

Genesis Chapter 1 Continued

Genesis 1:6 "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters."

Firmament or expanse is the portion of God's creation named "heavens," that which man saw when he looked up, i.e., the atmospheric and stellar heaven.

"Firmament" is an "expanse" between the waters suspended by God in vapor form over the earth. Most likely, approximately half of the waters upon the earth were supernaturally elevated above the atmosphere, perhaps in the form of an invisible vapor canopy.

This would have trapped the earth's heat with a "greenhouse effect" and would have provided a uniformly tropical climate everywhere, until it collapsed upon the earth during the universal rainfall at the time of the great Flood (7:11). This might explain the longer life described in Genesis 5, in addition to providing a water source for the Flood of chapters 6 to 9.

I do not believe that God expects us to scientifically figure out how this all came about. He just expects us to have faith that He did it.

Genesis 1:7 "And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which [were] under the firmament from the waters which [were] above the firmament: and it was so."

"Firmament ... under the firmament": This refers to subterranean reservoirs (7:11).

"Above the firmament": This could possibly have been a canopy of water vapor which acted to make the earth like a hothouse, provided uniform temperature, inhibited mass air movements, caused mist to fall, and filtered out ultraviolet rays, thus extending life.

Genesis 1:8 "And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day."

"And God called the firmament heaven": Including the starry and airy heavens: it has its name from its height in the Arabic language, it being above the earth, and reaching to the third heaven; though others take the word "shamaim" to be a compound of two words, "sham" and "maim", that is, there are waters, namely, in the clouds of heaven.

At the end of the second day there is no phrase "and God saw that it was good" (verse 10). Anything we might say about this would be just supposition.

Thus, here was the second day.

Verses 9-10 "Dry land": This was caused by a tremendous, cataclysmic upheaval of the earth's surface, and the rising and sinking of the land, which caused the waters to plunge into the low places, forming the seas, the continents, islands, rivers and lakes (Job 38:4-11; Psalm 104:6-9).

Genesis 1:9 "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry [land] appear: and it was so."

Verse 9 - Day three. The distribution of land and water and the production of vegetation on this day engaged the formative energy of the word of Elohim. And God said, Let the waters under heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.

To explain the second part of this phenomenon as a consequence of the first, the disclosure of the solid ground by the retirement of the waters from its surface, and not rather vice versa, is to reverse the ordinary processes of nature.

Modern analogy suggests that the breaking up of the hitherto universal ocean into seas, lakes, and rivers was effected by the upheaval of the land through the action of subterranean fires, or the subsidence of the earth's crust in consequence of the cooling and shrinking of the interior mass.

Psalm 104 hints at electric agency in connection with the elevation of the mountains and the sinking of the ocean beds (comments added by author).

Psalm 104:7-8 "At thy rebuke they (the waters) fled: at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away (were scattered). They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them".

The gathering of the waters into one place implies no more than that they were, from this day forward, to be collected into one vast body, and restrained within bounds in a place by themselves, so as to admit of the exposure of the earth's soil.

The "place founded for them" was, of course, the depths and hollows in the earth's crust, into which they were immediately withdrawn, not through direct supernatural agency, but by their own natural gravitation. The configuration of the dry land is not described; but there is reason to believe that the original distribution of land and water was the same, or nearly the same, as it is at present.

Genesis 1:10 "And God called the dry [land] Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that [it was] good."

"And God called the dry land earth": The whole chaos that was a muddy fluid, a mixture of earth and water, a rude unformed mass of matter. But now that part consisting of, or formed of, land and was separated from the waters, and they from it, is called "earth":

Which has its name in the Arabic language from its being low and depressed; the lighter parts having been elevated, and moved upwards, and formed the atmosphere; the grosser parts

subsiding and falling downwards, made the earth, which is low with respect to the firmament, which has its name in the same language from its height, as before observed.

“And the gathering together of the waters called he seas”: for though there was but one place into which they were collected, and which is the main ocean, with which all other waters have a communication, and so are one; yet there are different seas, as the Red sea, the Mediterranean, Caspian, Baltic, etc.

Or which are denominated from the shores they wash, as the German, British, etc., and even lakes and pools of water are called seas, as the sea of Galilee and Tiberias, which was no other than the lake of Gennesaret.

“And God saw that it was good”: That these two should be separate, that the waters should be in one place, and the dry land appear, and both have the names he gave them. And this is here mentioned, because now the affair of the waters, the division and separation of them, were brought to an end, and to perfection.

Verses 11-12: “After his kind”: God set in motion a providential process whereby the vegetable kingdom could reproduce through seeds which would maintain each one’s unique characteristics.

The same phrase is used to describe the perpetuating reproduction of animals within their created species (verses 21, 24-25), and indicates that evolution, which proposes reproduction across species lines, is a false explanation of origins.

Genesis 1:11 "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, [and] the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed [is] in itself, upon the earth: and it was so."

“Whose seed is in itself”: The principle of reproduction that marks all life (verses 22, 24, 28).

Contrary to the modern evolutionists (who insist that all plants and animals developed over hundreds of millions of years from a single speck of life in the ocean) and theistic evolutionists (who claim the Bible allows for such processes by the use of such phrases as “Let the earth bring forth”).

Genesis not only dates the creation of marine life (verse 20), as being after the creation of plants and fruit trees, but also reveals that fruit trees were created already bearing fruit “whose seed is in itself.”

God produced a functioning and mature Creation. Plants were created full-grown, as mature and adult organisms, with a superficial appearance of age. Similarly, Adam and Eve were created as adults. The phrase “after his’ [or their] “kind” is repeated 10 times in this chapter, and demands that adults of each “kind” would have to be created supernaturally to begin the life cycle.

Moses uses the word “kind” 30 out of the 31 times it appears in the Old Testament. The word may not require the separate creation of each species by God, but it does require at least the separate creation of families within orders.

You see God not only created the first plant life, grass, fruit, trees etc., but He also provided the way for it to perpetuate itself. Plant life could not exist without the light acting on the chlorophyll in the plant leaves and causing it to grow.

Notice, the first three words "And God said", and the last four words say it all "and it was so".

Genesis 1:12 "And the earth brought forth grass, [and] herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed [was] in itself, after his kind: and God saw that [it was] good.

"And the earth brought forth grass": In great abundance at once; the hills and vales were clothed with it, and so a rich provision was made the beasts and cattle of the earth a few days before they were created:

And herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself after his kind": wholesome and healthful herbs and plants, and delicious fruit to be meat and food for man, ready prepared for him when created (see Gen. 1:29); on this day, though after related, were made the garden of Eden, and all the trees in it, pleasant for sight, and good for food.

Particularly the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil,

“And God saw that it was good”: Which he had now caused to spring forth, grass, herbs, and fruit trees, which were good for men and beast, and this he foresaw would be so.

Genesis 1:13 "And the evening and the morning were the third day."

And here was the third day.

Genesis 1:14 "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:"

“Lights”: Verse 16. For 3 days, there had been light (verse 4), in the day as though there was a sun, and lesser light at night as though there were the moon and stars. God could have left it that way, but did not.

He created the “lights, sun, moon, and stars,” not for light, but to serve as markers for signs, seasons, days, and years.

“Signs”: Certainly to include:

(1) Weather (Matt. 16:2-3);

- (2) Testimony to God (Psalms 8, 19; Rom. 1:14-20);
- (3) Divine judgment (Joel 2:30-31; Matt. 24:29);
- (4) Navigation (Matt. 2:1-2).

“Seasons”: It is the earth’s movement in relation to the sun and moon that determines the seasons and the calendar.

The Scripture says they were also to be for telling the seasons, and the days, and the years. In the Jewish calendar a month occurs at every new moon.

“Verses 15-18”: “Two great lights ... to divide the light from the darkness”: It was God (not some other deity) who created the lights. Israel had originally come from Mesopotamia, where the celestial bodies were worshiped, and more recently from Egypt, where the sun was worshiped as a primary deity.

God was revealing to them that the very stars, moons, and planets which Israel’s neighbors had worshiped were the products of His creation. Later, they became worshipers of the “host of heaven”, which led to their being taken captive out of the Promised Land.

Genesis 1:15 "And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so."

“Lights in the firmament ... give light upon the earth”: To continue there as luminous bodies; as enlighteners, as the word signifies. Causing light, or as being the instruments of conveying it, particularly to the earth, as follows: “to give light upon the earth”; and the inhabitants of it, when formed: “and it was so”.

These lights were formed and placed in the firmament of the heaven for such uses, and served such purposes as God willed and ordered they should.

Genesis 1:16 "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: [he made] the stars also."

“And God made two great lights” refers to the sun and moon. They did not appear (a different verb and stem), as the dry land did in verse 9, but were actually made (‘asah, synonymous with bara’), at this time. God makes it clear that He, not the sun, is the earth’s Creator, and that God is not dependent upon the sun either for the earth’s material substance or for the sustaining of life.

From the standpoint of astronomy, the sun and the moon are obviously not “the two great lights” of the universe. This is the language of appearance, as seen from man’s viewpoint. Genesis is written in geocentric (rather than heliocentric), terms.

“Signs” in verse 14 might refer to unusual sights in the heavens, such as eclipses of the sun, rather than suggest that God designed the celestial bodies to determine the destinies of individual men as modern astrologers proclaim (2 Kings 23:12; Jer. 19:13; Zeph. 1:5), where God condemns such practice.

Genesis 1:17 "And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,"

In the fourth day's work, the creation of the sun, moon, and stars is accounted for. All these are the works of God. The stars are spoken of as they appear to our eyes, without telling their number, nature, place, size, or motions; for the Scriptures were written, not to gratify curiosity, or make us astronomers, but to lead us to God, and make us saints.

The lights of heaven are made to serve him; they do it faithfully, and shine in their season without fail. We are set as lights in this world to serve God; but do we in like manner answer the end of our creation? We do not: our light does not shine before God, as his lights shine before us. We burn our Master's candles, but do not mind our Master's work.

Genesis 1:18 "And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that [it was] good."

And God set (literally, gave), them (i.e. sun, moon, and stars), in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and even the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. An intimation that on this day the astronomical arrangements for the illumination of the globe and the measurement of time were permanently settled. And God saw that it was good.

Genesis 1:19 "And the evening and the morning were the fourth day."

This was the conclusion of the creation of the sun and moon as fixtures that we might see the light in, thus ending the 4th day.

Genesis Chapter 1 Continued Questions

1. That which man saw when he looked up was called what?
2. The third heaven is where God is, what are the other 2 heavens called?
3. Where were approximately half the waters upon the earth located?
4. What type of an effect would this have on the earth?
5. What might explain the longevity described in Genesis 5?
6. What does under the firmament refer to?

7. What caused the dry land?
8. What day did this happen?
9. What happened on day three?
10. What was the dry land called?
11. What was the one main place where all the water collected?
12. What was unusual about the fruit trees when they were created?
13. What happened on day four?
14. What were some of the signs for in verse 14?
15. What were the 2 great lights?
16. What was their purpose?