

Genesis 1

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. **2** Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. **3** And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. **4** God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

6 And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.” **7** So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. **8** God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

9 And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. **10** God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good. **11** Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. **12** The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. **13** And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

14 And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, **15** and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. **16** God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. **17** God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, **18** to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. **19** And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

20 And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.” **21** So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. **22** God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.” **23** And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

24 And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. **25** God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” **27** So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. **28** God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” **29** Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. **30** And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so. **31** God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

1. What does the creation account found in Genesis 1 tell us about our God?
2. Which words or phrases in Genesis 1 help us, as Christians, deal with the false teachings of evolution?

3. Note at least three ways in which Genesis 1 sets forth the preeminence of humans in God's creation.

4. What do God's words in Isaiah 43:6,7 tell us about the purpose for which we were created: *Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth—everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made?*

What do these words lead us to do?

5. What does the final verse of Genesis 1 tell us? Give examples of how the world of that day must have differed from our world today.

6. Why do you think this story is one of the most popular stories included in children's Bibles?

7. Which day of creation amazes you the most and why?

8. One way some have tried to reconcile the prominent theories of evolution with God's Word is to assert that God creates through an evolutionary process. This is sometimes called "theistic evolution." To hold to such a position, the words of Genesis have to be interpreted figuratively. The word "day" cannot, in that case, mean a literal day. However, while teaching against another theory which assumed that God created everything instantaneously rather than over the course of six days, Luther said "...we assert that Moses spoke in the literal sense, not allegorically or figuratively, i.e. that the world, with all its creatures, was created within six days, as the words read. If we do not comprehend the reason for this, let us remain pupils and leave the job of teacher to the Holy Spirit."

Why is the idea that God creates through evolution contrary to clear teaching of Holy Scripture, especially Genesis 1? Why would accepting such speculative theories be detrimental to a Christian's faith? What do such theories say of God and His Word?

9. When we consider the words, "in the beginning" we might be tempted to delve into speculative questions, such as, "What was God doing before He created all things?" Luther answers, "It is folly to argue much about God outside and before time, because this is an effort to understand the Godhead without a covering, or the uncovered divine essence. Because this is impossible, God envelops Himself in His works in certain forms, as today He wraps Himself up in Baptism, in absolution, etc. If you should depart from these, you will get into an area where there is no measure, no space, no time, and into the merest nothing, concerning which, according to the philosopher, there can be no knowledge. Therefore we justly pass over this question and are satisfied with the simple explanation of the phrase 'in the beginning.'" Although God has not given answers to every speculative question, what has He given us? Where does God reveal Himself to us? How has He revealed Himself to us in Genesis 1?