

Giving Form to Creation

Genesis 1:2-10

² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning--the first day.

⁶ And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." ⁷ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸ God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning--the second day.

⁹ And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

Some Introductory Comments

Common Themes Each Day

1. God simply speaks and what he commands occurs.
2. God defines the significance of things by giving them names. Adam will also do this (Genesis 2:19-20). [Names were not randomly given, but were appropriately chosen (or created) so as to communicate something about the object being named.]
3. When something new is made, the day's work is not complete until it can be evaluated and called "good." There is *nothing* that isn't "good."
4. "Day" is defined as being comprised of an evening and a morning.
 - Nothing occurs in the context that would suggest that the word is being used in a merely symbolic way.
 - The Old Testament Hebrew concept of "day" follows this pattern, starting in the evening, rather than at midnight (the time we start *our* "day").

What happened in heaven, the place where the angels live?

We are not given *any* information about the creation of "form" in heaven. We are told a few things about its inhabitants (in other Scripture passages), but no details about their creation. This is because God tells us what we need to know for *our* life and existence... and details about the creation of heavenly beings don't fall into this category. They could have been created on Day 1 (when the "heavens" were created), on Day 4 (when other heavenly objects - sun/moon/stars - were created), or at various times during the "creation week" (when corresponding entities were created on earth - "form" on the first three days and inhabitants after that).

One thing we *do* know is this: The Devil and all his followers were *not* created evil; for at the end of the creation week, *everything* was very good (1:31).

Day 1 - Separation of Light from Dark

Remember the starting point: A dark, empty, wet "blob" surrounded by "nothingness" (v. 2).

On Day 1, what did God make, once the earth itself had been created? (v. 3)? _____

How did he make it (v.3a)? _____

What was God's evaluation of what he had just done (v. 4a)? _____

- Initially, there was no distinction between light and dark areas on the earth. Perhaps there was a diffuse grayness everywhere, with light waves (or photons) moving in random directions. (This would include the entire "electromagnetic spectrum," of which visible light is just a part.) But this would quickly change:

What type of "distinction" or "separation" did God make (4b)? _____

How did God define the two parts of this "distinction"; what did he call them (v. 5a)? _____

- This light was "concentrated" into a general location on one side of the earth (which, at this point, was still just a watery "blob"). This meant that half the earth was illuminated by light, while the other half was in darkness - just like today. But unlike today, the light source had not been localized to a specific object, such as the sun, because no objects had yet been created in space. (That occurred on Day 4, and from then on, the photons which give us daylight come from the sun.)
 - Even today, scientists can detect a small amount of "background noise" in space - photons or electromagnetic waves (which includes light waves), which are not necessarily associated with any specific heavenly object.
 - Note also that the sun will not be *needed* for light, in the future "New Jerusalem," for the source of light will be God himself. (See Revelation 21:23; 22:5. It won't be *needed*, but these verses don't say specifically that the sun will or won't *exist*. Perhaps it will exist for other areas of the earth that are a long distance from the New Jerusalem.)

How did God define the word "day" (v. 5b, 8b, etc.)? _____

- In the Old Testament, the Jewish day began at sunset. This follows the pattern seen here, in which the day began with darkness and ended with light.

Symbolism in the Bible - Light and Darkness as an Example

God created the physical world in a way that would enable it to teach us truths about God, and about various non-physical concepts. Because of this, some of the things mentioned in the creation account, such as light and darkness, took on a symbolic significance.

God made the nature of light and darkness in such a way that they would be able to teach us spiritual realities about good and evil, knowledge and ignorance, life and death, etc. Having been "separated" by God (v. 4), the two are mutually incompatible. There is even significance in the fact that darkness is the *absence* of light. (See John 1:4-5.) Note, however, that this does not mean the *original created entities* had that significance. As part of creation, even the darkness was "good" in God's sight.

Even before sin entered the world, Adam and Eve would have been able to learn something about the non-physical concepts that were illustrated by light and darkness. They would have had at least some idea of the incompatibility of good and evil. They did not have to *experience* the evil, in order to know that it was incompatible with good. Had they chosen to *not* sin (Genesis 3), they would have still known the difference.

Day 2 - Separation of Water from Water

What was separated or divided (v. 6-7)? _____

- Day 2 begins with a watery "blob" that now has light and dark areas (on opposite sides). On this day, the water is divided into two locations, separated by an "expanse" (called "firmament," in some translations).

What does God call (or name) this "expanse"? _____

- This "expanse" is defined (or named), but it isn't really anything *new*, which needed evaluated (and called "good"). It was more an issue of separating something that was already there. The "expanse" (sky or heaven) was more an *absence* of something (water), than its *presence* - just like darkness is the *absence* of light.

More about the "expanse" and "heaven"

The "expanse" is *between* the earth and the "waters in the sky," as well as *above* those waters. It would include all that we call "sky" and "space." This is why, on Day 4, we read that the sun, moon and stars are also in the "expanse" of the sky.

When this account was written, the "expanse" was basically "the area up there" and was essentially inaccessible to humans. The specific distances to the water layer or to the sun/moon/stars was not an issue. They were all simply "up there"! Birds (Day 5) would also inhabit the lower parts of this "expanse."

The word "heaven" is also used to refer to many things - the sky (where the birds and clouds are), the universe (where the sun, moon and stars are), the place where God resides, etc. The context helps us understand what is meant.

What are the "waters above the earth"?

Most people interpret this as referring to the clouds - and it probably does. But some have interpreted this passage as suggesting something different, perhaps a "canopy" of water vapor, surrounding the earth, *higher than* the clouds. Such a layer, they argue, would have been invisible, allowing the sun to pass through it; but it would have acted similar to a greenhouse, providing a uniform, warm climate worldwide, and protecting the earth from the dangerous rays of the sun. (This idea of a uniform climate agrees with fossil evidence, which shows that there were at one time tropical plants and animals at the North and South Poles. It also agrees with the Genesis 5 record, which shows us that the early earth's inhabitants had significantly longer life spans than people do today.) Those holding this view would say that this layer was destroyed when the waters in the sky came down during the global Flood in Noah's day.

More recently, computer models designed to test this theory have suggested that such a "greenhouse layer," if it existed, would have been *too hot*! So unless further evidence shows differently, there is no reason to change our view that this passage is a reference to the clouds and water vapor we normally observe in the atmosphere.

There is an important thing to remember, when considering theories such as this is: Man-made theories come and go. Some may prove reasonably accurate; some may be disproved. Whatever the case, *the Bible remains accurate in what it says*, whether or not our attempts to explain it are correct! We should always be willing to modify our views, if doing so will make them closer to what Scripture says!

Day 3 (Part 1) - Separation of Land and Water

Which water layer is the focus of this day (v. 9a)? _____

What happened to this water layer, and what appeared, as a result of it happening (v. 9)? _____

How did God define these two entities? What did he call them (v. 10)? _____

What was God's evaluation of these accomplishments (v. 10b)? _____

Additional comments about the sea and the land:

- At the global flood, the seas again covered the earth (Genesis 7-8), but they will never do so again (Psalm 104:9).
- Revelation. 21:1 tells us specifically that there will be no sea on the new earth.

A Job Well Done.

At this point, all the "forms" or "separations" have been made... and none have been made since then. Today, we have light and darkness, water, earth and sky (including the "space" of the universe).