



International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

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Genesis 1:1-13 **New International Version** **September 2, 2018**

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, September 2, 2018**, is from **Genesis 1:1-13**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

Introduction

With Genesis, the Bible begins to answer some Who, What, When, Why, Where, and How questions that the Bible will answer and explain more fully and in greater detail from Genesis through Revelation. Among other truths, God progressively reveals in the Bible more truths about God's nature, God's purposes, and God's relationship with the universe and us.

Who — God is God the Father, Jesus the Son of God, and the Spirit of God.

What — They created the heavens and the earth, the entire universe including its material, immaterial, and spiritual parts out of nothing (by using no previously existing material). See Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-5; Psalms 104:30.

When — From a human perspective, time began within eternity when They began to create the heavens and the earth.

Why — They created the heavens and the earth for humankind. They created a beautiful place for the people that God created in His image to live, to love, and to glorify God; a place where eternal relationships between God and His people and among His people could begin.

Where — God created the universe outside of God. God is not the universe and the universe is not God. God is separate from the universe that God created. God created the universe “in space.”

How — God thought and willed to create; then, God declared and revealed what God intended to create or bring into existence; then, by God’s power alone, God created. God can and will do whatever God says or promises. God is not dependent on anything or anyone outside Himself. No one or no thing can prevent God from achieving His purposes. God is the Sovereign Lord over all. God evaluates what He does and only creates what is good

and only does what is good and right.

Verse by Verse Commentary

(Genesis 1:1) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Eternity has no beginning and no end. God began time when God created the entire universe — the heavens and the earth. God’s creation reveals God’s “invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature” (Romans 1:20). But some suppress the truth about God (Romans 1:18). Despite all the evidence around and within us, the fool chooses to believe and say there is no God (Psalms 14:1).

(Genesis 1:2) Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

When God created the earth, God did so reasonably by using a logical step-by-step sequence that reveals God’s wisdom and creative power to bring something out of nothing – nothing cannot create something. God first created the earth as a substance that had no form, and nothing could live on it or within it as it was. The earth’s beginning was similar to a lump of extremely, overly saturated and very wet clay submerged in water that a potter might want to dry considerably before beginning to create a pot or piece of art. God created the material that God used to bring order to the earth and the heavens and

to fill them with all God created. The Spirit of God (preferable to Wind of God) hovered over the mixture of land and water that God had created; similar to a potter carefully considering what he wants to do first as he looks over a formless lump of clay before beginning to work and express his creativity. Humans must create from preexisting material. God did not use preexisting material. God first created out of nothing the materials that God used in creating all God created.

(Genesis 1:3) And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

God wanted material light to shine upon and over all God’s creation. The light would reveal all God’s handiwork to the angels. God spoke what God wanted done and God did what God wanted done and God revealed what God did. God is the Lord, the Sovereign Creator and Ruler over all that God creates and maintains in existence. God reveals the truth about His divine nature and character by working in the light, so all can see or learn about Him and His creation (see Romans 1). God can work in the dark, but most of God’s living creatures need light to see and live. Spiritual light and life is in Jesus Christ (John 1:4-5). As the spiritual Light, Jesus created the material light outside himself, and all material and spiritual light and life depends upon Jesus. No light can exist independently of the Son of God.

(Genesis 1:4) God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.

When God created material light through Jesus Christ who is the Light in His very spiritual nature, so the light could make plant, animal, and human life possible, God said the light was good. God did not say the darkness was good, and God separated light from darkness, but God made His creation so living beings would benefit from the darkness by giving them the darkness as a time for rest, and so they could appreciate the sun and moon and the beauty of the stars, which they could also use for navigation. God brings what is good into creation. God distinguishes, evaluates, and can separate good from evil. God makes value judgments.

(Genesis 1:5) God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

Jesus Christ is our supernatural Light, and God through Jesus Christ created natural light and separated the light from the darkness and named them day and night without first needing to create the sun and the moon and the stars to make light. God is not dependent on His creation for anything. God did not depend on the celestial bodies that God will later create to make light. In these early verses of Genesis, God revealed His way of working in general; in later verses God will reveal more specifically how God

created. The new Jewish day begins in the evening, and God brought light into darkness on the first day.

(Genesis 1:6) And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.”

A vault, a firmament, an expanse, or a dome are various words used to interpret the Hebrew text to say that just as God could separate light from darkness that has no “substance” that we can feel, so God can separate material substances that we can feel to make our world; such as, water from water. The firmament or dome could be understood by primitive people as the “unscientific” way of describing how the water in the sky is separate from the waters on the earth.

(Genesis 1:7) So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so.

What God says He will do, He will do. God reveals himself as absolutely trustworthy and all powerful. God will keep His promises and do what He says. Having placed light in the darkness to reveal His creative efforts, on the second day God created space for animals and birds and people to live and move and have their being.

(Genesis 1:8) God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

As the Sovereign Creator, God named the space above the earth “sky.” The first and second day included both the creation of natural light and sky and the separation of light from the darkness and water from water, which will make human life possible and enjoyable. All God created in earth, sky, and water would be for good.

(Genesis 1:9) And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so.

Next, God separated the land from the seas (to the Hebrews, a “sea” was any body of water surrounded by land; such as, the Sea of Galilee, which we might call a lake). After working vertically by separating water from water, God now works logically and horizontally by separating the water from the composition of various matters and minerals that compose the land. Thus, God made room for plants and animals to live in the water and on the ground, with air to breathe above and below the waters. God intended to create life that could inhabit everything He made in land, water, and sky.

(Genesis 1:10) God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

Throughout Genesis 1, we see how God has the intellectual ability and the power to do whatever God wants. God also has the ability to distinguish good from bad, right from

wrong, make value judgments, and evaluate what He does. We learn that in every situation and in everything God does, God does only what is good. Some may think God does evil from time to time, but this comes from a person's limited knowledge of God. Beginning with Genesis, the Bible reveals the true character and nature of God.

(Genesis 1:11) Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so.

To further demonstrate God's creative power for all to see and understand, God created the land with the ability to grow and sustain vegetation that people would later use for crops and building materials. God made plants that produced seed and fruits that could reproduce themselves without needing God's direct intervention for every plant to reproduce itself. God made seeds and plants that would reproduce themselves according to their kinds, which would later help mankind as they planned, sowed and reaped. Corn will not reproduce carrots and apple trees will never produce lemons or limes. Note: some humans have manipulated and modified some plants, animals, and people so they cannot reproduce themselves.

(Genesis 1:12) The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

Repeatedly, Genesis reminds us that whatever God intends to do, God can accomplish, and all God did in creating the world was good. Whatever God wants to do today, God can do. No created being can prevent God's purposes or stop God from doing whatever God wills to do. All creation depends on God for everything. Whatever happens in creation, God always works everything out for the good of those who love Him (see Romans 8:28-30).

(Genesis 1:13) And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

During the first three days of God's creation, God made the earth and the sky and the vegetation ready to support animal and human life. Animals and humans need air to breathe and food to eat. Genesis shows how God does everything to meet the needs of all He creates before these needs are needed. All we need for life (both material and spiritual), God provides.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Describe what was the earth like after God first created the heavens and the earth?
2. After creating the heavens and the earth, what did God create next? Why do you think God created that next?
3. As God created, what judgments did God make?

4. What are some of the items God separated as God created day by day?
5. What are some things you have learned about God in this lesson?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly
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