

Genesis 1:24-31

As Day Six dawns, we see an *almost* completed earth in the *completed* expanses of the heavens.

Day One: the primal heavens and primal earth are created, empty, shapeless, void. The earth is utterly dark and covered in surging waters. After this, God creates primal, elemental light. ❏

Day Two: God does something that will be of vital importance to all the future beings on earth. He creates the first heaven, which will be an expanse between the waters on earth's surface and waters above (i.e., the clouds). Thus earth will have a surrounding atmosphere, necessary not just for future birds in which to fly, but necessary for a suitable climate for beast and man.

Day Three: Next God separates the waters on earth's surface so that the dry land can emerge. Immediately, within the same day, the fertile dry land sprouts fully mature vegetation, plants and fruit trees bearing mature fruit with seeds.

Day Four: During the following day, Day Four, God populates the second heaven with planets and stars, including the nearest star—our sun—"to give light on the earth" and rule the day, and earth's moon, to rule the night. These two lights He ordains to "separate the light from the darkness." All these lights that dwell in the second heaven—space—receive the light that will shine down on and be used by man from that elemental light created on Day One.

Day Five: Now begins the systematic populating of this brand new earth; there is reason and logic behind this—one might even say, an "intelligent design." ❏ God, the most intelligent Designer there has ever been, will populate the earth in order from the least to the greatest, or perhaps more accurately, from the lowest to the highest beings. He will begin with those that swim in the sea, followed by those that fly in the expanse immediately above the surface of the earth (i.e., the sky). These will include far more than just fish and birds, but some aquatic reptiles and "great sea monsters," and flying dinosaurs, such as pterodactyls. Their Creator not only declares this "good," but, surprisingly *bleses* these two "kinds," ordaining them with the power to "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth."

So we now come to the sixth and final day of Creation, the first part of which we will look at in this session. But let's begin by reading the full account of this last day.

elemental light

Remember: For the final, eternal state of man, there will be no need for "light," for that will be supplied by the Godhead (Revelation 21:23). There is no reason not to assume that that was also true in eternity past, prior to Creation.

"intelligent design" according to Wikipedia

"Intelligent design is a pseudoscientific argument for the existence of God, presented by its proponents as 'an evidence-based scientific theory about life's origins.' Proponents claim that 'certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection.' ID is a form of creationism that lacks empirical support and offers no testable or tenable hypotheses, and is therefore not science."

Read Genesis 1:24-31.

v24

Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind”; and it was so.

What I quoted Leupold on in our previous session applies to the creative act of v24 as well:

Leupold: God could have called forth these creatures by His mere word; instead He speaks the word that enables the earth to bring them forth. 📧

Once again we have “living creatures” (i.e., “soul of life”). As I pointed out in our last session, even though these land animals, as well as the aquatic and flying beasts, have souls, this does not mean the same as it does with man. The soul in this regard means merely an animating principle, that which causes them to breathe. The difference—in the nature of the soul, and in the hierarchy of beings—between animals and man can be seen when v24 is compared to v7 in Chapter Two.

Read Genesis 2:7.

We see two differences—one subtle, one more pronounced—between the Chapter One and Chapter Two accounts.

First, as to the soul, we see that the process is inferior to that for man. In v24, as in vv20-21, we see God commanding that creatures come forth with “souls,” that is, they are created that way from the outset, pre-fab as it were. But with man the soul is introduced, by God, in a more personal, even intimate manner.

Then Yahweh God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and so the man became a living being.

Here the personal name for God is used—*Yahweh Elohim*—and only after the man is formed from the ground is he given his soul. How? By having it *breathed into him personally by Yahweh*.

Second, the picture in v24 is of God commanding something to emerge from the earth, but in v7 of Chapter Two—even though the earth or soil is involved in both—it is a picture of (how I have always described it) *God getting His hands dirty* in the creation of man. There is a measure of detachment in God’s creation of the aquatic and flying animals and the mammals created just before man. But with the creation of man it is different: *God* is the one literally forming man out of what Luther calls, a “lump of earth.”

But note:

A comparison of vv20-25 (the creation of living creatures) with vv11-12 (vegetation and trees) reveals a subtle difference. Note that v11 says, “Then God said, ‘Let the earth sprout vegetation...’” and is reinforced in v12 with “And the earth brought forth vegetation...” Verses 20 and 24 say something similar: “Then God said, ‘Let the waters swarm...’” and “Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth...’” respectively. But instead of simply reinforcing this as in v12, the text reminds us that even though the waters and earth played a role in this creative effort, it was God who made the creatures: v21, “And God created...” and v25, “God made the beasts of the earth...” In this systematic Creation God draws a distinction between living creatures, and plants and trees. And later in Day Six He will draw an even sharper distinction between the beasts and man. Here is evidence—even in the first week—that God is sovereign, and holds the right to establish a hierarchy within His Creation. He calls the shots (1 Chronicles 29:11; Exodus 33:19; Romans 9:14-18).

Yet, just *how* detached God is in His creation of the land animals—if at all—is hard to say. Look at v19 in Chapter Two.

Read Genesis 2:19.

That word translated “formed” is the same as that used in v7 to describe Yahweh God forming man from the earth—*yiser* (yets-SAHR). More on all this, of course, when we get to Chapter Two.

... living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind

Here we have three groups, or classifications, of land animals—three “kinds” (i.e., species)—that God “brings forth” from the earth: cattle, creeping things, and “beasts of the earth”.

cattle

The translation “cattle” is common, and OK, but I think the ESV and NIVs are better with “livestock,” for *behemah* is a broader term than just bovines. The idea is domestic beasts, those dumb (i.e., non-speaking) animals bred and managed by humans.

creeping things

I seldom have opportunity to recommend the NIVs, so let me do it again here. The standard translation for this among our versions is “creeping things,” but the NIVs have “creatures that move along the ground,” and that is closer to the meaning of the Hebrew *remes*. This would then include everything, large or small, moving upon the earth or close to the earth moving about on short legs.

beasts of the earth

Once more the NIVs, while no doubt the least literal in their translation, leave us with a clearer idea of *chayyath haarets* with “wild animals.” That is, non-domesticated (wild) beasts with freedom of movement upon the earth.

v25

God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing of the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

As he has before, Moses reiterates the facts of v24 in v25. But I can’t help but think that in this instance, considering the pedantic, repetitive nature of v25, he is using it to draw a contrast with what follows—and what a dramatic contrast it is.

Look at the rhythm of v25:

**God made
the beasts of the earth
after their kind,
and the cattle
after their kind,
and every creeping thing of the ground
after its kind;
and God saw that it was good.**

The creation and allocation of all these creatures was precisely according to God's plan—as with all those before. They were allocated into different species, sharing some traits, but each still distinct from the others. It pleased God to create them this way; it was “good.”

But now He is going to create something entirely different—something that will share *its* kind with nothing less than God Himself.

In v26 we eavesdrop on the planning for this new creation; this isn't the *doing*, but the discussion and establishing of the *purpose behind* the doing in v27. This is the Godhead, as it were, sitting around the conference table, working out the details for the next and most profound step of the Creation.

v26

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, so that they will have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Every Sunday morning during our prayer time we are reminded of the consequences of man's fall in the Garden—the consequences of his short-sighted rebellion against his Maker. This twisted, depraved, painful, disease-ridden, groaning world in which we live is the direct result of the first man and woman forgetting—even just for one, fatal moment—that they and they alone in all of this fresh Creation had been made in the image of God.

I would contend that there are three—and perhaps *only* three—epochal events in the vast history of time that sent (or *will* send) a cosmic quake throughout the universe. Surely one of these was when the Son of God/Son of man died upon the cross; that quake is described in Matthew's gospel.

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. And the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many. (Matthew 27:50–53)

Mortal man cannot fathom the fierce temblor that coursed through the universe in that moment.

Like unto His death on the cross will be Christ's return. The universe will quake, but most especially this earth will be literally torn apart and reshaped, as is described in profound detail in Zechariah 14, when Christ once again stands upon the earth. ❏

Zechariah 14:4-10

The *first* event, however, to cause such a shudder and tremor throughout earth and the heavens occurred not long—in cosmic terms—after the first week of Creation. And we have to understand the depth and impact of that betrayal before we can truly comprehend the supreme grace that a holy God dispensed upon the human race on this sixth day. Then, of course, it works from the opposite direction as well: understanding the unimaginable grace of being made in God's image, reveals the true nature of the insidious action of Adam.

We have clearly seen, as we have progressed through the days of Creation, that that Creation was no higgledy-piggledy mish-mash of random acts, but a well-ordered, systematic plan that began with the elemental basics, then moved steadily and logically into the more detailed aspects of the universe and this world. This plan, as made clear in the Genesis narrative, was *earth-centric*; everything was being created for the benefit of this globe we call home. And now we see that it was all being done for the benefit of man.

God didn't do all this for chipmunks, or garter snakes, or polar bears. He didn't do it for the trees (as disappointing as that surely was to J. R. R. Tolkien), and He didn't do it for the fish in the sea. No, He did all this for human beings, and it is a measure of God's forgiveness and grace that even after Adam's betrayal God would send His own Son as the price of man's eternal salvation. Indeed, knowing that Adam *would* betray Him, did not stifle God's grace—nor the blessing of giving man dominion over the earth and its other creatures.

Chapter Three will reveal in no uncertain terms that man's betrayal of his Maker was a cataclysmic offense that will reverberate not just through the heavens, but through time on earth all the way through to the Great White Throne judgment of Christ (Revelation 20:11-15). Only then will the penalty of sin be removed in preparation for the new heaven and new earth, and the believer's eternal state with God.

In our next session, **(in three weeks)**, we will examine in full God's last act of creation: Man made in God's image (vv26-31).

SESSION 12

The Final Day of Creation, *part one*
Genesis 1:24-31

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A Unique Kind

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