

Genesis

Lesson 1: In the Beginning

As you read through this lesson, take the time to look up the highlighted scripture references in your Bible. This will increase your understanding and enable you to 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" (see **Isaiah 64:8** and **2 Thessalonians 1:1**, for example). We can't see Him because He is not made out of flesh and blood like we are (**1 Corinthians 15:40**). God is spirit (**John 4:24a**) and, because our human eyes weren't designed 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 designed to see Him - at least, not yet! But one day we will (**1 John 3:2**).

God and "the Word"

There's something very interesting about God. The Bible tells us that before the world began - in the very beginning - there was someone with God called *the Word*. And the Bible tells us that *the Word* was also God (**John 1:1-2**). That's a bit hard to understand isn't it? If there is only ONE God - and this is what the Bible teaches (see **Deuteronomy 4:35**; **Deuteronomy 6:4**; **Mark 12:29, 32**) - then how can *the Word* be God too?

Well, this is one of those things that our human minds can't really understand yet! However, when God is described in the Bible, the language or analogy of "family" is often used. For example, God is the Father and Jesus Christ is His Son - that's a family relationship.³ So perhaps one way of trying to understand how God and *the Word* can both be God is to think about a family. I'll explain what I mean using the Smith family as an example.

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 describe God as "invisible".

³ See Matthew 11:25-27; Mark 1:1; John 1:14; John 5:17-20; Ephesians 3:14-15; Hebrews 1:1-9.

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There are five people in the Smith family - Fred, Carol, Amy, Paul and Debbie - and they all have the same last name, Smith.⁴ They are ONE family called Smith, but that family consists of five people. And it's a BIT like that with God. There is only ONE God, but in the beginning, the God "Being" - or entity that was God - consisted of God (the Father) and *the Word*.

Another way of trying to understand this concept is to think about colour. Any of you who like to paint, for example, know that if you mix blue and yellow paint together you end up with green paint. So although green is ONE colour, it is composed of two different colours - blue and yellow. This is something that our human minds can understand because we've seen it in practice. And perhaps this analogy can also help us understand - at least a little - how both God and *the Word* can be "one".

The Bible tells us something else about *the Word* - He later came down to earth and became Jesus Christ! (John 1:14).⁵ It's because of Jesus that we can have the opportunity to live forever (John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:50-57), so we'll be learning a lot more about Him in future lessons!⁶

God and Creation

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; Psalm 33:6). He created the angels, the sun, moon and stars, the earth and all of the other planets, the plants, trees and animals. He even created us! (Genesis 1:26; Psalm 139:13-16).

The angels were some of the first things that God created - 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).⁷ The angels were - and still are - full of praise for what God has done! (Nehemiah 9:6; Revelation 4:11).

The Bible tells us that God founded the earth by wisdom and established the heavens by understanding (Proverbs 3:19; Jeremiah 10:12), and that He created the universe out of things that are *invisible* (Hebrews 11:3). But we don't know *exactly* how God did all of this because the Bible doesn't give us that information!

⁴ This particular Smith family is fictitious - created for the sake of this lesson.

⁵ More information about this can be found in Teen Lesson 4, "[In the Beginning](#)", written for older teens.

⁶ For more information about Jesus Christ and His role in our salvation, see "The Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread" lesson in the Holy Day series.

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

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What the Scriptures do tell us is 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, see also Psalm 104:5-6). So we know that, at some point in its creation, the earth was covered in clouds, darkness and water (Genesis 1:2).⁸ We also know that, at some point *after* the creation, one of God's *specially* created angels rebelled against Him.⁹

Fallen Angel

When God originally 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". This is the angel that we know as Lucifer today.¹⁰

By all accounts, Lucifer was VERY SPECIAL. The Bible tells us that he was perfect - perfect in wisdom and perfect in beauty. He was an anointed guardian angel around God's throne (this means that he was specially appointed) 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 (Ezekiel 28:12, 14-15, 17). It made him sin! Eventually it 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 have the potential to become His sons and daughters and live forever, sharing in His divine nature (John 1:12-13; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Hebrews 2:10-11; 1 John

⁸ 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!

⁹ We have traditionally taught 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).

¹⁰ 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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3:2; 2 Peter 1:3-4). This was God's Plan from the beginning and it's still His Plan today.¹¹ And He wants everyone to have the opportunity to live forever as part of His Family - including you and me! (**1 Timothy 2:3-4; John 3:16-17**). But God didn't create the 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.¹² 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!¹³

But of course Lucifer lost the war - as you might expect (**Revelation 12:7-8**).¹⁴ No one can EVER fight against the GREAT GOD of the universe and win! Lucifer was cast to the earth (**Revelation 12:9; Isaiah 14:12**) - along with the fallen angels (now called demons) - 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. You see, he couldn't be called the "shining star" anymore because he was no longer a "shining one" - he was full of darkness and evil.¹⁵ So God changed his name to Satan, the Devil, which means "adversary" or "enemy" - and Satan has been God's enemy ever since! (See, for example, **Revelation 12:9, Luke 10:18-19** and **Matthew 13:24-25, 37-39a**.)¹⁶

Many years passed - perhaps even millions of years!¹⁷ But eventually the right time came for God to carry out His Plan to create human beings - people who would have the potential of becoming part of His very own family! We'll find out how He created them in our next lesson.

¹¹ More information about this plan can be found in "The Holy Days and God's Plan" lesson in the Holy Day series.

¹² Read James 3:14-16 to find out where this kind of attitude leads.

¹³ The craters that we've seen in pictures of the moon, the earth and other planets (apparently damaged by meteorites) - and the disappearance of the dinosaurs from the earth in some meteor-caused catastrophe - may be evidence of this war.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ Ephesians 6:11-12, Colossians 1:13 and Jude 6 are some scriptures that show this.

¹⁶ More information about Satan can be found in Teen Lesson 10, "The Adversary", written for older teens.

¹⁷ Many scientific discoveries (i.e. fossil records, radioactive decay, cosmology, the development of the elements, as well as coal and oil, etc) suggest that God designed a long period of "gestation" in order to prepare the earth to sustain human life.