

Oh What A Day!

Genesis 1:3-23

Kent Hughes in his commentary on Genesis tells the story about “the 17th century mathematician and philosopher Sir Isaac Newton who made a miniature mechanical replica of our solar system. At the center was a large golden ball representing the sun, and revolving around it were smaller spheres attached at the ends of rods of varying lengths that represented the planets. They were all geared together by cogs and bells to make them move around the sun in perfect harmony. One day as Newton was studying the model, an unbelieving friend stopped by for a visit. Marveling at the device and watching as the scientist made the heavenly bodies move in their orbits, the man exclaimed, ‘My, Newton, what an exquisite thing! Who made it for you?’ Without looking up, Sir Isaac replied, ‘Nobody.’ ‘Nobody?’ his friend asked. ‘That’s right! I said nobody! All of these balls and cogs and belts and gears just happened to come together and wonder of wonders, by chance they began revolving in their set orbits and with perfect timing.’ His friend undoubtedly got the point. The existence of Newton’s machine presupposed a maker, and even more so the earth and its perfectly ordered solar system.”

Please turn in your Bible to Genesis 1:3-23 as we begin today to look at the days of creation.

At the onset I believe in a literal six day, 24 hour timeframe of creation. I don’t believe in gaps or long days or that God started it and left the process to evolution. I have talked with folks who ask couldn’t God have used any of those methods? And to that as I said to them and will say to you, yes He could have, but is that what He said He did or is that what He meant?

Consider with me today these three points.
 The day of God in creation is exact
 The design of God in creation is exceptional
 The delight of God in creation is expressive

I. THE DAY OF GOD IS EXACT

So just what is meant by a day?

Does it mean millions of years?

Does it mean a literal day with millions of years in between?

Does it mean a literal day?

We talked about some of those theories last week and you already know my position but let me explain why I think it’s a literal day.

Going back in church history to the early church fathers many of them didn’t teach that a day was an ordinary day in Genesis 1. Many were influenced by Greek philosophy which caused them to treat the creation story as an allegory. They surmised that since God was timeless that meant in relation to His creation activities, those days must also be timeless and so couldn’t be related to human time. As time progressed and knowledge in science grew Bible scholars began to be influenced by outside biblical sources viewing the days of creation as long days.

Gleason Archer writes in *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, the book we used in college: “From a superficial reading of Genesis 1, the impression would seem to be that the entire creative process took place in six twenty-four-hour days... This seems to run counter to modern scientific research, which indicates that the planet Earth was created several billion years ago.”

James Montgomery Boice in *Genesis: An Expositional Commentary* writes: “We have shown the possibility of God’s having formed the Earth and its life in a series of creative days representing long periods. In view of the apparent age of the Earth, this is not only possible – it is probable.”

In contrast this is what Martin Luther had to say on the subject. “The days of creation were ordinary days in length. We must understand that these days were actual days, contrary to the opinion of the Holy Fathers. Whenever we observe that the opinions of the Father’s disagree with Scripture, we

reverently bear with them and acknowledge them to be our elders. Nevertheless, we do not depart from the authority of Scripture for their sake.”

It comes back to the issue of the authority of God’s Word. Are we going to believe what God said or what we think God meant, especially when it is interpreted through the microscope of science?

So what kind of day was it? We know that words can have more than one meaning. The English word day can have 14 different meanings depending on the context. Consider this example by Ken Ham using the word in just three different ways.

“Back in my father’s day, it took 12 days to drive across the country during the day.”

The first use refers to day in a general sense as in a period of time.

The second use has a number with it referring to an ordinary day.

The third use refers to a portion of the day.

The Hebrew word used here is yom. While it can have a variety of meanings, in the vast majority of its use in the Old Testament it means an ordinary day. Where it means something different, the context of the passage makes that clear. The very first use of the term is seen on the first day of creation and it can only mean an ordinary day. When light was created separating day and night God didn’t mean that there were millions of years of day and then millions of years of night. The night/day cycle refer to one 24 hour period of time. The plural is not used in chapter 1.

Secondarily, notice the evening/morning cycle which is another indication in support of a single 24 hour day.

Terry Mortenson writes “Everywhere these two words are used (evening and morning) in the Old Testament, either together or separately and with or without the word yom in the context, they always mean a literal evening or morning or a literal day.”

Thirdly, notice that in each instance of the day in

question the word is mentioned in the context with a number indicating a literal day.

If there is still a question about it being an ordinary day then perhaps a passage of Scripture will help. Exodus 20:8-11

Regarding the Sabbath day of rest required by the law, Moses referred to the creation week of six days after which God rested. It is not an ambiguous number of days here. It is specific to six days.

Perhaps the words of Martin Luther sum it up best. “If you cannot understand how this could have been done in six days, then grant the Holy Spirit the honor of being more learned than you are. For you are to deal with Scripture in such a way that you bear in mind that God Himself says what is written. But since God is speaking, it is not fitting for you wantonly (haphazardly, needlessly) to turn His Word in the direction you wish to go.”

The day of God in creation is exact.

The design of God in creation is exceptional. Its beauty is beyond description.

II. THE DESIGN OF GOD IN CREATION IS EXCEPTIONAL

The sequence of events occurring in these six days is significant. It isn’t random. It isn’t haphazard. There is order. There is design. There is a specific purpose. When we left the earth last week it was formless, empty and covered in darkness and surrounded with water. The elements of matter and water are the building blocks, the raw materials that were necessary on which to build and sustain life. It was the potter’s lump of clay sitting on the wheel ready to be fashioned into a vessel fit for use. Verse 1 is a panoramic view of the universe. Verse 2 zooms in to one specific point of interest in the universe – the earth. The rest of the chapter zooms in closer to the actual events of creation. Consider the days.

A. Day One – God Created The Light – vs. 3-5

Notice right away that God spoke. Nine times in the six days God said or God called. In each day you will notice a pattern.

There is His creative word.

There is a report of what happened.

There is His evaluation.

There is His sovereign naming. In the Old Testament to name something indicates ownership. There is the numbering of the day.

I believe that when it says “God said” it means what it says. He spoke and it happened. Again we refer back to the word create in verse 1 being an instantaneous, miraculous event – God spoke.

Psalm 33:4, 6, 9 “The word of the Lord is right and true; He is faithful in all He does...By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of His mouth...For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm.”

Psalm 148:1-5 “Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him from the heights above. Praise Him, all His angels, praise Him, all His heavenly hosts. Praise Him, sun and moon, praise Him, all you shining stars. Praise Him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created.”

Hebrews 11:3 “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what is visible.”

You don’t need to be a rocket scientist to understand that God literally spoke and it happened. Take it by faith that God knows what He said and what He meant and that’s how it happened. Just because science says something doesn’t make it so. Remember that science once believed the earth was flat and that the earth was the center of the solar system.

The same breath of God in the person of the Lord Jesus who spoke and instantly calmed the seas, who spoke and demons trembled, who spoke and healed

the lame, who spoke and raised the dead is the same God who spoke in creation and at His command it happened. In the creation narrative notice the cause and effect – “And God said...and it was so.”

The power of God’s spoken word is undeniable and powerful. Here at the beginning of creation He spoke and it happened just as He said. Something different never came into existence when He called for something to be created. Here on day one of the creation week the very first recorded words of God were to bring forth light.

Now some have asked where this light came from if the sun, moon and stars weren’t created until day 3. Was it His glory that provided the light? Had He veiled His glory until the opening day like flooding a dark stage with spotlights at the opening of a play to reveal the set and actors? Could it have emanated from the Spirit who was hovering there in the dark who in a moment of time burst into brilliance dispelling the darkness?

Those are certainly possible, but as I read the text I don’t believe that it was the light of God. As I read verse 3 I see this as a creative act. Something that was not and now is. He doesn’t need a generator such as the sun to produce light. He called for light and it appeared, not His own but something else.

One author states that “light is necessary in making God’s creative work visible.”

Notice also in the passage that there is now a distinction between light and darkness. It is the beginning of earth’s rotation. Light was shining on the face of one side of the earth while the other was immersed in darkness. As the earth rotated it moved from darkness to light and light to darkness. Light is mysterious. Its wavelength and frequency determines its color from deep violet on one end of the spectrum to deep red on the opposite end. No one can tell you what light is, only what it does.

Some have asked me where this light came from. My answer is that I don’t know. No one does. I

don't think it came from God because this light was created. God didn't need a sun or a moon to reflect the sun in order to create light. He spoke and there was light and that light separated day and night.

On each day God makes distinctions in His work. Here there is the distinction between light and darkness. God called the light day and the darkness night. "And there was evening and there was morning – the first day."

Now we come to day two.

B. Day Two – God Created the Sky – vs. 6-8

After studying this section I have moved away from a position I once held about the waters above and the waters below. While in college I was taught what Bible scholars believe to be what's called the canopy theory. Basically the theory asserts that when God separated the waters above from the waters below, forming the sky that separated them, there was the water on the earth that became the seas and the water above the sky was like a thick pool of water around the earth. What I discovered in my study changed my view. Yes, there was a separation of waters below from above. That space in between God called sky.

The water above was a vapor. Scientists estimate that there is 54 trillion,460 billion tons of vapor that continually surrounds the earth. Water is 773 times the weight of air. That gives you an idea of the kind of power that was required to separate the waters above from the waters below. And yet for an all-powerful God this is nothing because nothing is impossible for Him.

The word firmament or expanse literally means a spread out thinness. An atmosphere was created to surround the earth and this atmosphere has several layers. The closest to the earth is the troposphere which is about 8 miles. The higher you go the colder it gets.

Next is the Stratosphere which extends up to about 30 miles above the earth's surface. It's where we

find the ozone layer. Interestingly the higher you go in this layer the warmer it gets because the sun's ultraviolet radiation warms it up.

The next is the mesosphere that extends up to about 53 miles from the earth's surface. Temperatures decrease the higher you go in this sphere.

Somewhere surrounding the earth's atmosphere God separated the waters below from the waters above. A vapor seems more likely than water in order for light to pass through. When I was a teen I did some snorkeling at camp and the deeper I dove the darker it got. So a water canopy doesn't seem likely because the light wouldn't get through.

Henry Morris writes "Water vapor, even in vast amounts, is invisible, whereas clouds, fog and so forth, are composed of minute droplets of liquid water and are therefore opaque... Furthermore, a vapor canopy could be more easily maintained aloft and would serve much more effectively as a marvelous sustainer of vigorous life conditions on earth."

Morris sites a number of reasons for the plausibility of a vapor vs. liquid canopy.

1. Vapor has the ability to transmit incoming radiation. It can retain and disperse much of the radiation from the earth's surface. It would serve as a global greenhouse, maintaining a uniform warm temperature all over the world.
2. Great movement of air would be inhibited. Windstorms would be unknown therefore providing uniform temperatures.
3. With no global air circulation, there would be no rain except over bodies of water.
4. With no air movement there would have been no dust particles rising into the atmosphere from which to form rain.
5. Uniform temperatures would mean uniform humidity from local evaporation and condensation in the form of dew and ground fog in each day-night cycle.

Sorry Liz, there would have been no snow.

6. Warm temperatures and adequate moisture would produce lush vegetation all over the world with no deserts or polar ice caps.

7. The vapor would filter out harmful ultraviolet radiation, cosmic rays and other destructive energies that are now known to affect both the body and our genetics decreasing the viability of the individual and of any species. Such a canopy of vapor would have contributed to the health and length of age in humans and animals.

8. A heavy vapor canopy would have increased atmospheric pressure on the earth further contributing to greater health and life span.

9. These vapors became the flood gates that opened from above during the global flood.

“And God said...and it was so...and there was evening and morning the second day.”

C. Day Three – God Created The Seas, The Dry Ground and Vegetation – vs. 9-13

Notice again the distinctions here on this day between the seas and the dry ground. He spoke and gathered the waters into one place so that land could appear. “And God said...and it was so.” The gathered waters He called seas and the dry ground He called land.

Following this separation God spoke so that the land would produce vegetation. Again there is a distinction between plants and trees. Notice too that we begin to see within the distinction a uniqueness in their creation. They were to produce after their kind. We’ll see it again on the 5th and 6th day. It is an important distinction – “after its kind”. The word is used with a preposition so that it means in respect to or according to indicating that there are specifications or limitations.

An apple tree will not produce a strawberry.

An oak tree will not produce a rose.

A cactus will not produce oregano.

The word is always used in the singular form but the word implies a collective noun making it generic in each case. The ending of the word always suggests that each form has its own generic group which it belongs to by order of the Creator.

For example when you think of an apple kind it speaks broadly to the varieties of apples: delicious, Granny Smith, Johnathan, McIntosh and so on. Or the broad varieties of roses or grass or herbs. Botanists estimate that there are some 100,000 species of plants and trees. Within the plant kinds there are 5,000 different types of grasses.

The term here is meant to be broad in scope, yet restricting it to its own kind. God decreed that there would be no change in kinds, although He gave within each kind wide variation.

It is my belief that these were created by God mature and fruit bearing. In two days creatures would require food and habitat in which to live and eat. They were going to be hungry and would need to have shelter.

I hope you can see that God is setting boundaries within each of the things He is creating. He gave boundaries to the day and night in the cycle of the earth’s rotation. In day four we’ll see that the boundary includes the seasons and rotation around the sun.

There is a boundary for water and sky, and for land and sea.

There are boundaries for plants and trees.

God is a God of order and precision not of chance or haphazard planning.

“And God said...and there was evening and morning – the third day.”

D. Day Four – God Created The Lights – vs. 14-19

This expanse is different than the expanse seen in day two. We sometimes refer to the sky as heaven

and to the solar system or the expanse of the universe which we call space as heaven and then Paul talked about a third heaven, which is the residence of God, different from the other heavens. It is where His throne is.

The reference here is to the sphere beyond our earth, out into what we call space. It would be ludicrous to think that God is going to hang the sun, moon and stars in the sky that surrounds the earth.

Notice that nowhere in this passage are the lights named. They are assumed to be the sun and moon by their description. There is the greater light and the lesser light and then there are the stars. I believe this is intentional. At the direction of God's Spirit guiding his writing, it's likely that Moses didn't name them, even though we know what he means, because the sun and moon were worshipped by the Egyptians. This would tell the Israelites that these heavenly bodies were not to be worshipped. They weren't deities to worship. Instead Psalm 19:1 says they worship the Deity who made them. "The heavens declare the glory of God."

God gives the purpose for their creation. They differentiated the night from the day. They were to serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years. They marked the cycle of the year. They marked the seasons. It is a regular cycle because God designed it with order for that purpose. Although the length of the day remains the same at 24 hours, the time of light and darkness changes with the seasons.

On each day God said...and it was so meaning that when He spoke there could only be one possible outcome. I've made a few things here and there. As I've sketched them out in my mind, they don't turn out quite the same way in reality. I might have to change something here or there. Not so with God. He spoke and it turned out the way He wanted.

"And God said...and there was evening and morning – the fourth day."

E. Day Five – God Created Creatures For the Water and Sky – vs. 20-23

On this day as God creates, He distinguishes between the creatures that live in the sea and those that grace the air with flight. Once again we see that they are to produce after their kind, setting boundaries and limitations.

If you compare the timeline of evolution with the timeline of creation you would note that evolution has marine animals (vertebrates and invertebrates) originating millions of years before the evolution of fruit trees and other higher plants. Many plants require pollination by insects which weren't created until day six, which further supports a 24 hour day rather than millions of years to evolve.

A kind is a kind is a kind and in thousands, even millions of years the kinds will never reproduce into any other kind than they already are. God created them with boundaries and limitations. Darwin's Finches are still Finches. Your pet gold fish won't reproduce with a tuna. A flying fish is not a bird. It is and always will be a fish.

"And God said...and there was evening and morning – the fifth day."

The design of God in creation is exceptional. The delight of God in creation is expressive.

III. THE DELIGHT OF GOD IN CREATION IS EXPRESSIVE

Each day God spoke and there was a result and following that creative act there was an examination by God that concludes with an exclamation, an expression of delight. Each creative act He saw was good. "And God saw that it was good."

Once again the English word can have several meanings. Did He mean that it was so-so or average, or mediocre or was it above average? It can even mean exceptional. What then, did God mean when He said each day that it was good?

The word used here implies the idea of perfection or excellence. God couldn't have done any better and wouldn't have done anything differently.

It also carries the idea of being pleasant. Even though we live in a fallen world that groans alongside us because of sin, there is a beauty in creation that is pleasing to the senses.

We see beauty in any number of settings from fresh snow falling blanketing all of nature or in the blue waters off a sandy beach or the brilliance of a sunset. There is even a mesmerizing beauty in the sight of thunder.

We hear the sound of birds chirping or the rush of a waterfall or the rustling of leaves or the sound of a crisp apple as we bite into it.

We taste the varieties of fruits and vegetables some that please the pallet others that are bitter or sour.

We smell the fragrance of a garden or the scent of pine when we walk through the woods or the freshness of the breeze blowing in from the sea.

We feel the softness of fur as we rub our hands across the back of a pet or run our fingers over the tops of grass.

Everything God made in those creative days was pleasing to the senses and was His very best and He says it was good. He is delighted in what He has made to fill the heavens and the earth.

There is one more expression of delight in these verses. We notice it in verse 23 and we'll see it again next week.

“God blessed them (the creatures of the sea and air) and said, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.’”

One author says this is “God’s benediction on living things that inhabit the water and that fly in the air. By this blessing they flourish and fill both realms

with life. God’s rule over His created realm promotes and blesses life.”

God gives them His blessing. He delights in His creation and He now invites the creatures of air and sea to multiply as if to say in His blessing, be fruitful and increase in number so that more of your kind can express praise.

And we are invited along with creation to rise antiphonally in worship and adoration of our Creator and give Him praise. This week let’s join with all creation and praise the Lord.

“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.”
(Psalm 150:6)

“Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.” (Psalm 100:1)