

LIFE GROUP STUDY NOTES

**Doctrine**  
Foundations of Faith in the God of the Bible



WEEK THREE: CREATION Pt 1:  
GOD MAKES

**Background Information**

The book of GENESIS was written by Moses roughly 1400 B.C.

It is the first part of five books called the Pentateuch (which means book in five parts).

Those five books are the first five books of our English Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

GENESIS literally means 'Beginning'. So Genesis can rightly be called the 'book of beginnings'.

- **Galileo Stated:** *"The Bible tells us not so much how the heavens go, as much as it tells us how to go to heaven"* Discuss this statement. Do you agree? Why/Why Not?

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**GENESIS 1:1**

In order to better understand the different ‘views’ on creation Christians need to have a better understanding of what the writer of Genesis (Moses) meant in Genesis 1:1

**Word Study**

- ‘IN THE BEGINNING’ [RESHIT] - RESHIT literally means ‘an indefinite period of time’.
- ‘GOD’ [ELOHIM] - is pluralistic in nature (in keeping with our trinitarian doctrine) - ELOHIM also encompasses ‘Creator God’.
- ‘CREATED’ [BARA, not ASAH]
  - BARA means ‘to create from nothing’
  - ASAH means to ‘create’ .... but not from nothing.

**DISCUSSION:** Talk about the difference between BARA and ASAH when it comes to creating and see if you can site examples that illustrate the difference between the two.

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**RECONSTRUCTING GENESIS 1:1**

If you were to re-read Genesis 1:1, amplified out to include the meaning behind the words used, it would read something like this:

***“In the beginning*** (over an indefinite period of time), the creator ***God, created*** (from nothing) ***the heavens and the earth”***.

**DISCUSSION:** What ‘new understanding’ has been brought to this verse for you? Why?

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## **Six Christian Views of Creation**

- Read the six different Christian views of Creation. After you have read them all, interact with them by answering the questions that follow.

### **VIEW 1: - HISTORIC CREATIONISM**

- The Earth is VERY OLD ... older than human life, and then at some point in time God prepared the earth for human life over the 6 days of creation.
- This view comes from the understanding that the word for 'beginning' [RESHIT] marks a starting point for creation, but not a time frame for what comes afterwards.
- Therefore, this view holds that the earth is very old (God created the heavens and the earth over an indefinite period of time), humanity is very young and the six days that God took to prepare the earth for human beings, and the creation of human beings is a LITERAL 6 DAYS.

### **VIEW 2 - YOUNG-EARTH CREATIONISM**

- This view holds that God made EVERYTHING in the 6 days ... including the heavens and the earth.
- Therefore, this view holds that the earth is very young, and human life is very young and that God made everything in the literal six day period.

### **VIEW 3 - THE GAP THEORY**

- This view holds that the earth is very old, and that there is a gap between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2
- *"Genesis 1:1 explains that a first creation happened perhaps billions of years ago. Then, a catastrophic event, likely the fall of Satan from heaven, left the earth in the destroyed condition of Genesis 1:2 and that God responded to this disaster by re-creating the earth again a few thousand years later in six literal days."* (Driscoll & Breshears)
- So the earth is very old, humanity as we know it is very young, but that the earth as we know it is in fact a re-creation.

### **VIEW 4 - LITERARY FRAMEWORK**

- This view states that the earth is very old, humanity is very young and that Genesis 1 & 2 are poetic and figurative and we are not to take it literally.
- This view states that we are not to view the six days as literal 24 hour days.

**VIEW 5 - DAY - AGE VIEW**

- This view states that the earth is very old and humanity is very young.
- Day-Age View holds that the six days are not literal 24 hour days but are in fact six separate extended time periods or ‘geological ages’.

**VIEW 6 - THEISTIC EVOLUTION**

- This view would state that evolution is right, but that behind evolution is God.
- In other words, God began creation and then pulled back from working directly in creation to work instead through the natural process of evolution.
- The only exception that this view would state is that God involved himself directly again in the making of the human spirit.
- Mark Driscoll & Gerry Breshears state: “For the most part, this view accepts the hypothesis of evolution but seeks to insert God as the creator of matter and overseer of the evolutionary process.

**Questions**

Which of the six views of Creation did you find yourself leaning towards? Why? Discuss your answer with your group.

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Did any of the six views cause a negative response in you? Why? Discuss your answer with your group?

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## CREDITS

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears: *“DOCTRINE: What Christians Should Believe”*

Wayne Grudhem “SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY”

Millard J. Erickson “INTRODUCING CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE”

Note: These study questions have been adapted from Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears book: *“DOCTRINE: What Christians Should Believe”*.