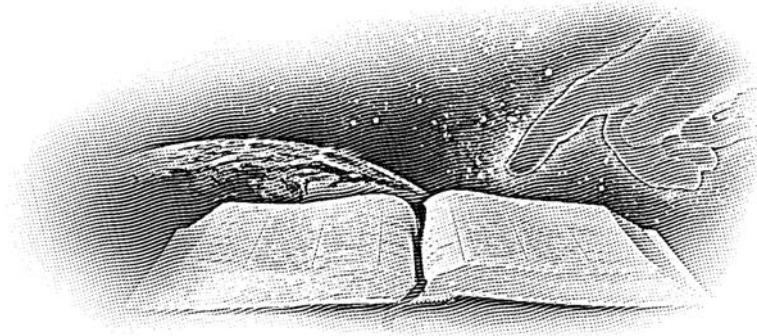


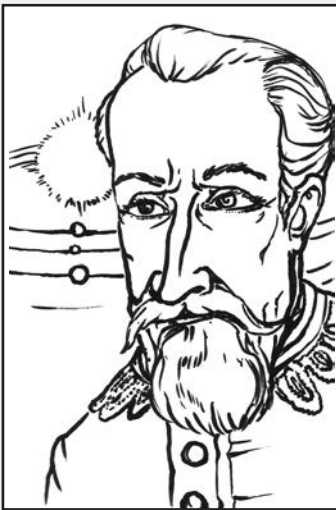
When God Made the Earth: Bible Truth and Genesis—Part 2



SABBATH—MAY 23

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Revelation 7:1; Revelation 20:7, 8; Genesis 1–2:4; Genesis 5; Genesis 11.

MEMORY VERSE: “The heavens tell about the glory of God. The skies [the open spaces above the earth; the sky] announce what his hands have made” (Psalm 19:1, ERV).



Johannes Kepler was a scientist. He believed his work showed humans more about the work that God made.

MANY FAMOUS THINKERS in the past read the Bible. They learned how God made the earth. This Bible truth made them excited to learn more about nature. So, they started to explore God's work. Their research led to the start of modern science. Some of these scientists were Johannes Kepler, Isaac Newton, John Ray, and Robert Boyle. These scientists believed that their work showed humans even more about the work that God made.

After the French Revolution, science changed. Scientists stopped believing in God. Scientists did not include God in their work. Charles Darwin made this new idea popular in his book *On the Origin of Species* (1859). Since that time, science has moved far away from the Bible. Because of this, people no longer believe in the Genesis story. They say it is a made-up story that does not show us real history.

Does the Bible teach that idea? Was the Bible's story about how life started on this earth a story that God's people took from the people around them? Or does the story in Genesis really show us a view about how life started? Can we trust the Bible? Is its information true?

These are some of the questions we will answer in this week's lesson.

A FLAT EARTH? (Revelation 7:1 and Revelation 20:7, 8)

Many people during Bible times thought that our earth was flat. Most people understood that the earth was round. They had good reasons for thinking this way. Even so, today, many people continue to say that the Bible itself teaches that the earth is flat.

Read Revelation 7:1 and Revelation 20:7, 8. What are these verses talking about? More important, do these verses teach us that the earth is flat?

John is the writer of these verses. He is writing about the end times. He writes about the four angels of heaven “standing at the four corners of the earth. The angels were holding the four winds of the earth” (Revelation 7:1, ERV). Do you see in this verse that John writes the word “four” three times? That is because John wants us to connect in our minds the angels to the four directions on a compass: north, south, east, and west.

So, John is using word pictures here. We do the same thing today. We say “the sun sets” or the wind “comes from the east.” The verses show us that the four winds are word pictures for the four directions: north, south, east, and west. So, we must not say that the four directions here are real. That explanation makes the verses say something that they are not teaching at all. Jesus uses word pictures Himself in the same way that John does. He uses the word “heart” to talk about where evil thoughts get started. He said: “Evil thoughts come out of a person’s heart” (Matthew 15:19, Nlrv). Jesus is not talking about a real human heart. He uses the human heart as a word picture to teach us Bible truth about where sin starts inside us.

Read Job 26:7–10 and Isaiah 40:21, 22. What do they teach us about the earth?

Job 26:7 (ERV), shows us that the earth hangs in space: “ ‘God stretched the northern sky over empty space. He hung the earth on nothing.’ ” The earth’s shape is the same as a “ ‘circle’ ” (Job 26:10, EXB). It is not flat. Isaiah 40:22 (ICB), says: “God sits on his throne above the circle of the earth. And compared to him, people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the skies [all the space above the earth; the sky] like a piece of cloth. He spreads them [the sky] out like a tent to sit under.”



The four winds are word pictures for the four directions: north, south, east, and west.

WRITINGS FROM BIBLE TIMES ABOUT HOW HUMANS WERE MADE (Genesis 1–2:4)

Archaeologists are scientists who dig up the past. They have dug up writings from Egypt during Bible times. These Egyptian writings contain histories about the Flood and how the earth started. These stories are older than the Bible. So, people started to wonder if Moses copied these Egyptian stories in the Bible when he wrote Genesis. But is that really true?

Read Genesis 1–2:4. Then read these verses taken from the *Atra-Hasis* story: “Long ago, the gods did all the work, not humans. The gods carried heavy workloads. The work was too hard for them. It was too much trouble. . . . So, the gods said ‘Let the female god Nintu make human children. Let humans do the work that the gods used to do!’ . . . Geshtu-e was a god who was very smart. The other gods killed him. Then the female god Nintu mixed clay together with Geshtu-e’s body and blood to make humans.”—Stephanie Dalley, *Myths From Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pages 9, 14, 15, adapted. How are the Genesis story and the *Atra-Hasis* story different?



In Genesis, God puts humans in a garden.

Yes, there are some things that are the same in both stories. The first humans in both stories are made of clay. But the two stories are more different than they are alike.

(1) In *Atra-Hasis*, humans work for the gods so that the gods can rest. In Genesis, God makes the earth and everything in it **for** humans. Then God rests with them. In Genesis, God puts humans in a garden. Then God invites the humans to talk with Him and take care of the earth. We do not see this idea in *Atra-Hasis* at all.

(2) In *Atra-Hasis*, a god is killed. Then the gods mix his blood with clay to make seven males and females. In Genesis, Adam is made by God Himself first. Then Eve is made later to help him. God breathes life into Adam. God does not make Adam and Eve from the blood of a dead god.

(3) Suffering and pain is not part of life for humans in the beginning in Genesis. But that is not true in *Atra-Hasis*.

The Bible story about the start of human life is lovely. It shows an all-powerful God who makes humans for a holy reason to live on a perfect earth. In the end, the Genesis story is very different from the *Atra-Hasis* story.

GENESIS DOES NOT TEACH NATURE WORSHIP (Genesis 1:14–19)

Genesis does not depend on made-up stories from other religions in Bible times about how life started. Moses wrote Genesis to show that these made-up stories are not true. He shows that only God made the sky and the earth.

Read Genesis 1:14–19. What does God make on the 4th day? What does Moses explain that they do?

Moses does not write the words “sun” and “moon.” For sure, he wants to avoid these words. Their names in Hebrew were the same as the names of the sun god and moon god in the Near East and Egypt during Bible times. Moses names the sun the “brighter light” (Genesis 1:16, NLV). He names the moon the “smaller light.” These names show us that God made the sun and the moon to do special work. “God put these lights in the sky to shine on the earth” (Genesis 1:17, ERV). “He put them there to separate the light from the darkness” (Genesis 1:18, ICB). So, the verses show us very clearly that the sun and moon were not gods. They were objects in nature that God made to do work.

Read Genesis 2:7, 18–24. How is God closely connected to the work of making Adam and Eve?

The Near Eastern stories show that the gods made humans to do hard work. Then the gods did not need to work so hard. But the Bible does not agree with this idea at all. The Bible teaches that God made man and put him in charge of the earth.

Genesis shows us the truth about how life started. It helps to correct false ideas and beliefs from Bible times. Moses used words and ideas in his writing that did not agree with the false ideas about how life started. How did Moses do this? He talked about God’s work and plan for humans when He made them.

Hundreds and hundreds of years ago, the Bible story about how human life started went against the ideas that most people had at the time. Today, this same Bible truth goes against the ideas that most people have about how life started. Why should we not be surprised?



The Bible teaches that God made man and put him in charge of the earth.

GENESIS AND TIME (Genesis 5 and Genesis 11)

Read Genesis 5 and 11. How does the Bible show us human history from Adam to Noah and from Noah to Abraham?

In the Bible, we find long lists of names. These lists show us fathers and sons. These lists also show us time. So, we find that the information in these lists has two parts: (1) a person's name and (2) the time when his son was born. Here is an example: "When Person #1 lived a certain number of years, he became the father to Person #2.

"Then Person #1 lived many more years after he had other sons and daughters." Genesis 5 adds a new part: "Person #1 lived a total number of years. Then he died." Genesis 5 and Genesis 11 show us all the future children of Adam. Nobody extra was added to the list. Nobody is missing. 1 Chronicles 1:18–27 shows us this information is correct. In this way, the Bible explains itself.

For almost 2,000 years, Jewish and Christian Bible thinkers taught that Genesis 5 and 11 show us history. These chapters also help us to know the date that the Flood happened and how old the earth is.

Not long ago, people started to give new explanations for Genesis 5 and 11. These thinkers said that the information from science and history shows that the earth was not made in six days. They also say the earth is very old too. If they are right, then we cannot trust the Bible to be true.

But we know that we can trust the Bible. We know that Genesis 5 and 11 show us the truth "about God and history. These two chapters connect Adam to the rest of the human family. These chapters also connect God with man. Genesis 5 and Genesis 11:10–26 show us God's people are connected to the man that God made on the 6th day when He made the earth. That man is Adam."—Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Meaning of the Chronogenealogies of Genesis 5 and 11," *Origins* 7/2 [1980], page 69, adapted.



"Genesis 5 and Genesis 11:10–26 show us that God's people are connected to the man that God made on the 6th day when He made the earth."

The verses in Genesis 5 and Genesis 11 are in the Bible for a very good reason. At the same time, Paul warns us in 1 Timothy 1:4 and Titus 3:9 about the danger of fighting over lists. What danger does Paul warn us about?

THE BIBLE AND GENESIS (Matthew 19:4, 5)

Read the verses below. Then write down what each verse says about the topics in Genesis 1–11:

Matthew 19:4, 5 _____

Mark 10:6–9 _____

Luke 11:50, 51 _____

John 1:1–3 _____

Acts 14:15 _____

Romans 1:20 _____

2 Corinthians 4:6 _____

Ephesians 3:9 _____

1 Timothy 2:12–15 _____

James 3:9 _____

1 Peter 3:20 _____

Jude 1:11, 14 _____

Revelation 2:7 _____

Revelation 3:14 _____

Revelation 22:2, 3 _____

Jesus and **all** the New Testament writers talk about Genesis 1–11 as history that is true. Jesus talks about Moses’ writings and about the time when God made Adam and Eve (Matthew 19:4). Paul tells the men in Athens that God is the One who made the earth “and everything in it. He is the Lord of the land and the sky. He does not live in temples built by human hands” (Acts 17:24, ERV). The New Testament writers built their teachings on the Bible truth in Genesis. In this way, these writers show the modern readers that God’s work in Genesis 1 and 2 is important.



Paul tells the men in Athens that God is the One who made the earth “and everything in it” (Acts 17:24, ERV).

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Gerald A. Klingbeil, editor, *The Genesis Creation Account and Its Reverberations in the Old Testament* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2015).

“The Bible is the best record of history that men have. It can teach men many things. The Bible came from God’s own hand. God’s hand has kept the Bible safe from the time it was written. The Bible is the only book that gives us a true history of our race.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 5, page 25, adapted.

“I have been shown that rock science by itself cannot prove anything true. Rock science needs help from Bible history. Yes, scientists have found objects from the past in the earth. These objects do show us proof of a time in the past that was different from how things are today. But only Bible history can help us to understand how old these objects really are. It is okay to guess how old something is that we find in nature. That is fine as long as our guesses do not go against Bible facts. But when men turn away from Bible truth and try to explain nature using only science, then they will have trouble. Exactly how God made the sky and the earth in six real days, no one knows. God has not shown this truth to humans. His works are too much for our minds to understand. So is His life.”—Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, book 3, page 93, adapted.



“Scientists have found objects from the past in the earth. . . . Only Bible history can help us to understand how old these objects really are.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Scientists make explanations that cause many arguments and disagreements. So, why do so many people accept science’s explanations that life on earth started long before there were any humans?
- ② Modern science says that you cannot use miracles or God to explain what happens in nature. How is this way of thinking too limited when it comes to the story in Genesis 1 and 2? The Genesis story about how God made the earth is something that only God can do. But if you refuse to accept God’s power as the explanation for how the earth was made, then why will any other idea be wrong that you come up with to explain life on earth?