

Genesis 1:14-19

PREFACE

We have witnessed God’s methodical, systematic creative steps from the beginning. At times He—one could rightly substitute “They”—will create something that requires something else by which to thrive, but then will immediately create that which was initially lacking, such as creating, in Day Three, living vegetation that will obviously require sunlight to survive, and then immediately creating that sunlight on Day Four.

At other times, however, God will supply in advance that which will *soon* be needed—not unlike a general pre-stationing stores and fuel for the troops that will soon be advancing—such as God supplying food from the plants and trees in Day Three for the living beings He will create in Day Six, or as He created “light” in Day One before there was a sun to contain and shed that light in Day Four.

In our text for this session God does both. The plants and trees, created yesterday, will now today receive their necessary sunlight. But on this Day Four the sunlight and moonlight will be created in advance of the creation of the beasts of the field and Man, for whom the light will be necessary two days hence. Equally important, however, is that in this day God creates the means by which Man will tell time, establish calendars, and be able to navigate the globe.

Read Genesis 1:14-19.

Occasionally a passage of Scripture seems to reveal that God has embedded it in His word, not for the sole purpose, but for at least one purpose: to keep us honest. If we have adopted one interpretation earlier—in this case, vv1-5—then to be honest we must likewise hold to that same interpretation as we proceed deeper into the narrative. We can’t change horses in the middle of the race.

Consider, for a moment, the natural world we live in: the vast grasslands of the prairies; the forests containing myriad species of trees; the risings from low, rolling hills to majestic peaks that pierce the highest clouds; the seemingly endless variety of living beasts, from the desert, to the grasslands and forests, to the sea. Then add to that the myriad human variations, as the politically-incorrect childhood song puts it—

Red and yellow, black and white,

They are precious in His sight.

(C. H. Woolston)

Now look at how this narrative begins in vv1-2:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

We—that is this church and your humble teacher—do not subscribe to the so-called “Gap Theory,” which interprets v1 as God first creating a beautiful, pristine, lovely earth first, which became corrupted by Satan and sin, and was subsequently replaced. We hold that God created the one and only earth just as it is described in these two verses—which will only be replaced at the end of the apocalypse and the start of the believer’s eternal state.

Revelation 21:1-5

Now, why am I regurgitating something we’ve already covered. Because these two verses are where we establish the roots of our perspective on the Creation epic. And I would posit that God’s methodology with “the heavens” was the same as with “the earth.” Why would He, as some suggest, completely populate the endless universe with all the planets and stars and moons, solar systems, et al—including our *own* star and moon at the outset of the first day—yet take five more days to outfit and populate the most important planet in His universe? Why would He complete everything else in His Creation, yet leave the solitary location of His gospel to Man a shapeless, dark, wet mass.

I believe I have shown that God’s method from the beginning was to begin with the basics, then refine and add over time, in a systematic fashion. Doesn’t it follow that He would employ the same method for both heavens and earth? More than a few commentators base their conclusion that the sun and moon *had* to be created on day one because they are part of the “heavens”—space. To that I—and others, of course—say, Why? Did the Day One earth look *anything* like earth today—even the earth in Day Three? As I read v2, the initial state of the earth sounds more like a clumsy asteroid than a globe fit for humanity.

When those scholars that claim the sun and moon were created in v1 get to the passage before us today, they stand on their heads and do a little etymological song and dance to explain away the cold fact that God says He made them—as well as all the stars—on Day Four—*not* Day One.

v14

Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years;

I conclude that the evidence of Scripture is that on Day One of Creation God made the universe—the “heavens”—in a similar “not yet” form as He did the earth: Empty, formless, and void. He created the empty space that would later be called by Man, “space.” Now, in Day Four, in vv14-19, He will populate that empty space with “lights”—luminaries, light-bearers. And by them He creates one more essential Creation-component to make earth hospitable for Man: Time. On Day One (v3) God created elemental light; now He implants that light into the stars—most importantly, the one star closest to earth—to light the day, and reflects that same light off the moon to light the earth’s night, along with the myriad long-distant stars in space.

Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens...”

Here Moses uses a different word than before, and recycles a couple of words he used earlier.

“Light” in v3 is *or*, and is a root word meaning to be or become light, and is used for the dawn, but also for spiritual illumination:

**The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear?
(Psalm 27:1a)**

**For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.
(Psalm 36:9)**

**O send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me; Let them
bring me to Your holy hill And to Your dwelling places.
(Psalm 43:3)**

The “lights” in v14 is a different word, *meoroth*, which means a luminary (luminous body), light-bearer, lamp, source of light. Less common than *or*, I could find only one instance of this word, in Psalm 90:8, where it is used in a more symbolic or metaphorical manner:

**You have placed our iniquities before You,
Our secret sins in the light of Your presence.**

All others refer to the mechanics of an instrument shedding light. But Moses uses the same words used earlier for “expanse” and “heavens.” We shouldn’t confuse them with their earlier application, however; “expanse” in v14 does not refer to the expanse or firmament created to separate the waters in v6, nor does “heavens” refer to the first heaven of earth’s atmosphere. Both, here, refer to the second heaven, space.

The text lists the reasons for the lights—

- to separate day from night
- for signs
- for seasons
- for days and years
- to give light to the earth (v15, v17)
- to rule the day and the night
- to separate light from darkness

—all for those dwelling on the earth.

...to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years;

In a sense, of course, “time” had already been created—at least from God’s perspective—by the application of “evening and morning” comprising a day. But now, with the creation of the sun and moon and stars, there would be the means by which the earth’s approaching inhabitants—from mice to men—could measure time.

Those of us of more pedestrian ilk may give little thought to the utilitarian fullness of the objects in the heavens. The sun rises in the morning, it sets at night; the moon rises in the evening, and sets around dawn; the stars are just out there—and we give all of these celestial bodies little thought in the course of our daily lives.

But there are others who actually *use* the heavens; they can *read* the sun, moon, and stars.

- Israel will need the celestial objects to be faithful and obedient to the Lord, to know the months and seasons for the observance of the sacrifices and feasts ordained by God.
- Those who pilot ships must know the phases of the moon, for it affects the tides.
- Those who navigate the seas (at least prior to GPS) read the stars for knowing where they are and where they are going.
- The farmer must pay attention to the seasons, all governed by the position of the sun, for planting and harvesting. The sun will also govern what the farmer is able to plant, based on where he lives on the earth and its proximity to the heat of the sun.

Many are under the mistaken impression that grace is an artifact of the NT, that it came in through Christ. But grace has been part of God’s nature and character from eternity past—as evident in Creation itself. God is methodically, systematically piecing together a world and universe that will become a perfect habitat for man and woman and all the beasts of the field—all because of God’s grace. As to “signs,” Leupold helps us out.

Leupold: Now “signs” (*ôthôth*) is here used in the broadest possible sense. Indeed, the luminaries are signs from various points of view. They are “signs” to devout faith, declaring the glory of their Creator (cf. Ps. 8 and 19). They are “signs” by which men get their bearings, or the point of the compass by day or by night. They may convey “signs” in reference to future events (Matt. 2:2; Luke 21:25). They furnish quite reliable “signs” for determining in advance the weather to be expected (Matt. 16:2, 3). They may be “signs” of divine judgments (Joel 2:30; Matt. 24:29). That they may well serve in all these capacities is clear both from Scripture and from experience.

v15

and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so.

I’m not going to pretend that I understand all the ins and outs of ancient Hebrew, but I am fascinated by the second “light” reference in v15. At its root it is the same word used in v3—to be or become light, the dawn, etc. But the variation used in v15 is related more to *fire* than just illumination—and how appropriate! To very ancient man the sun will indeed be his source of heat, of warmth like that found in the heat of a simple fire, as well as illumination. When the first man and woman are created they will be naturally and innocently naked, like the beasts, and they will be warmed by the sun. Other than the sun, what was the source of his artificial illumination? Fire.

v16

So God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night, and also the stars.

The end of v15 gives us the standard indication that God has now accomplished what He set out in this fourth day: “...and it was so.” Now, as He has before, Moses adds more information and context for the preceding acts. Verse 16 remains earth-centric; the sun—the greater light—is not greater compared to any other star, nor is the moon—the lesser light—lesser compared to any other moon, but the one that rules (has dominion over) the day is the dominant light of the two—especially since the light of the moon is reflected light of the sun—as perceived from earth.

...and also the stars.

Let us pause for a moment to consider the “starry host” created on Day Four. As with other aspects of God’s six-day Creation, scientists and evolutionists take issue not just with a simple reading of God’s word, but especially considering the vastness and distance from earth of the stars, planets, solar systems, etc.

By their reasoning, many of them claim that the incredible distances between stars—measured in light years, a measurement of *time*, the distance light travels in a year—is solid evidence of the great antiquity of the universe, and by extension, the earth. They reason that since the light from some stars takes multiple thousands of light years to reach earth, it cannot possibly be true that the earth is only a few thousand years old.

Some Bible scholars argue against this by pointing out that “the laws of light refraction in the interstellar spaces cannot be asserted to be identical with those prevailing under conditions as we know them” (Leupold). That may be, but we don’t even need to go there. The Bible says that on and in Day Four God “made...the stars.” Let us assume that that statement means that on that day God made (spoke into existence) absolutely every star that will ever be, and set in space just where He intended them to go: “...and God saw that it was good” (v18).

Where is it recorded that this means that Adam and Eve, gazing up into the night sky, were able to see every star God had just created a few days earlier—or even all the stars we can see today? Their visibility to those on earth has no bearing on whether or not, or when, they existed. How does it validate Darwin that Adam and Eve saw perhaps only a subset of stars that we can see today? It fits entirely within the economy of God’s Creation, as recorded in Scripture, that those in the Garden of Eden may not have seen every star that had just been created. Besides, there is this important point:

Matthew Henry: The scriptures were written, not to gratify our curiosity and make us astronomers, but to lead us to God, and make us saints.

When faith gets sidetracked into such arguments it diminishes God’s purpose behind it all. His written word, His incarnate Word, the reason for Creation itself, and the reason for our redeemed lives is His glory. Science need not be the enemy of faith, but it can become a distraction to the process of our becoming more like Christ.

vv17-19

And God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good.

Verses 17 and 18 reiterate what had been stated in vv14-16, effectually reinforcing how—as strange as it may seem to many today—all this, the sun and moon and even the distant stars, He has set in place for the benefit of this earth. That is, a determined, reasoned, intentional population of space (“the expanse of the heavens”) to benefit man. And v19 offers the now-standard conclusion: “evening and morning, a fourth day.”

SESSION 10

The Creation of Time

Genesis 1:14-19

God's Methodology

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