. Our relationship with God, our friendships, families, marriages—they all have ups and downs. But what makes relationships work well?

Read Genesis 2.4-17

How is this account of creation different to the account we read last week in chapter 1?

What does Genesis 2.7 tell us about ourselves? What does it tell us about our relationship to God?

What is Adam to do?

What is Adam *not* to do?

Read Genesis 2.18-25

Until now, everything God has created has been good. What is the first thing that is *not* good?

How does the creation of Eve fix what was not good?

How does chapter 2 fill out for us what we read last time in Genesis 1.27-28?

Thinking about men and women, in this passage where do you see...

- similarity?
- diversity?
- unity?

Check out Colossians 3.9-19. How do these New Testament instructions help our relationships today to look the way God made them to be?

Think it over

What do we learn about the value of men and women to God?

What are some of the implications of our dependence (Genesis 2.7-9) on God?

God made marriage to be...

- exclusive
- public
- permanent
- a mutual encouragement and support
- the place for sex
- a partnership for the sake of fulfilling God's mission

... what does this look like for married couples today? What does it mean for single people today?

What valuable insights are there for relationships more generally in this chapter?

How does this chapter help us think about work?

Prayer ideas

Praise God for blessing humanity with what we need to live and flourish in his creation.

Thank God for creating us to be relational.

Pray that all our relationships would serve Jesus' mission.

Genesis 3

"What's wrong with the world?!" "What's wrong with people?!" "Why isn't this as good as I expected?" Think of some different answers—Christian and non-Christian—to these questions.

Read Genesis 3.1-13

How does the serpent twist God's words from Genesis 2.16-17?

How does Eve twist God's words from Genesis 2.16-17?

The two trees in the middle of the garden are significant (Genesis 2.9). They are signposts – or reminders – for Adam and Eve. They teach them important things about God. The Tree of Life reminds them that God is their life-source. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil teaches them there is a good way to live and an evil way to live, and it is wrong to choose for themselves what they think is right and wrong in God's creation.

In Genesis 1 and 2, God created a world where he, with the man and woman in partnership together, exercise fruitful rule over the good creation. How do the serpent, Eve, and Adam undermine the purpose, order, and structure of God's good creation here in chapter 3?

What is the result of their disobedience?

Read Genesis 3.14-24

Summarise the curses against...

- the serpent

- the woman

- the man

Where do you see mercy appear in this section?

Check out Mark 1.12-13. How is Jesus different to Adam and Eve?

Check out Romans 16.20. How is this good news for this world?

Check out 1st Corinthians 15.20-26. How is this good news for this world?

Check out Romans 8.18-23. How is this good news for this world?

Think it over

What is the difference between temptation and sin?

Who is responsible when we disobey God?

Answer one of the two following questions

- What is sin at its core?
- A non-Christian friend asks you, "What is sin?" How would you answer?

In what ways do you most often fall for Satan's deceptions?

Think of three examples of how the curses in Genesis 3 play out today.

If we understand how God has dealt with the problem evil and suffering in this world, how might that help us share Jesus well?

Prayer ideas

Praise God for his merciful response to sin.

Thank God for crushing Satan under the feet of Jesus.

Pray that we would take the chance to turn from sin to life in Christ.

What strategies do people come up with for dealing with wrongdoing in the world?

Read Genesis 4.1-16

What do we learn about Cain and Abel in verses 1-4? How do they worship God?

We're not told straight away why Cain's sacrifice wasn't acceptable. But then it all comes out! What do we learn about Cain from verses 5-8 (check out Hebrews 11.4 too)? What words would you use to describe him?

How is Genesis 4.12 similar to the curses of Genesis 3?

What is Cain's response to God in verse 13? How does God show this jealous, envious, bitter, resentful, murderous, and now *humbled* man mercy?

Read Genesis 4.17-26

What kind of man is Lamech?

What pattern is being set, from Adam, to Cain, to Lamech?

What does this tell us about sin?

In this chapter we see the origins of a theme that will run through the whole bible—sacrifice, the death of the innocent, and mercy for the guilty. Think of some of the other places in the Old Testament and New Testament you see this.

Think it over

How often do you think you're like Abel (living a life pleasing to God), but really have a heart like Cain's (wishing you had what someone else has, wanting to wrong those who've wronged you)? Are there times when sin is crouching at the door of your heart?

Do you think God's treatment of Cain was fair? Why, or why not?

What do you think of Cain's assessment of life without God in Genesis 4.14? Do you think it holds true today?

Wonderfully, as we come before Jesus echoing Cain's words, "My punishment is more than I can bear!", Jesus will bear it for us! How does this mercy make you feel?

God's mercy comes through Jesus' generous sacrifice. How does knowing this shape how we pray?

Prayer ideas

Praise God for his mercy, which comes through Jesus taking our punishment for us.

Thank God for his patience and love.

Pray that we would take sin seriously.