

In the Beginning

Genesis 1 and 2

Detailed outline from the Sermon on September 9, 2007

God created (1:1) the heavens and the earth.

Early earth was undeveloped, unrefined; “formless and void.” Darkness still blanketed reality and yet the spirit of God hovered, ready to spring into action.

The first day: light. No specific bodies of light mentioned, but at least the concept and the power of God’s words speaking it into being. One input...the impact of the “compression waves” of sound against the mysterious dark energy, or dark matter that preexisted light, and that was the catalyst. God’s word.

The second day (3-5): water and sky. He separates out, by the power of his spoken word, the waters that cover the earth from the waters that plensish the earth. 2:4-6 indicate a different watering system – more of a steaming and streaming affair than our current system of intermittent clouds and rain.

The third day (9-13) dry ground appears and the water separates out into oceans and seas. On the dry land, vegetation breaks out at God’s command and the whole place starts to really come alive.

The fourth day (14-19) God adds definition to notion of light, setting lights in the sky (suns, stars, moons) to mark seasons, days, years. The notion of time as we know it is created on the fourth God-day.

The fifth day (20-23): sea creatures, then birds.

The sixth day (24-27): livestock, wild animals, the things that crawl the earth. Then humans, mankind, to rule or steward the earth and its living creatures. People, created in God’s own image.

(27-31) So God created ... God blessed ... God said “Be fruitful, increase in number and subdue, steward, rule over the rest; God gave mankind the plants and animals for food; God saw that it was good and found it to be very good.”

The seventh day (2:2-3) God blesses the day, sets it apart (“holy”) and rests (Sabbath).

Some things worth noting:

1. About days:
 - a. To many who hear and believe these words, it's very important to embrace a six-day creation cycle. And by six days, some people mean six 24-hour blocks of time.
 - b. Others who hear and believe these words note that the constructs that produce time as we know it are part of the fourth day's work; giving indication that God wasn't operating according to days as we know days, but rather days as God knows days. The Psalmist, and then the apostle Peter, note that (Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8) to God a day is like a thousand years, or even vice versa, depending how you read it.
 - c. Altogether, this can turn into a young earth, old earth argument between God-loving, God believing people, with other biblical or scientific data thrown into the skirmish to reinforce positions, some defending vigorously a very literal approach to scripture and others seeking a synthesis between the Bible's creation story and emerging scientific discoveries and theories.
 - d. I had dinner last night with a true scientist who holds a very orthodox faith, and he said, "There will not be an entrance exam at the gates of heaven asking us to declare a young earth or old earth position."
 - e. My position? Our fear of science is one of the biggest barriers between us and the world. I suggest that we relish science as a quest to discern how the Master Craftsman formed and now sustains this amazing system of spinning and orbiting miracles.
2. About the order of things created? It interests me that the order of created things closely corresponds with the order of evolutionary theory.
3. About the big argument – So you believe in evolution? I believe that God created the heavens and the earth. I'd likely believe any science that's provable. And I am convinced that the progression of scientific discovery will glorify, not diminish God. And the notion of randomness is the chief weakness in the argument of evolutionary theory, in my opinion. The particulars of this argument I leave to people more learned and curious than me. But I do not fear science and often wonder why we think God needs defending, or why we get so emotional about all this. Are we afraid that the authority of all scripture breaks down if our views are challenged?
 - a. One thoughtful friend, who has a history as a naturalist and botanist in dynamic relationship to very biblical faith, finds the same defensive posture among godless naturalists. "The naturalistic foundation of their lives cannot be challenged without setting off alarms which may even result in irrational fears and ridiculous arguments. It merely demonstrates how foundational their naturalism is. It is not just a philosophy, but rather like a human retro-virus it has become a real and functional part of their identity. In the battlefield of world views, Intelligent Design is no friendly spectator; it is like David in the Valley of Elah stooping for stones." The debate is marvelous. The divisions are tragic.

4. About being created in “our” image. Mysterious...
 - a. Is this a reference to trinity?
 - b. Is this a reference to heavenly beings?
5. About the seed of creativity we’ve been made in God’s own image and part of that means a proclivity for creating; and even in the garden we were tending.

More about man and woman

1. Man made from the dust (2:7)
2. The Garden of Eden (2:8-14)
 - a. Trees for food and to please the eye
 - b. The tree of life
 - c. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil
 - d. A river watering the garden.
 - e. Man to work it and care for it – a trust
3. Woman as a suitable helper, made from man
4. READ 23-24
5. They were naked and without shame.

A few more observations:

Curiosity and creation

Devotion and creation

Revelation and creation

Celebration and creation