





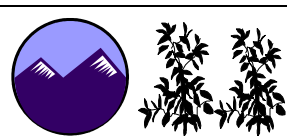
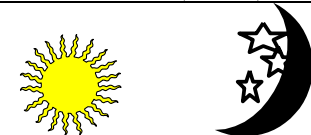
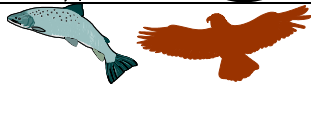
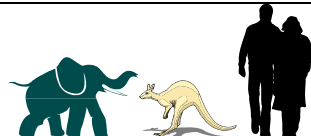
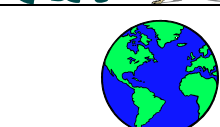
Lesson 5

GOD AND CREATION

Reading Genesis 1; 2:1 - 7

The Creation

In the first chapter of the Bible, Genesis 1, you have just read about the seven days of creation. The chart below shows the work of each day:

Day 1		Light shone; day and night came into being.
2		The waters were divided; expanse of heaven appeared.
3		Dry land appeared. Grasses, plants and trees grew.
4		Sun, moon and stars appeared.
5		Fish swam in the seas; birds flew in the air.
6		Animals were created; and last of all, God made man and woman.
7		God rested.

Notice how everything follows in the right order. For example, the plants and trees were not made until the third day, when the dry land was ready for them. Animals were made on the 6th day, when there would be food for them to eat.

"And God saw everything he had made, and behold, it was very good."

All round us every day we see the excellence of God's work. Men have invented some wonderful things, such as aeroplanes and medicines, but the skills needed to produce these are nothing compared with the skill and power which created the universe with such precision. Day follows night; season follows season, and we never doubt that they will continue to do so. Men's work may go wrong, but God's never does.

Many of men's works are ugly; but everything God makes is not only perfectly suited to its purpose: it is beautiful too. The smallest flower with its colour and form, and its ability to reproduce itself, is a miracle. So is the small bird with wings perfectly designed for flight, and able to find its way thousands of miles round the world to its winter home.

"O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth" (Psalm 8:1).

Gods that are no gods

All through the ages, men have seen the wonders of nature; and instead of worshipping God who made these things, they have worshipped the things He made! Even God's people, the Jews, have done this at times. Men have worshipped the sun, the moon and the stars; they have imagined there were spirits living in the water and the wind, in wood and in stone. This is an evil thing to do, and is condemned by God. Read what the apostle Paul says about this in Romans 1:20-23. Note especially verse 23:

"...they...changed the glory of the uncorruptible (undying) God into an image made like to corruptible (dying) man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things."

Of course, when men prayed to these false gods, they never answered. How could they, when they were not really gods at all? Worship of false gods is an evil thing, and it has led to many evil practices; even such a horrible thing as burning children in a fire.

Even the Jews, though they had been given God's righteous laws, were guilty of worshipping idols. He had warned them about this. Read His warning in Deuteronomy 4:15 - 19.

Now look at Ezekiel 14:1-5. Notice how God said of these idol-worshippers in verse 3, that they had 'set up their idols in their heart'. We too can do this. If there is anything in our lives which we think is more important than God who made us, then that thing can become an idol in **our** heart.

If we are to please God, we will have nothing to do with idols. And we will have nothing to do with those who worship idols. Paul speaks of this in 2 Corinthians 6:14, where he says:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

Read on to the end of the chapter. Then turn to 1 Thessalonians 1:9,10, which tells how the Thessalonians "...turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come. "

A world which men have spoilt

Men are doing evil when they worship idols. And men do evil when they spoil the world which God has made.

In the beginning our world was an even more beautiful place than it is today. Men have done much to spoil its beauty. They have cut down trees indiscriminately, making deserts where forests once grew. They have polluted the air with poisonous fumes, and polluted streams and rivers with poisonous waste from their factories. In these and many other ways, our world is being spoilt.

But it is still God's world, and He will not allow men to go on spoiling it for ever. In Acts 17:31 the apostle Paul says,

"God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world."

The day is coming when God will send Jesus back to reign on earth. His wise rule and righteous laws will restore the world to its first perfection. God has said, "*As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with my glory*".

The Almighty God

Psalm 90:2 says: "*From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*" This is something our minds cannot grasp. We know from our own experiences in life that all things have a beginning and an end; we are familiar with birth and death. But the Lord God always has been and always will be. We must have faith that this is so because, as the writer to the Hebrews says,

"He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

We may look at the wonderful things of nature, and learn something of God's power and wisdom-but we cannot find out from the world around us anything about God's purpose in making the world, or what plans He has for its future. We cannot find out why He made men, or how He wants them to live.

Only through His Word can we find out these things. To know about God, we must come to the Bible. The Bible tells us that He is great and good; it tells us that He is working out a plan for the earth. Listen to the words in which He revealed Himself to Moses:

"The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty" (Exodus 34:6 - 7).

God is gracious and loving, but He is also righteous and just, and expects us to honour and obey Him.

In the beginning...

Many people believe that this wonderful world of ours came about by chance. They think some spark of life just happened, and from this beginning, over millions of years, there came the ordered and beautiful world we see today. So, they say, marvellous things, like eyes that see and ears that hear, just came about by chance.

Not so many years ago most scientists believed the 'theory of evolution', as this idea is called. They said the world we live in today came about by gradual changes over millions of years. Today, however, many well-known and well-qualified scientists are coming back to the view that the evidence of design and order round us speaks of a Great Designer; it just cannot be the result of chance. The Bible says:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

It does not tell us how He did it, and if it did, we should not understand.

We have to accept His word in faith. One thing is certain - we cannot believe the Bible teaching that God created all things, and at the same time believe that the world came about by chance.

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Psalm 33:6).

The early chapters of Genesis tell us the same message. We have to understand these early chapters of the Bible before we can understand the work of the Lord Jesus in overcoming sin and death, which we read about in the Gospels.

We saw in Genesis 1 how God made the world, and created man and woman on the sixth day. Now read from Genesis 2:15 to Genesis 3:24. These verses tell a sad story. At first, everything was perfect in the Garden of Eden. Then Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and their disobedience brought sin and death into the world.

In His love for men and women, many years later God gave His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was able, by his perfect life and his death on the cross, to make a way for God to forgive sin. Jesus brought us a hope of life. You will read about this in your next lesson.

We are part of God's Creation

"O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker" (Psalm 95:6).

To be able to come before God to worship and praise Him is a great privilege. Jesus speaks of those who come to worship *"in spirit and in truth"*. He says, *"The Father seeketh such to*

worship him" (John 4:23). God seeks men and women who will believe and obey Him, and rejoice in the world He has made.

God wants people to allow Him to guide their lives. He is preparing such people for the time when they will be able to serve Him for ever in His Kingdom, when Jesus comes back to the earth. If we read His word, and honour and obey Him now, in that day we shall be among those who will say,

"Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him...We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isaiah 25:9).

Summary

1. This world was created by the Lord God.
2. He alone is to be worshipped.
3. All men's theories of how the world began are false if they deny that God is the Creator.
4. We can only find out about God, and His purpose with the world, by reading the Bible.
5. The Bible will teach us how we can overcome sin and death through the Lord Jesus, and share in God's Kingdom when Jesus comes back.

Verses to read

Psalms 24; Psalm 102:25 - 28; Romans 1:18 - 23; Genesis 2:15 - 3:24

Learn by heart

Hebrews 11:3.