

Lesson 1: Genesis 1, Creation, part 1 (with an overview to the series)

Introduction to the Pentateuch Series

King David praised the word of God in Psalm 19 with these words:

- ⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul;
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.
- ⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.
- ⁹ The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.
- ¹⁰ They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

I loved this passage in college. I remember marking it all up in my Bible. Though I am not sure when I asked the question, “What exactly was David talking about? What was his Bible?” The answer of course is the Pentateuch, the Law of Moses, the first five books of the Bible, also with the books of Joshua and Judges. That makes me consider Psalm 19 in a new light. I have to ask myself, “Do I consider the first five books of the Bible sweeter than honey and more desirable than gold? And if not, why not? Is it because these books are not sweeter than honey and not more desirable than gold? Or is it that I do not know them well enough to experience the sweetness and the value that David experienced?” I have worked over the surface and picked up many wonderful gems lying about, especially from Genesis and Exodus. How though do I dig deeper to experience this kind of appreciation for the words of Moses that David describes?

Moses had written in Deuteronomy 17:18-19 that when Israel does come to have a king, “he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life...” That’s not something I can see most of the kings of Israel doing, but David, I could see David obeying this one. He wrote it out. He memorized it. He reflected on it. He chewed it over in his mind and tried to apply it to his personal life and to the governance of the nation.

Of course, David made some really big mistakes and did not understand everything or even apply all of what he did understand. Still, he sought after God and was able to sincerely say, “This is gold to me. This is honey.”

To be fair, we have the wonderful news of the Messiah described in the gospels. We have the details of our new covenant played out in the real-life letters to the churches. We have a new vision of history in John’s Revelation. We have a lot more Bible to focus on than David did. That’s true. So, it makes sense that we spend a lot of our time in the New Testament. At the same time, our own understanding of the new covenant that applies to us is greatly enhanced by our study of the old covenant that applied to them. Paul calls our covenant the covenant of Grace and their covenant the covenant of Law, particularly in Romans 6-7. But it would be a serious mistake to think that there is no grace in the Law or that there is no law in the covenant of Grace. We have the dos and don’ts of commandment all over the New Testament. Just read Matthew 5-8, Ephesians 4-6, Romans 12-15 or the book of James. We have a lot of commandment, and we need to know how law works in our covenant of Grace. One of the ways to better understand that is to go back and get a picture of how grace works in the covenant of Law. Study of the Law of Moses should give us insight into the new covenant of Jesus.

The Pentateuch is the singular most important document for understanding the background of the New Testament. The beginning of a Christian worldview starts here with Interpreting the Pentateuch. We are not going to go verse by verse through these five books. This will be a survey study. We are going to address passages through the Pentateuch that will enhance our ability to understand the whole.

Whenever I teach in an old European capital, like Prague or Kiev or Sarajevo, there is almost always a river running through it. Rivers were the highways of the old world. There is also usually a square with a guy on a horse, except for Ljubljana, they have a poet and are very proud of the fact. Each city has monuments that the locals want to show you. Along with the historic statues and buildings, there is the bustle of life, a large outdoor market, massive apartment blocks with schools and factories and banks scattered throughout.

In a big city it takes time to get to know the ins and outs of all the neighborhoods with the various streets and shops. And I imagine that is true for you with the Pentateuch. When you go to the Pentateuch, you have your favorite places to visit, places you have been before, maybe the Creation story, maybe the ten plagues, maybe the spies going into the promise land. There is a good chance it's a narrative section of the Pentateuch. But there are some more pedestrian places that might not excite you. Maybe you have just walked through them, the genealogies, the tabernacle furniture, most of Leviticus. I want to help you become more familiar with all that you might encounter in the Pentateuch. I want to take you to a few places where you may never have spent much time. There is a river that runs through the whole. That will help us keep our bearings. It is the river of God's commitment to his own promises. His commitment to his gracious plan of redemption in spite of his people's repeated faithlessness. We will also visit some major monuments with a focus on monuments to grace. We will uncover some of the cultural spots that give insight into the thought and life of the times. And since I get to be the tour guide, I will also take you to a few of my favorite out of the way places. We will not see everything. We do not have the time in this visit. But that is okay, because we are going to see a lot, and my goal is to motivate you to come back regularly on your own.

We will have four or five lessons per book with a couple extra at the beginning because Genesis is so foundational. We will start in this lesson with Genesis 1, but before we do that, I want to go over a major motif that will help us with the culture of the Pentateuch, and then I want to go over some background details about the Pentateuch as a work of literature. And then we will get into Genesis 1.

The Kingdom Motif

First, the kingdom motif. The kingdom motif will be a consistent background model or idea for us as we study through the Pentateuch. It will help us understand aspects of Old Testament thought and the thought of the Ancient Near East.

Kingdom is a recurring motif through the Bible. Mark introduces the ministry of Jesus in 1:14-15, writing that Jesus came "preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'" Later Jesus taught his disciples to pray this way, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come..." Jesus speaks about the kingdom both as a present reality and a future reality. This already, but not yet sense of the kingdom fits with the two comings of Jesus. He already reigns from heaven. And he will come again to fully establish his reign over a new heaven and a new earth.

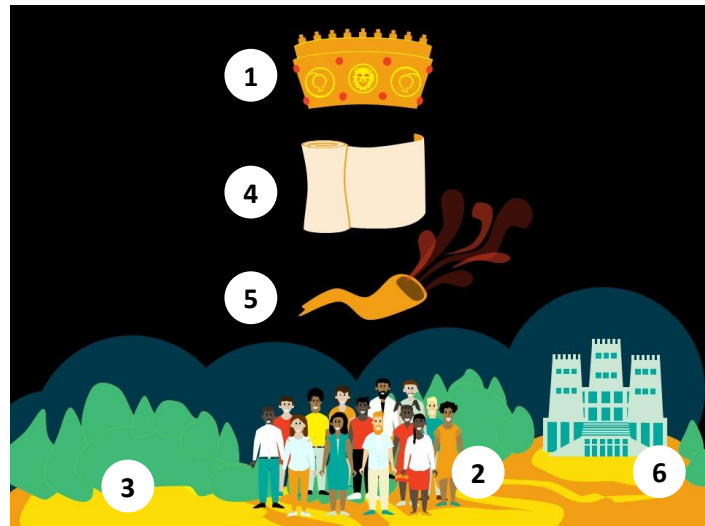
David recognizes that his kingdom is a reflection or perhaps a vassal state of a much greater kingdom. He praises God in Psalm 145:11-12, this way,

They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom
And talk of Your power;
To make known to the sons of men your mighty acts
And the glory of the majesty of Your kingdom.

David sees God as the king of a great kingdom.

Our kingdom motif has six elements, six things you would expect to have in order to have kingdom. What do you think those six things are? What are the basic elements of kingdom? You might want to pause the audio here and see how many you can come up with. What do you need to have to have kingdom?

The two most basic elements are (1) a king and (2) a people. Some students say an army, but I am counting that in with the people, king and a people. So, what else do we need? We need (3) a land, that is an environment or a place where the people will live. We also need (4) a covenant that will define the relationship between the king and his people. Covenant is not only a biblical idea. A covenant between a great king and a lesser kingdom was called a suzerain-vassal treaty in the Ancient Near East. It was a common type of legal agreement with a fixed form. We will talk more about suzerain-vassal treaty or covenant in our next lesson. For now, it is enough to recognize that kingdom and covenant go together. So, we have a king, a people, a land, and a covenant. That's four elements. We also need (5) a mediator, because no self-respecting great king is going to communicate the requirements of a treaty himself. He communicates through a mediator. And finally, we need (6) a palace. Which, in the case of God or a god, would be called a temple. In fact, the Hebrew word for temple comes from a much older Sumerian word that literally means "big house." A temple is a house for a god. That's why in the Ancient Near East, it would be ridiculous to have a temple with no idol in it. The point of the temple is that it houses the god.



These are our six elements: king, people, covenant, mediator, land, and temple. We could trace each of these elements as an important theological theme through the Pentateuch. We could look at the temple theme or trace the importance of the land. Each will come up as we move along in our series. We will especially give focus to the idea of covenant as a definition of the relationship between God, the great king, and man, his vassal people. So, our special focus is on king, people, and covenant.

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Pentateuch Background Details

Author

Before we move into Genesis, I want you to know where I am coming from regarding the background details of the Pentateuch as a book, such as the author, title, date and audience.

One of my favorite professors in seminary was Dr. Jeffrey Niehaus. He had a significant influence on me, introducing me to Ancient Near Eastern cultural and theological backgrounds of the Bible. He recently put out a three-volume biblical theology, the first volume came out in 2014. I have not read it, but just from looking at a synopsis of the books, I see that I received much of the content in his classes.

I really liked that at times Dr. Niehaus would share with us some of his own walk with Jesus. He came to faith during the last month of receiving his doctorate from Harvard in English poetry. He then started over, getting his Master's in theology and moving to England to pursue a doctorate in Old Testament studies. Dr. Niehaus had two readers, both of whom must sign off on his doctoral work in order for him to receive his degree. In his dissertation, Dr. Niehaus argued that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. But one of his official readers required him to give equal credit to the opposing documentary hypothesis which argues that the text of the Pentateuch comes from four schools of writers referred to as J, E, D and P. If you ever heard of JEDP, that's referring to the documentary hypothesis, and it is rejecting Mosaic authorship. Holding to Mosaic authorship and not willing to give equal support to the documentary hypothesis, Dr. Niehaus was refused his doctorate. All that work was rejected because he held to Mosaic authorship. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary hired him anyway. He did have a doctorate from Harvard after all, and I am sure they appreciated his biblical stance.

I bring up Dr. Niehaus for three reasons. First, I want you to be aware of one of the major influences on the teaching you will get in this series. I am always trying to interpret faithfully the text of the Bible. At the same time, we all have teachers who help us and influence us. I'll post a bibliography at observetheword.com to give other acknowledgements. Second, I want you to know that I am familiar with the documentary hypothesis, even though we are not going to spend any time on it. And third, I want to communicate to you that I reject the assumptions of the documentary hypothesis, believing with Dr. Niehaus and the vast majority of evangelical scholarship through the ages with the biblical assertion that Moses is the author of the first five books of the Bible. So, all that just to say, "Moses wrote it." Moses is the author.

Title

Recognizing Moses as the author of the Pentateuch helps us understand the title, date and audience. The Jewish title for these five books is Torah, which is usually translated in English as law. So, when we get past these first five books and later authors refer back to them, like Joshua does in 8:31, he writes, "as it is written in the book of the law of Moses," the word law there is the Hebrew word Torah. Of course, that word means much more than just the dos and don'ts, the commandments of law. It encapsulates all the material included from Genesis to Deuteronomy. It is the instruction of Moses or the covenant of Moses, that is the Law of Moses.

The word Pentateuch is a Greek word meaning five scroll work. This helps us to remember that the first five books of the Bible, while operating as separate books, also operate as a unified whole, a series of five books. A survey of the Pentateuch, like we are attempting, is a great place to consider the larger unity of the whole. We are moving quickly enough in order to keep the big picture of God's promises in mind. As far as the title goes, I will try to stick with Pentateuch, but may use Torah or books of Moses or books of the Law all to mean the same thing, the first five books of the Bible.

Date

Rather than argue a precise timeline for the Pentateuch, I suggest to you an easy to remember timeline. It is approximate, but extremely helpful. Think of Abraham at 2000 BC, Moses at 1500 BC, and David at 1000 BC. 2000, 1500, 1000, how easy is that? Abraham, Moses and David. And Jesus came at 0, and we are on the other side at 2000 AD. Simple.

Audience

Having defined the author, title, and date, that leaves us with the audience. This is one of the first principles of good Bible study. We do not want to jump in and start interpreting the Pentateuch as though Moses had us primarily in mind. The most basic meaning of the text is generally going to be the meaning that the author intended his audience to receive. Who was the audience?

Usually, someone answers by saying, "God's people" or "Israel." That's on the right track but not specific enough. Which Israel? Who were the real people who first received this five-scroll work from Moses? The next answer I get tends to be the Israelites who came out of Egypt. That is closer. But most of them died in the desert before Deuteronomy was written. The first audience to receive the Pentateuch was the second generation of Israelites to have come out of Egypt. It was the second generation as they were camped on the wrong side of the Jordan river faced with the decision of whether or not they would be faithful where their parents' generation had been unfaithful. Will we trust God and enter the land?

Moses knows that he is not going to enter the land. He has done his best to prepare Joshua to take up the mantle of leadership. And now he has written the book of the Law for these people, for this generation. They have three big picture questions they need answered. (1) Who is our God? (2) Who are we? (3) What is our mission? This is what Moses needs them to know. We can ask these same three questions from an individual point of view. (1) Who is my God? (2) Who am I? (3) What is my mission? These are the questions that this second generation out of Egypt needed answered in order to walk faithfully with God. These are also the questions that we need answered for our generation if

we are to walk faithfully with God. We start with this second generation out of Egypt, but there is going to be relevance to us.

So, let's get started.

Genesis Overview

Each time we start a new book in this series, I'll give you a basic outline or structure for the book. For Genesis, I am using Bruce Wilkinson's *Talk Through the Bible* outline. Its simplicity is very nice. We divide the book into two parts. Chapters 1-11 cover four events, and chapters 12-50 cover four people. The four events deal with all humanity while the four people deal with one family. The events are Creation, Fall, Flood and Nations. That's Genesis 1-11 and all of humanity. The four people are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. That's Genesis 12-50 and one family.

Genesis: Kingdom Prologue							
Key Passage: 12:2-3							
Chapters 1-11: Four Events				Chapters 12-50: Four People			
Creation	Fall	Flood	Nations	Abraham	Isaac	Jacob	Joseph
All humanity				One family			
Common Grace Kingdom				Special Grace Kingdom			

To get a nice overview of Genesis in your mind, I also recommend the Bible Project overview videos. They are great. In fact, when I teach this course in a classroom setting, I stop talking at this point and have the class watch the first Genesis video which covers chapters 1-11. You can do that if you want to. Stop now and watch the video. The Bible Project really handles the biblical literature well. For your convenience, I have posted all of the Pentateuch videos from the Bible Project on the resource page of our website at observetheword.com. So, if you want to see a short overview video, go to observetheword.com and watch Genesis, part 1.

We are beginning with the beginning and are just going to address chapter 1 and the first story of Creation. As we look at the text, we will focus on the three big picture questions. (1) Who is our God? (2) Who are we? (3) And what is our mission?

Genesis 1:1-2:3

(1) *Who is our God?*

Genesis 1:1,

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

That sums up the whole story. It's not unusual for biblical literature to give us a layered approach to a narrative where the story does not unfold simply linearly, but successive accounts overlap one another. Genesis 1 and 2 is an example. The story of Genesis 1 ends a little into chapter 2 at verse 3 with the seven days and God resting. Genesis 2 does not pick up after day 7 but starts by giving focus to days 3 and 6 when God first brought forth vegetation and then created man. Then perhaps we are to understand the rest of chapter 2 being completed on day 6 or the rest of the process takes more than a day and so the story moves forward. In either case, the Genesis 2 narrative doesn't follow but overlaps with the Genesis 1 narrative, giving us additional information with a different emphasis.

Perhaps that is how we should understand 1:1. In this first verse, we are given the whole story. God created heaven and the earth. It is a summary statement that also serves as an introduction. Genesis 1:2 and following does not take place after Genesis 1:1 but gives us more information about the creation described in Genesis 1:1. We would then ask, "How did God create heaven and earth or what do we need to know about the creation of heaven and earth?"

Verse 2 is the point where we are picking up the story. God has already created a watery mass to work with.

Genesis 1:2,

The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Water in the Ancient Near East was a symbol of chaos. This comes out strongly in the flood narrative in which God saves Noah's family through the waters of judgment. In fact, ancient cultures may have viewed water as chaos because of a common memory of the flood. But there was this theme in ancient literature. Here the waters are described as formless and void with the Spirit of God moving over them. Moses will later make a literary link to the phrase "the Spirit of God was moving [or hovering] over the surface." That same Hebrew word shows up in the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32:11 where Moses describes God as a majestic bird watching over Israel, "Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that hovers over its young, he spread his wings and caught them, he carried them on his pinions." The vision of the Spirit of God hovering as creator and as protector occurs here at the beginning of the Pentateuch and then at the end of the Pentateuch. It's a really nice literary link suggesting the unity of five books from beginning to end.

So, we start with this image of God the Spirit hovering over the formless waters. In verse 1 he created something out of nothing. Now he is continuing the process of creation with the additional idea of bringing order out of chaos.

Then we get the first day.

Genesis 1:3–5,

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. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

Now we have light.

The beginning of this story is telling us about our God. Our God is the one who creates something out of nothing, who brings order into chaos, who calls light to shine into the darkness. That's our God. And scholars recognize that elements of this story oppose Ancient Near East creation myths. There is no description here of God needing the creation. There is no Leviathan, no monster of chaos. There is no battle between gods to bring it about. The earth does not come out of the body of a god or a monster, like in all those other stories. Nothing exists prior to God's action in verse 1. And though some rejection of false ancient worldviews is likely present in the background of our Genesis story, it is left in the background. This story is not focusing on the false narratives but on giving us a true narrative that teaches us about our God.

We learn that God exists before the creation of anything. We learn that God brings the physical world into being. We learn that order and light come from God. We also learn that what God makes is good. In verse 4 God looks at the light, and he calls it good. That will be repeated every day. Everything that God makes is a reflection of him and is therefore good. What God makes is good.

While rejecting ancient myths, this story also rejects a modern myth. God does not arise out of human consciousness. Human consciousness comes to be because of God. Likewise, moral good is not a social structure. It is not defined by human culture and conventions. It comes out of the nature of God. Good is defined by who God is. Would God be God if there were never any humans around to experience him or worship him? Absolutely. He is not at all defined by us. We are defined by him. So, we can ask, "Who are we? According to this story who are we?" Let's consider that as we read on.

(2) *Who are we?*

In day 1 we have light. Let's read the rest of the story, all 7 days, from Genesis 1:6 – 2:3. And as we read, pay attention to what is created on each day, and see if you can detect the pattern. There is, of course, the linear seven-day pattern, but there is another pattern to the days that goes along with that. See if you catch it.

Let's read Genesis 1:6-2:3. **[Read Genesis 1:6-2:3.]**

The first pattern of the days is the list of seven. So, we all know that. We are familiar with the idea that there are seven days of creation. There is a second pattern in there. And that pattern is a parallel pattern. So, days 1-3 are set parallel to days 4-6. Day 1 and 4 go together, then day 2 and 5 and then day 3 and 6. Let's think about what God does on each of the days. In the first three days, God creates the environment. In second set of three days he is going to populate the environment. So, God created light on the first day. He separated the waters to create sky and sea on the second day. He separates the waters again on the third day to bring forth land with vegetation. These are our environments, or we could say our kingdoms, our realms.

Day 4 parallels days 1 in which God created light and separated it from darkness by populating the realm of light with the sun and the moon and the stars. Day 5 parallels day 2 on which God separated sky and sea by populating sky and sea with birds and fish. Day 6 parallels day 3 on which God separated dry land from the water by populating that dry land with animals.

The primary way an author communicates meaning is through words, phrases, and sentences. An author also communicates meaning through style and structure. In this case, the parallel structure of the days communicates to us the creation of an environment in which mankind will live, but not only live, mankind is going to reign. God creates the environment, then he populates the environment, crowning that population with the creation of man. We are learning about ourselves. God is defining us. Let's read again 1:26-28. It's about us.

Genesis 1:26–28

²⁶ God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

What do we learn about ourselves? Most importantly we learn that we are created in the image of God. This is where the intrinsic value of the human being comes from. If human rights is not just a completely made up concept, where does it come from? How do we ground it? How do we say that human beings are valuable and that they have certain rights that we should pay attention to? We are unique and valuable because God has made us in his image.

This is the basis for equality between men and women. Verse 17 says, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." As equals. The modern world, especially in the West, holds this principle to be self-evident. But is it? History suggest that it is not self-evident. History promotes the view that a certain class or race or gender is better, smarter, more valuable. That is the way cultures have acted throughout time. The secular worldview has no ultimate ground for the claim of equality. No ultimate ground for the claim of value. We sense it to be right in our cultures that little boys and little girls have equal value, equal worth. What is our basis for that? Well, Genesis 1:27, we are made in the image of God, male and female he made them in his image. This is why we argue the value of human life, regardless of race, regardless of gender, from the womb to hospice, each human being bears the intrinsic value of being made in God's image.

Being in God's image means that we are moral beings. This comes out through the Pentateuch. The basis for the Law of Moses is that we should be holy because our God is holy. That is who he is. What he

creates is good, good, good, very good. So, we should be, too. This is part of our uniqueness in the animal realm, even if it has been polluted by the fall of man and twisted. It is still in us and shines out at times. Along with this sense of morality, we share also in God's rationality and in God's creativity. He has made us able to observe the world, to think about it, to appreciate beauty, and to desire to create.

Something that may not come out here explicitly, but I think comes out in Scripture, particularly in the New Covenant concept of the body of Christ, is how we are meant to reflect or give image to the nature of God as trinity, to God as three-in-one, to the communal nature of God. C. S. Lewis described a wonderful truth about the mystery of the trinity in his book *Mere Christianity*. 1 John 4:8 says, "The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love." When we say that "God is love", there is a very interesting truth that accompanies the Christian mystery of God as three in one. Because God is one, it is possible to say that he is self-existent. He depends on no one for anything. He has always been, and he always will be. He is uniquely the first. But if God was merely one then that would mean love was not actually possible until God created someone to love. God must lack the experience of love until he creates. And so, God has a need, if he wants to love. In order to love, he must create.

But that is not true for the biblical concept of God. He is one. But according to the biblical mystery, he is also three. And among the three the Father has always loved the Son and the Son has always loved the Father and so also the Spirit. We do not have to say God values love or God desires love or God imagines love or God created love. We can say, "God is love", and in that we mean that he has always loved. He has never lacked love.

So now, how does a single individual reflect, like Adam, reflect the image God as love. Now, I guess a single individual could reflect God's image by loving God. But I believe that God's intention in creating human partnership between a man and a woman, among a family, among a community, such as the body of Christ, his intention is that we might show off the image of God by loving one another. God created man, he created him male and female, to image his love by loving.

There is one more way revealed here that human beings are to be like God. They are to reign over the earth. That brings up our kingdom motif. It is here in the first chapter of Genesis, this idea of kingdom. God the great king has created a kingdom for his vassals Adam and Eve for them to live in and to rule in. They are to be King and Queen. That leads us to our third question, "What is our mission?"

(3) And what is our mission?

The original mission of Adam and Eve here is to be fruitful, fill the earth, rule over it, subdue it. And they are to do this as a reflection of the image of God on earth. And it does not mean that the earth and animals are created for the whim of man, to be used up and abused. It does mean that the creation is subservient to man. It is wrong to emphasize the need to care for our environment to such a degree that the earth and the animals are given equal or more value than man. The earth and the animals are the environment in which we live. On the other hand, we do have a responsibility to care for the environment God has entrusted to us in a manner that we imagine God would want us to care for it.

God is the great king who rules over all. He has now created an environment for mankind to thrive in as his vassals. Adam and Eve are lesser rulers, stewards of the realm God has given into their hands. We can imagine God's intention that Adam and Eve would rule benevolently as his representatives. It sounds like it is going to take some work, to multiply, fill, subdue and rule. God has given them real responsibility with the intention that as their rule spreads over creation the glory of God is to be manifested to the heavenly realms.

That mission will be affected by the fall of man in chapter 3. We are going to have to ask, "How does this change after the fall?", but a sense of it is maintained for Israel. They are still to flourish on the earth as a reflection of the God they worship. So, when we get to Exodus on Mt. Sinai, God will say to Israel, "you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (19:6)." They are still supposed to

be holy, to reflect his goodness. They are to be holy. Priests are to reflect the goodness of God and bring others into right relationship with him. And then later, God will say to the second generation out of Egypt in Deuteronomy chapter 4 that they are to live out the law as a witness to the surrounding nations (4:6). They are supposed to see how you live and be attracted to your God.

This continues to be our mission. Doesn't it? We have an awesome God who shines light into the darkness and brings order out of chaos. And we are to join in that work, living out his image as a witness to his glory. We were made for this to reflect him. So, as the moon reflects the glory of the sun, which is not its own, but shines brightly out, so too we are created to reflect the glory of God. That's who he is. That's who we are. That's our mission.

Reflection Questions

1. What stands out to you as you read Genesis 1:1-2:3? What do you notice as interesting or important or strange or confusing? What questions come to mind?
2. What repetition stands out to you in the sequence of days? There is more than one kind of repetition. What point might Moses want to make by repeating or restating the same or similar facts and ideas?
3. Who is God? In what way does Genesis 1 rebuke or correct or affirm the religious or secular worldview of your society regarding the nature of God? What is important for people to know about who God truly is?
4. Who are we? In what way does Genesis 1 rebuke or correct or affirm the religious or secular worldview of your society regarding the nature of people? What is important for people to know about who we are as human beings? What are real or potential consequences for a society that rejects this understanding of human beings?
5. What's our mission? In what way does Genesis 1 rebuke or correct or affirm the religious or secular worldview of your society regarding human purpose? Why is it important for people to know they have a purpose? And what stands out to you about the purpose communicated here in Genesis 1?
6. Why does God make a point to rest on the seventh day? What does this communicate about God's creative work? What might the point be for people?