

## **GOD IN ACTION: ONE ARMY BIBLE STUDY LESSON 2**

**In this Bible Study we will be looking at different ways in which God is active in our world today. We will look at various scriptures and ask ourselves, ‘what are we going to do about it’?**

### **Lesson 2: Genesis 1-4**

*We believe that there is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, and who is the only proper object of religious worship.*

**Background and Context:**Genesis is the first book of the Pentateuch. Stories of the Patriarchs included within are very important for not only Christianity but also Judaism (established ca. 70 CE) and Islam (established ca. 610 CE)<sup>1</sup>. Genesis records Creation, the Edenic Covenant, Noahic Covenant, Abrahamic Covenant, the patriarchs, and the journey into Egypt.

### **Genesis 1-2**

#### **God as Creator: Genesis 1:1-2:3**

View *Room for Creation*(see Further Reading section) as we read the scriptures:

- ❑ What do we notice about the relationship between God and creation?
- ❑ What does it show us about the relationship between animals, people, etc. and their environments?
- ❑ What do we notice about God’s creation of and relationship to humankind?
- ❑ What was God’s general assessment of the environment he created and the inhabitants he created for the environment?

---

<sup>1</sup> Christians accept that Jesus is the Messiah prophesied in Genesis (and the other Scriptures) and that the Messianic Era commenced at His resurrection from the dead (Ca. 33 CE). The Rabbis responded to the destruction of the temple in relation to Jesus Christ’s resurrection by denying His Messiahship and creating the modern religion of Judaism through the drafting of a document banning the ancient sacrificial system and, among other things, removing the cornerstone of Temple worship from their ceremonies (Ca. 70 CE). Mohammed in turn responded to his rejection by the Jewish community, establishing Islam, after experiencing a vision (ca. 610 CE).

## **Genesis 2:4-25**

- ❑ What is God's relationship to this environment that He created?
- ❑ What is man's relationship to God and the environment God created?
- ❑ What is our responsibility today for the environment? Does this still apply? If it does do we look after God's creation? How can we who are here today obey the command to look after God's creation?

*Scriptures for further exploration re: creation: Psalm 33:6, Psalm 93; Isaiah 45:12; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 11:3*

## **God as Governor: Genesis 3**

When God made this wonderful garden out of nothing at all for Adam and Eve to tend, He – as the governor of all things – just asked something very simple in return. God made the world for His people and He told them to take care of it and obey Him in two or three simple ways.

1. Genesis 1:28a: “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it...’”
2. Genesis 1:28b: “Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.””
3. Genesis 2:16-17: “And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.’”

God says 1) populate the earth, 2) take care of everything in it and 3) in doing this I'll let you eat anything you want in the garden – but just not the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it's not safe. I'm saving that for something.

3. Genesis 2:16-17: “And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.’”

- ❑ Read **Genesis 3**: How do people respond to God’s command to save the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?
- ❑ What was the result of their response?
- ❑ What are some of the things that God asks us to do and how do we respond?

1. Genesis 1:28a: “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it...’”

- ❑ Read **Genesis 11:1-9** what is humankind’s response to the command to fill the earth?
- ❑ What is God’s response to their actions?
- ❑ This is very similar to the command in **Acts 2 (especially 1-5, 42-47)** Recorded in Genesis 11 is God’s confusing of people’s language so that they would go to the ends of the earth. In Acts 2, God provides an understanding of various languages so that we can bring His Good News of salvation to the ends of the earth. How does this relate to Genesis 1 and Genesis 11?
- ❑ What is our responsibility to go and share the good news of salvation?

2. Genesis 1:28b: “Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

- ❑ **Leviticus 25-26** records that we are directed that the land itself shall enjoy its Sabbath rest (**Leviticus 25:2, 26:33-35**) just as man was commanded to (Exodus 20: 8-11, Deuteronomy 5:15), and just as God did (Exodus 20:11, Genesis 2:3). If we, as ‘tenants’ of God’s land (**Leviticus 25:23**) fail in our responsibility to carry out this duty to take care of the land, then what did happen to Israel?

- ❑ What will happen to us (**2 Chronicles 36:20-21**)?

Scriptures for further exploration Job 34:14-15; Psalm 65:9-13, 104:24-30; Isaiah 65:17-25; John 19:11; Romans 8:18-25; Colossians 1:17; Revelation 21:1-4.

### **God as Preserver**

#### **Genesis 4:**

- ❑ **Genesis 4:1-12** records what Cain did to his brother; what were the consequences of Cain's actions?
- ❑ Cain pleaded for mercy, what did God do?
- ❑ God is the preserver of all things **Job 12:10** records that, "In His hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind." **Job 27:3** refers to the life within us as "the breath of God in my nostrils." **Job 33:4**: "The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life." And Psalm **104:29** warns us "When You [God] hide Your face, they are terrified; when You take away their breath, they die and return to the dust." God is the preserver of all life. If He were to withdraw His spirit from us, we would perish (cf. also Job 32:8, 34:14; Psalm 33:6; Ecclesiastes 3:19).
- ❑ What happens if God ceases to be the preserver of all life?
- ❑ As God is the preserver of all life, what does this mean to us?
- ❑ As God is the creator and governor of all life and we are his managers of sorts, how can we be good stewards of the earth and all that the Lord has entrusted us to manage on His behalf?

### Further Reading

Brueggemann, Walter. 1982. *Genesis, Interpretation 1*: Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press.

Chung, Michael K. 2005. *The Narrative of the Tower of Babel in Dialogue with Postmodern Christianity*, Presented to Fuller Theological Seminary (Fall 2005).

Hausser, Alan. 1982. "Genesis 2-3: the Theme and Intimacy and Alienation," in *Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature* ed. David J.A. Clines, David M. Gunn and Alan Hausser. Sheffield, England: Department of Biblical Studies, The University of Sheffield.

Fretheim, Terence E. 1994. *The Book of Genesis NIB I*: Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Josephus, *Antiquities I*. iv.1.

Kidner, Derek. 1967. *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* Downers Grove, Il.: InterVarsity Press, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 1, S. 58

Ramsay, Captain Michael. 2012. *Genesis 1-4: God: Creator, Governor, and Preserver of All Things*. Presented to Swift Current Corps of The Salvation Army (26 February).  
<http://sheepspeaks.blogspot.ca/2012/02/genesis-1-4-god-creator-governor-and.html>

Ramsay, Captain Michael. 2011. 'Genesis 11:1-12:4: A Very Moving Covenant', in *Journal of Aggressive Christianity* 70, (December 2010 – January 2011): 32-35. Available on-line:  
[http://www.armybarmy.com/pdf/JAC\\_Issue\\_070.pdf](http://www.armybarmy.com/pdf/JAC_Issue_070.pdf)

Ramsay, Captain Michael. 2006. *Leviticus 25 1-23 in the Context of the Holiness Code: The Land Shall Observe a Sabbath* Presented to William and Catherine Booth College (Fall 2006), available on-line at [http://www.sheepspeak.com/OT\\_Michael\\_Ramsay.htm](http://www.sheepspeak.com/OT_Michael_Ramsay.htm) - Leviticus 25 1-23

Ramsay, Captain Michael. 2009. *Reading Report on Charles Darwin, "Recapitulation and Conclusion"* [Darwin, Charles 1872. *The Origin of the Species* Akron, Ohio: Werner, chapter 15, pp. 267-306]. Presented to William and Catherine Booth College (February 2009). Available on-line: [http://www.sheepspeak.com/Michael\\_Ramsay\\_History\\_TSA.htm#Darwin](http://www.sheepspeak.com/Michael_Ramsay_History_TSA.htm#Darwin)

Ramsay, Captain Michael. 2012. *Room For Creation*. Swift Current, Saskatchewan: Sheepspeak.  
[http://www.sheepspeak.com/Room\\_for\\_Creation.pdf](http://www.sheepspeak.com/Room_for_Creation.pdf)

Ramsay, Captain Michael. 2012. *Genesis 1-4: God: Creator, Governor, and Preserver of All Things*.  
Presented to Swift Current Corps of The Salvation Army (26 February).  
<http://sheepspeaks.blogspot.ca/2012/02/genesis-1-4-god-creator-governor-and.html>

Reagan, Debra ed. *Interpretation: a Journal of Bible and Theology* 65no.4 (October 2011).

Schuele, Andreas. 2012. 'The Spirit of YHWH and the Aura of Divine Presence' *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 66no. 1, (January 2012): 16-28

The General of The Salvation Army. 2010. *The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine* London: Salvation Books.

The Salvation Army. 1998. *Salvation Story: Salvationist Handbook of Doctrine* London: The Salvation Army: 27-28.

The Salvation Army Ethics Centre. 2009. *Responsibility for the Earth* Toronto: The Salvation Army Canada and Bermuda. Available on-line: <http://www.salvationarmyethics.org/position-statements/responsibility-for-the-earth-2/>