

Hemphill, KenSurvey of the Old Testament (Nondisposable Curriculum Book 3)

6. The Creation (Genesis 1-2)

This opening study contrasts the Bible's starting point—God—with a purely material view of the universe. It walks through the first words of Genesis phrase by phrase to show what they teach about God, creation, and the special place of humankind. The focus is theological: not chiefly how or when the world was made, but who made it and why.

Key takeaways

- "In the beginning" affirms God created everything from nothing (ex nihilo), with intention, purpose, and a goal in mind—He controls both the start and the end.
- God is the subject of the Bible's first sentence and dominates chapter 1 (named 32 times). To read Genesis without seeing God as the focus is to misread it.
- 'Create' in the Old Testament always describes divine activity alone—bringing something new into being and to completion. Creation itself testifies to God's power and character.
- God spoke creation into being by command ("God said"), so the universe is not self-existent. Each stage He calls "good," meaning it reflects His character and serves His purpose.

- Humankind is the climax of creation, made male and female in God's image—so every human life is sacred and purposeful.
- Being in God's image makes man relational, rational, and therefore responsible: created for fellowship with others and, above all, for communion with God.
- Humans are God's stewards and representatives, accountable to manage His resources for His purposes and glory.

Passages worth keeping

“"Good" means that everything God made reflects His character since it comes from Him and serves His purpose.”

Reframes 'good' as relationship to the Creator, not mere beauty.

“We cannot live fully without God because we were created by Him and for Him.”

States the chapter's core claim about human purpose.

How it connects

The chapter ties Genesis to the whole of Scripture—Isaiah, John, Hebrews, the Psalms—showing creation is a thread running from beginning to end, and it draws a practical line: if life is God's gift, then the handicapped, the terminally ill, and the unborn all have great value.

Scripture referenced

- **Genesis 1:1** -- God created the heavens and the earth—the foundation text
- **Genesis 1:26-27** -- Man created male and female in God's image
- **Genesis 2:7** -- Man formed from dust, given the breath of life—body and soul
- **Romans 1:20** -- Creation reveals God's power and nature
- **John 1:1, 3** -- All things made through the Word, before creation
- **Job 38:4** -- The Creator is capable of managing all of life