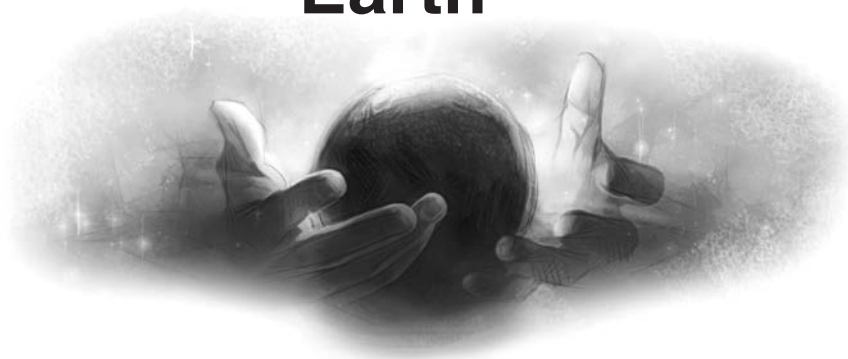


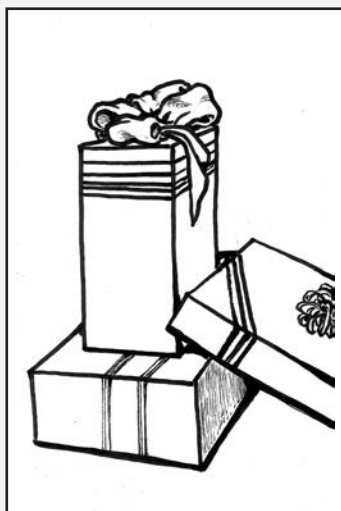
When God Made the Skies and the Earth



SABBATH—MARCH 26

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Psalm 100:1–3; Genesis 2:1–3; Exodus 20:8–11; Genesis 1:26–29; Genesis 2:15–17.

MEMORY VERSE: “In the beginning, God created [made] the heavens [skies] and the earth” (Genesis 1:1, NlrV).



We can learn that our lives are a gift from God.

THE BIBLE starts with the story in Genesis about how God made life on this earth. This information is very important. The Genesis story shows us when both human history and Bible history first started. This story about the beginning is real. We can trust this story the same as any other story or history in the Bible. The Genesis story really happened.

In Genesis 1–Genesis 2, we can read the story about how life on earth started. These two chapters teach us lessons about God and humans. When we study these chapters, we will understand more about the seventh-day Sabbath. We will learn about how God made humans as a copy of Himself. God made humans out of the ground, too. We also will learn why God made the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We will study its connection to the tree of life.

What is the most important lesson we can learn from the stories in the book of Genesis? For sure, we can learn that our lives are a gift from God. God made the skies and the earth before any humans were alive. Then God gave humans the gift of life. After Adam and Eve sinned, God gave humans the gift of His mercy. For sure, God made us, and God saves us. The seventh-day Sabbath shows us both of these precious Bible truths.

**THE GOD WHO MADE THE SKIES AND THE EARTH
(Psalm 100:1–3)**

Read Psalm 100:1–3. As these verses show us, how should we feel about the God who made us? Why should we also feel this same way about God when we read Genesis 1 and 2?

Genesis starts with a message about God, the One who made us. We see this Bible truth in the words written as: “God created the sky and the earth” (Genesis 1:1, ERV). “God” is the most important word in this first line.

Genesis 1 and 2 show us two different pictures of God. We see the first picture of God in Genesis 1:1–Genesis 2:3. These verses show us that God is far above humans. The word written as “God” in Genesis 1:1 is “**Elohim**” in the Hebrew language. The name Elohim shows us that God is mighty and all-powerful. The word “**Elohim**” is plural. Plural means more than one. So, Elohim shows us more than one Person. Elohim shows us that God is royal and more excellent than anyone or anything else.

We see the second picture of God in Genesis 2:4–25. This picture shows us God in a personal way. The Hebrew name for God in these verses is YHWH. This name shows us that God wants to have a close friendship with us. What is the most important lesson we learn from this second picture of God? We learn that the Genesis story about life is really an invitation to worship God. To do that, we must know that His royal beauty and power are very real. At the same time, we must feel our deep need of God. We must depend on Him completely. God made us. So, “we belong to him” (Psalm 100:3, ERV). Now do you see why many Bible songs talk about how life started on earth (Psalm 95:1–6; Psalm 139:13, 14; compare with Revelation 14:7)?

Genesis gives us these two pictures of God to show us an important Bible truth about worship. God is both royal and powerful. So, we always should remember to show God respect. At the same time, this all-powerful God wants to be our Friend. For sure, God wants us to feel happy because He loves us and wishes to be near us. But we always must remember that God is very powerful (read Psalm 2:11). He knows and sees everything. Then we will better understand how to worship Him. We also will enjoy His loving mercy more in our lives.

God is very powerful. He holds everything together. At the same time, He wants to be our Friend. Why is this Bible truth so surprising and wonderful?



We learn that the Genesis story about life is really an invitation to worship God.

EVERYTHING WAS VERY GOOD
(Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31)

Read Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31 and Genesis 2:1–3. Why does God say “it was good” after everything He makes each day? What does God do when He finishes making everything at the end of the week? What lesson does His action teach us? Read Genesis 2:1–3 for the answer.



Moses says that God made the earth and everything in it (Genesis 1:1).

At the end of each day, God says His work is “**tov**,” or “good.” The Hebrew word “**tov**” shows us that God did a wonderful job. Everything God made was a success. When God says, “It was good,” He is really saying, “everything works.” The light shines (Genesis 1:4). The plants grow fruit (Genesis 1:12), and so on. “**Tov**” shows us more than how well something works. Bible writers use “**tov**” to show their joy for something beautiful (Genesis 24:16). “**Tov**” shows us something good and not evil (Genesis 2:9). Evil things are connected with death (Genesis 2:17).

The words written as “it was good” show us that everything God made worked nicely. Everything was beautiful and perfect, too. There was no evil in anything God made. The earth then was not ruined by sin and death as we see today.

Most scientists today do not teach Bible truth. They teach that life on earth happened by chance and accident. Everything was made by slow changes that happened over a very long time. This idea is named evolution. The Bible does not teach evolution.

Moses, who wrote Genesis, gives us a different explanation about how life started. Moses says that God made the earth and everything in it (Genesis 1:1). Nothing we see was made by chance. Life did not happen by accident. No, life happened because God planned it (Genesis 1:3). The Hebrew word written as “made” in Genesis 1:1 is “**bara**.” Bible writers only use this word to talk about God and what He does. So, “**bara**” shows us how God works. When God made something, it happened right away. There was no delay.

At the end of His week of work, God says that everything He made was “very good” (Gen. 1:31, ESV). So, God made everything (Genesis 1:1). God also finished His work in six days and rested on the Sabbath (Genesis 2:1, 2).

Evolution teaches us that life on earth was made by slow changes that happened over billions of years. This false idea is not in agreement with Bible truth. Why can these two ideas never agree?

THE SABBATH (Genesis 2:2, 3)

How does the Sabbath show us that God made the skies and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh day? How does this Bible truth help us keep the Sabbath holy? For the answers, read Genesis 2:2, 3 and Exodus 20:8–11.

God made the Sabbath to show us that He ended all His work. So, when we rest on the seventh-day Sabbath, we show our faith in the Bible truth that God rested after He finished working. God also said that all His work was “very good” (Genesis 1:31, KJV). When we keep the Sabbath, we say that God made everything beautiful and good, too.

We can rest from our work on the Sabbath, just as God rested from His work. When we keep the Sabbath, we show God that we are thankful for all His gifts. These gifts include our bodies. Some thinkers during Bible times taught that the body was evil. Sad to say, some modern thinkers teach this idea, too. But this idea is wrong. The Bible does not teach this false idea anywhere. As Sabbath keepers, we thank God for all His gifts, including our bodies. That is why we take care of this earth and ourselves.

Every seven days, the Sabbath gives us hope for a better future. So, the Sabbath is a promise. When the week ends each Sabbath, we see that God will end our suffering in the future. After humans sinned, the Sabbath showed us that God will save us. The Sabbath also shows us that God will make the earth new again (Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:1). Then God will end all sin and suffering forever.

No wonder Jesus chose the Sabbath as a good time to heal people and to end suffering (Luke 13:13–16). The Jewish religious leaders got angry when Jesus healed the sick on the Sabbath. The leaders accused Jesus of breaking the law. But Jesus showed the leaders, and us, that we should take care of the sick on the Sabbath. We should show mercy to the suffering, too. When Jesus healed the sick on the Sabbath, He also promised us a time in the future when pain, suffering, and death will end forever. So, the Sabbath gives us hope that Jesus will save us now and end sin forever in the future.

How does our resting on the Sabbath day show our faith in the promise that Jesus saves us now? How does our rest also show our belief that Jesus will make the skies and earth new again in the future?



Every seven days, the Sabbath gives us hope for a better future.

WHEN GOD MADE HUMANS (Genesis 1:26–29; Genesis 2:7)

Genesis 1:26–29 and Genesis 2:7 show us how God makes humans. What things do you see that are the same in both stories? What do both stories show us about humans?



God “took dust [part of the ground]” and made a man (Genesis 2:7, ERV).

Humans are copies of God. So, we look much the same as God does. We are the only copies that God made of Himself, too. But we are not exact copies of God. Only Jesus is. For sure, animals are not copies of God: “God made every kind [type] of animal. He made the wild animals, the tame animals, and all the small crawling things” (Genesis 1:25, ERV). But “God created [made] humans in his own image [as a copy of Himself]. He created them to be like [much the same as] himself. He created them male and female” (Genesis 1:27, ERV). Sad to say, many people who read the Bible do not really understand this verse. They think that humans are only spiritual copies of God. So, they believe that we can show the love of God. But they think we do not really look the same as God.

What does the Bible teach us about this topic? Genesis says that God made Adam “in his own image [as a copy]” (Genesis 1:27, ERV). The Hebrew word for “image” shows us that God made humans with bodies that looked the same as His own body. God also made humans to be spiritual. The word written as “like [much the same as]” (Genesis 1:26, ERV) shows us this Bible truth. “Like” comes from the Hebrew word “**demut**.” “**Demut**” shows us that Adam can think and feel. So, Adam thinks and feels the same way God does. Ellen G. White says, “When God made Adam, Adam looked very much the same as God. Adam was a copy of God. Adam had a body, mind, and spirit.”—*Education*, page 15, adapted.

We see that Genesis 2:7 teaches this same Bible truth: “And the man became a living person” (Genesis 2:7, NIV). The words written as “a living person” come from the Hebrew word “**nefesh**.” “**Nefesh**” shows us that Adam came alive because God did two things. (1) God “took dust [part of the ground]” and made a man. (2) Then God “breathed” life into the nose of the man (Genesis 2:7, ERV). The word written as “breathed” shows us that Adam has a spirit and a real body. Adam needs both a spirit and a real body to live.

Later, God will make the woman from the body of the man (Genesis 2:21, 22). God makes the woman this way to show us that she also got a spirit and a real body.

THE THREE GIFTS (Genesis 2:15–17)

What does God do as soon as He makes the first man? God gives him three gifts: (1) the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8), (2) food (Genesis 2:16), and (3) the woman (Genesis 2:22).

How should we feel about the earth, people, and God? What is the connection between all of these things? For the answer, read Genesis 2:15–17.

Moses says, “The LORD God put the man in the Garden of Eden to work the soil and take care of the garden” (Genesis 2:15, ERV). The word written as “work” is “**avad**” in the Hebrew language. This word helps us understand what God expects us to do with our gifts. We must work hard to improve them. Jesus teaches us this same lesson in His picture story in Matthew 25:14–30. In Genesis 2:15, the verb written as “take care of” comes from the Hebrew word “**shamar**.” In the Hebrew language, “**shamar**” means to “keep.” “**Shamar**” shows us that we need to protect our gifts.

God also gives the man the gift of food (Genesis 1:29). Then “the Lord God told the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree of the garden’ ” (Genesis 2:16, NLV). Humans did not make the trees or their food. The trees and the food are a gift. This gift shows us the love of God.

This gift of food also comes with a commandment. God tells the man, “ ‘But you must not eat from the tree that gives knowledge about good and evil. If you eat fruit from that tree, on that day you will certainly [for sure] die!’ ” (Genesis 2:17, ERV). This important rule is a test. God gives the humans this test for their own good. If they fail, God will not allow them to eat from the tree of life.

The third gift is the woman. God gives the man a command about this special gift. This command shows us an important rule about marriage: “a man will leave his father and his mother, and will be joined to his wife. And they will become one flesh [body]” (Genesis 2:24, NLV). The words written as “one flesh” are a word picture. The husband and his wife become one person when they marry (compare with Matthew 19:7–9). Marriage is a gift from God. The husband and the wife are responsible for making sure that their marriage is a success. They are also responsible for making more people and taking care of each other.

God gives you many wonderful gifts. How can you protect these gifts? How can you use these gifts for Him?



The trees and the food are a gift.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “Science and the Bible,” pages 129, 130, in *Education*; “The Creation,” in *The Story of Redemption*, pages 21, 22.

“Nature is the same as a book. Nature is a ‘second’ Bible. Nature and the Bible show us that God ‘wrote’ them both. Nature and the Bible are in complete agreement. Scientists always discover new wonders, for sure. But nothing from real science ever disagrees with the Bible. The book of nature and the Bible teach the same thing. They help us learn about God and His natural laws. These laws show us how God works.

“Some scientists teach false ideas. They think that science and the Bible do not agree. So, the scientists try to force the Bible to fit their false ideas. They destroy our belief in Bible truth. Scientists who study the earth and its rocks say that science does not agree with the Bible about how life started. These scientists say that millions of years were necessary for life on earth to happen. So, the scientists force the Bible to agree with their false ideas. The Bible says that God took six days to make the skies and the earth. But the scientists say that these six days are really word pictures for thousands and millions of years.

“This idea is completely false. The Bible record is in perfect agreement with nature and its teaching.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, pages 128, 129, adapted.



“The book of nature and the Bible teach the same thing.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What if you thought that the Bible story about how life started was a fairy tale? Sad to say, many Christians believe this way. This false idea destroys our faith in the Bible. What hints do you see in the Bible that show us that Moses knew that the stories he wrote in Genesis 1 and 2 were true stories? What does Jesus say about these stories?
- ② What does the Genesis story teach us about being good managers of the earth?
- ③ For sure, sin ruined a lot of the perfect beauty of this earth. But what things in nature continue to show you that the things that God made are “very good”? How do these things show us that God is kind and all-powerful?