

Genesis

Lesson 1: In the Beginning

Read through this lesson with your parents and then study the highlighted referenced scriptures in your own Bible. This will increase your understanding and help you prove this material for yourself.

The Bible tells us that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (**Genesis 1:1**). But who is God? And why can't we see Him? Have you ever wondered?

Supreme Being

God is the Supreme Being of the universe and He has always existed (**Psalm 90:2**; **Isaiah 57:15a**). This means that there is no one who is greater or more important than He is. God created everything that exists (**Revelation 4:11**) and the Bible calls Him our "Father". We can't see Him because He is not made of flesh and blood like we are (**1 Corinthians 15:40**). God is spirit (**John 4:24a**) and, because our human eyes weren't made to see things that are "composed"¹ of spirit, He is invisible to us.² But that doesn't mean He's not there!

For example, when you're holding a photograph, you can see the picture very clearly can't you? But if someone took that photograph from you, walked over to the other side of the street and then held it up for you to see, would you be able to see the picture on it? Of course you wouldn't! That's because your eyes weren't designed to do that. But the picture is still there on the photograph. It hasn't disappeared just because you can't see it! And it's the same way with God. He is there, but we can't see Him because our eyes weren't meant to see Him - at least, not yet! One day we will be able to (**1 John 3:2**).

God, "the Word" and Creation

There's something very interesting about God. The Bible tells us that in the beginning - before the world began - there was someone with God called *the Word*. And the Bible tells us that *the Word* was also God (**John 1:1-2**). *The Word* later came down to earth and became a man called Jesus Christ (**John 1:14**; **Philippians 2:5**). Jesus is the Son of God and it's because of Him that we can have the chance to live forever³, so we'll be learning a lot more about Him in future lessons.

¹ "Composed" in the sense of "that's what He is" - NOT "made" in the creative sense. God has always existed.

² Romans 1:19-20; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17 & Hebrews 11:27 all describe God as "invisible".

³ See John 3:16 & 1 Corinthians 15:50-57. For more information about Jesus Christ and His role in our salvation, see "The Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread" lesson in the Holy Day series.

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The Bible tells us that it was through Jesus Christ (as *the Word*) that God created the universe and everything in it (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16). He created the angels, the sun and the moon, and the stars. He created the earth and all of the other planets. He created the plants, trees and animals - He even created us!

The angels were some of the first things that God created - and He created them before He created us - or the earth that we live on. Part of their job was to sing praises to God - and when He created the earth, they all shouted and sang for joy (Job 38:4-7).⁴

We don't know exactly HOW God created the earth because the Bible doesn't give us that information. It just tells us that He did! However, the Scriptures do tell us that "the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God" (2 Peter 3:5, ESV) - and that when God laid the foundations of the earth He "made the clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band" (Job 38:4, 9; Psalm 104:5-6). So, at some point in its creation, the earth was covered in clouds, darkness and water (Genesis 1:2).⁵ The Bible also tells us that at some point after the creation, one of God's *specially* created angels rebelled against Him.⁶

Fallen Angel

When God created the angels, He didn't make them all exactly the same. Some were special angels called cherubim and seraphim (see Genesis 3:24; Ezekiel 10; Isaiah 6:2-3). And one of them was a particularly BEAUTIFUL cherub called the "shining star, son of the morning". We call him Lucifer today.⁷

⁴ The "morning stars" and "sons of God" in verse 7 are a description of angels (see Job 1:6; Revelation 1:20).

⁵ Our traditional teaching is that the earth was not originally created this way, but that it *became* this way. This teaching is based on the premise that God did not create the world in vain - "without form" (Isaiah 45:18) - and that the word "was" in Genesis 1:2 can also be translated as "became". An alternative explanation - based on the information found in 2 Peter 3:5 and Job 38:4-11 - is that God originally created the earth out of water and gaseous cloud vapour. However, what's important is not HOW He did it, but the fact that He did!

⁶ Our traditional teaching is that this rebellion took place between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 - and that the ensuing war caused the physical destruction that left the earth covered in water and darkness. This makes sense, but isn't included in the text above because the Scriptures don't tell us specifically what happened (but do tell us not to add to God's words - see Proverbs 30:5-6; Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32 and Revelation 22:18-19 for example).

⁷ Heylel (roughly translated "bright, morning star") is the Hebrew word used to describe this being in Isaiah 14:12. The word was translated as "Lucifer" in the Latin version of the Bible (the Vulgate), and now appears as Lucifer, shining star or morning star in most English Bibles.

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By all accounts, Lucifer was VERY SPECIAL. The Bible tells us that he was perfect - perfect in wisdom and perfect in beauty. He was one of the guardian angels around God's throne and he was also one of the angels who sang for joy when the earth was created. So he was happy - at least to begin with.

But then Lucifer became puffed up with pride because of his beauty and this corrupted him - it made him SIN! (Ezekiel 28:12, 14-15, 17). Eventually this turned his heart AGAINST God and he became filled with hatred. And finally he decided that he wanted to take God's place in heaven! He wanted to "be like the Most High"! He wanted to be in charge! (Isaiah 14:13-14).

We don't know exactly *why* Lucifer wanted to be in charge. But perhaps it was because he knew about God's wonderful plan for mankind. You see, God was planning to create His own special family, and He was going to do this by creating human beings - people who would be given the chance to become His sons and daughters and live forever, sharing in His divine nature.⁸ This was God's Plan from the beginning and it's still His Plan today. And He wants EVERYONE to have the opportunity to become part of His Family - even you and me!⁹

But God didn't create angels to be part of His special family. He created them to be our helpers, to watch over us and protect us (Hebrews 1:13-14) - and perhaps Lucifer didn't think that was fair. Perhaps it made him jealous. And perhaps he thought that if HE was in charge, he could prevent God from carrying out His Plan!

War in Heaven

So, puffed up with pride and filled with hatred, Lucifer resorted to violence. He devised a plan to overthrow God as the ruler of the universe and persuaded one third of the angels to join him. They swept up to heaven to fight against God on His throne and, as a result, there was a great WAR in heaven! But of course

⁸ 2 Peter 1:4 explains that God wants us to share in His divine nature. John 1:12; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Hebrews 2:10-11 and 1 John 3:2 reveal God's Plan to make us part of His Family - to be His children, His sons and daughters.

⁹ For more information about God's Plan to make us part of His Family see "The Holy Days and God's Plan" lesson in the Holy Day series.

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Lucifer lost the war - as you might expect (**Revelation 12:7-8**).¹⁰ No one can EVER fight against the GREAT GOD of the universe and win! Lucifer was cast back to earth (**Revelation 12:9; Isaiah 14:12**) and the Bible reveals that he is now the "god of this world" (**2 Corinthians 4:4**).

God also changed Lucifer's name at that time. He couldn't be called the "shining star" anymore because he was no longer a "shining one" - he was full of darkness and evil.¹¹ So God changed his name to Satan, the Devil, which means "adversary" or "enemy" - and Satan has been God's enemy ever since!¹²

Many years passed - perhaps even millions of years¹³ - but eventually the right time came for God to carry out His Plan to create human beings. It was time for Him to create people who would have the potential of becoming part of His very own family. And we'll find out how He created them in our next lesson.

¹⁰ In context, these scriptures seem to apply to the war in heaven shortly before Christ's return. But when you put all of the pieces together, there is enough evidence to suggest that they may be dual and may also apply to Lucifer's rebellion after the creation of the earth.

¹¹ Ephesians 6:11-12, Colossians 1:13 and Jude 6 are some scriptures that show this.

¹² See, for example, Revelation 12:9, Luke 10:18-19 and Matthew 13:24-25, 37-39a.

¹³ Many scientific discoveries (i.e. fossil records, radioactive decay, cosmology, the development of the elements, coal and oil, etc) indicate that God designed a long period of "gestation" to prepare the earth to sustain human life.