



COGNWM Youth Bible Lessons – Lesson 1

A Planned Beginning

Where did our planet, Earth, come from? How did human life start? Did someone plan the earth, with its mountains, trees, oceans and everything you see around you? The answers to these many other questions are found right in the pages of your Bible!

In this lesson you will learn of God’s plan for creating the universe and all life in it, especially human life. As you study the lesson use your Bible to look up all the scriptures that are given. You will also need a pen or pencil to fill in the blanks where questions are asked. If you have your Bible and a pen or pencil with you, continue reading. If not, get them before you go any further.

To begin our study let’s go back in history to a time before you were born, before your father and mother were living – before your grandparents were living, before the city in which you live was started – even before the nation in which you live was formed. Are we back far enough to see the beginning? Not yet!

Let’s travel back before the oldest nation on earth began, before any people lived on our planet. But still we are not back to the beginning. We still see the earth, the sun and all the other planets and stars shining in the night sky. The beginning was before there was anything that our eyes can see.

These things were all made at some time long, long ago before our minds can imagine. If we could go back to that time, what would we see? Would we see the earth and life beginning by chance, as most of your school science or history books teach? Would we see a world of erupting volcanoes, white-hot flowing lava, boiling oceans and an atmosphere of deadly gases from which an accidental “spark of life” is said to have been struck? You are told that from this accidental beginning, life advanced from single cells to oceans full of wriggling worms, to giant lizards and flying reptiles, to ape-like creatures, to gorilla-like cavemen and, finally, to modern-day man.

Is this really what happened in the beginning? How can you know for sure? Was anyone there who could give us an eyewitness report? Are there any written records?

YES!

Two places in the Bible we read: “In the beginning . . . “In both of these places this sentence continues with a name. Someone was there and has left you and me a written account of what really did happen! We can know for sure! Read Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1, then write these verses on the lines below.

(Genesis 1:1) _____

(John 1:1) _____

So, our beginning starts with two great Beings called God and the Word. Before anything else existed, they were there – together. They planned and created everything that we now see around us (John 1:3).

God is actually a name for a family of beings, just as your last name is a family name for the people in your family (Ephesians 3:14-15). So, when we say that God created all things, we mean the God Family created all things. The Bible tells us of only two Beings who are now members of the Family of God: God and the Word, or God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son. Each member in God’s Family is called God, just as each member in your family is called by your family name.

You will learn much more about this most important fact about God later in this study.

Do You Remember?

1. How many members are now in the God Family? _____
2. Who are they? _____
3. What scripture proves this? _____

Now, let’s move forward in time and look at what the creating God Family made!

Surprising though it may seem, the first part of God’s creation would have been invisible to you and me. The great Creator God, through the Word, first designed and created spirit beings – the angels. Each angel was individually planned and created – millions or perhaps billions of them! They were made of spirit and were given self-sustaining life. This means they don’t need to eat and drink or even breathe air to stay alive as you do. And, they can never die. They are immortal beings. Also, God created them with minds. They can think, reason, plan, make choices and decisions. In this way they are much like God.

But, in another important way, they are not like God. They were not created having perfect holy character as God and the Word have. This perfect character is the one thing that even God cannot create instantly. It must be developed by the choice and purpose of the one in whom it is being formed. You will also study much more about this later in these lessons.

The angels were created with minds able to think, reason and decide. They have self-will. God also revealed fully and plainly to them His perfect, holy way of living. God then allowed them to choose to follow His righteous way of life, or to turn from it and follow other ways of their own planning. They were told plainly the right way, but God did not force them to go that way. The choice was up to them.

What was God's purpose and plan in creating all these angelic spirit beings? Why were they made? God wanted to share His perfect, joyful way of life with other beings. He also needed others to help Him carry this way of life throughout all the endless universe that He had created. He wanted them to share in all that He had made.

But, we're getting a little ahead of the story. Let's now look at the time recorded in Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1 – the time of the creation of the heavens and the earth. We don't know for sure how long ago this was. Scientists tell us the earth is millions or billions of years old. This is possible and does not disagree with anything revealed in the Word of God. We do know, however, that the angels were created before the earth, because God reveals that all the angels (created "sons of God") sang for joy at this completion (Job 38:4-7).

In Hebrews, the language in which Moses wrote the book of Genesis, the word translated heaven in Genesis 1:1 is plural – heavens – and, therefore, includes all the physical creation – the entire universe. At this time, after the creation of the angels, all the universe (including the earth) was brought into being. "But," you may ask, "why did God create the earth and all the limitless universe if the angels had no need for air, food, water or shelter?" They didn't need a physical creation to keep themselves alive. They had life within themselves. They were eternal beings.

The answer is that the universe, and especially the earth, was created as a testing ground – a proving ground for the angels. Remember, they were to develop perfect, righteous, godly character. This one, super-important part of them had to be developed over a period of time. So, God created the vast universe of untold millions and millions of stars, planets and moons to be an environment – a place of living – in which this righteous character could be developed. He started by placing some of the angels here on this planet – Earth.

Do Your Remember?

1. What was the first thing the God Family created? _____
2. What scripture proves this? _____

When the angels were created, they were not all created alike. Some were of greater rank than others. One of the highest-ranking angels was a being of great beauty and wisdom, named Lucifer. His name meant Light Bringer or Shining Star of the Dawn. This great ruling angel was placed on the earth by God to lead the other angels and to rule them according to the perfect laws of the Creator. He was to bring the light of God's way of life to the angels on the earth.

How long Lucifer and his angels lived on earth before the creation of man is not told to us by God. It may have been millions – or even billions of years. However long it was, these were years of great happiness and peace as Lucifer ruled his world by every one of the perfect laws of God.

But one day Lucifer began to think an evil thought. By continuing to think this evil thought, he finally made himself believe that he could make a great, evil plan succeed.

What was it that he was planning?

Rebellion!

He had become jealous of God. He convinced himself that God was being unfair to him. Lucifer was sure that with the millions of angels over which he ruled he could succeed in overpowering God. What was it Lucifer wanted to do? He wanted to take over God's throne – to take God's place as the Supreme Ruler of the entire universe (Isaiah 14:14).

What had started as a foolish, sinful thought had grown into an evil plan that was to carry the entire creation into total destruction!

Filled with pride and greed, Lucifer and his angels swept up to heaven for the attack. An unbelievable war followed, with spirit beings using great and terrible forces that we humans know nothing about (Revelation 12:7). God, who has all the power in the universe, released His power against Lucifer and his army of rebellious attackers.

Awful and total defeat came upon Lucifer. God's fearsome power was released with such fury that the invading army and its leaders were blasted out of heaven and back down to earth (Revelation 12:9).

But God wasn't finished! He changed Lucifer's name to Satan, which meant enemy, and his followers were from then on known as demons. These miserable, bitter,

unhappy spirit beings were forever turned from good and obedience to evil and rebellion. Yet, Satan was allowed to remain as king on the earth until a new king would become qualified to take his place. (You will study much more about this new king in future lessons.) This is the thread that ties together all the parts of God’s Holy Word and His glorious plan for all His creation.

Do You Remember?

1. What did Lucifer plan to do in his rebellion against God? _____

2. What scripture tells of this? _____

But, let’s come back again to God’s physical creation - the earth and all planets and stars of the universe.

When these were created by God, they were perfect in design and beauty. God doesn’t create confusion or ugliness (I Corinthians 14:33). Yet, verse 2 of the first chapter of Genesis says, “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” A better wording of this verse is, “And the earth became without form, and void.” Satan’s rebellion happened after the creation and caused the earth to become formless and empty.

God’s good and perfect laws had been broken and the natural result was suffering and destruction. What had been a dazzlingly beautiful jewel of God’s perfect creation became total ruin when Lucifer and his followers tried to overpower God. Roaring winds flattened the forests and drove the oceans into crashing mountains of water. The earth’s surface split and cracked and great volcanoes formed and spread rivers of lava over much of the land. The air was filled with blinding ash and poisonous smoke. Probably no animal or plant life survived this terrible destruction. Only Satan and his demons were left alive on the ruined planet.

No one knows how long the earth was in this condition. But during this time the entire earth was covered by oceans, and the air was a thick mixture of gases, smoke, ash and water vapor. This mixture was so thick that no light could reach the surface of the seas. No kind of physical life could survive on this dark, poisoned planet. Finally, God was ready to begin the next step in His great master plan for the universe. He began to renew the earth and bring back its former beauty.

Do You Remember?

1. Did God create the earth “without form and void” – ugly and empty? _____

2. Give a scripture that says God doesn't make things in confusion. _____
3. What caused the earth to become dark, empty and ugly? _____

For five days God worked at getting the earth ready for human life. On the first day he began to thin the thick poisoned air so that light could shine through upon the earth's surface. The thick darkness then ended and day and night were separated (Genesis 1:3-5).

Then, on day two, He formed a layer of fresh, clean air over the surface of the sea. This allowed water vapors to rise and form into great billowy, white clouds. This air was a mixture of healthful gases, which were needed to support breathing animal and human beings. This mixture of gases is called atmosphere (Genesis 1:6-8).

On the third day of this week of remaking the earth, God raised up the land in some areas and pushed down the ocean floor in other places. This formed dry land areas, or continents, for plants and animals to live upon. On these continents, He also created all kinds of trees, bushes, flowers and grasses – everything that could grow out of the dry land. The earth was becoming beautiful again, with blue oceans and green land masses (Genesis 1:9-13).

The fourth day brought even more clearing of the atmosphere, and the sun, moon and stars shone through in all their sparkling beauty and brilliance (Genesis 1: 14-19).

On the fifth day the great Creator God placed all types of sea creatures into the oceans, lakes and rivers. He also created birds to fly in the beautiful, cloud-filled sky (Genesis 1: 20-23).

In five short days the almighty God Family had renewed the whole face of the earth and prepared it for man to live upon.

On the sixth day of this re-creation week, God formed all types of land animals. From mighty elephants to tiny worms and insects – every kind of life that walks or crawls upon the surface of the land was made (Genesis 1:24-25). All was now ready for human beings to live upon the renewed earth!

Do You Remember?

In a very short form list the events of each day of this re-creation week.

The time had finally arrived for God to form the most important part of all His vast creation. From the red mud of the earth, working perhaps like a sculptor with clay, He molded a statue that looked very much like Himself. When He was finished, He breathed into this figure the breath of life, and this first man became a living, breathing being (Genesis 2:7).

God named the man whom He had created Adam, which meant red, rosy or ruddy. He placed the man in a beautiful parklike garden, called Eden. Possibly near the part of the earth that is today called the nation of Israel.

God knew when He made the man that he was made incomplete. Man wasn't really all there. Like the angels before him, he needed to develop righteous, holy godly character. This had to be developed with God's help and by the determined effort of the man in which it was being formed. It could come only through a lifetime of experience and decision making. Once Adam developed this holy righteous character, (the ability to do what he had been taught was right and good, even when he wanted to do something else), he could then be a complete creation.

This was all part of why man was made. You will remember that Satan was allowed to stay as king over the earth until a new king was ready to take his place. To be qualified to replace Satan this new king would have to be totally obedient to God and His holy law. God had to know, beyond any doubt, that the new king would never rebel against Him and His government, as Lucifer and his followers had done. How could He know this? How could He be sure that this new king would never turn against Him? There was only one way!

The new king would have to prove himself over a lifetime of obedience. He would have to develop the holy, righteous character of God Himself; develop the very nature of God; become like God in his thinking and way of life. In short, he would have to qualify to become a member of God's holy Family.

This is why God created Adam and put him on the earth. He was giving Adam the chance to become His Spiritual Son, as well as be the new king to replace Satan as the ruler of the earth! You will learn much more about this great purpose for all human life as you continue your study of God's Holy Word.

Do You Remember?

1. How was Adam not complete? _____
2. What was missing in him? _____
3. Why did God make Adam? Give two reasons. _____

After Adam was made, God caused a deep sleep to come over him. As he slept God removed from Adam's side a rib. Beginning with this rib God formed a companion for Adam – a woman whom Adam named Eve (Genesis 2:22).

This completed the physical reforming of the earth and the creation of life upon it. In six days God had repaired the damage caused by the rebellion of Satan and his followers. God reviewed all that He had made and saw that it was all “very good” – designed, made and operating as He had planned it.

One thing different in this New World was that God gave all the plant, animal and human life upon the earth the ability to reproduce themselves. Instead of creating millions of human beings one by one, as He had the angels, He made human life so that it would reproduce itself. Each life form would multiply “after its kind” as time passed. So, in time the earth would be filled with plants and animals and people.

God also made all life temporary, rather than eternal as the angels were. As new life developed, old life died. It was all kept in perfect balance by physical laws that God created. These laws are now called by man the laws of nature. They are really the laws of the great Creator God who designed them and set them in motion to keep His creation working properly.

When Adam and Eve were created, God placed them in a beautiful garden home. They were given a perfect home with perfect weather. All the food they needed was there for the taking. They had a Father who was deeply concerned about them and loved them more than any other part of His creation. Nothing could have been more perfect. Everything was full of beauty, happiness and peace!

Before Eve was created, God gave Adam the responsibility of naming all the animals (Genesis 2:19-20). This was much easier than you might think, because all the creatures were friendly and harmless – just as they will be again when God's government is soon returned to this earth (Isaiah 11:6-9).

Together God told Adam and Eve to “dress and keep” their garden home. God had given it to them in perfect beauty, and they were told to work to keep it that way. In Genesis 1:28, God also told them: “Be _____

The earth.” He commanded them to have many children, that the earth might be filled with life. And, of course, they were to teach their children about God and His holy, righteous laws, which, when obeyed, would bring them continued peace and happiness throughout their lifetime.

Do You Remember?

1. How did God make human life different from angel life? Give two ways.

2. What things did God tell Adam and Eve to do? List three.

You have already learned that God finished the physical creation on the sixth day with the making of Adam and Eve. But there was still one day left of that first week in this New World. God created something very important and special on this last day!

With all His work finished, God rested (Genesis 2:2). You may wonder why He needed a rest. Was He all worn out from His creative labor? Was He so tired He just had to stop and rest? Not at all! God doesn't become weary or tired (Isaiah 40:26). But He did rest. Exodus 31:17 tells us: ". . . In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." This rest was refreshing to God. But not because He was tired or weary. So, why did He rest?

By resting He put His holy presence in that seventh day and set an example that He wanted all humans to follow from then on. By resting God created the Sabbath day – making it a day of rest for all mankind throughout all time. He also "blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it" (Genesis 2:3).

What does "sanctified" mean? Look up the word sanctified in a dictionary and write the definition on the lines below:

God set apart this seventh day of the week from the other days. It was set aside for holy use – for physical rest and assembled worship of the Creator God.

God also knew that man would need a rest every seventh day, a chance to forget about daily cares. Many people today have never been taught about the Sabbath, and, as a result, suffer from worries and mental stress, because they don't keep this day of rest and relaxation.

So, the Sabbath was created as a day to remind us of our Creator and a day to rest. Every seventh day of the week was, from this time forward, to be holy time, special to God and to be used only as He directs. (Later you will learn more about just how you should use God's holy time – how to keep the Sabbath holy.)

Adam and Eve were created knowing nothing. Their minds were totally empty. It was God's responsibility to teach them all the things they needed to know but couldn't learn by themselves.

On this very first Sabbath day God sat and talked with them. He took this time to teach and instruct them about Himself and His great master plan for them and all their children. He told them of His perfect law, which, when obeyed, would give them happiness and peace in their beautiful garden home.

We are told very little of what actually was said on this first Sabbath. However, we know that God could not expect Adam and Eve to obey laws that they knew nothing of. So, He had to tell them what was good and right, as well as what was bad and wrong for them to do – in other words, how He expected them to live their lives.

One example of God's teaching on this first Sabbath can be found in Genesis 2:9, 16-17. Have you read of God's instructions about the two special trees He placed in the garden – The Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? God gave Adam and Eve permission to eat of all the trees in the garden except the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. He told them that if they disobeyed Him and ate of this tree they would die. But He also told them that if they ate of the Tree of Life they could live forever.

In other words, God was telling them that they did not have the right to decide for themselves what was good and what was evil. Only God knows good from evil, and it was His responsibility to make that knowledge known to them.

On this first Sabbath God, then, taught Adam and Eve that they must be obedient to Him and go His way if they were to receive His blessings and qualify to join His Family.

This is still one of the purposes of the Sabbath day. We are to talk with God in prayer, and He talks back to us through the pages of His written Word when we study the Bible and when we listen to the minister explain the Bible in Sabbath services. The Sabbath is still a time for teaching and learning.

Do You Remember?

1. What did God teach Adam and Eve on this first Sabbath day? _____

2. Is the Sabbath a time for us to be taught by God? _____

Lost and Found

Lost in the sentences below are the names of persons (or beings) mentioned in this lesson. Can you find them? Underline each name as you find it and check it off your word list.

Example: EDGARDENTED THE FENDER.

Word List: Adam Angels Demons Eve God King Satan Word Garden

1. My patience is at an end!
2. Please hand me a damp sponge.
3. With these glasses, I see very well.
4. Class, please go downstairs for a fire drill.
5. It was a new, ordinary pencil.
6. Do you remember who sang, Elsie?
7. Did you ever try to ride tandem on skies?
8. Do your kin go to family reunions?