

# UNIT 1

## GRADE 10

# LESSON 1

### Aim & Objectives:

- Acknowledging and Praising God's Creation.
- God's Control over the Universe.
- Stewardship

## God's Mastery and Our Stewardship Over His Creation

### Theme:

God's Glory Manifested through His Handiwork; Human beings as the crown of creation.

### Teacher's Preparation:

- Teachers should be aware of the fundamentals of the theory of Evolutionism which is taught in schools vs. those of creationism taught in our Sunday Schools.
- Teachers should be careful not to label what is being taught in school as "wrong" and what is taught in Sunday School as "right" simply because it is Sunday School (see Wayne's Grudem discussion in *Proposed Readings* below for a decent treatment of the various theories. Also, be aware that students may raise contradictions – see below for an example below for a seeming conflict between Genesis and science that has been raised).

Ex: The scientific and logical sequence of events for creation is that plants & trees were created *after* the sun as the former requires the light of the latter in order to carry out its biological functions. However, in the Genesis account, God seemingly made the sun (v. 14-16) *after* the plants and trees were placed (v.11-12).

### *Proposed Readings:*

- Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology, Zondervan Publishing (see Ch. 15 – Creation, which provides a good overview of the various types of creation theories)
- Any texts from Biology 101 courses in high school to be aware of what is being taught in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades.

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## Genesis 1:1-31 (NRSV)

1 In the beginning when God created<sup>[a]</sup> the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup> the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God<sup>[b]</sup> swept over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup> Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. <sup>4</sup> And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

<sup>6</sup> And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." <sup>7</sup> So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. <sup>8</sup> God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

<sup>9</sup> And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup> Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. <sup>12</sup> The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

<sup>14</sup> And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, <sup>15</sup> and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. <sup>16</sup> God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. <sup>17</sup> God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, <sup>18</sup> to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light



from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup> And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." <sup>21</sup> So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." <sup>23</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup> And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. <sup>25</sup> God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

<sup>27</sup> So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup> God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." <sup>29</sup> God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. <sup>30</sup> And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. <sup>31</sup> God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

### Student's Introduction to the Lesson:

#### The Big Bang Theory

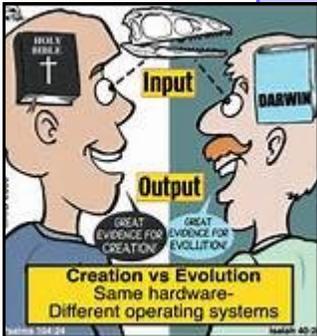
One of the most persistently asked questions has been: How was the universe created? Many once believed that the universe had no beginning or end and was truly infinite. About 15 billion years ago, a tremendous explosion started the expansion of the universe. This explosion is known as the Big Bang. At the point of this event, all of the matter and energy of space was contained at one point. What existed prior to this event is completely unknown and is a matter of pure speculation. This occurrence was not a conventional explosion but rather an event filling all of space with all of the particles rushing away from each other. The Big Bang actually consisted of an explosion of space within itself, which is unlike the explosion of a bomb where fragments are thrown *outward* instead of inward. The Big Bang laid the foundations for the universe. Immediately after the Big Bang, as one might imagine, the universe was tremendously hot and the particles in the environment began to expand. As the universe expanded further and thus cooled, common particles began to form. After the universe had cooled, lighter particles would be joined together that would define present day common matter.



## Main Idea/Bible Exposition:

**Biblical Perspective**

God created the universe. It is through the words of God that the universe was created from nothingness and formlessness (the concept of creating from “nothingness” is also referred to as creation “*ex nihilo*” - Latin). We comprehend the magnitude of the beauty of creation when we observe the universe that consists of galaxies, stars, planets including our earth. Our comprehension about the universe is extremely limited.

**View Creation with the Eye of Faith**

The author of the book of Genesis narrates how God gave all of creation form, image and life (Genesis 1:1-25). The writer of the book of Genesis does not illustrate the scientific version of the Earth’s formation but this does not mean that the Biblical perspective and scientific thought are necessarily in conflict. The process of creation reveals God’s love. Through the process of creation, God brought order to a chaotic situation (Gen 1:1-2). The Creator placed all living creatures in the most appropriate places, with man at their head to exercise his God-given stewardship. God created man in His own image. Faith is the basis for understanding the universe. As we read in the Bible, “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible (Heb.11:3). The universally accepted Nicene Creed begins with the proclamation of faith in God, “We believe in the one true god, the Father Almighty Maker of Heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.”

**Harmonious Existence of All Creation**

God made the world for human beings and the rest of creation. God separated land and water so that animals and plants could grow and flourish. (Gen: 1:9 & 10). Nature and environment play an important role in the plan of the Creator. All creatures ceaselessly work to fulfill the task entrusted to them by the Creator. The Earth and other planets move in their orbital order, thereby ensuring the stability of the universe.

The richness and variety of life on earth bear witness to God’s creativity. (Psalm 65: 9-18) Sometimes humans feel that they have the authority to destroy creatures to suit their own whims. This false assumption leads to an abuse of God’s resources, which is often detrimental to man. Humans ignore the fact that all creatures have unique opportunities, rights and responsibilities by which they fulfill their design within the natural world. Many species of animals and plants, which are essential for the existence of man, are disappearing from the earth. On many occasions, not only are the air and water polluted, but the entire ecological balance of earth is disturbed for the sake of industrial development. Humankind has no right or permission to mercilessly exploit nature or to destroy its balance by forgetting its responsibilities towards future generations.

**Human beings: The Crown of Creation**

The task of humanity is not to act as owners, but as stewards and caretakers of God's good creation – everything God created was found to be "good". According to

Gen. 2:15, the Lord God placed human beings in the Garden of Eden to tend and care for it. It was an honorable call to authority along with responsibility to adore the

Creator and to serve as God's laborers in maintaining the earth. The duty of man is to be a good steward of earth's natural resources. Man has the responsibility to control and protect all creatures on land and in the sea for his existence and growth. 'And let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth (Gen: 1:26).



Stewardship is also to be understood in the use of earth's available resources. Rich nations exploit the mineral resources of weak, less developed countries. Poorer nations are then forced to accept the harmful byproducts of such exploitation by rich nations in exchange for financial resources. However, these financial resources may then go to enrich a select, elite group within that poor nation instead of the wealth being used to enrich the general population of that nation. On one side, malnutrition and poverty in poor nations cause death and disease, while on the other, rich nations dump excess resources into the world's oceans and lands.

Let us hope that human beings will relinquish the thought that they are the sole owners of the entire universe and are therefore entitled to use these resources without any responsibility or sense of culpability. Man has no right to mercilessly exploit nature or to destroy its balance by forgetting his responsibility towards future generations. Each one of us should accept personal responsibility to conserve nature and curtail waste. We should remember that as Christians, we are not entitled to anything by sheer virtue of human rights. What we have are *privileges* that God has given us to use. Many environmental problems arise due to man's irresponsible dealing with God and his fellow beings. An understanding of humanity must be viewed from the broader perspective of stewardship – a stewardship that is responsible for all creation.



The Scripture illustrates God not merely as the Creator of the past, but also the Creator of the present. Creation is an ongoing process, both in regard to the human experience and the world around us. We read in the Scripture, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Gen 1:1) and it is our hope that we will see a new heaven and a new earth (Rev 1:1, Is 65:17, 66:22). God's people are expected to submit themselves to His will, so that they will be used as instruments to fulfill the process of creation that is repeatedly carried over until it reaches the level of perfection that God has intended. God utilizes human beings by equipping them with sufficient grace and strength. All discoveries and innovations are therefore a continuation of God's creation, thus revealing God's greatness.

**Group Discussion:**

As stewards, it is our responsibility to acknowledge that all the wisdom and intellect are inspired by God. Our aim is to always protect and care for the universe, in order to fulfill God's purpose. However, that is easier said than done. Consider the following case studies:

**Case Study 1**

A geological survey in a poor country, where most people live below the poverty line, finds a large deposit of minerals hidden underneath a rainforest that is well known for its diversity of flora. Mining companies from rich nations offer the people of that poor nation billions of dollars for the rights to extract the minerals. How should the poor nation respond and why? What does it need to consider?

**Case Study 2**

Bloomingdales, a luxury US retail outlet, is known for its line of expensive animal furs. A militant group of animal-rights activists decides to protest Bloomingdales' sales of animal furs by breaking into a warehouse, stealing a large number of furs and burning them in a public display that is then broadcast on YouTube. What should be your response and why? What do you need to consider?

**Values For Life**

It is by faith we understand that the Universe was created by God's word. He has entrusted us with the responsibilities and privileges of stewardship. God provides us with sufficient grace in sustaining and fulfilling His creation.

**Life Response**

God, You are the Creator of all things and the Master of the Universe. There is no other God but you.

**Memory Verse:**

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims His handiwork.

**Psalms 24:1-2**

**Closing Prayer**

Father Almighty, empower us with unwavering faith. We thank you for your masterful creation and the world you gave us to care for. Help us to be good stewards and help us always to live a life pleasing to you. Amen

**Lesson Review:****Multiple Choice**

- 1) The concept that God formed the universe out of nothing can best be described by creation:
  - i. A priori
  - ii. Ex nihilo
  - iii. Ceteris paribus
- 2) A name of a theory that explains how the universe began is:
  - i. the Big Bang Theory
  - ii. Faraday's Theory
  - iii. the Fundamental Theorem
- 3) God created sea creatures and birds on the:
  - i. second day
  - ii. fourth day
  - iii. fifth day

**Short Answers**

- 1) Describe the Big Bang theory.
- 2) Explain the relationship created between poor nations and rich nations that abuses resources.
- 3) Describe the various responsibilities of man as a steward over creation.

**Essay**

The US government decides that coal mining, if allowed to continue, will cause irreparable damage to the environment and is considering closing down all coal mining operations and plants in the United States. However, many thousands of families depend on the coal mining industry for jobs to put food on the table. Given the Bible's position on our stewardship of natural resources and using knowledge that you may have gained through other studies, how do you think the US government should respond?

*In writing your essay, do the following:*

- a) Introduction (briefly summarize the challenge and who you consider the interested parties to be)
- b) Describe two issues that the US government needs to consider in making its decision.
- c) Describe what you consider to be the Biblical position on this dilemma. You may use the story of creation within Genesis, any characters/events/concepts in the Bible, and information gained via studies outside of the Bible to support your viewpoint. (*Note: It is not necessary to use all of these so long as you properly support your position.*)
- d) Conclusion