

Looking At Life

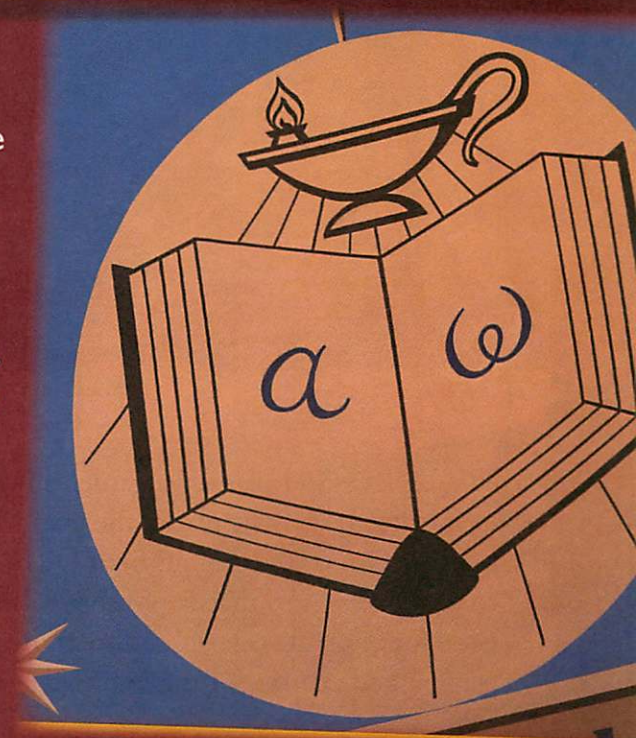
Lesson 3

Unit One

The Alpha and Omega

Here I Am, Lord

- All : Dear God we trust you as Our Father and believe that you created all things.
- Voice 1: You spoke us into being.
- Voice 2: Each of us uniquely created in Body and Soul.
- Voice 1: Our body, which is physical...
- Voice 2: Is stamped with your fingerprint, which is our soul.
- Voice 1: You reveal yourself through your Word, both written and lived.
- Voice 2: You desire a relationship with your children.
- Voice 1: You know us each by name.
- Voice 2: You give us your Spirit to guide and protect us...
- Voice 1: and to give us the grace that we need to be good stewards of the natural resources you gave us.
- Voice 2: You desire true happiness for your children.
- All: You are the Alpha and the Omega; you were there at the beginning of our physical life and you will be with us in Eternity.



The Armenian language was designed with God at its beginning and end. The first letter “**ayp**” is the first letter of the word for God (*Asdvadz*). The last letter of the alphabet “**keh**” is an ancient abbreviation for Christ. God is literally the beginning and end of Armenian letters and literature.

A Peek at Primeval History

As a group, read the accounts of Creation in Genesis 1 & 2 and sequence the events of Scripture in the order in which they happened.



Genesis _____

- a) The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there he placed the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ____
- b) Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground. ____
- c) Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. ____
- d) Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. ____
- e) This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven. ____
- f) Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. ____
- g) Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. ____

- h) The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which he had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. ____

Genesis _____

- a) Then God said, Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear;” and it was so. God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters he called seas; and God saw that it was good. ____
- b) God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; he made the stars also. God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. ____



- c) Then God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them;” and it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good. ____
- d) God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind;” and it was so. God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good. ____

- e) God said, "Let us make people 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." God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ____
- f) 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. Then God said, "Let there be light;" and there was light. ____
- g) Then God said, "Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens." God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." ____
- h) Then God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. ____

Digging Deeper

1. How are the two accounts different?
2. How are the two accounts the same?
3. What is the most difficult for you to accept in the story of Creation?



God's Awesome Creativity!

Yes...the Church teaches and Christians believe that God created the whole world. But God creates in a much different way than humans have the ability to do. Let's look at some different ways we humans can create. A potter can create beautiful pottery from clay, a carpenter can create handsome furniture, an artist has the ability to paint a magnificent mural and a writer has the ability to imagine and write a best-selling novel. These are among some of the many ways that humanity has the ability to create...

In your estimation what is the difference between human creation and God's creation?

Testing the Waters... Science versus Faith

If you learned about the theory of evolution in school you've learned that scientists have a theory that higher forms of life developed from less complex forms over a great period of time. For instance, you might have heard that scientists claim to have strong evidence that humans evolved from the same ancient ancestor as apes. But, how can we believe we were created by God if that is true?



Our Christian belief is not founded in the scientific world, nor confined to a history book. Our evidence in God as the ultimate Creator is found in a book of faith—that book is the Bible. In the 1500's when the printing press was invented, the first book they printed and distributed was the Bible, which was an essential tool in the emergence of modern science. Francis Schaeffer, a renowned historian, said "Science did not conflict with what the Bible teaches; indeed, at the most important point, the Scientific Revolution rested upon what the Bible teaches."

Would you be surprised to know that the Church accepts, to some point, the theory of evolution? Yes, we believe that God created the world and everything in it...but when exactly that happened in the course of time is an unknown event in the scientific world. But

the church does *unquestionably* believe that the origin of man's soul comes from God, that the soul is God's very own fingerprint in every human being. Perhaps God used evolution as his way of forming human beings.

Here are the guidelines that our faith affirms about creation.

1. All things were created by a loving God.
2. Human beings are made in the image of God, which

means we are spiritual beings, with the capacity to know, love, and choose with freedom.

3. Even if human beings emerged in a process of evolution, God is still Creator because he guided the process of evolution.
4. Whatever the origin of humankind's bodily form, our souls are a special creation of God, not the result of evolutionary process. The soul is "God's fingerprint" in each human being.

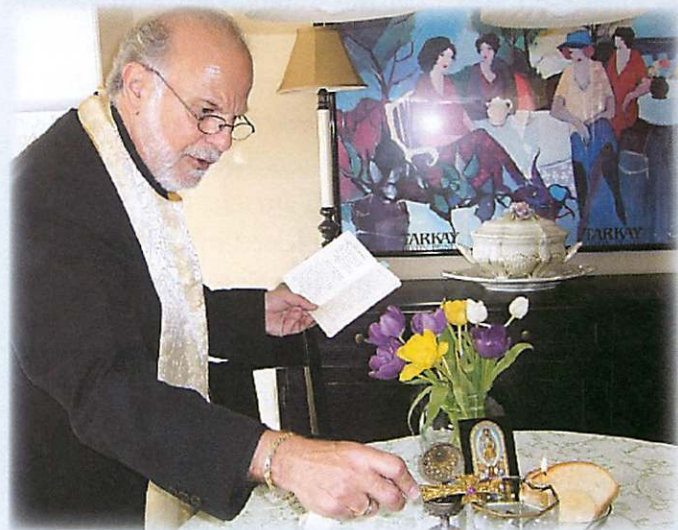
Our Armenian Way

The Blessing of the Fields and the Home

The Armenian Church has many special services that ask specifically for God's ongoing blessing upon creation. One of these special services is the *"blessing of the fields."* The purpose of the ceremony is to bring fruitfulness and fertility to the fields or gardens. In ancient times the ceremony was conducted outside the church, in the fields, according to the church calendar, approximately 12 times annually. The significance of this service is to both celebrate our blessings and to thank God for the earth and all that is in it.

Another such service is the **Home Blessing (Dnorhnek)** The Church teaches that everything God created is good and holy. So, we do not bless our house to make it holy, but to rededicate it to the Lord, and ask God's protection and blessing upon all those who live or enter the home. During this ceremony three important items are blessed: water, bread and salt. Water is an essential element of life. Think back to our Scripture reading this morning, what did it say about water? (Gen. 1:1-3) Bread is symbolic of our physical need for food and the bread of life—the Body of Christ that we receive in Holy Communion; salt preserves and brings flavor—and in Jesus' words "we are the salt of the earth."

Can you think of other items that are used in a home blessing? Hint: The priest brings them



with him when he comes to visit. See if you can name four of the items

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

During the ceremony, we join in the refrain "Amen Alleluia." With these words we proclaim that we have confidence in our God who has always come to the rescue of his people. **'Amen'** means "let it be." When we say or sing 'amen,' we are giving our signature to the ritual which has occurred and pledging to be a part of what makes this house, this world, holy.

Next week we will talk about Adam & Eve and the relationship that God has with his people. Remember to bring a photo of yourself as a baby!