

In the Beginning...

An Exploration of Genesis

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 1 April 14, 2024
"Out of Nothing"

OPENING PRAYER

Father, I thank you that we can engage our minds, hearts and souls as we try and figure this out together. And I know that all of us here have views that have solidified over time. I just pray that you would keep us open to where the evidence leads, not to where we hope it leads. I pray that you would help us to see science and faith are not at war. Thank you for the richness of scripture. Thank you for the gift of scripture. Thank you for the minds that we can use to find you. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Genesis 1:1-5 (NIV)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning - the first day.

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INTRODUCTION

In Genesis chapters 1 - 3 we have the Biblical creation story. Upon reading these stories many people believe there's an irreconcilable tension between science and Christianity. If you become a Christian, you can't embrace science. If you embrace science, you can't have faith. What if faith and reason aren't enemies, but friends?

The lessons in the Biblical creation stories are not in conflict with science. They are deeper truths about the nature of the universe and our place in it. So you don't have to choose between science and faith. You can be a smart person who believes that God gave you a brain for a reason and a follower of Jesus Christ. Even as you explore the 'how' of science, remember to go beyond that and ask 'who?' and 'why?'.

QUESTIONS

1. How has a 'scientific' worldview either challenged your faith, become an obstacle to faith for you, or become a catalyst to faith for you?
2. Does it surprise you that 51% of scientists today believe in some God or some form of higher power, and 33% believe in a personal God? Why or why not?
3. Many people (including Christians) get hung up on whether Genesis 1 describes a literal seven-day creation. Read Genesis 1: 1-5 (on page 1). What do you think of Pastor Eric's point that the biblical account of creation was designed to explain the 'who' and the 'why' of creation more than it was intended to describe the 'how' and the 'what' of creation?
4. Even if we fully and completely understood the scientific 'how' of science, we would always wonder 'who' and 'why'. In what ways are 'who' and 'why' more significant questions than 'how'?
5. Naturalism says religion is an aberration... something we invented to make ourselves feel better or for our survival, but something that is also untrue. How would you respond to that?

FINAL APPLICATION

Even as you explore the 'how' of science, remember to go beyond that and ask 'who' and 'why'? As you embrace those questions, read biblical accounts like the Gospel of Luke and the Gospel of John to gain a better sense of who God is and why he created us.