

Monday - Week One

Lesson One: The Creation of the World

Read: Genesis 1:1-2:3

Summary: In this first chapter of the Bible we see God's magnificent grace as God creates a perfect world for human beings.

Background and Comments

- Genesis 1:2 indicates that God first created the "raw material" for creation on the first day and then "formed and filled" the earth after that [note: this is not evolution. These six days of creation were filled with God's miraculous creative ability.] The following chart shows the forming and filling idea:

Days of Forming	Days of Filling
1. Light (v 3)	4. Lights (v 14)
2. Water above and below the expanse (v 7)	5. Fish and Fowl (v 21)
3. Dry Ground (v 9) Vegetation (v 11)	6. Livestock and people (v 24,26) Plants (v 30)

[Chart adapted from Concordia Self Study Bible]

- Verse 26 gives us a hint of the Trinity. God said, "Let us make man in our image." In verses 1 and 3 we see another glimpse of the Trinity. God the Father (v 1 - "God"), God the Son (v 3 - "God said" - the Word of God. cf John 1:1-3) and God the Holy Spirit (v 2 - "Spirit of God") are mentioned.

Lessons for Today

- God's careful and perfect creation show us how much God cares for us. For example, the Hebrew word translated "hover" in verse 2 is used of a mother hen sitting on her eggs. God is still "hovering" over this world making sure that everything works according to His will; that includes everything in your life.
- Human beings were made in God's image (v 26); that is, Adam and Eve's will perfectly matched God's will. They were perfect in every way. In heaven we will once again experience the richness of God's image.

Read: Psalm 1, Matthew 1.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for this wonderful world. Help me to be a good steward of this blessing. Amen.

Tuesday - Week One

Lesson Two: Paradise

Read: Genesis 2:4-25

Summary: In the second chapter of Genesis we read an expanded account of what happened on the sixth day of creation.

Background and Comments

- Verses 4-6 give us a glimpse at the pre-flood world. The earth was not watered by rain showers but by underground streams or mists. Christian scientists think that there might have been a giant vapor canopy above the earth (Genesis 1:7 - the water above and below the expanse, the sky). This vapor canopy would have filtered out harmful rays from the sun and would have contributed to the longer life span of human beings. These scientists also think that the earth was not tilted by the present 23 ½ degrees; if there was no tilt then the earth would have had a uniform tropical climate (which would explain the remains of a tropical forest that we find in arctic ice). Perhaps the tilt happened during the cataclysm of the flood. All of this is speculation - but is something interesting to think about.
- Adam and Eve felt no shame in their nakedness because they were not sinful (they felt no shame at all). Today many people are not ashamed by near nakedness in public either; that is because their conscience has become dull.

Lessons for Today

- Adam showed his spectacular knowledge and imagination by naming all the animals. Perhaps one of the reasons God had Adam name the animals was to make him realize that he was alone. God filled that need by creating Eve in a miraculous and meaningful way. God often makes us aware of our problems before He solves them.
- Genesis 2:24 shows us God's blueprint for marriage: leave (your parents) and cleave ("be joined to" your spouse"). What a simple but powerful arrangement. Cleaving to your spouse is a full-time job. God does not want our marriages to be lifeless working relationships with little time for interaction. He wants our marriages to be passionate, exciting unions between a man and a woman.

Read: Psalm 2, Matthew 2.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, You created the first people in a special and unique way and showed that we are the crown of Your creation. Help us to treat others in this same loving way. In Jesus' name; Amen.

Wednesday - Week One

Catechism Review

Read pages 20-25

1. The Muhammadans and the papacy were both harmful to the Christian church. What are the greatest threats facing the church today?

2. Luther tried to bring peace to his soul by becoming a monk and following all the rules of the monastery. What do many people today try to do to bring them peace?

3. How do we sometimes fall into the trap of seeking peace through what we do?

4. Carefully read Luther's response to the order to recant (on page 23, 4'th paragraph). Would you agree or disagree: "Luther sounded a trumpet call for the freedom of the conscience at the Diet of Worms". Explain.

5. What was the purpose of Luther's first Catechism? Are you making use of the Catechism in the way Luther intended?

Read: Psalm 3, Matthew 3.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for the work of Martin Luther and all other faithful preachers and teachers of the Word. Help me to support the pastor(s) and teachers You have placed in my life. Cause me to use Your Word faithfully in my life. In Jesus' name I pray; Amen.

Thursday - Week One

Lesson Three: The fall

Read: Genesis 3

Summary: In this sad chapter we see God's creation ruined by sin; yet we see the richness of God's grace and the first promise of the Gospel.

Background and Comments

- The New Testament holds Adam accountable for the first sin. Verse 6 tells us why. According to this verse Adam was with Eve when she listened to the devil and ate the forbidden fruit. Adam failed miserably in his role as the family leader. He should have told Eve not to listen to the devil. Husbands and wives both have responsibility for what happens in a home but the husband is ultimately held responsible by the Lord.
- God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden so they wouldn't eat from the tree of life and then live forever in this sinful world. We need to remember that this world is not our home; in God's incredible wisdom He will use the curse of death as a blessing to take us from this sinful world to heaven.

Lessons for Today

- This chapter gives us a case study in how the devil works.
 1. First the devil tries to create doubt in our minds . (v 1)
 2. Then the devil mixes truth and falsehood (v 4-5 - The devil was right that Adam and Eve would know good and evil. But they would certainly not be like God.

Have you seen these schemes of the devil at work in your life? The best (and only) weapon against the devil is the Word of God. It's truth cuts through the devil's lies. Which sections of the Word have you found especially useful against the devil?

- Adam and Eve ran from God because of their sin. People have been running from God ever since. How do you sometimes run from God because of your guilt?
- One result of Eve's sin was that women would have pain in childbirth; Adam would find that the result of his sin was that work would not be enjoyable anymore. How different life was before sin entered the world. This offers us a glimpse at the coming joy of heaven.

Read: Psalm 4, Matthew 4.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for keeping Your promise to Adam and Eve that You would send a Savior. In that Savior's name we pray; Amen.

Friday - Week One

Life issues

Topic/Question: Is evolution compatible with the Bible's teaching about the origin of the world? What about theistic evolution?

Bible References and Considerations

- Genesis 1. Especially note that after each day's activity we read "And there was evening, and there was morning -- the ... day". These were 24 hour days without a question.
- The New Testament speaks about Adam and Eve as historical people; if the world had evolved there would have been no Adam and Eve.
- Theistic evolution maintains that the world evolved over millions and millions of years but that God is the One who started the process. The only thing wrong with that idea is that it totally contradicts the Biblical record and is therefore false. God didn't direct an evolutionary development; He created the world.

Practically Speaking

- The lie of evolution contradicts several truths of God's Word:
 1. People are special creations of God. The Bible says that human beings were created in God's image, not formed by a mindless process.
 2. We live in a sinful world. Evolution teaches that things are improving over time. The Bible (and our experience) teaches us that this world is devolving (getting worse) because of sin.
 3. God is the ruler of the world. Evolution teaches that people are their own masters because we have no creator. Obviously the Bible teaches that God is the Master of the world.
 4. Human beings need a Savior from sin and death. According to evolution death came into the world long before human beings did. The Bible teaches us that the wages of sin is death; death is the result of sin. We need a Savior from sin and death.
- Our young people in school often face the lies of evolution (especially in public high schools and colleges). What are they to do? They need to stay firmly rooted in the truths of God's Word. They can learn the views of Christian scientists that are able to show that evolution is not good science. They can make a clear confession of their faith in their classrooms [Note: one way to do that would be to answer questions the way the teacher wants and then add that they don't believe it.].

Read: Psalm 5, Matthew 5.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, give courage to our young people, Lord. Amen.