A Summary of the Bible

In the beginning, the all-powerful, personal God created the universe. This God created human beings in His image to live joyfully in His presence, in humble submission to His gracious authority. But all of us have rebelled against God and, in consequence, must suffer the punishment of our rebellion: physical death and the wrath of God.

Thankfully, God initiated a rescue plan, which began with His choosing the nation of Israel to display His glory in a fallen world. The Bible describes how God acted mightily on Israel’s behalf, rescuing His people from slavery and then giving them His holy law. But God’s people—like all of us—failed to rightly reflect the glory of God.

Then, in the fullness of time, in the Person of Jesus Christ, God Himself came to renew the world and to restore His people. Jesus perfectly obeyed the law given to Israel. Though innocent, He suffered the consequences of human rebellion by His death on a cross. But three days later, God raised Him from the dead.

Now the church of Jesus Christ has been commissioned by God to take the news of Christ’s work to the world. Empowered by God’s Spirit, the church calls all people everywhere to repent of sin and to trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness. Repentance and faith restores our relationship with God and results in a life of ongoing transformation.

The Bible promises that Jesus Christ will return to this earth as the conquering King. Only those who live in repentant faith in Christ will escape God’s judgment and live joyfully in God’s presence for all eternity. God’s message is the same to all of us: repent and believe, before it is too late. Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe with your heart that God raised Him from the dead, and you will be saved.
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### Unit 1: Creation and the Fall (Genesis; Job)

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### Unit 2: God Establishes a Covenant People (Genesis)

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### Unit 3: God Grows His Covenant People (Genesis)

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<td>Session 3</td>
<td>God’s New Name for Jacob</td>
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For a story to be great, it must include a great beginning. The story of the Bible, which tells the true story of our world, is no exception.

In the Book of Genesis, we see God the Creator in all His majesty and goodness as He spins the world into motion and lavishes His image bearers with love. We have an “inciting incident” that introduces conflict into this good world, as the first humans raise their fists in defiance toward their loving Father and bring havoc into this peaceful paradise. But even here, we have a promise—God will make things right again. God will cover His people’s sins and crush their adversary. The rest of Genesis shows how even though sin spread throughout the world, God remained faithful to His promise to Eve, His promise to Noah, and His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Book of Genesis is a glorious and earthy tale of rebellion and redemption, of sin and salvation, of failings and faith. Here is a book that shows us who we are in our sin and who God is in His grace. May this study lead you to express gratitude for God’s love toward you and then extend His love to everyone who inhabits this world He has promised to restore.
**J.D. Greear** (unit 1, sessions 1,3-5) is pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, which Outreach Magazine has ranked as one of the fastest-growing churches in the United States. Greear has a PhD in systematic theology from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author of many books, including Not God Enough, Gaining by Losing, Jesus Continued . . ., and Gospel. J.D. lives in Raleigh with his wife, Veronica, and their four children.

**Philip Nation** (unit 1, session 6) is the pastor of First Baptist Church of Bradenton, Florida. He is the author of the Bible study Pursuing Holiness and the book Habits for Our Holiness. He serves as an assistant professor of leadership at Houston Baptist University. He and his wife, Angie, have two sons. Find out more about Philip at philipnation.net.

**John Onwuchekwa** (unit 1, session 2; unit 2, sessions 1-3) is the lead pastor of Cornerstone Church in Atlanta, Georgia. He studied at Dallas Theological Seminary and is now completing a doctorate of education at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Shawndra, have been married since 2007 and have one daughter.

**Chris Pappalardo** (unit 1, sessions 1,3-5), PhD (SEBTS), is a researcher, editor, and writer at The Summit Church. He is also the co-author of One Nation Under God: A Christian Hope for American Politics (2015). Chris has the joy of being married to the love of his life, Jenn, and being the father of two eminently adorable littles—Lottie and Teddy.

**Mary Jo Sharp** (unit 2, session 4; unit 3, sessions 1-3) is an assistant professor of apologetics at Houston Baptist University and the founder and director of Confident Christianity, a non-profit apologetics ministry. She is an itinerant speaker on apologetics throughout North America and has engaged in formal debates on Islam.
THE GOSPEL PROJECT
A Journey Through the Storyline of Scripture

Fall 2018  
*In the Beginning*
Creation and the Fall (Genesis; Job)
God Establishes a Covenant People (Genesis)
God Grows His Covenant People (Genesis)

Winter 2018-19  
*Out of Egypt*
God Redeems His People (Genesis; Exodus)
God Provides for His People (Exodus)
God Receives Worship from His People (Exodus; Leviticus)

Spring 2019  
*Into the Promised Land*
God Guides His People (Numbers; Deuteronomy)
God Gives His People a Home (Joshua)
God Delivers His People (Judges; Ruth)

Summer 2019  
*A Kingdom Provided*
God Provides a King (1 Samuel)
God Provides a Godly King (1–2 Samuel; Psalms)
God Provides a Wise King (1 Kings; Ecclesiastes)

Fall 2019  
*A Nation Divided*
God Speaks to His People (1–2 Kings)
God Judges the Sin of His People (2 Kings; Prophets)
God Shows Mercy to His People (2 Chronicles; Prophets)

Winter 2019-20  
*A People Restored*
God Sustains His People (Daniel)
God Restores His People (Ezra; Prophets)
God Prepares His People (Nehemiah; Esther; Malachi)
Spring 2020  
*Jesus the Messiah*
- Jesus Comes into the World (Luke)
- Jesus Begins His Ministry (Gospels)
- Jesus Among the People (Gospels)

Summer 2020  
*Jesus the Servant*
- Jesus the Healer (Gospels)
- Jesus the Teacher (Gospels)
- Jesus the Miracle-Worker (Gospels)

Fall 2020  
*Jesus the Savior*
- Jesus and the Kingdom (Gospels)
- Jesus the Savior (Gospels)
- Jesus the Risen King (Gospels)

Winter 2020-21  
*The Mission Begins*
- The Holy Spirit Comes (Acts; Epistles)
- Fundamentals of the Faith (Acts; Epistles)
- New Life in Christ (Acts; Epistles)

Spring 2021  
*The Church United*
- Living Like Jesus (Acts; Hebrews)
- The Sent Church (Acts; Epistles)
- Don’t Forget (Acts; Epistles)

Summer 2021  
*All Things New*
- Paul in Prison (Acts; Epistles)
- Facing Adversity (Acts; Epistles)
- Jesus Will Come Again (Revelation)
Gather with your group for Bible study and fellowship. Use the Group Time in your Daily Discipleship Guide to follow along and participate in the session. Mark up the Scripture passages, answer the questions, fill in the blanks, do the activities, write out questions and thoughts—Make this guide yours!

At the conclusion of the session, use My Mission to respond to the truths from God’s Word. Choose at least one of the questions on the page to drive your response in faith, in community, and in mission for Jesus Christ, the center of God’s Word and our purpose in life.
How to Use

**Daily Discipleship Guide** provides a brief guide for small groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. Meet up with a group once a week for fellowship, encouragement in the faith, and mutual accountability.

During the week following the session, use the five **Daily Study** devotions to build on the foundation laid during the “Group Time.” These devotions will help you get into God’s Word for yourself and take initiative in your own discipleship. Read the Scriptures, respond to the questions, and grow in the faith.

Finally, **Encourage One Another** provides a brief guide for small groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. Meet up with a group once a week for fellowship, encouragement in the faith, and mutual accountability.
Unit 1

Creation and the Fall

*Genesis; Job*

Memory Verses

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through him and for him.”

—Colossians 1:15-16
God’s Good World

**SESSION IN A SENTENCE:** God created everything out of nothing by the Son, through the Son, and for the Son.

**MAIN PASSAGES:** Genesis 1:1-13; Colossians 1:15-20

What are some of your favorite book or movie beginnings, and what did they introduce?

Every story has a beginning. And the story of the Bible begins with four astounding words: “In the beginning God.” God wasn’t just there at the beginning; He was there before the beginning. What this means is that everything and everyone has an origin, that is, except God.

The depiction of God we see in the Bible takes our simple ideas of religion and blasts them to pieces. It shows us a God who is so fundamental to all of life that even time itself must bow to His will as one of His creations. Here is a God whom we cannot control, cannot contain, and often cannot predict.
Group Time

**Point 1: God created everything (Gen. 1:1-2).**

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

Every world religion (and for that matter, every individual in the world) has an idea of how the universe came to be. In ancient times, creation accounts like the one we find in Genesis 1 were quite common. But this particular creation account is unique in one major way: God created everything *out of nothing*.

**Creation Out of Nothing:** Because God created out of nothing, creation has ___________ and ______________ and points us to the Creator.

How should knowing God as Creator impact how we understand who He is, who we are, and why we should obey Him?

It is important that we know God created everything out of nothing, but it also matters that we see *how* God created everything. When God created everything, He did it by starting with a formless void and then shaping it with His Word. In the same way, our lives are formless and void until God’s Word comes in to bring life and peace, beauty and order.

Where would you put the shape of your life on this scale?

[Scale] Formless and Void — Beautiful and Orderly

God created the universe, including people, for a purpose. Why is this important for us to know and remember?
Point 2: God created everything good (Gen. 1:3-13).

3 Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” There was an evening, and there was a morning: one day.

6 Then God said, “Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water.” 7 So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so. 8 God called the expanse “sky.” Evening came and then morning: the second day.

9 Then God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. 10 God called the dry land “earth,” and the gathering of the water he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good. 11 Then God said, “Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.” And it was so. 12 The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

13 Evening came and then morning: the third day.

The author of Genesis 1 doesn’t just want us to see the greatness of God’s creation; he wants us to see the goodness of it. The goodness of creation is really just an overflow of God’s goodness because He made it. We see that in the phrase repeated throughout Genesis 1: “God saw that it was good.”

The Goodness of Creation:
Creation is good, in God’s judgment, because He created it for a purpose that it fulfilled—to ________ and ________ the good character of the Creator. God’s people should ________ and seek to ________ the goodness of God’s creation.

Voices from the Church
“Nothing comes from the hand of God that is not intrinsically good. He is the good God who does all things for good.”
—Barnabe Assohoto and Samuel Ngewa

How should the intrinsic goodness of God’s creation impact how we live in it?
Point 3: God created everything for His Son (Col. 1:15-18).

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and by him all things hold together. 18 He is also the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.

Creation has always been about Jesus. It has only ever been about Jesus. He is the center of it all. He is the Word with God in the beginning, spinning galaxies into existence. And He will be the center when all is said and done. Since Jesus is the center, Lord, and goal of all creation, it only follows that life works best when He controls it.

What people, places, things, or ideas might we put at the center of our lives?

___________________—____________________—____________________—____________________.

This is the story of ____________________.

This is the story that begins with “In the beginning God...”

How have you seen sin—centering life on anything other than Jesus—de-create and destroy?

The Story of the Bible:

___________________—____________________—____________________—____________________.

This is the story of ________________.

This is the story that begins with “In the beginning God...”
My Mission

Because Christians have been given new life through faith in the Son of God, through whom and for whom all things were created, we honor Him in our stewardship of His creation as we help others see their purpose in Him.

• If you believe God created the world through the Son and for the Son, how will you honor the Son this week?

• How can your group work together to steward God’s creation well for His glory and the good of others?

• What are some opportunities you have this week to show and tell about our good God and the good news of His Son, Jesus Christ, Creator, Sustainer, and Savior?

Notes

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Daily Study

Day 1: Read Genesis 1:1-2

The creation account raises many disputed issues about the origin of the earth. Many Christians become passionate when discussing the finer details of these issues, assuming that anyone who disagrees with their stance is intellectually naïve or untrue to Scripture. The conversations can get tense in a hurry.

While the finer details of these discussions matter, we need to consider a larger question as we study the creation account in Genesis: Why was this passage written? Concerning the creation of the universe in Genesis, it seems rather obvious that the author, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, never intended to answer many of our questions. Much more important to him and for us is the notion that God created, and He did it by the power of His spoken word.

What unites us is much more critical than what threatens to divide us here. And what unites us is our affirmation that we are all part of God’s glorious creation—a creation that He spoke into existence and a creation He sovereignly rules over with love, grace, mercy, and justice.

How would unity on God as the Creator of all things benefit the world?

Voices from Church History

“There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: ‘Mine!’”

—Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920)
Day 2: Read Genesis 1:3-25

Thinking about God’s creative power makes our minds want to explode. Astronomers tell us that there are an estimated two hundred sextillion stars in the universe. That’s a 2 followed by 23 zeroes: 200,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. The magnitude of a number like this stuns our puny minds. As it should.

God spoke each and every one of these stars into existence with but a few words (1:14-19). And the prophet Isaiah reminds us that He knows the name of each one (Isa. 40:26).

The God who created such an immense universe and intimately knows every millimeter of it can’t just be thought of as “big.” He’s bigger than big. He’s not just great; he’s greater than great. We have no words to describe fully the magnitude and power of the God who simply said “Let there be…” and suddenly, it was.

How does what you have been taught about the origin of the universe line up with the story of creation in Scripture?

Day 3: Read Psalm 19:1-6

God’s creation tells a story. It’s a story of majesty, splendor, beauty, and greatness. But the story creation tells isn’t about itself—it is about the Creator. As majestic and beautiful as creation is, God the Creator is even more so, always greater than His creation. This is the story creation whispers, and sometimes shouts, to us every day.

Think about what you believe to be the most beautiful or amazing part of creation, something that makes your jaw drop. What do you envision? Perhaps a towering mountain range or a white sandy beach. Maybe a field of flowers or a leopard in mid-stride. Whatever you picture, as beautiful and glorious as it is, it pales in comparison to God’s original creation before the fall. Even now, stained by the curse of sin, creation continues to declare the glory of God! That’s how glorious He is.

Creation was designed to point us to the greatness of God and to elicit worship toward Him in our hearts and lives. That is the story creation tells.

What are some parts of creation that make you marvel the most? What do they tell you about God?
Day 4: Read Colossians 1:15-20

When we hear “firstborn,” we naturally think of the child born first into a family, namely, the oldest child. But that way of understanding what firstborn means gets us into trouble when we see it used of Jesus in the Bible.

The Son of God is eternal. He has always existed and always will exist, without beginning or end. So when the Bible says that Jesus is firstborn over all creation (1:15), that does not mean He was created first before the rest of creation was created. This becomes clear in the very next verse where we read that everything was created by Him, which must exclude Himself since self-creation isn’t possible.

So what does it mean that Jesus is firstborn over creation? It means that Jesus is preeminent—He is first in rank above all of creation, being the image of God who created all things and holds all things together.

In what areas of your life do you struggle to place Jesus first?

Day 5: Read John 1:1-4

The apostle John opens up his story of Jesus’ life by connecting Him to the creation story. The Word created all things good, but later the Word took on flesh (v. 14) to enter into this dark, sin-filled, chaotic world that life and light might shine in it once more.

Throughout His ministry, we see Jesus undoing the chaos and darkness left by sin. He heals diseases, opens the eyes of the blind, makes the lame walk, the deaf hear, and the dead come to life. He forgives adulterers, murderers, and thieves. Where sin left a dark void in the world, Jesus came with a thundering word: Let there be light!

But Jesus’ ministry went even deeper. He laid down His life in the darkness and chaos of death, taking upon Himself our sin so that we who had rejected the Word could have light and life again. Jesus allowed Himself to be de-created on the cross so that we could be re-created through His resurrection. Your life may be a picture of chaos, but if Jesus can create everything good out of nothing, He can surely re-create everything in you.

Where is the chaos in your life that you need Jesus to re-create?
Encourage One Another

Join together with 2-4 people from your group, or with your family, sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and you are responding.

Share your thoughts and reflections on the truths from Scripture in this session:

- God created everything (Gen. 1:1-2).
- God created everything good (Gen. 1:3-13).
- God created everything for His Son (Col. 1:15-18).

How have you responded to these truths from Scripture?

When have you witnessed the goodness of God’s creation this week?

How can we help others know the God who created us, the world, and everything in it?

Notes
UNIT 1
SESSION 1

SESSION 2

SESSION 3

SESSION 4

SESSION 5
2. Sidney Greidanus, Preaching Christ from Genesis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 125.

SESSION 6

UNIT 2
SESSION 1

SESSION 2

SESSION 3

SESSION 4

UNIT 3
SESSION 1

SESSION 2
1. Thomas Brooks, Heaven on Earth (CreateSpace Publishing Platform, 2014), 64.

SESSION 3
Want to go deeper in your study?

If you have enjoyed studying Genesis with The Gospel Project, we recommend reading Read the Bible for Life to see how all of the books of the Bible fit together as one story.

**Pick up this resource at your local LifeWay store or visit LifeWay.com**
In the Beginning

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. He made everything good, very good, in fact, and the pinnacle of His creation was His image bearers, human beings formed to reflect the Creator's good reign over everything. But they chose to sin and reject God's rule, and so, they brought death and destruction into God's good world. Yet God made a promise of a Son who would one day redeem what they had broken.

Out of the masses of broken and scattered people, God called a man to trust Him and obey and be blessed. He promised this man descendants more numerous than the stars and that all the earth would be blessed through his family. The Lord began to fulfill this promise with a son, but the ultimate fulfillment would come through a future Son provided for the salvation of the world.

The Lord was faithful to His promises, though His people were often unfaithful. In His mercy and grace, He advanced His plan to bless the whole world through one broken family, and from this family would come the One to restore the goodness of creation.

What's Next?

WINTER 2018-19
Volume 2: Out of Egypt
God Redeems His People (Genesis; Exodus)
God Provides for His People (Exodus)
God Receives Worship from His People (Ex.; Lev.)

SPRING 2019
Volume 3: Into the Promised Land
God Guides His People (Num.; Deut.)
God Gives His People a Home (Joshua)
God Delivers His People (Judges; Ruth)

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Jennifer Grisham
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