

Origins

Creation, A Biblical Theme

Lesson #4 for January 26, 2013

Scriptures: Genesis 2; Matthew 19:4-6; Psalm 8; Job 38:1-21; 42:1-6; Isaiah 45:18; Acts 17:22-31.

1. This lesson will explore how the stories and the events recorded in Genesis 1-4 impacted the rest of Scripture and how later prophets and apostles referred to those Genesis events. Did later Bible writers believe the stories in Genesis 1-4?
2. As Seventh-day Adventists, we have claimed the three-angels' messages as our final truth to spread to the world. Notice that the first angel begins with the challenge for us to worship God "who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." (Revelation 14:6,7, *NIV*)
3. The Scriptures as we have them today were written over a period of about 1600 years. There is no way that the writers could have collaborated together to try to promote some false teaching. Is it possible that Moses had such an influence on later writers that they quoted him even without believing that what he said was true? If you believe that Genesis 1-11 are nothing more than myth, you must then remove huge sections of the Bible as being unreliable or even untrue. If you claim to believe the Bible, you are committed to believing the Genesis stories. Can we believe history is true even if we cannot repeat it?
4. Both Bible-believing Christians and evolutionists have the same hard evidence at which to look. Creationists interpret it one way; evolutionists interpret it another way. Never allow an evolutionist to claim that he believes in science and creationists have only faith in an old book, the Bible. What evolutionists believe is their religion. We need to match science with science and match religion with religion. That is the only fair way to compare evidence.
5. There are many references later in Scripture to Genesis 1:1-2:3. Some are indirect, (2 Corinthians 4:6) but others are very direct. (Hebrews 4:4) Should it matter to us that Jesus and the biblical prophets and apostles all spoke of creation as a historical fact?
6. Many modern scholars, skeptics, and theologians believe that the book of Genesis was put together from a number of different sources and edited numerous times to produce the book which we now have. They talk about "E sources" based on the biblical name for God, *Elohim*. And they talk about "J sources" based on the biblical name *Jehovah*. They firmly believe that Genesis 1 was written by one author while Genesis 2—especially starting with verse 4—was written by a completely different author, and they believe that those two accounts cannot be fully reconciled with each other. It is interesting to notice in that respect that in Matthew 19:4-6 Jesus just puts the two together as if they are one story! Is it even possible that Jesus was just ignorant?
7. Is it essential in our Christian beliefs to regard all parts of Scripture as equally inspired? Could a passage be "partly inspired"? Could we discount the truthfulness or reality of Genesis 1-11 and still regard the rest of Scripture as fully inspired? Can we chop up Scripture and decide what we will believe and what we will reject?
8. Read Genesis 2. What are we supposed to learn from this chapter? It states that all living creatures—not just Adam—were made from the soil. (Genesis 2:19) Before God began creating, was there a "drought" on this earth? (Genesis 2:5) Humans were to be in charge of everything else. We were made in God's image. Adam and Eve were instructed not to

eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The source of our life and the nature of our reality are spelled out. A body formed from the ground, possibly from clay or clods, was then “breathed into life” by the Spirit or breath of God. Thus, human beings began to live.

9. Look at some other passages in Scripture to see what they might tell us about creation. Psalm 8 tells us that God made the sky, the sun, the moon, and the stars. He made human beings to be just like Himself and to rule over the earth. As a result, all of us are to worship Him.
10. Read Psalm 104. Notice that the author not only mentioned many of the same things that are mentioned in Genesis 1 but also mentioned them in the same order, clearly suggesting that he was fully aware of the writings of Moses and Genesis 1. First, there was light and heavens and the earth, the sea, and its boundaries; then, land; then, all living plants, the sun, moon, and stars; and thus, days and years and night; and then, there were countless creatures to fill the earth.
11. There are many other passages in the Psalms which clearly indicate that the authors believed in creation. See Psalm 24:1,2; 33:6,9; 74:16,17; 89:11. Notice specifically that Psalms 33:6,9 say that God created things merely by speaking them into existence. How should we relate to that kind of awesome power?
12. Read Job 1 & 2; 38:1-21. It is important to notice that Job 38-41 are God’s speech to Job. Job finished speaking in Job 29-31; he described largely his former experience with God. He begged for God to speak to him once again. He pleaded for a return to their former relationship. Then, in Job 32-37, Elihu spouted off with his ignorant accusations against Job. Clearly, he thought that even in his youth he knew better than Job. Then, God responded with the verses for our study today. Are these verses primarily a response to Job? Or, to Elihu? Or, to Job’s other three friends? Is it possible that in his speech, Job was not adequately recognizing the sovereignty and creative power of God? In those first few verses, we notice several very important points. God created the world when we were not there. He decided on the size of it, the shape of it, and how it should be supported in space. God’s other children—sometimes described as the stars or heavenly beings—rejoiced when they saw this earth and humans being created. This clearly places Job 38 in the context of the great controversy. How much difference did the fact that the whole universe was watching make in how God created this earth?
13. It is very important to notice that Job’s talk, finally recognizing humbly the truthfulness of his position in Job 42:1-6, was followed immediately by God’s statement that Job had said of Him what was right! And God said it twice! (Job 42:7,8) So, why do Job 38-41 and 42:1-6 seem to suggest that Job was in the wrong even though the final conclusion clearly says that Job was right?
14. Isaiah 40-55 are very interesting chapters pointing out that there are two very important qualities of God that set Him apart from all imitators: 1) His ability to create out of nothing, and 2) His ability to predict the future—even far in advance. As we look at the book of Job, we notice that at the beginning God predicted that Job was upright and righteous. Then and there, God declared that he would remain so. (Job 1:8; 2:3) In Job 4, the Devil claimed that no human being can be upright in God’s sight and that he will be able to break down anyone who makes such a claim. When God responded (Job 38-41) after all of the discourses throughout much of the book, He specifically dealt with His creative ability. Then, in Job 42:7,8, He demonstrated that He had correctly predicted the future of Job. In the beginning, Job was declared upright; at the end, Job was praised for speaking the truth

about God. Notice that Job was completely humble before God, he claimed God as his Friend, and he continued to deny having done anything wrong.

15. Job had not really said anything about creation. So, why did God respond by talking about creation? Clearly, God was telling Job that there was a lot going on behind the scenes that he did not know about or understand. Think of how much better we should understand matters of creation today, considering all the science that has been developed and explained since the days of Job. Furthermore, we are living after the cross and after the life of our Savior Jesus Christ, and we should be able to understand the plan of salvation much better than Job did. What kind of relationship could Job have had with God? How did he maintain such a relationship when he had no church, no Bible, no pastor, and was living so long ago in history? We know the story of Jesus. God wants us to tell the truth about Him!
16. Read Isaiah 45:18. Clearly, God intended for this earth to be inhabited by creatures like us. No other planet in our solar system is fit for human habitation. Three quarters of our world is covered with water, an essential element for human life. Our air is a safe mixture of 21% oxygen and 78% nitrogen. Other planets even in our solar system are very hot, and their air consists primarily of carbon dioxide or helium.
17. Furthermore, our earth, with its temperature modulating atmosphere suitable for terrestrial life, does not get too hot or too cold except possibly at the poles. As we have suggested before, there are many, many other factors that make this planet suitable for human habitation.
18. What else did the prophets say about creation? Look at Isaiah 44:24; 45:12; Jeremiah 51:15,16; Amos 4:13; Jonah 1:9; and Zechariah 12:1. In these verses we see that the prophets recognized that God created everything in the universe and that He created us. He created stars; He created mountains, day, night, land, and sea, and gave life to human beings. More than that, He communicates with human beings. He has made His thoughts known to us. What are the implications of having such a Creator as a Friend?
19. If we as a human race are just the final step in an evolutionary process, then we have nothing to look forward to in the future. When we die or are torn apart by superior beings, that will be the end of our existence. How does that make you feel? Isn't it so much better to realize that the God who created us also has a wonderful plan for our future?
20. There are also great passages in the New Testament talking about creation. Read Acts 17:22-31. Paul was raised in a society where everyone believed in the authenticity of the Hebrew Scriptures. Then, for the first time he was matching wits with Epicureans and Stoics who had little or no knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures. So, Paul went back to a common ancestry—the fact that we all exist. Read specifically Acts 17:25,28. Paul claimed that the unknown God that they were worshiping gives us life and breath and everything else. He gives us the capacity to live and move and exist.
21. Consider some other New Testament passages which show a clear belief in the creation story: Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 2:27,28; Luke 3:38; John 1:1-3; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Hebrews 1:1,2; 4:4; James 3:9; 2 Peter 3:5; Jude 11,14. And it was not only the New Testament writers that gave reverence to God for His creative abilities, but also the angels in heaven reverence Him: Revelation 4:10,11; 10:5,6; and 14:6,7.
22. So, why is it so hard for scientists to wrap their minds around the idea of creation? There are a couple of major reasons why science has a problem with the creation story. 1) The

creation story is a singularity. A singularity is an event which happens only once. One cannot go back and redo it and test it again and again under different circumstances to see exactly how it works. 2) A second reason why creation is a problem for scientists is that if the creation story is true—as we believe—it was completely supernaturally caused. Scientists do not have the ability to redo the experiment. And science as now practiced does its best to rule out any supernatural cause. Scientists want to be in charge of every experiment!

23. So, what will we choose? Will we choose to believe in the supernatural action of God? Or, to accept the questions and doubts raised by scientists?
24. Men will endeavor to explain from natural causes the work of creation, which God has never revealed. But human science cannot search out the secrets of the God of Heaven, and explain the stupendous works of creation, which were a miracle of almighty power, any sooner than it can show how God came into existence.—Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1*, p. 89.
25. Having now reviewed the teachings of all of Scripture, is there any evidence that the Bible writers disagreed in their understanding of our origins? Jesus Himself clearly endorsed the authority of Moses (Luke 16:29-31) and fully believed the story of creation. (Mark 2:27,28; Matthew 19:4-6)
26. Again scan through Genesis 1-4. These four chapters describe the beginnings of almost everything that we know as human beings. Described there are God, the creation of our earth, the sun, moon, and stars, implying the creation of our universe. Also described are the creation of life and this world as we know it. There is the beginning of sin and the beginning of the plan of salvation. (Genesis 3:15) These four chapters define who God is, who man is, and what our relationship to each other should be. They define the ideal nature of reality. Man is given a role in ruling over and caring for this earth.
27. A brief explanation is given of what went wrong and how God deals with sinners, and there is a hint of God's plan of salvation. That is a pretty good start for just four chapters! More than that, in Genesis 4 we have the first explicit use of the term, sin. (Genesis 4:7) Notice that sin is not just a missing of the mark or wrong choice; it is an enslaving power. This theme is spelled out considerably more in Romans 3-6. If we question the veracity of Genesis 1-4, can we honestly believe in all the prophets and apostles and even Jesus Himself who stated that those chapters are truthful? Does God give us the option of superimposing our will and our choices above His Word and His will?
28. So many Christians—even of those who believe in the creation account—have not thought through what the implications of creation are. Many others deny the truthfulness of the creation account, and they have not thought through the implications either. What are the implications of believing or not believing in the creation account? What does this imply about our understanding of inspiration?

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