

Making Inhabitants for Creation - Part 1

Genesis 1:11-19

¹¹ Then 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." And it was so. ¹² The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening, and there was morning--the third day.

¹⁴ And 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, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening, and there was morning--the fourth day.

Introductory Comments

On each day, certain things are described as being created or made. These are representative of entire *categories* of created beings (or objects), including those which might not be specifically mentioned. For instance, when vegetation is created on the third day, two classes of vegetation are mentioned. Those which are *not* mentioned (such as *water* plants) would still have been included.

Day 3b - Vegetation

One major function of vegetation is to provide for the animals - food (energy source), oxygen, shelter, etc. These things will need to be present before the animals can be created. (Plants have other important functions, as well, such as providing beauty, variation in the scenery, etc.)

What did God create? (What did he cause the land to produce?) Two categories are mentioned (v. 11-12).

1) _____

2) _____

How did they reproduce? _____

- The creative act on this day focuses on vegetation. The two specific plant groups which are mentioned focus on *land* plants. Other types of vegetation (such as water plants, one-celled plants, and anything else that doesn't fit into the "animal" category) were probably created at the same time.
- Some plants don't reproduce by way of *seeds*. If they were created that way, then they are among the plants that are not specifically mentioned in the text. However, they may have degenerated and lost their seed-bearing capability, due to the effects of the Fall (Genesis 3), or the ecological changes that occurred after the Flood (Genesis 6-8). Either way, they still reproduce after their "kind."
- What we see today is only a small representative of the many kinds of plants that were originally created. The fossil record indicates that an enormous variety of plants (as well as animals) have become extinct. Most of this probably occurred when creatures had difficulty adjusting to the radically changed environmental conditions after the Flood.

What was God's conclusion at the end of the day (v. 12b)? _____

What is meant by the word "KIND"?

Today, scientists use concepts, such as *family*, *genus* and *species*, to describe plants and animals. The Old Testament word "kind" (specifically, the Hebrew word "*min*") is found Genesis, the book of Leviticus, and a few other places. When we compare the modern and the Old Testament terms, we discover that a "kind" generally represents something above the level of *species* - often between the modern concepts of *family* and *genus*. Sometimes it may even have a broader meaning.

This is important to understand for several reasons. First, since God created plants and animals to reproduce offspring "according to their kinds," this *limits* the extent of variability among creatures. This means that one "kind" of creature *cannot* change into another "kind." Fish *cannot* become amphibians or reptiles; reptiles *cannot* become birds or mammals; primates *cannot* become humans. It is impossible - an imaginary concept at best.

On the other hand, there can be lots of variation *within* a "kind." The original "dog kind" would include not only modern-day dogs of many shapes and sizes (ranging from Chihuahuas to Great Danes), but foxes, wolves, coyotes, jackals, and several other related species. There can be a *great* variety, but they will *always* be part of the "dog kind," and will *never* change into another type of "kind."

This agrees fully with all known scientific evidence. There often *is* a wide variety within a specific "kind" of plant or animal. However, there is *no* evidence - either in present observations, or in the past fossil record, that shows a transition from one "kind" to another.

Knowing this information is also valuable when one attempts to calculate the amount of room that may have been needed on Noah's ark. Instead of *two each* of dogs, foxes, wolves, coyotes, jackals, and all the other related species, Noah would have needed only a male and a female of the "dog kind." This greatly reduces the number of animals that would have needed to be on the ark. When looked at this way, there would have been *plenty* of room for *all* known "kinds" of animals (even those now extinct) that would have needed to be on the ark.

Day 4 - The "Inhabitants" of the Sky

What are three of the things God created in the sky (v. 16)? _____

- The Hebrew word for "lights," in this passage, is *not* the same as the word "light" in verse 3. In verse 3, the word refers to "illumination" (the light itself); here it refers to "a luminous body" (an object that gives off light).

- The word "star" is probably representative of *all* the objects that would have been created in the "sky" (universe), other than the sun and moon. This would include planets, meteors, asteroids, comets, and the rest. This is because our *modern* definition of "star" has been around for only a few centuries. Today, we think of the *composition* of the object - such as huge ball of gaseous plasma (= a star), or a clump of frozen ice and debris (= a comet), etc. But before recent centuries, a "star" was defined by what was visible with the naked eye - a distant point of light in the sky. Planets would be points of light that moved about the sky - "wandering stars." Meteorites would have been called "falling stars," etc. Though this may seem strange to us, with our "modern" definitions of the words, this was all perfectly legitimate, when based on *their* definition of the word "star."

There were four reasons for these lights:

Reason #1 (v. 14a and 18b) - _____

- Remember that there was *already* light separating night from day (v. 3). Now, however, that light would be "centralized" into one location.

Reason #2 (v. 14b) - _____

- A "sign" is an *indicator*, a *reminder*, or a *warning* about something. Scripture mentions many instances in which something is used as a "sign" of something else. Some signs were miraculous; others weren't. Scriptures which give examples of signs include: Genesis 4:15 (apparently some type of mark on Cain); 9:12-17 (a rainbow); 17:11 (circumcision); numerous passages in Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy (various things God did, when Israel was in Egypt and in the desert); Joshua 4:6 (a mound of stones in, or next to, the Jordan River); 1 Samuel 2:34 (the death of Hophni and Phinehas); 14:10 (enemy soldiers saying, "Come up to us."); 2 Kings 20:8-11 (the sun's shadow moving backwards); Isaiah 7:14 (the virgin being with child); etc.
- The word "sign" does *not* refer to occult practices, such as astrology. We don't worship the stars or look to them for guidance. Rather, we acknowledge that they *reflect* the glory of God - Psalm 19:1. We worship the God who created the stars, and look to him for guidance.
- Many believe that the phrase "seasons and days and years" explains what these "signs" are. (Some, but not all, translations reflect this view.) However there are some instances in Scripture, in which God *did* use activities that occurred in the sky, as either a "sign" of his judgment on wicked people, or as an indicator of some extraordinary event (such as the birth of Jesus). For some examples, see: Joel 2:30; Jeremiah 10:2; Matthew 2:2; 24:29; and Luke 21:25.
- The sun, moon and stars are indicators of the time of day, and of the different times and seasons of the year. They have been used to determine when various social, ceremonial and religious activities and events were to occur. Knowledge of their positions can also be used in determining one's location on the earth (longitude and latitude).

Reason #3 (v. 16a and 18a) - _____

- This refers specifically to functions of the sun and the moon. The word *govern* (or *rule*) does not mean that they exert any "magical influence" over the earth. (This is a view that developed when people rejected the *Creator* and began to worship *created things*, instead.)

- In what sense do the sun and moon govern? During the day (when the sun *rules*), "daylight activities" tend to occur; and during the night (when the moon *rules*), "night time activities" tend to occur. Their presence influences just about everything we do! This is illustrated in Psalm 104:19-23.

Reason #4 (v. 15 and 17) - _____

- How is this different from Reason #1? The first reason focused on the distinction between day and night - a distinction that had already existed, but which was originally accomplished in a different way.

The emphasis in this fourth reason is specifically on the fact that the light would hit the earth. Probably implied are the *consequences* of that light hitting the earth - ranging from the ability for animals (and humans) to see things, to the warmth that the sun provides, to the energy that the plants absorb (thus converting the light energy into an energy form that the animals can use - food).

What was God's conclusion at the end of the day (v. 18c)? _____

Which came first? The sun and stars, or the earth? _____

- We live in a day, in which many false teachers (*liars*, from God's perspective) claim that the sun and stars came into existence *prior to* the earth. They *deliberately* ignore the *facts* about the creation of the heavens and the earth. (See 2 Peter 3:3-7.)

Comments about the length of months and years.

There is an interesting difference between the "prophetic" month and year, and our "calendar" month and year. In prophecy, Scripture often defines a "month" as being 30 days, and a year as being 360 days. For instance, Revelation 11:2-3; 11:11; 12:6, 14; and 13:5 all seem to refer to the same length of time: 1260 days = 42 months (of 30 days each) = "a time, times and half a time" = 3½ years (of 360 days each).

Perhaps more interesting is this: In the *historical* account of the Great Flood (Genesis 6-8), a careful analysis of the dates and times mentioned also reveals a year of 360 days.

Is all this merely for convenience? Some people might think so. But there is a distinct possibility that something happened at the time of the flood, to cause the number of days in a year to change. The events of the Flood were totally catastrophic and destructive. It not only included massive amounts of water falling from the sky, but also massive earthquake (and probably volcanic) activity. (Remember that the "springs of the deep" - underground aquifers of water - *burst forth* - Genesis 7:11.) What could have caused such a sudden catastrophe? It has been suggested that the earth may have been hit by a huge meteor or asteroid... and if this were the case, it could have even affected the earth's orbit around the sun. (It could have also caused the 23½ degree tilt that the earth has on its axis.)

The idea of meteors (or something similar) hitting the earth is not at all far-fetched. Scientific evidence shows that it *has* happened in the past, and Scripture suggests that it may happen again.

- There is strong evidence that meteors have hit the earth. Scientists have discovered huge craters at numerous locations around the earth. Some of them are over 100 miles (160 km) in diameter!
- The book of Revelation suggests that it is going to happen again. Revelation 8:10-11 mentions a "star" (using the definition of the word that was common at that time) that will someday hit the earth and destroy a significant portion of it. Its description resembles a comet or meteor.