

God Made the Earth



SABBATH—JUNE 29

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 1:26–31; Genesis 2:15; Genesis 3:16–19; Genesis 4:9; Proverbs 22:2.

MEMORY VERSE: “Anyone who crushes [hurts] poor people makes fun of their Maker [the God who made them]. But anyone who is kind to those [people] in need honors God” (Proverbs 14:31, NlrV).



God never stops loving humans.

DID YOU EVER WORK HARD to make something beautiful? Maybe you painted a picture. Or maybe you cooked a special meal. Then you gave your picture or the meal as a gift to someone you loved. But what did this person do? Did he or she want the gift? No! He or she threw the meal in the trash! Or maybe this person ripped the picture! Did that ever happen to you? If yes, then you will understand something that happened to God. God made the earth beautiful. But then sin hurt everything He made.

The Bible says that God made everything. He saw that everything He made was “very good” (Genesis 1:31, ERV). The Bible shows us how God felt about everything He made too. We can read about how God felt in Genesis 1 and 2. Then we will understand why God’s heart is so sad when He talks to Adam and Eve after they sinned.

Since that time, people continue to sin. Often, they are not fair or kind. They hurt each other. They fight against God. But God never stops loving humans. He made a plan to save us. He also gave us a part in His plan to help Him save other people too. Wow! We serve a wonderful God!

THE GOD WHO MADE US (Genesis 1:26–31)

All life starts with God. Your life too. So do the lives of all humans. This earth and everything on it starts with God too. The Bible says: “ ‘By his power we live and move and exist [keep on living]’ ” (Acts 17:28, ICB).

The Bible story about life starts with these words: “In the beginning God created [made] the sky and the earth” (Genesis 1:1, ICB). How did God do that? He used only words! He made all life by using only the words that came out of His mouth. Yes, He made Eve from Adam’s bone. And before that, God made Adam himself from the dirt. But where did the dirt come from? God used words to make the dirt, right? He said the words. Then the thing He said appeared out of nothing! Make a picture of that in your head if you can!

Read the story in Genesis 1:26–31 about how God made Adam and Eve. What important things does this story tell us about God? What important things does this story tell us about people?

We should spend time in nature. Nature can teach us many things about God. But did you know our knowledge about God also can teach us about how He made the earth? For example, we know that God likes everything to be neat and in a nice way. So, we should expect to find things in nature to be set in a nice way too. We believe God loves beauty. So, we should not be surprised to see examples of beauty on the earth He made.

In the same way, we believe God loves people. God made people to connect with each other. So, we should find many examples of connections in nature. Everything God made on this earth connects together. He made the animals to get along. God made humans to connect with Himself, with each other, and with the rest of nature.

We do not understand everything about God. But what we can see should help us think more about the way God wanted life to be.

The earth and all that God made show us God. Yes, we live on an earth broken by sin. But how does your knowledge about God help you to understand life on this earth better?



Nature can teach us many things about God.

A PERFECT EARTH (Genesis 1)

Do you wish sometimes that you lived in the Garden of Eden? It is easy for us to feel that way. Read about the Garden of Eden in the Bible. Yes, the Bible's story about Eden is very short. But the Bible tells us enough to make us want to live there.

God was very happy with everything He made. "God saw everything he had made. And it was very good" (Genesis 1:31, NIV). The earth was both beautiful and useful. It was filled with life and color. But God also filled the earth with everything that life needed to grow. No wonder God stopped at the end of each day when He made the earth to think about how good everything was!



We should thank God every day for all His gifts from nature.

Read Genesis 1. In this chapter, the Bible tells us that God saw that the things He made were "good." Do you see how many times the Bible says that? (Read Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 25, and 31.) What do you think that means?

The Bible was written after humans sinned. But it shows us the wonders of nature. Job 38–41 and Psalm 148 are examples that show us nature's beauty. We must remember that these chapters in the Bible were not written about the earth before there was sin. No. These chapters show us the same beauty that fills the earth today.

Jesus gave us examples in nature that show us God's love (read Matthew 6:26, 28–30). These examples from nature teach us to depend on God. They also fill us with wonder. Open your heart and mind to the beauty in nature around you. Then you will see just how much God gave us. We should thank God every day for all His gifts from nature. When we do, we will want to give Him our hearts. Then we will want to serve Him forever.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe God made us and saves us. We wait for His kingdom. While we wait, we should understand something important about the beauty, joy, and good things we see. All this beauty shows us our earth was very wonderful before sin. The beauty we see also is a promise that God will make the earth beautiful again.

What do you like the most about nature? What does the beauty in nature tell you about the Lord?

MANAGERS OF THE EARTH (Genesis 1:28 and Genesis 2:15)

What does the Bible tell us about the Garden of Eden and this earth after God made it? The Bible says that God filled the Garden of Eden and this planet with life. He filled them with beautiful things to make humans happy.

God also gave the first man and woman a special job. God gave this work to the whole human family too. God put Adam and Eve in charge of everything on earth.

First, God gave Adam the job of naming all the animals and birds (read Genesis 2:19). Then God gave Adam another job. This job was a gift and a blessing from God Himself. “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Have many children. Fill the earth and take control of it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the air. Rule over every living thing that moves on the earth’ ” (Genesis 1:28, ERV).

Read Genesis 1:28 and Genesis 2:15. What is the same about both verses? What work did God give humans? Write Adam and Eve’s job description below in one or two sentences.

Sadly, many Christians in the past have used Genesis 1:28 in the wrong way. They used it as an excuse to take what they wanted from the earth. Some of these people did not care if they destroyed the earth. They cared only about getting rich. Yes, it is true that God made the earth for humans. But “the LORD God put the man in the Garden of Eden. He put him there to farm its land and take care of it” (Genesis 2:15, NIV).

God made us managers of everything He made. What is the first thing we think about when someone asks us, “What does a good manager do?” We often think about money. But our being good managers is not only about money. What is the first command God gives us as His managers? He tells us to take care of the earth and everything He made. God also included Adam and Eve’s future children in His command. It was God’s first plan for the earth to be filled with life, beauty, and good things for all humans. Adam and Eve had a big part in taking care of everything.

The earth belongs to God (read Psalm 24:1). He continues to ask us to take care of everything He gives us. But we live on an earth hurt by sin. So, it is even more important for us to be good managers.



God gave Adam the job of naming all the animals and birds.

A BROKEN EARTH (Genesis 3:16–19)



God gave humans the freedom to choose good or evil.

What was one thing God gave Adam and Eve that He did not give to anything else on earth? God gave humans the freedom to choose good or evil. But plants, animals, and trees cannot choose between right and wrong the way humans can. God feels that the freedom to choose is very important. That is why He let humans choose to disobey Him. God took a very big risk when He gave us free choice. But God wants people to choose to obey Him. He does not want to force us to obey. Forced love will cause us to fear God, not to love Him.

God made angels free to choose right or wrong too. One of the angels chose to do wrong. His name was Lucifer. After Lucifer sinned, his name was changed to Satan. This name shows us that Satan is God's enemy. Satan wanted to destroy the good things God made on this earth. So, Satan used the snake to trick Eve. Satan led Eve to doubt the Word of God and His gifts to humans. Satan caused Eve to feel these things were not enough to make humans happy (Genesis 3:1–5). What was Satan's biggest trick? He led humans to want more than God gave them. Satan also led Adam and Eve to doubt that God was good. Worse, Satan caused humans to depend on themselves, not God.

Adam and Eve chose to sin. That choice broke their connection with God (Genesis 3:8–10). Then Adam and Eve knew they were not wearing any clothes. They felt afraid and embarrassed. Their marriage was broken in many ways too. Their connection with the rest of the earth was broken in awful ways too.

Read Genesis 3:16–19 and then answer the question. How did the connection between humans and nature change after sin?

Sin changed everything. Life became a lot harder for Adam, Eve, and every living thing on earth. Sin is real. Sin breaks things. It hurts and destroys people and our friendships. Sin separates us from God. It wrecks our families. It also makes it hard for us to live on this earth. All the problems in our lives and on this earth show us that sin is awful.

But God made the earth to be beautiful. In Genesis 3, God promises to make our earth and our lives new. While we wait for that to happen, God asks us to do something. He asks us to follow His first plan for this earth.

THE HUMAN FAMILY (Proverbs 22:2)

Adam and Eve chose to sin. Not long after, sin started to break things on the earth in new and awful ways. Cain was very jealous of his brother Abel. Cain's heart was filled with anger and hate for his brother. So, Cain killed Abel. Later, God asked Cain: "Where is your brother Abel?" (Genesis 4:9, ICB). Cain said, "I don't [do not] know. Is it my job to take care of my brother?" (Genesis 4:9, ICB). God's question shows what God thinks the answer is. "Yes, Cain, it is your job to take care of your brother."

Read Proverbs 22:2. What truth does this simple verse teach us? What else does this verse tell us about our connections with other humans?

God made every person we meet. God made humans to look the same as He does and to be the same as He is in many ways. Each person is connected with other people. We are all part of the human family. Yes, that family is broken and hurt in many ways. But "we are all connected together. We are all part of the human family. The evil that happens to one part of our human family brings hurt and pain to all of us."—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry [work done for God] of Healing*, page 345, adapted. Clearly, we are all connected to each other. Because of our connection, God wants us to take care of each other and everything He gave us (read Matthew 22:37–39).

The Bible teaches us again and again that God made us. It is one of the reasons God commands us to keep the Sabbath holy (read Exodus 20:11). It also is why we should worship God in the end time (read Revelation 14:7). It is why we should take care of other people and the poor too.

God made us. That truth connects everyone together. "Anyone who crushes [hurts] poor people makes fun of their Maker [the God who made them]. But anyone who is kind to those [people] in need honors God" (Proverbs 14:31, NIV). This verse makes it very clear. We are all connected closely to each other.

God made us. That is why He asks us to give Him our hearts and lives. He also asks us to worship Him, work for Him, and care for other people. Maybe at times it can be hard to love people. But even so, it is our "job to take care of [our] brother" (Genesis 4:9, ICB).



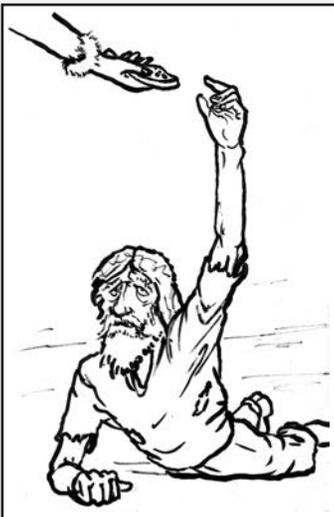
It is our "job to take care of [our] brother" (Genesis 4:9, ICB).

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Creation” pages 44–51, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*.

“‘God is love’ [1 John 4:8, ERV]. . . . God’s heart is filled with love. So is His law. It has always been that way. It always will be that way too. ‘God is high and lifted up. He lives forever. His name is holy. He says, “I live in a high and holy place”’ [Isaiah 57:15, ERV]. ‘His ways last [continue] forever’ [Habakkuk 3:6, NLV]. ‘He does not change’ [James 1:17, NLV].

“Everything God makes shows us His love. God’s power pours a blessing on everything He made.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs [Old Testament fathers and leaders] and Prophets [special messengers]*, page 33, adapted.

“What will happen if men will do their duty as loyal managers of God’s gifts? Here is what will happen. No one will cry for bread. No one will be poor or in need. No one will be naked because he or she has no clothes. What causes all these awful things? They are caused by selfishness in human hearts. . . . God made men His managers. So, we must not blame God for the pain, the suffering, and the hunger we see in life.”—Ellen G. White, *Welfare [the help we give to people in need] Ministry [work done for God]*, page 16, adapted.



“We must not blame God for the pain, the suffering, and the hunger we see in life.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Look at the second Ellen G. White quote above. What is she saying? Who does she say is responsible for why people are poor? What should this answer tell us about why it is important for us to be good managers of God’s gifts?
- 2 Many hundreds of years have passed since Adam and Eve first sinned. Is it possible for us to see God’s love for us in nature after all this time? If yes, in what ways do you see it? As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe God made the earth and all nature. What can we do to help other people see God’s love in nature too?
- 3 What does being a good manager of God’s gifts mean to you? How has this week’s lesson given you new ideas about being a good manager?
- 4 What if every person we saw wore a sign that said: “God made me and loves me”? How can that sign change the way we behave with other people? In what ways can it help us to show other people more love?