

Grounds of Faith Café “Genesis” (Subtitled: Is there a snake in your Garden too?) Further subtitled: Lessons from the Garden!

Generation X to Z seeking Connection: (D 104-105): An interactive Scriptural study that explores God’s Redemptive action from the beginning of time in a casual café style setting. We will pray, read scripture, and jointly explore provided studies in groups of four or five. Learn about God’s design for His Creation, His intent for man’s participation, Satan’s deception, man’s disruptive actions and God’s plan to redeem it all. You will find strengthened connections and new Christian friendships in the **Grounds of Faith Café** as we study God’s good news for us. Please bring a Bible, a welcoming heart, an open mind, and a receptive spirit.



Facilitators: Lee Smith and others

Genesis Lesson 1 (1:1 – 2:3): Some Summary Thoughts

1:1: “In the beginning, God....”: Focus: God (“*Elohim*”) is pictured as royal monarch enthroned over the universe. He “speaks” and creates effortlessly. Mankind shares actively in this royal framework. *Elohim*, as used in the Scriptural context, denotes plural majesty (sometimes interpreted as inferring the “Trinity”). This point is strengthened later on as New Testament accounts reveal that God who says “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness... (Genesis 1:26) includes God’s Son, Jesus Christ, as the very agent of creation (Colossians 1:16).

The initial picture presented to us, then, in our opening glimpse of the Godhead whose story dominates all of life, is that “God” (*Elohim*) is the Creator of the universe. As such, He is before all things, is the cause of all things, is above all things, is the goal of all things – a point that becomes even more abundantly clear in the New Testament description of God’s Son, Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:16). This discussion is particularly pertinent because just as God opens with a limited description of His character, Being, and power in the first line of His Word, we will see that He will allow us to grasp additional attributes or character traits in His continued Revelation.

1:2: “...and the **Spirit of God** was hovering over the waters...” The second tremendously powerful theological point in Genesis is the immediate introduction of the Holy Spirit of God. We find the initial description to show that the Spirit is intimately involved in the creation “hovering/moving” (literally: “cherishing/ nourishing,” i.e., love in motion) over the surface of the water. As we move into the New Testament, this same Spirit is described as the “*Paraclete*” – the comforter who rested on or entered into Jesus at His baptism and led Him into the wilderness to be tested (Mark 1:9-12); raised Jesus from the dead, and indwells Christians today (Romans 8:11).

1:3: “And God said...” The third major point in this overview is the description of power immediately ascribed to the “Word” of God. God speaks the world into existence. As we move through Scripture, we will find that God’s Word goes out in power and it never comes back empty or void. This becomes even more important as we learn another character trait of the “Word” of God from John 1:1-3 where we read his description of Jesus: “1:1 *In the beginning was the Word (Greek: Logos – expression of thought or communication/ transmission of active God to man), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 1:2 He was in the beginning with God. 1:3 All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.*” John 1:14 “**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...**”

1:31: “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” In declaring His creation “very good,” at its conclusion, the context of God’s use of “good” seems to indicate that He equates it to harmony in the creation (Genesis 1:24-30 describes a harmonious relationship within creation that shows all parts supporting and serving each other). Scripture supports this as what is declared “not good” by God (Genesis 2:18) is to be alone or independent, i.e., potentially out of harmony with the rest of creation and with God.

Meaningful life for mankind: Established as a consequence of being created in God’s image, i.e., made with the character traits of God – intellectual, rational, moral, and spiritual qualities -- humanity is Invested with dignity, worth, responsibility. Humans are not merely created matter, but divine representatives; created to be stewards in their relationships to Earth, and to maintain trust and dependence on the Creator God.

Next week we will see that as Genesis 1 gives way to chapters 2 & 3, Scripture pictures a change in tone and change in focus. The only part of creation given the ability to articulate praise to the creator in words uses words to betray Him.