



## St Cuthbert's Bible Study

### Genesis: The Beginning of the Beginning

#### Genesis 1:1-2:4

#### Six Days of Creation and the Sabbath

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup>the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup>Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

<sup>6</sup> And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' <sup>7</sup>So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. <sup>8</sup>God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

<sup>9</sup> And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. <sup>10</sup>God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup>Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. <sup>12</sup>The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

<sup>14</sup> And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, <sup>15</sup>and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. <sup>16</sup>God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. <sup>17</sup>God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, <sup>18</sup>to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup> And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.' <sup>21</sup>So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup>God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' <sup>23</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup> And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.' And it was so. <sup>25</sup>God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth,\* and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

<sup>27</sup> So God created humankind in his image,

in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup>God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' <sup>29</sup>God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. <sup>30</sup>And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. <sup>31</sup>God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

<sup>2</sup>Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude.<sup>2</sup>And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. <sup>3</sup>So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

<sup>4</sup> These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Before we dig into Genesis we need to be aware of what kind of book it is and what kind it isn't. The temptation of our modern sensibilities might be to read it as a history book or science book. Neither of these will help us see the depth and beauty of Genesis and what its message is for us today. The purpose of Genesis isn't to tell us exactly how everything happened in the way a newspaper would, but rather to capture the meaning, tradition, customs, and values that the writers wanted to convey. Genesis contains narratives passed from generation to generation to preserve the identity and heritage of the Hebrew people. Most importantly it tells us what the character of God is like and how God begins a relationship with humanity since the beginning of time. Though most of the narratives of Genesis focus on one family, it has always been and continues to be the story of humanity – the story of us.

### **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

*Always read each passage multiple times before reflecting on them or attempting to answer questions. Read the passages carefully. Don't rush. Take time for verses to sink in before moving ahead. If it helps you, take notes as you go about your thoughts and questions that come to mind. You are strongly encouraged to journal your experiences when reading on your own and when participating in our Bible Study sessions. Never assume everyone else knows something when you don't. Ask questions. Demand answers.*

Our study throughout Genesis will focus on three main questions. Consider them as you read Gen 1:1-2:4. The comments beneath each question below, are intended to help guide and inform your thinking, but not provide the answers for you.

### **1) What does this passage tell us about God? What are God's traits? How is God communicating?**

- God creates, makes, speaks. God likes order - there is a beautiful and poetic repetition to these verses.
- Each day it says, "it was evening and it was morning." God seems to be at work even before the day begins – God is constantly making and creating, it is an ongoing process through the night. (God's days aren't the same as ours anyways – time isn't even there until after day 4 when the sun and moon are created).

- God is planting seeds (vv11-13)- God starts things off, he is intimately involved; yet God leaves room for plants, animals, and humans to multiply and grow and do their thing. God is “letting be” as much as doing the creating.
- God is very powerful, but not authoritarian. There is an inherent freedom (the “letting be”) that God gives to the world, especially humanity. We often think of power as “grasping” but God’s power is about freedom. Grasping for power leads to death; Creative power gives life.

**2) What does this passage tell us about human nature? How can you see yourself or identify with the characters and situations?**

- We are blessed. God blesses humanity in vs 28. God first blesses the animals (vs 22) and will also bless the Sabbath (vs 2:3). But at our core, our essence, humanity is blessed (not evil).
- We are created in God’s image. Men and women are created in the image of God. We are good. Nothing else in the world is created in the image of God except us.

**3) What do you need to remember about this passage? What can you take with you into your everyday life? How is the passage calling you into the likeness of Christ?**

- I am blessed. I am capable. God puts a lot of trust into my hands. We are trusted with God’s image, with life itself.
- Even out of chaos – when the earth was a formless void (vs 2) – God created. Nothing in my life is too chaotic or messy for God to work with. For us to co-create together.