

Expository Essay:
God Created All Things - Genesis 1:1-2:4
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The passage to be interpreted, Genesis 1:1-2:4, shows God's handiwork in the creation of the heavens and the earth. This section of the Bible gives a general account of what God created. God gives enough information to show that He is the Creator of the universe.

Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". This verse is a general introductory statement of what is to be described in the rest of this chapter 1 through chapter 2:4. It shows that God "laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of [His] hands" (Hebrews 1:10). "This is the beginning of the created universe" (Kidner 44). Creation took place 'in the beginning' which "refers to the commencement of time in our universe and demonstrates that the matter of the universe had a definite origin" (Benware 29). The word 'God' in the Hebrew means "more than one" (Strong's #0430). "Creation is the work of the Triune God" (Erickson 371). "It appears from Scripture that it was the Father who brought the created universe into existence" (Erickson 373). "Although the creation is from the Father, it is through the Son and by the Holy Spirit" (Erickson 373). The New Testament gives up evidence that "through [the Son] all things were made... " (John 1:3) and "by [the Son] all things were created..." (Colossians 1:16). 'Created' is the word 'bara' which means to 'to make' or 'to form' (Benware 44). It is "used throughout the Bible only with God as its subject (Ross 28). "This word 'created' ('bara') stresses what was created or formed was new and perfect" (Ross 28). 'Created' covers the whole range of God's work, which encompasses the "entire organized universe and everything in it" - the 'heavens and the earth' (Benware 29).

DAY ONE

Genesis 1:2 says, "the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters". It is recorded what the earth looked like, when God started His creation on the earth. The earth was destitute, without form, or order. At the beginning of creation, "God did not use any pre-existent matter, but created the universe from nothing" (Hebrews 11:3). The earth, at this point, was uninhabitable for man or any living creatures, or vegetation (Wenham 60). There was complete blackness over the earth. This verse introduces the fact that there was water over the earth. It is not explained where the water comes from however, "by God's word the heavens existed" and water could have been created then (2 Peter 3:5). The Holy Spirit was poised over the existing waters, ready as the "outgoing energy" of God to start the work of creation (Kidner 45). "The creation started and the earth was formed out of the water and 'through' the water" (Strong's #5204; 2 Peter 3:5).

In Genesis 1:3-5, "God said, "Let there be light," and there was light". God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night...". From day one through day six of creation when God said 'let' a part of His creation exist, it became a reality. On this first day of creation God created light. This light was probably not the sun, moon, or stars, as each of these would be created later on day four of creation. It is not recorded exactly where this light or "illumination" came from, it just exists as God said it should (Strong's #0216). "Light, which has lent its name to all that is life-giving, truth-giving, gladdening, and pure, appropriately marks the first step" in the creation process (Kidner 47). Also recorded on

day one, and day three through six, God saw that what He had created was good. "There was nothing evil within God's original creation" (Erickson 375). What was created were positive items that were added to the earth and desirable in nature to God. God divided the light from the darkness, "marking out the horizon on the face of the waters for a boundary between light and darkness" (Job 26:10). God made the distinction between the light and the dark. He named the light 'day' and the darkness 'night'.

DAY TWO

In Genesis 1:6-8, "God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water". God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it...". At this point in creation the waters engulfed the earth and God "divided" the waters "severing" it in two (Strong's # 0914; # 8432). The waters were divided into the water above and the water below. "The waters elevated above the earth created the earth's atmosphere" (Benware 30).

DAY THREE

In Genesis 1:9-13, "God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear...". God called the dry ground 'land', and the gathered waters He called 'seas'. God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds...". The land produced vegetation...". God "collected" the water binding it together in one place (Strong's #6960). "He piled the waters up and put the deep into storehouses" (Psalms 33:7). Dry land appeared, the "firm ground of the earth" (Strong's #0776). The earth now had mountains and plains that God called 'land', and ocean basins that He called the 'seas' (Benware 31). "[God] gave the 'seas' a boundary of the sand", "which was an everlasting barrier that the sea would try to cross but the sea would not prevail" (Proverbs 8:29; Jeremiah 5:22). "The emphasis of creation now shifts towards the theme of fullness" (Kidner 48), when God caused the land to "make" "tender sprouts" (Strong's #6213; #1877). The vegetation started to fill the earth. The land "brings forth grass, herbs, and fruits" (Henry - Genesis 6-13). God commands this vegetation He created to multiply according to its kind. Here it is seen that "the productive powers of the earth is a God-given gift" (Hamilton 11). "This day three of creation was very important for mankind because now man has land to live on and plants to sustain his life" (Wenham 60).

DAY FOUR

In Genesis 1:14-19, "God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth"...". "God made two great lights -- the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars...". God brought into existence the "luminous bodies" (Strong's #3974) "to distinguish" (Strong's #0914) the day from the night. "These luminaries were designed to give light to the earth and to function as a calendar for the earth, marking off days, months, years, and season" (Benware 31). "For a specific reason the moon is called (only here) the lessor light, and the sun is called (also only here) the greater light" (Hamilton 11). "Among Israel's neighbors, sun and moon were designations for deities" (Hamilton 11). These two lights, the greater and the lessor, were made to "rule" over the day and night (Strong's #4910). "For they rule only as lightbearers, not as powers" (Kidner 49). "When [people] look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and

the stars -- all the heavenly array -- [they are] not [to] be enticed into bowing down to them and worshipping" (Deuteronomy 4:19). "The sun, moon, and stars are a display of God's handiwork", "which are good gifts from God" (Ross 29; Kidner 49).

DAY FIVE

In Genesis 1:20-23, "God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky. God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems...". "God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth"...". God called into existence everything that lives in the water. The waters would be "full" of living or "breathing" sea creatures - suggesting active life (Strong's #8317; # 5315). The great creatures or literally "sea monsters" (Strong's #8577) "were regarded as divine in some ancient myths; Genesis insists that they were merely some of God's creatures" (Wenham 61). "All the water creatures came into being on this day, leaving no room in the biblical text for [atheistic] evolution with its gradual [non-divinely orchestrated] development from single-celled, marine organisms" (Benware 31). After God finished making the sea creatures, He made the birds. The word 'bird' has a broader meaning than just the winged birds in the sky. The word 'bird' in the original Hebrew is "owph" from the root word "uwph" which means literally "fly things" (Strong's #5775, #5774). On this day of creation not only were the birds created but also apparently the "flying insects" (Kidner 49). God commanded the animals of the sea and the animals of the skies to "increase" (Strong's #7235) and have young - i.e. they were "capable of interbreeding" with the purpose of filling the seas and skies (Webster - 'species'). God blessed the animals of the sea and the animals of the skies, which "guaranteed their fertility" (Wenham 61).

DAY SIX

In Genesis 1:24-25, "God said, "Let the land produce living creatures..., livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, ...". On this day, God created three groups of land animals (Sailhamer 5). The first group was the livestock or "cattle that were large dumb beasts". The second group were the creatures that move along the ground - the "reptiles or any other rapidly moving animal" that was close to the ground (Strong's #7431). The third group of animals was that of the wild animals.

In Genesis 1:26-27, "God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground". God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them". There are two common theories that can be considered when God said that He would make man in 'our' image. One theory says that "God is pictured talking to the angels" (Wenham 61). "The 'our' in this theory implies that man is like God and the angels" (Wenham 61). The other theory is that the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, would make man in their image. "Traditionally, Christians have taken this last theory that man was made in the image of God" (Wenham 61). In holding the theory that man is made in God's image, then "humans would share, though imperfectly and finitely, in God's nature, that is, in His communicable attributes (life, personality, truth, wisdom, love, holiness, justice)" (Ross 29). "Man did not evolve; he was created by God" (Ross 29).

In Genesis 1:28, "God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground"". "God's blessing on the male and female was not only to bestow a gift but also to give them a function" (Kidner 52). The function of man would be to rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and over all the creatures that moved on the earth. In telling the male and female to increase in number, "God thereby blessed sexual intercourse and indicated its importance in his plan" (Wenham 61). "Humanity was defined when God created male and female as bisexual, the partners are complements of the other" (Kidner 52).

In Genesis 1:29-31, "God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food". "And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground -- everything that has the breath of life in it -- I give every green plant for food...". "The assigning of 'every green plant for food' to all creatures... means more than all plants were equally edible to all" (Kidner 52). "This is a generalization, which directly or indirectly all life depends on vegetation, and the concern of the verse is to show that all are fed from God's hand" (Kidner 52). "God [gave] food at the proper time" (Psalms 145:15).

In Genesis 1:2-1:31 there was a set pattern established for each of the first six days of creation. "There is the creative word, the report of its effect, God's evaluation of it as 'good', at times the sovereign naming, and the numbering of each day." (Ross 28). A compelling question from this is how long was a 'day' (the Hebrew word 'yom'). There are several popular theories that have developed to reconcile the apparent age of the earth with the biblical material, to determine the length of time it took for God to create the earth (Erickson 380). "All the theories that developed have points of strength, and each have some difficulties as well" (Erickson 381). Beyond what the verses say, it cannot be determined exactly how long God took to create 'the heavens and the earth' other than it took six periods or 'days' to create the 'heavens and earth'. In the passage, God labeled each of the successive days of creation one through seven. On each of the first six days "evening came and morning came" showing the progression of time during creation" (Kidner 47).

Genesis 2:1 says that "the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array". "God completed His work and confronted it as a completed totality" (Kidner 53).

DAY SEVEN

Genesis 2:2 says, "...God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work". "God had finished his creative task and literally 'ceased' from what He had been doing" (Kidner 53). "This is a rest of achievement, not inactivity, for He nurtures what He created" (Kidner 53).

In Genesis 2:3, "God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done". "When God blessed the seventh day of rest, it was not just for God alone but for the world to consider this day a day of rest" in respect, honor, and recognition for what God had created (Kidner 53).

In Genesis 2:4, "This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created...". The report in Genesis of creation shows how "God called all things into being, leaving no room for notions of a universe that is self-existent, or struggled for random, or a divine emanation" (Kidner 46). It is assured through Genesis that God created all things.

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