



Shelby Christian Church

CORE 52: NEW LENS – CREATION * GENESIS 1 & 2, JOHN 1:1, EPHESIANS 2:10 * 8/24/25

MAIN POINT

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" Genesis 1:1

INTRODUCTION

What first comes to mind when you think about the Book of Genesis?

Why can't we skip past Genesis? Why is the story recorded in Genesis critical to understanding God's Story as a whole?

Have you ever thought about all three members of the Trinity playing a role in creation before? What did you think about that? How does our human drive to create mirror God's creative nature?

The Book of Genesis stands as the most famous beginning of any book ever written. From its opening line, readers are invited to reflect on who God is and what it means to live in relationship with Him. Within its pages, Genesis reveals the origins of the realities that define human existence: the creation of the universe and the earth, the beginnings of life, marriage, family, nations, work, creativity, worship, prophecy, sin, law, crime, conflict, judgment, and even death.

UNDERSTANDING

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 1

Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." What does this verse reveal about God's role as the source of all things?

In Genesis 1:2, we read about "the Spirit of God hovering over the waters." How does this description expand our understanding of God's presence in creation?

Why do you think God refers to Himself in the plural in Genesis 1:26 ("Let us make mankind in our image")? How have Christians historically understood this?

What do you think it means to be made in God's image, and how should that affect the way we live?

How does understanding humanity's role in caring for creation (Genesis 1:28–30) affect your perspective on stewardship of the environment, resources, or even your own body?

Genesis 1 reveals God as the Creator of all things. By His powerful Word, He brings order out of chaos and declares creation "good." Humanity is the crown of His creation, made in His image with dignity, purpose, and responsibility to care for the earth. The chapter closes with God resting, establishing a

rhythm of worship and trust. Genesis 1 reminds us that our lives are not random—we are created by God, for God, and sustained by His goodness.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 2

How does Genesis 2 expand and give more detail to the creation story from Genesis 1?

What stands out to you about the way God forms Adam from the dust and breathes life into him (v. 7)? What does this show us about God’s care for humanity?

Why do you think God gave Adam both work (to tend the garden) and a command (not to eat from the tree of knowledge)?

What does God’s statement in v. 18, “It is not good for the man to be alone” reveal about His design for community and relationships?

How does the creation of woman (vv. 21–23) highlight equality, unity, and complementarity between man and woman?

Genesis 2 focuses on God’s personal and intimate work in creation. Unlike the broad overview of chapter 1, this chapter highlights God forming Adam from the dust and breathing life into him, showing His nearness and care. God places Adam in the garden of Eden to work and guard it, giving him freedom with one clear boundary. Seeing that it is not good for man to be alone, God creates woman from Adam’s side, establishing marriage as a union of equality, unity, and love. The chapter closes with a picture of innocence and trust—man and woman living in harmony with God and each other, “naked and not ashamed.”

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 1:1

John begins his Gospel with the words, “In the beginning was the Word.” How does this opening connect to Genesis 1:1? Why do you think John starts this way?

What do you think John means by calling Jesus “the Word” (Logos)?

The verse says, “The Word was with God, and the Word was God.” How do these two truths fit together? How does this verse affirm both the divinity and distinct personhood of Jesus within the Trinity? How might this verse have challenged or surprised John’s original Jewish and Greek readers?

John 1:1 introduces Jesus as the eternal Word, existing “in the beginning” with God and fully divine. This verse establishes that Jesus was not created but has always existed, intimately involved with God in creation and in God’s plan to bring light and life to the world. It reminds us that Jesus is both with God and is God, revealing His unique identity and authority.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EPHESIANS 2:10

What does it mean that we are God’s “workmanship” or “masterpiece”? How does this differ from other ways people might define themselves?

What are some ways you might be tempted to earn God’s favor through works rather than resting in grace? How does this verse clarify the relationship between faith and action? How can you discern what specific “good works” God has prepared for you in your current season of life?

Ephesians 2:10 reminds us that we are God’s workmanship—His masterpiece—created in Christ Jesus for a purpose. While we are saved by grace, God has prepared good works for each of us to do, giving our lives meaning and direction. This verse highlights that our faith is active: we are called to live out the good works God has designed, reflecting His love and glory in the world.

APPLICATION

What do you enjoy doing to connect with creation?

What is the consequence of ignoring God the Father, the Spirit, and Jesus as creator? How have you seen this play out? How does knowing that Jesus is eternal God affect the way you view His birth, life, death, and resurrection? What does it mean for your daily life that Jesus—the eternal Word of God—desires relationship with you?

If every person is created in God’s image, how should that influence the way we treat others in our community and around the world? How do you see God’s design for work, rest, and relationships reflected in your own life?

In what ways do we struggle today with living according to God’s original design?

PRAYER

COMMENTARY

Genesis 1

verse 1. The Beginning of All Things - Genesis opens with the majestic declaration: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” This verse establishes God as eternal, sovereign, and the source of all that exists. Creation is not the result of chance or conflict, as in many ancient myths, but of the purposeful act of the one true God. Verse 2 introduces “the Spirit of God hovering over the waters,” suggesting God’s active, sustaining presence in bringing order from chaos.

verses 3–25 - The repeated phrase “And God said” underscores the power of God’s Word. Creation comes into being through divine speech, highlighting His authority and effortless control. The structured pattern of six days reveals God’s intentional design:

Days 1–3: God forms realms (light/darkness, sky/sea, land/vegetation).

Days 4–6: God fills those realms (sun, moon, stars; birds and fish; animals and humanity).

This symmetry emphasizes order, beauty, and purpose in creation. Each stage is declared “good,” affirming that the created world reflects God’s character and design.

verses 26–31 Humanity in God’s Image - The climax of Genesis 1 is the creation of humanity. Unlike the rest of creation, human beings are made in God’s image (*imago Dei*). This means they reflect God’s character, possess moral and spiritual capacity, and are given authority to rule over creation as God’s representatives. The use of the plural (“Let us make mankind in our image”) hints at divine plurality—understood in the light of the New Testament as an early glimpse of the Trinity (cf. John 1:1–3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2). Humanity is created male and female, equal in dignity and value, and called to live in community. God blesses them with fruitfulness and stewardship—responsibility to care for creation, not exploit it.

The Goodness of Creation - Throughout Genesis 1, creation is repeatedly declared “good,” culminating in “very good” after humanity’s creation. This underscores the intrinsic value of the physical world and God’s delight in His work. Sin has not yet entered the picture; what God made was perfect and harmonious.

He alone is Creator, ruling overall. creation responds to His command, foreshadowing the Word made flesh (John 1:14). The Trinity in Creation: God the Father speaks, the Spirit hovers, and the Son (the Word) brings life (cf. Colossians 1:16). Made in God’s image, humanity is called to steward creation and live in relationship with Him. The material world is not evil but a gift from God to be enjoyed and cared for.

Genesis 2

verses 1–7 Genesis 2 does not contradict chapter 1 but complements it by zooming in on the creation of humanity. God is portrayed in personal, hands-on terms: He forms Adam from the dust and breathes into him the breath of life. This shows God’s intimate care and the unique dignity of human beings, who are both physical (dust) and spiritual (God’s breath).

verses 8–14 The garden is described as abundant, beautiful, and life-giving, with trees pleasing to the eye and rivers flowing out of it. It represents God’s provision and His desire for humanity to flourish in a place of blessing. At the center are two key trees—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—symbolizing God’s gift of eternal life and His authority to define right and wrong.

verses 15–17 Adam is placed in the garden “to work it and take care of it.” Work is not a result of sin but part of God’s good design, giving purpose and stewardship. Yet God sets a boundary: Adam must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This reminds us that true freedom comes with obedience and trust in God’s wisdom.

verses 18–23 For the first time, God says something is “not good”: Adam’s aloneness. God creates woman from Adam’s side, showing equality and complementarity. The joy of Adam’s response—“bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”—celebrates the unity and partnership God intended between man and woman.

verse 24 provides the biblical foundation for marriage: a man leaves his family, unites with his wife, and they become one flesh. This covenantal union reflects both intimacy and permanence, designed by God as part of His good creation.

verse 25 The chapter closes with a picture of purity: “The man and his wife were both naked and not ashamed.” This represents trust, transparency, and harmony with God and with each other—before sin enters the story in Genesis 3.

John 1:1

“In the beginning” -John opens his Gospel with the same phrase used in Genesis 1:1, deliberately linking Jesus to the creation of the world. This emphasizes that Jesus existed before all things, showing His eternal nature. He is not a created being but has always been present with God.

“Was the Word” - The term Word (Greek: Logos) conveys the idea of God’s self-expression, wisdom, and creative power. Jesus, as the Word, is God’s ultimate revelation—through Him, God communicates His nature and purpose to humanity. The Word is active, alive, and intimately involved in all of creation.

“The Word was with God” - This highlights relationship and distinction within the Godhead. The Word is not separate from God but is in eternal fellowship with Him, indicating the relational aspect of the Trinity: Father and Son together in unity.

“The Word was God” - John affirms the full divinity of Jesus. He is not merely a messenger, prophet, or spiritual being—He is truly God. This statement establishes the foundation for understanding Jesus’ authority, mission, and redemptive work.

Eternality of Christ: Jesus has no beginning; He existed before creation. Divinity of Christ: shares fully in the nature of God. Revelation of God: Jesus is God’s Word—through Him, God makes Himself known to the world. Trinitarian Hint: The distinction of “with God” yet “was God” points toward the relational unity of Father, Son, and Spirit.

Ephesians 2:10

“For we are God’s workmanship” - The Greek word translated “workmanship” literally means a crafted work or masterpiece. Paul emphasizes that believers are not accidental or ordinary; we are carefully created by God. This underscores God’s intentionality, creativity, and love in shaping each of our lives.

Our identity and purpose are rooted in Christ. Salvation is not just about forgiveness—it also redefines who we are and equips us for a life that reflects God’s character. Being “in Christ” means our lives are connected to His power, guidance, and purpose.

Paul clarifies that the purpose of our new life in Christ is to do good works—not to earn salvation, but to express the reality of it. Good works are the natural outcome of faith, demonstrating God’s love and serving others.

God has preordained opportunities for each believer to make a meaningful impact. Our good works are not random; they are part of God’s eternal plan. This gives our lives direction, purpose, and confidence in following His call.

Salvation is by grace alone, yet genuine faith produces good works (cf. James 2:14–26). God has a unique plan for every believer to fulfill.: Our value and purpose are rooted in God’s creation and redemption.

The good works we do are part of God’s overarching design for His kingdom.

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