

The Seven Days of Genesis | Genesis 1:3-2:3 Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

Purpose of Discussion: to help us appreciate the poetic nature of the Genesis 1 creation account and lead us to the kind of life-changing worship and trust that Genesis 1 is aiming at.

Sermon Refresher: Science has not disproved the Bible. To say that it has is based on a misreading of the Genesis 1 creation account. Genesis 1 is part of a highly sophisticated poetic prelude to the rest of the Bible. Genesis 1 is not answering scientific “how” questions such that it is conflicting with modern scientific explanations of the origins of our universe. Instead, Genesis 1 is answering profound “who,” “what,” and “why” questions in Hebrew poetic form meant to significantly shape the worldview and worship of God’s people.

Icebreaker: What was your favorite subject in school growing up? What subjects do you most enjoy reading or learning about now?

Discussion:

1. Even though we can’t all read Genesis 1 in the original Hebrew language, we can still see significant signs of poetic form in our English Bible translations. Open your Bibles and go around the room reading Genesis 1:1-2:3 out loud, each person taking about 3 verses. After you read, take time to notice examples of each of these common Hebrew poetic elements:
 - 1) Parallelism/repetition
 - 2) Elevated/figurative language
 - 3) Symbolic use of numbers
2. If this is indeed Hebrew poetry that wasn’t meant to answer our scientific “how” questions but was instead answering the ancient Israelites’ more foundational worldview questions (“who,” “what,” “why”) after they were rescued from Egypt, what answers was it giving? Take a few minutes to answer each of these questions in your own words according to Genesis 1.
 - 1) Who is the God who created you (and rescued you out of Egypt)?
 - 2) Who are you as a people?
 - 3) What is this creation? What is its purpose?
 - 4) Why did God create you? Why did God rescue you out of Egypt?

3. Hebrews 4 talks about the seventh day in this same poetic figurative sense. Read Hebrews 4:4, 9-11 out loud. What seems to be the meaning of the seventh day here?

Hebrews 4:4, 9-11

⁴For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: “On the seventh day God rested from all his works.” ... ⁹There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; ¹⁰for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. ¹¹Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest ...

4. How are we to “make every effort to enter into that rest?” In what way are we to “rest from our works” in order to enter salvation?
5. At the conclusion of the sermon, Dave said that God’s story is the only story that can give our life the meaning and purpose we need. He encouraged us not to allow our life circumstances to make us panic and leave God’s story. Read the following three scenarios. How is each person being tempted to leave God’s story for a lesser story?
 - 1) John and Jennifer have been married for over 20 years. Over the years, through much unresolved conflict and the distraction of busy lives, they have grown apart and now they live more like business partners than loving spouses. John is thinking about leaving Jennifer because their marriage is just too far gone and too unfulfilling. It would be too painful to work through their issues.
 - 2) Ashley is 32 years old. She has been a Christian since college. Despite the fact that she really wants to be married and have a family, she has never really dated anyone seriously. It’s been years since a Christian man has taken any interest in her, and she has gotten really discouraged. Recently a nice fellow who has no interest in Christ or church has been paying her lots of attention. She knows he’s not a Christian, but she’s thinking of dating him because she’s so afraid that she’s never going to find anyone.
 - 3) Brian is a husband and father of two kids in his mid-40’s. He works a very demanding and competitive job. He feels that if he doesn’t work more than others at his company, he will surely be past up for promotions and pay raises. His work has driven him to work 6 days a week for months now. He barely has time for his family and is often tired or angry when he does. Worshipping at church and time he used to spend reading his Bible has been squeezed out.
6. What are some things you could say to each of the people in these three scenarios to help them remember and stay in God’s bigger story?

Sharing and Prayer:

Share ways that each of you feels your life circumstances pulling you to live in a lesser story. Pray for each other that God will strengthen you to live in his bigger story.