

K.E.Y. Bible Study (2012-2013-Year V)

K.E.Y Bible Study is a systematic study of Scripture that equips participants to become acquainted with the major truths of the Bible over a five-year period. Each lesson is self-contained, so, you can join the study at any time during the five years.

Purpose: To teach the most significant events, passages, and doctrines of the Bible in a manner and using methods that encourage and empower the student to:
KeeP the Faith We Have Received
Be **E**quipped to Serve the Body of Christ
Become **Y**oked in Ministry with Other Believers

Session 1
August 22, 2012

“The Original Ground Zero”
Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:1

Why is Genesis 1:1 a K.E.Y. verse in the Bible?

These ten words form the foundation on which the rest of the Bible is built. How the world began is of interest to all people of every culture. Frequently, it is a very divisive issue between Christians and non-Christians and even becomes a point of speculative conflict between Christians. Yet, the beginning verse of the Bible gives a very clear and concise statement that answers a basic question and provides the foundation for a Christian worldview.

General Background

Who?

God is the only character in this verse and the central character of every book of the Bible. The Bible describes the acts of God and reveals the character of God. Even though there are “when” and “where” sections in this handout, the verse is about the “Who.”.

When?

Religious scholars, sociologists, and scientists speculate regarding the date of this verse. The best answer to the question of when is, “in the beginning.” Among the answers given by religious writers, the most famous was given by the Irish Archbishop James Ussher, who lived in the mid-1600s and believed the world was created on October 23, 4004 BC. Ussher’s dating system was often used in the reference notes in versions of the King James translation of the Bible beginning as early as 1701. Ussher’s dates were used in the very popular *Scofield Reference Bible* published in the first decade of the twentieth century. As a result, many incorrectly assumed these dates were part of the text.

Where?

The specific action described here occurs everywhere.

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Context:

The first eleven chapters of Genesis serve as an introduction to the book of Genesis and to the first five books of the Old Testament (the Pentateuch). This is an intentional introduction because the central concept of the Pentateuch is the covenant. The God of the covenant is the same as the God of creation. The purpose of covenant redemption is to accomplish God's original purpose for creation. The material in this verse and the passage that follows is not anti-scientific; it is pre-scientific. The New Testament interprets this passage in light of who Jesus is. He is present at creation and the agent of creation (see John 1:3, 10; I Corinthians 8:6; and Hebrews 1:2). Moses is assumed to be the compiler of the first five books of the Old Testament.

Word Study

- **"in the beginning"** – This is the Hebrew title of the first book of the Bible. The title "Genesis" comes from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, which was translated approximately three centuries before Christ. "Beginning" marks a starting point or the first action and is usually associated with a specific time. This is often used with a word meaning "the end." The Hebrew story of life is linear as opposed to other worldviews that make life more cyclical. The Bible teaches there is a starting point to life on earth and an end point. The belief that creation and the universe have a beginning and an end is a significant distinction that has several implications.
- **"God"** – The name for God used in this verse is the Hebrew word *Elohim*. This name for God is not found as often in other ancient Semitic languages as it is in the Hebrew. It is a plural form but does not suggest multiple gods because the name is only used with singular verb forms and adjectives. This plural form does signify many dimensions to God. While it certainly cannot be used as a proof text for the Trinity in the Old Testament, it does allow for the possibility of the Trinity. God is the subject and the one doing the creating. The writer is not introducing God to the readers; he assumes they know God through the covenant. This written history assumes the reader knows the oral history. The God of the covenant is personal. Knowing this helps to us to see God, the Creator, as not just power but also person. In order to accept the personhood or personality of God, we have to be aware of the larger story of the Old Testament.
- **"created"** – This Hebrew word is used only when describing the creative activity of God. A different word is used when describing the creating humans do. It means "bringing into existence" rather than "reshaping." God did not reshape matter; God created matter.
- **"the heavens and the earth"** – This is a poetic expression indicating the whole universe.

Which of the *six areas of spiritual competencies* is emphasized in this K.E.Y. verse?

- This verse is about the character of God specifically God as Creator.

What am I to *know* as a result of having read and studied this K.E.Y. verse?

- God is the Creator of all.
- God has no beginning, and therefore, is separate and distinct from creation.
- There is nothing or no one that can compare to God.

What am I to *be or become* as a result of having studied this K.E.Y. verse?

- In awe of God, the Creator
- Fully aware of my dependence on the Creator

What am I to *do* in order to apply this K.E.Y. verse in my private and public life?

- Worship God, the Creator.
- Serve God, the Creator.