



The law was not just for *those* people back *then*. It is for believers today. In this six-week study, Kristie removes the dread and disillusionment often associated with studying God's law. You don't have to be daunted by His law. You can be *delighted* by it!

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Creation

(GENESIS 1)

*[Abraham] believed the LORD, and he
counted it to him as righteousness. —Genesis 15:6*

Everyone likes a good origin story. The Marvel comic book series and movie franchise introduced us to the origin of the infinity stones. We learned that before the Marvel universe began, six singularities controlled various aspects of existence.

According to this fiction series, after the big bang, these singularities were somehow compressed into stones and scattered throughout the universe. Those who possessed a stone could control a specific aspect of reality, such as mind, space or time control, teleportation, power and energy manipulation, and altering reality. Glimpses of these stones in the various Marvel movies only allows us partial understanding of their power. But when we trace the origin, we get a fuller picture of how each character who possesses a stone reflects the origin, why Thanos is so morbidly intent on collecting all of them, and why it is critical to keep them from him.

We also learn that the original intent of the stones was to govern the universe and that they were not meant for the whims of fallen (though powerful) mortal beings. Even those who wielded a stone somewhat righteously ended up dying because of it.

Genesis 1 is an origin story, not one that starts with a big bang that throws the universe into chaos, but it starts with the God of the universe who, in love, created the world and everything in it. By the power of His Word, He ushers forth life and order and meaning. And with that same power He offers to redeem and bless humanity through an unlikely offspring.

As you complete this week's study, ask the Lord to help you delight in the law by understanding His power, His work, and His blessings to humanity through the creation story.

DAY ONE

CONTEXT OF THE PASSAGE

Before the creation of the world, there were no multiple singularities. God was and is the singular Being who has always existed. He did not need anyone or anything (Acts 17:25). Yet, it was God Himself who planned from before the foundation of the world to create and to redeem a people for Himself (Eph. 1:4). But why? The Bible teaches us that God created both the heavens (Ps. 19:1) and humanity for His glory (Isa. 43:7). God's glory has to do with His greatness, with the honor He deserves as sovereign ruler of all things. It is often referred to as His "weightiness." His glory is the ultimate purpose of all creation.

This study begins by meditating on the untainted beauty, grandeur, and perfection of God's place and people under His presence, as a display of His glory.

Every passage of the Bible is influenced by the verses surrounding it. We call this the literary context. But Genesis 1 starts the whole Bible! So what would be the literary context? While we cannot point to a passage that exists before Genesis 1, we do know that Scripture has a lot to say about what happened "before the beginning" of the world. We can look both inside and outside Genesis 1 at the larger biblical context to learn more about the work and mind of God in creation. When you read the whole of the book of Genesis, you will see the power of God and the weakness of humanity on display. As we unpack the beginning of human history, keep in mind that Genesis was written for the first generation of Israelites

during their desert wanderings. They had been freed from slavery in Egypt and were looking forward to entering the land that God had promised them. As a people without a home, traveling through a region that was full of false gods, the Israelites were vulnerable to the people and cultures around them. The book of Genesis reminds these wandering God-followers to persevere in obedience, trusting in God's power to protect and keep them, His work in guiding and providing for them, and His promise to bless them in the land that He had given. Let's dive into this week looking for God's power, work, and blessings on display from the beginning.

READ GENESIS 1:1-2.

What stands out to you as you read? Throughout this study, you are encouraged to circle or underline phrases that are repeated and highlight what seems significant to you. It's okay to write in your Bible!

What aspects of God's character do you see most clearly in this passage?

Read these passages and write down what was going on before “the beginning” or “before the foundation of the world.”

PASSAGE	NOTES
JOHN 17:5, 24	
PSALM 90:1–2	
PROVERBS 8:22–31	
REVELATION 13:8	
EPHESIANS 1:4	
ACTS 17:24–27	
1 PETER 1:19–21	

In a sentence, what are these passages communicating about what happened “before the foundation of the world”?

Read these passages and write down what you learn about the work of God in creation and the mind of God in creation. What words describe the activity of God in creation? How or why did He create these things?

PASSAGE	GOD’S WORK IN CREATION	HOW OR WHY GOD CREATED IT
EXAMPLE: PSALM 33:6	HEAVENS MADE BY GOD’S WORD; THE HEAVENLY HOST BY HIS BREATH	BY HIS WORD BY HIS BREATH
JOB 38:4–7		
PSALM 136:5		
ISAIAH 40:12–14, 18–22, 25–26		
ISAIAH 45:18		
ACTS 17:24–27		
COLOSSIANS 1:16–17		
HEBREWS 11:3		
REVELATION 4:11		

What do you learn about God from this exercise that echoes what you wrote earlier?

What truths from Genesis 1:1–2:3 would sustain Israel as they wandered?

How might these same truths sustain you?

DAY TWO

COMMAND OF THE TEXT

Many people struggle at the beginning of their Bible study time, unsure if they really understand what a passage means. One reason for this struggle is that we often look for the *why* before we have really explored the *what*. In other words, we try to discover meaning and application before we get the basic message that the Scripture writer was communicating to his audience.

For this reason, I have found it helpful to read very slowly so that I can ask lots of questions about the words in and around my passage: the people, places, things, and word pictures in the passage, as well as the situation in which the passage was written. Sometimes the author is taking the reader on a journey where there is a question posed and answered, or a problem presented and solved, or a conflict developed and resolved. Sometimes they want to remind them about who God is and what He has done and is doing in their lives. Sometimes they want the reader to see the logical conclusion resulting from a set of beliefs, actions, or thought patterns.

This process of slow reading and asking plenty of questions helps me make what I hope are “obvious observations.” Through these obvious observations, I’m prayerfully asking the Lord to allow the Word to take on shape and structure and order, to help me see—as the elder saints used to say, “what thus saith the Lord”—so that I can grasp *what* God, through the biblical author, is saying to those who would have first heard or read the passage.

If Scripture seems unclear, we need a process for seeing what is plainly there. It's sort of like driving through fog. Even if you've been on the same road or highway before, fog makes you question every acceleration and every turn. Dense fog can make you hover over your brakes, nervous to take your foot off and give the car a little gas, lest you run into something unforeseen and damage your car.

But as the fog clears, the questions that once induced fear and doubt give way to discovery and beauty. Instead of the dreaded, "Oh no! I have no idea what's ahead and I'm afraid to move forward," the thought becomes, "Oh wow! I'd never noticed that landmark before or those flowers."

Clearing away the fog doesn't negate questions but embraces them as opportunities for revealing insights that were previously obscured by the fog of uncertainty and whatever else keeps us from clearly seeing what is there. The beauty of slow reading and careful observation is that it leads to discovering God's revealed truth in the Bible. It also demonstrates that God is extraordinarily intentional about every word of His God-breathed, Spirit-illuminated, Christ-centered Word. Once we learn *what* a passage is about, then we can move on to asking *why* the writer says what they say, what it would have meant to the original biblical audience, and how it relates to our lives today.

I have listed some questions below that will help you to make some obvious observations about the text, meaning the answers to the questions come directly from the passage and help you see the overall arrangement of the passage. There are also questions that will guide you to derive meaning from the verses, that encourage you to understand what God intends to teach you about Himself and about humanity.

The Israelites would have to go back to "the beginning" and remember who their God is and why He created them. So now let's consider what these opening verses in Genesis command us to understand and believe about God in creation.

READ GENESIS 1:1-2.

Who is the subject in these verses? What did He do and when? What does this teach us about Him?

READ GENESIS 1:3-25.

What phrases are repeated, and why did the writer use repetition?

List all the things that God created. What does this teach us about Him?

READ GENESIS 1:26–31.

What transition words are new to this section? Remember, transition words are *and*, *but*, *then*, and so on.

What is unique about this aspect of God’s creation in verses 26–27?

In verses 28–31?

What does this teach us about God’s plan for humanity? Use words from the text.

READ GENESIS 2:1–3.

What verbs stand out in these verses and why?

Based on your answers to the questions above, think of a title for each of these sections. These titles will serve as an outline that helps us see how the author has organized the passage:

Genesis 1:1–2

Genesis 1:3–25

Genesis 1:26–31

Genesis 2:1–3

Putting it all together, write a sentence (or two) that communicates what Genesis 1–2:3 would have meant to the Israelites.

The opening chapter of Genesis was written in the context of a people who are surrounded by competing lesser gods and who feel the limits of their abilities. This passage reminds Israel that God created all things as a demonstration of His limitless nature and unrivaled power, to bless His creation. As we move through the book of Genesis, we see that the blessing of God is quickly challenged by Satan, but God's plan was never meant to be fulfilled through Adam in the garden.

DAY THREE

CLUES ABOUT CHRIST

God existed when there was nothing. By the power of His Word, He went to work, showcasing His glory through the creation of the world with order, mystery, creativity, and specificity. Indeed, the heavens and earth declare and proclaim His glory and His work. God created people to reflect His glory, to represent Him in the world, and to rule over all the things He created.

Upon hearing this recounting of the creation, maybe the wandering Israelites would trust that God had not forgotten them. Maybe they would look for ways in which God showcased His glory in their wilderness wandering. Maybe they would see how God continued to bless them as a growing nation, providing food, clothing, leadership, protection.

Maybe they would be encouraged to keep walking in faith in the wilderness, in anticipation of His glory being revealed in a way they did not expect. No human could perfectly reflect God's glory, perfectly represent Him, perfectly rule over His creation, perfectly keep His instructions and commands. God's glory would be revealed, and amazingly, God chose to *share* His glory with us (John 17:22–24)! God would indeed bless humanity ultimately through Christ. Let's explore ways in which Genesis 1 gets us to Jesus.

From the passages below, what do you learn about Christ's power, work, and how He blesses humanity?

JOHN 1:1-16

What is the interplay between the power of God and the work of God?

How was the work of God meant to bless humanity?

ROMANS 1:18-20

What aspect of God's power do we learn about and how does God display His power?

What do we learn about God's "eternal power and divine nature" (v. 20)?

COLOSSIANS 1:16–20

What do verses 16–17 say about Christ’s power and work?

What else do we learn about the work of Christ in verses 18–20?

From verse 20, how does Christ bless humanity?

HEBREWS 1:1–4

What are the actions of God mentioned in these verses?

What do these verses say about the power of God?

How do the works of God bless humanity?

Write a sentence that communicates what you learn about Christ from Genesis 1.

Close your time today in prayer, delighting in God for blessing humanity through the gospel of His Son.

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