

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

GENESIS TO REVELATION

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And God Said...

Genesis 1:1-23

Introduction

It is against the first few chapters of Genesis that Satan has launched his fiercest attack. And rightly so, because, as I suggested in our last discussion, if a person can believe the first two chapters of Genesis, he can believe all of scripture.

If a person can believe by faith that God created the heavens and the earth, as we are told in the first chapter of Genesis, he then by faith, can believe in the last few chapters of Revelation, where we are told that God will create a new heaven and a new earth. Genesis provides the basis for such faith.

May I remind you, my friends, that if Genesis, chapter 1, is wrong, then Jesus, who confirmed this record, and the prophets, who declared this record, and the apostles, who continued to teach this record are all pathological liars. And as well, our faith has become mere delusion.

All that we believe, men and women, hangs in the balance of Genesis, chapters 1 and 2. And Satan knows that full well. I think that is why he has kept up his attack using mirages and theories against these first two chapters in the beginning of the Bible.

Three Reasons for the Creation Account

Now, as we approach this study, we should at least stop for a moment to answer three questions as to why God gave the creation account. Let me give three reasons for the creation account.

To encourage Israel's faith

1. The first reason for the Genesis creation account is to encourage Israel's faith. This God, the God who claims to be their creator, is the same God who led them into the promised land. And He told them to follow Him and they would conquer it. He had better be a powerful God. Moses declares His phenomenal omnipotence. God is powerful – and it bolsters their faith.

To refute the myths about origins

2. Secondly, this creation account refutes the myths about origins. As I said, theories are not new. We have the Babylonian creation aspects that have come down through time. We can read that in the time of the Israelites, there were also evolutionary theories. There were theories that men were fallen gods; that somehow God procreated and came up with humanity. There were the myths then, and God wanted to set the record straight. So, He refutes all the myths.

To paint a portrait of God's character

3. Thirdly, the creation account paints a portrait of God's character. Genesis, chapter 1, reveals God's sovereignty, His power, His relationship to men and the world. In fact, Genesis, chapter 1, refers to God no less than thirty two times in one chapter.

The Length of Days in the Creation Account

Now, as we study this chapter, let us divide it into two sections. We will study:

- The length of the days of the creation account;
- The activity found in each day of the creation account.

We will begin with the length of the days of the creation account. In Genesis, chapter 1, does the length of a day refer to a literally twenty-four hour solar day?

In all of these events, do the days follow one after the other as day follows night and night follow day? The theorist would suggest that these are not to be taken literally and that the word “day” represents age. So, a day could mean a million years or perhaps, a billion years, meaning a day does not refer to twenty four hours.

There are many in churches, by the way, who preach that it is possible to have one foot in Genesis and one foot in evolution. It is called “theistic evolution”. This is the belief that God began and then, over a process of millions of years things would evolve.

So, it is very important that we understand whether the creation account “day” means a twenty four hour day or millions of years for each day, which would allow evolution of all that is recorded in Genesis, chapter 1.

Three proofs for a literal interpretation

Let me give you three reasons why I believe this is literally twenty-four hour days. I might also add, these are days without any gaps.

Each day has an evening and a morning

1. First, each day has an evening and a morning. Notice this, as you read through Genesis, chapter 1. Look at verse 5b.

... And there was evening and there was morning, one day. Look at verse 8b.

... And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

This is common Hebrew phraseology for a literal solar day. It is even foolish that we would take the time to declare such obvious truth.

My friends, as we study the Bible, and we are beginning our study through the entire Bible with the book of Genesis, it is clear that God wrote what He meant. If He had not written what He meant, how would we ever know what He meant? So, it is as simple as reading the account for yourself.

Each day is accompanied by a number

2. Secondly, each day is accompanied by a number.

Notice, as we read the phrase “there was evening and there was morning,” that it was accompanied by a number of the day; such as, “a second day.” Any time and every time we read the word “day,” or “yom” in the Hebrew, it is accompanied by a numerical adjective. It always refers to a literal day – never figurative.

God summarizes all the acts of creation

3. Thirdly, God summarizes all the acts of creation. Look at two additional passages in Genesis, chapter 2, verses 1 and 2a.

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done . . .

Notice the way God summarizes all the acts of creation. Some would say that there is a gap between chapters 1 and 2. I do not believe that as chapter 2, verse 1, says that the heavens and the earth were completed and all their hosts – that is the activity of Genesis chapter 1, verse 1 – and then, by the seventh day, God completed His work.

Look at Exodus, chapter 20, which contains the Ten Commandments. You probably did not realize they are proof of creation as well. Look at verses 9 through 11a.

Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day . . .

This is conclusive and comprehensive. God did everything that He did in six literal days, and then, He rested on the seventh. It is as clear as scripture.

The Activity of Each Day in the Creation Account

Now let us look at the activity of each day in the creation account.

Day One (Genesis 1:1-5) 1. Day one is defined in verses 1 through 5 of Genesis, chapter 1.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 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. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

Let me give three things that occurred on the first day.

- God created light. This was not bodies that would give off light or reflect light, but simply light.
- God divided light from darkness. He drew the boundaries and divided light from darkness.
- God named the light day and the darkness night.

I could not help but notice, as I read this chapter, that God not only created objects, things, creatures, and later, mankind, but He also created a vocabulary. The first chapter of Genesis gives us the origin of many words that people use all of the time, whether they believe in creation or not. For example, we might say, “Boy, it is a beautiful day today.” or “Tomorrow is Monday morning.” or “Is it dark yet?” or “What are we having for supper this evening?” In this chapter, words were created; such as: light, darkness, day, evening, morning, water, heavens, the dry lands, sea, earth, vegetation, seeds, trees, plants, fruits, cattle. Everyone in this world borrows heavily from the Genesis account. In fact, if all of the words from the first few chapters of Genesis were taken out of your vocabulary, you would be linguistically stunted.

Day Two (Genesis 1:6-8)

2. Day two is described in verses 6 through 8.

Then God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the water 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. God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

Now God will create the firmament and He does that by dividing water. By now, all we have is earth covered by water.

This is not the appearance of dry land – that will happen a little later – and there is then a creation of the firmament whereby God creates heaven. This is the first heaven; this is where the birds fly and the clouds float by; this is the expanse. So, there is the water below covering the surface of the earth, the heaven, and then, He creates a body of water above, according to the text, which is a vaporous canopy.

This allowed for two things; two hidden things that God created as well.

- God created the conditions for paradise. The conditions God created were paradise.

The canopy of water above kept all the harmful rays of the sun away. In fact, there is only warmth. Because of this greenhouse effect, the world is a tropical region and the temperatures are constant and warm. There is no need for clothing, and in fact, Adam and Eve did not wear any. After the fall, they would wear clothing not because of the temperatures, but because of lost innocence. This is a world wide fertile region where the grasses would grow and the fruit trees would flourish. It was paradise.

It will one day be paradise again. There will be an absence of seasons and it will be constantly warm. That will mean a whole lot more to us when our winter season soon begins!

- God not only created the conditions for paradise, but He also created the potential for judgment.

When man’s rebellion reached its horrible climax, God told Noah to build an ark. Why? Because He was going to flood the earth. This is, of course, after the dry land appeared and mankind is flourishing. Now, where is God going to get the water to flood the earth?

I read this past week, if all of the clouds surrounding this globe were to drop all of the water they carried, and if that water spread evenly around this globe, it would only be as deep as about one and a half inches. Now where is God going to get enough water so that the it covers the face of the earth to in fact, fifteen cubits above the highest mountain? That is a few gallons of water!

In the Genesis account given in chapter 7, we are told that God nudges the vapor above, collapsing it, and water then deluges planet earth.

This thing that was created by God to allow fertile paradise living will now be that of which He judges planet earth. So He created this planet with the ability to produce and provide enjoyment, but also to destroy and to kill.

There is also another judgment coming. Turn to II Peter, chapter 3. I want you to notice a pattern that God established. II Peter, chapter 3, verse 6, tells us that the first judgment was water. Then verse 7 will tell us that the second judgment will be by fire. Look at verses 3 through 7.

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just it was from the beginning of creation." For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

(Notice that God used the water He had created to destroy the world. Continue to verse 7.),

But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

How is God going to destroy the present heaven and earth? I think He is going to nudge what He has already created and fire will burn earth to a cinder.

Now, I am considerably out of my field when I deal with scientific or mathematical facts. I did not do well in math and when I got to college, they looked at my records and said, "You need to repeat math."

So, they put me in a college course that we labeled as being for all of the "bone heads". I studied that math and barely squeaked out of there. However, I have been reminded this past week, of studying several things that will explain why I believe God will destroy the world by fire.

Seventy four percent of the earth is covered with water. Now water is the liquid form of H₂O, and I can remember that. That would be one atom of oxygen and two atoms of hydrogen. Now, what if Christ were to remove His sustaining hand? We know from Colossians, chapter 1, verse 17,

He [Christ] is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

He holds all things together and that includes molecules and atoms. What if God took His hand away? And what if that simple molecule of water was split so that the hydrogen was split from the oxygen? All waters, all seventy four percent that covers the face of this earth and exists as water vapor in the air would instantly turn to flammable gas. Then, it would only take one little spark somewhere on planet earth and the fire ball would destroy this planet inside and out.

Do you know what I think? I think there is a pattern here. God has created this earth with the ability to provide for life, but He has also preserved it for judgment because of sin.

Day Three (Genesis 1:9-13)

3. Day three is described in verses 9 through 13 of Genesis, chapter 1.

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. 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. There was evening and there was morning, a third day.

Notice there is no mention of oceans. Perhaps that is a remnant of the flood.

There are two key phrases in this text that I want you to note.

- The first key phrase is “bearing fruit”.

I think He is obviously saying that the trees were created in their mature state. When God created anything on planet earth, He created it in its already mature state. When He created man and woman, He created them as mature adults. There was no little baby Adam or little baby Eve – they were adults. When God created or spoke into existence a fruit tree, it was already bearing fruit. This is in the present tense.

I think it is important to note that when God created this planet, it was in a mature state. So, there was an apple tree bearing apples, and there was an orange tree bearing oranges, and there was a peach tree bearing peaches, and there was a money tree . . . just seeing if you are awake and with me! I think that was the tree that God told Eve to stay away from myself, but I could be wrong . . . or at least in trouble!

- The second key phrase is “after their kind”. The word “kind” is the word “phylum,” which means, “a direct line of descent within a group”. Why is this important? Because He is telling us that a peach tree will always bear peaches, a monkey will always bear monkeys. There is no such thing as a half beast, half man. God created this universe to reproduce “after their kind”.

Day Four (Genesis 1:14-19)

4. Day four is revealed in verses 14 through 19. Then God said,

“Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth; and it was so. 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. There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

So, God creates the sun, the moon, and the stars, and they were also created in their mature state. When He created the stars, their reflecting light was already reaching earth. The evolutionist would declare earth to be an old earth. They would say, “You see that star out there?”

We know that to be three million light years away, so it would take three million light years for its rays to reach to planet earth.”

However, if God created everything in its mature state, then when He created the star, He also created the trail of lights so that it was immediately reaching planet earth. So, we could still have, in effect, a young earth.

I think there are reasons other than just to give light that God created the lights. Let me give two reasons.

- The first reason is that the lights give constant illustrations to us. In the word, Jesus Christ is referred to as the Light of the world Christians are also lights. Look at a fascinating passage of the scripture in Philippians, chapter 2, verses 14 and 15. Paul is writing to the church at Philippi and says of the believer,

Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

This literally could be translated as reflected lights.

- The second reason is that we reflect the light of the Son.

I think the stars and the moon of heaven remind us that we reflect the light of Jesus Christ. I also think the created lights are constant reminders of the coming paradise. Revelation, chapters 21 and 22, tells us that one day, we will not have need of the sun or of the moon or of the stars to shine

because the light of God's glory and presence will pervade heaven and the new earth. Every time we look up, we can think that one day we will never need them again, because it will be the light of God that will light our world.

Day Five (Genesis 1:20-23)

5. Day five is described in verses 20 through 23 of Genesis, chapter 1. We will stop after these verses as we will only deal with five days in our discussion today.

Then God said, "Let the waters team 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." There was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

These verses provide fantastic illustrations for the believer as well. Look at the bird, which illustrates that God cares for us, as Matthew, chapter 6, tells us. Solomon tells us in the Proverbs to go to the animal kingdom and learn wisdom by their activity.

However, I think we are to learn something else from the animal kingdom. Look at Job, chapter 12, verses 7 through 10. Man speculates about origins; man searches for the beginnings, but Job says,

But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you; and the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you. Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you; and let the fish of the sea declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this. In whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind?

That is really clear, isn't it? If the fish could speak, they would tell you that we were created by the hand of God. If a bird could speak, he would speak to you of God's hand in creating you.

If even the animals know, why is man the one that has been given a logical reasoning faculty that declares something else. Even the animals know better than that.

Darwin, in fact, admitted the human eye was so complex that he wondered if he should even believe his theory of evolution. He could not even figure out the eye, because it was so complex.

John Wesley, writing of God's display of power in creating the world said, "God created the heavens and the earth and He did not even half try." I have read that people of old wrote three words above their doorways in Latin, "nice dominus grustra," which translated means, "without God, frustration".

Is it any wonder today that man is frustrated in his attempts to discover his origin, when he is doing it without God? Is it any wonder that men, women, and young people are frustrated in trying to find a fulfilling life? Why? Because they are doing it without God.

When I think of evolution, as chapter 1 of Genesis so comparably combats, I think of the tragedy of what this is teaching the young people of this country as to their worth. What kind of value do you have if your ancestor is an amoeba from some murky puddle? What kind of worth do you have if you trace your ancestry far enough back and find your great, great . . . ancestor is an ape? No wonder man is frustrated.

My friend, you learn your value and worth when you discover by faith that you have been created by a loving God who created you in His own image. That is fulfillment.

Application

I will end with only one application as we continue our study of Genesis, chapter 1. The application is, if God is indeed our Creator, He has every right, every ability to be our Savior. My friends, God is your designer, but He wants to be your redeemer.