

Origins

The Creation Completed

Lesson #3 for January 19, 2013

Scriptures: Genesis 1; Psalms 8:3; Romans 8:19-22; Leviticus 11:14-22; Genesis 2:1-3; Mark 2:27-28.

1. In last week's lesson, we talked about the formation of our world. (Days 1-3) In this week's lesson, we talk about how God filled the world with living creatures and then rested. (Days 4-7)
2. As we all know, there is no astronomical or other scientific basis for the seven-day week. Basically, months follow the phases of the moon. One year is the time for Earth to orbit around the sun. Individual days are determined by the spinning of Earth. But, there is no astronomical basis for our week. Why did God choose to make a seven-day cycle and call it a week? The Sabbath commandment in Exodus 20 makes it clear that God intended for six days to be set aside for human labor, but the seventh day was to be preserved as a rest day and a day of celebration in worship of God.

Had the Sabbath been universally kept, man's thoughts and affections would have been led to the Creator as the object of reverence and worship, and there would never have been an idolater, an atheist, or an infidel. (GC 437.2)

3. Even before we were created, God recognized that man would need this time of rest and time for building a relationship with Him. (Mark 2:27,28) How does He exercise that Lordship? Once again, we notice that God carefully worked everything out to meet our needs.
4. Read Genesis 1:14-19. Did God really create the sun, the moon, and the stars on the fourth day? As we suggested last week, days one through three were in preparation for days four to six. If light was created on the first day, what was the source of that light? The common sources of light for our world today are the sun, the moon, and the stars. More than that, there is a special challenge for those who want to make each "day" into a long period of time. If plants were created on the third day but the sun and the moon were not created until the fourth "day," what sort of light sustained those plants for the proposed long periods of time until the fourth "day"? Furthermore, what was the basis for the evenings and mornings of the first three days if the sun was not created until the fourth day? Unfortunately, we have no independent observer to answer these questions for us. We have already mentioned that God is Light. (Revelation 21:23) Perhaps God's presence during the light time of the day provided the light for the first three days. Another possibility is that on the fourth day, God assigned their major functions to the sun, the moon, and the stars. (Psalm 8:3) Hebrew scholars such as C. John Collins say that the wording of Genesis 1:14 could allow for either of these possibilities. (See C. John Collins, *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* [Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing Company., 2006], p. 57.)
5. A third possibility that might be easier to understand is that the sun and the moon were already in existence, but they were obscured by clouds or possibly volcanic dust and were not fully visible until the fourth day.
6. Are we willing to live with the idea that we do not know all the answers? Think of all the scientific mysteries present even today for which we do not have complete answers. We do not throw out science just because we do not have all the answers! We should not throw out the Bible just because it does not give all the answers.
7. Read Genesis 1:20-23. Once again, we notice a very orderly, precise description of the creation process. Nothing was left to chance. We also notice that the events of day two seem to be clearly in preparation for these events on day five. It is important to notice in this narrative that both the water creatures and the creatures of the air were created in plurality. There is nothing at all to suggest that originally there was only a single individual or pair of creatures which gave rise to many different types later. It is interesting to notice that whatever form those original creatures were

created in, they had the capacity to produce many variations down through the years through microevolution. Consider all the different types of dogs that have been developed. There are more than 400 named breeds of pigeons. There are thousands of different types of dogs. There are 27 breeds of goldfish. Clearly, God made provision for a variety of creatures.

8. While evolutionists suggest that the first creatures developed in the sea and finally crawled out onto dry land as amphibians and later developed into reptiles and birds, we note that birds have a number of amazing adaptations that are not seen in any other creatures. Bird feathers are lightweight and strong; stiff, yet flexible. The individual portions of each feather are held together by tiny barbs that brace the feather. Lungs of birds were designed for very rapid intake of oxygen. Even their bones have air sacs which can provide additional surface areas for absorption of oxygen. And at the same time, birds have bones much lighter than land animals' bones, and that makes them so that they can fly. Does that suggest an evolutionary origin?
9. Read Genesis 1:24-31. Land animals and humans were created on the sixth day. Once again, we notice that the land created on the third day with its vegetation provides for creatures which were created on the sixth day (and for the birds created on the fifth day). We also notice that just as God created a variety of forms on the fifth day, He created animal life: domestic and wild, large and small on the sixth day. And each of those creatures was clearly capable of producing a variety of offspring.
10. One of the expressions in Genesis 1 that has created considerable discussion is the expression "according to their kind." (Genesis 1:11,21,24-25) This has often been explained as a description of fixed "kinds," perhaps genera according to our modern scientific taxonomy. In ancient Greek philosophy, it was believed that God originally created "types" as a non-changing ideal. Each individual would then be an imperfect expression of that original "type." But, that is clearly not consistent with what we read in Scripture. For example, there were the results of sin. Romans 8:19-22 and Ellen White talk about the threefold curse on the earth as a result of Adam and Eve's sin, then Cain's murder of Abel, and then the flood. (4SG 121; 1BC 1085.6) Were the parasites and predators which cause so much suffering and violence in our world today present in their current form back at creation? Have lions always been carnivores?
11. Read Genesis 6:20; 7:14; and Leviticus 11:14-22. These verses can help us to understand that *kinds* as used in the writings of Moses to mean something more like "groups." What were created on the sixth day were a wide variety of creatures, each with pluripotentiality.
12. Human beings were also created on the sixth day. Later, we will study the detailed accounts of the creation of Adam and Eve.
13. The entire sequence was then followed by a day of rest. Of course, God did not rest because He was tired. Rather, He rested because He was finished with His work. The Hebrew word used for *rest* is *Shabbath* which, of course, is the word from which we derive our word *Sabbath*. God set aside and blessed this seventh day because He intended for it to be a continuous time of celebration with His children. In this context, it is important to notice that the Sabbath was made for us (Mark 2:27,28) and not because God had some special need. This should be immediately obvious from the fact that our particular seven-day cycle and each individual day are determined by our relationship to our sun and not related to any other astronomical phenomenon in any other part of the universe that we know about. Additionally, Sabbath was man's second day.
14. God not only set aside the Sabbath as a memorial of creation but also later added many more reasons for us to celebrate on that day. The Sabbath also was to be a celebration of freedom from slavery; (Deuteronomy 5:15) celebration of God's plan of salvation signified by the death of Jesus and His resting in the grave over the Sabbath (Luke 23:56); and finally, celebration of or anticipation of our future home in heaven and the new earth where we will continue to worship on the Sabbath. (Isaiah 66:23) How would God like us to celebrate all of that?
15. Read Genesis 1:5,8,31. One of the biggest questions that has been raised about the events of creation in recent times is the issue about how long were each of those "days." There is nothing in

the original text to suggest that those days were anything different from the 24-hour days that we have today. There was evening, the dark part of the day, and morning, the light part of the day. They made up each 24-hour period. If we really believe that God is omnipotent and that He could have created our world with the snap of His fingers, why do we have a problem with His creating what He did on each day of creation week? Surely, in the brief space of the creation account in Genesis 1, the repeated use of the expression “there was evening and there was morning” should teach us that these were ordinary 24-hour days.

16. Read Leviticus 23:3. Such verses as this should emphasize and reinforced the idea that they were days of standard, ordinary length. There is no evidence that the ancient Hebrews had any question about those seven days of creation week being anything other than days of ordinary length. Even many scholars who question other aspects of the creation account will admit that the wording in Genesis 1 implies literal days.
17. So, how should we deal with the wording of Genesis 1? If we feel confident in dismissing the obvious meaning of the wording, what are we implying? Are we suggesting that our knowledge and our wisdom take precedence over God’s Word?
18. Read Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8. These passages suggest that time is no limitation for God. One day in His sight could just as well be a thousand years. These verses have nothing to do with Genesis 1 and certainly do not help those who think that billions of years were needed for the evolutionary process!
19. If those six days of creation week were, in actual fact, long time periods, then we should see in the fossil record a matching succession. The first fossils should be plants, then there should be fossils of water animals and air animals, and finally, we should find land animals. But, this is not the sequence we see in the rocks. Water creatures come before plants. Land creatures come before air creatures. The fossils of fruit trees and other flowering plants come after these others. The only point of similarity in the sequences is that humans appear last in both accounts.

Of each successive day of creation, the Sacred Record declares that it consisted of the evening and the morning, like all other days that have followed.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 112.

But the infidel supposition, that the events of the first week required seven vast, indefinite periods for their accomplishment, strikes directly at the foundation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. It makes indefinite and obscure that which God has made very plain. It is the worst kind of infidelity; for with many who profess to believe the record of creation, it is infidelity in disguise.—Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 91.
20. Even if you believe in some nonliteral interpretation of Genesis 1, it should be clear that in the act of creation, nothing was left to chance. There was no common ancestry of species. Darwinian evolution is in blatant contradiction with Genesis, even at its most basic level.
21. Remember that science with all its ongoing discoveries and changes in beliefs has only a fallen, sin-polluted world to study. Is that important to remember in our understanding of origins?
22. Let us try to summarize what we have learned in this lesson. The real issue is one of interpretation. Will we allow Scripture to speak to us in its own terms? Or, are we going to insist that we will reinterpret Scripture in our terms? Evolutionists have created a new “religion.”
23. There are many examples of modern groups trying to reinterpret Scripture to better fit their own ideas. What does this tell us about their priorities? Let us look at some examples. A large group of Christians have interpreted the biblical terms for *fire*, *hell*, *eternal*, *everlasting*, and God’s *wrath* to support the idea of an eternally-burning hell. The truth as supported by many passages in Scripture is very different. Are we going to allow modern understandings of certain words to reinterpret Scripture into something it never intended to say?

24. As our lesson suggests, reinterpretation has been used to support the idea of Sunday sacredness. Once again, the Bible is clear if we read it while interpreting Scripture using only other Scripture.
25. Anyone who has seriously looked at modern science realizes that it is continually in flux and change. Some new discovery comes out and whole areas of supposed knowledge have to change to account for the new discovery. What does that tell us about the permanency of scientific knowledge? By contrast, the Bible says that God does not change. (Malachi 3:6) His Word, written thousands of years ago, has not changed either. Why is it that we now want to treat God's Word as flexible and changeable, and many want to treat scientific knowledge as inflexible and permanent? This is directly contradicted by the facts.
26. So, should we read the Genesis 1 account as a historical, literal account of seven consecutive, contiguous days? Or, should we read it as some allegorical or poetic presentation? Or, something very different?
27. The first question we should ask is: What did the biblical writers intend by what they wrote? There are two major answers to this question when we look at the Hebrew text.

First, when the Hebrew word for day (*yom*) appears in the Old Testament with an ordinal number (first, second, et cetera), the combination always depicts a literal day. Additionally, the presence of evening-morning vocabulary in Genesis 1 makes it hard to escape the obvious: the author clearly intended us to read the account as a basic chronological history with real days like the days that we experience now.

Second, there is a Hebrew construction called the "waw consecutive," which is a hallmark of Hebrew historical narrative. (*Waw* is a conjunction that is generally the equivalent of "and" or "but" in English. The consecutive *waw* is used in a story that is reporting sequences of consecutive events in historical narratives.)—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, Origins, page 38.

28. There are many stories in the Bible which are regarded as historical narratives. They use the same kind of language when talking about days and sequences that are used in Genesis 1. Hebrew scholars agree that the original intention of Moses was that Genesis 1 be considered as historical narrative.
29. Look at another example where by their interpretation of Scripture Jews and Christians have turned things upside down. The Bible makes it very clear that sin is deadly. (Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23) By contrast, God is love; One to be loved. (1 John 4:8,16) Thus, a careful biblical interpretation should lead us to love God and fear sin. But, when we look at the world around us—even the Christian world—what we find is that people love their sins and fear God. How does that happen?
30. Are we going to allow God to speak to us in His terms, interpreting according to the way He intended? Or, are we going to superimpose our own ideas as more valid than the literal, historical narrative of Scripture?

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