

• LESSON 1 (January 4) •

The Beginning of God's Revelation to Mankind

The word *genesis* means “an origin, creation, or beginning.”

- ❖ Why is *Genesis* a very appropriate name for the first book of the Bible?

- ❖ Take a moment to think about “beginnings” in Genesis. What had its origin, creation, or beginning in this first book of the Bible?

Let's start with Genesis 1:1.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

- ❖ What does this very first statement affirm?

- ❖ What does this very first statement deny?

- ❖ The Hebrew word we have translated *God* in Genesis 1:1 is *Elohim*, a plural noun. The question is, why? Why not *El*, a singular noun in Hebrew that can also be translated *God*?

Take the time to reflect on the beginning of *The Gospel According to John*.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. (John 1:1-3)

- ❖ How does John 1:1-3 deepen our understanding of Genesis 1:1?

The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. (Gen 1:2)

- ❖ What does this mean? What are we being told?

- ❖ Of the countless ways the Creator of heaven and earth could have introduced himself and his revelation to mankind, this is how he chose to do so. Think about that fact. Why *this* way?

Finally, take the time to reflect on some of the very first statements in *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. (Rom 1:18-23)

- ❖ How do these words of Paul relate to Genesis 1:1-2?

- ❖ What are Paul's readers, ancient and modern, being told?

- ❖ "So they are without excuse." How can Paul justifiably make such a strong statement? And what practical difference should that statement make in our lives this week?