

Covenant Gifts

Bible Stories and Interactive Lessons

“Make Your Starting Point Certain”

(2 Peter 1: 10)



Covenant Gifts

Story One: “*God gave the earth to humans*” (Psalms 115:16)

Our most important and pertinent starting point

“*beginning*”-“*start*” – “**created**” “**everything**” – “*God*” (2d in Hebrew Bible word order)

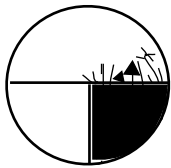
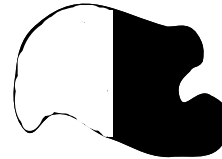
This is the Creation story Moses told the Israelites long ago (up-dated):

Before the universe was created, there was only God.

Suddenly, God’s voice began calling everything into being, the whole universe completely different (distinct) from Himself. By His mighty Word, God created all the vast kinds of reality and their conditions which had not existed before and He arranged them to function efficiently. Then God began hovering close to His creation with loving care. This is how it happened.

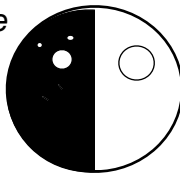
At first creation was completely dark, chaotic and empty.

Then, God's voice spoke: "Let there be light," and light began. It was completely different from darkness and He valued it good. He called light 'day' and darkness 'night'.



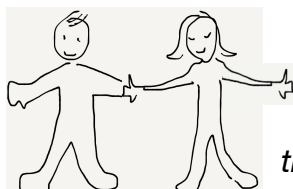
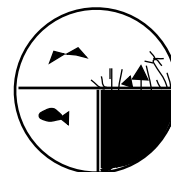
Second, God made air for earth, separating it from space, the huge expanse of seeming emptiness in which our earth and all the other stars and planets orbit. The air around earth He called 'sky'. Third, God separated dry land from water. From the ground He made grass, flowers, and trees bearing fruit, and all sorts of plants to grow and reproduce themselves.

Fourth, God said, "let there be two bright lights in the sky for light. The bigger light, the sun, He gave for daytime light energy. The smaller light,



the moon, God gave to reflect sunlight at night. Also people could measure time by their regular orbits. And, He made the stars and all the universe.

The world God was creating was good and beautiful, but He wanted more. Fifth, God caused the skies and seas to teem with life. He filled the seas with fish and other water animals and made birds of all kinds, colors and sizes to fly in the sky. Sixth, God created all the other animals that would live on land and multiply, from the smallest to the very largest.



God saved the best for last. God said, "let us make humans, male and female, in our image and likeness." He created humans with imagination and the ability to think and reach their own conclusions, as well as the power of speech, making them superior to all other creatures on earth. God blessed them saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and manage it and all life. And, I give you the fruit of every plant and tree to eat."

Seventh, satisfied with His work that it was well fashioned, in order, and able to function, God deemed it "very good!" He ceased creating, and designated that day special and then He rested.

This is how Moses described the unfolding of the universe, how everything began. In order to echo God's action, millions of people work six days, but count the seventh for rest. This gives us time and leisure to think with gratitude about our God, who created all things, about our Lord who gave us dominion over it and responsibility for it all.

Note: The Creation Story is the *record* made from the best ancient accounts Moses could find of the creation story and stamped with God's approval as 'canon', that is, His official revelation (from Genesis 1:1-2:3).

At the end of every story you will find a section to help 'connect the dots'. It will always include the following thought / discussion questions.

Thought / discussion questions:

1. Pray and then read or listen to the story
2. Retell the story in your own words
3. Discover the significance of this story. When you sense that you are familiar with it, select the most appropriate question(s) to ask yourself and/or discuss with others:

Q1: What does this story tell me about God?

Q2: What does this story tell me about the people in the story?

Q3: What does this have to do with me / what did I learn / what changes will I trust the Holy Spirit to make in me?

Q4: Who am I going to tell?

Additional material and questions are provided on the last page(s) of each lesson. These are intended for further study and/or discussion, and will include two sections (both intended for group interaction):

- **Food for further thought and discussion** (further Scripture, info and questions)
- **Wrap up** (what is not explicitly *taught*, but leads to what next and/or *action points*)

At the very end of this booklet *Covenant Gifts* under 'Supplemental Material' you will find lists of Starting Points and Covenant Stipulations, as well as step-by-step Instructions for filling out the Work Box, and even more research notes and suggestions.

Food for further thought and discussion:

Throughout Scripture ‘heaven and earth’ = everything other than God Himself (see 1 Corinthians 15:27)

What do you think it means that the universe belongs to mankind? (Psalms 115:16)

Which do you think is more true?

a. God is included in what we call ‘reality’?
OR

b. God and the created universe are more like a potter with his jar?

REALITY

God



Starting points: (see List of Starting Points, Step-by-step Instructions, and **Example** under “Supplemental Material”)

Starting Points revealed/inferred:	Inside		Outside
Core Starting Points: What is real / reality?	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
	<p data-bbox="683 793 841 852">Only Physical / natural</p> <p data-bbox="699 873 834 900">(S. Hawking)</p>	<p data-bbox="922 793 1130 852">Only non-Physical (mental/spiritual)</p> <p data-bbox="938 873 1135 900">(Oprah or Chopra)</p>	<p data-bbox="1263 793 1373 852">God and creation</p> <p data-bbox="1247 873 1393 900">(Jesus Christ)</p>
<p data-bbox="228 936 532 995">Story 1 Starting Point (which do you think it is?)</p>			

What do you think it means that the created universe is our first Starting Point?

END