

Making Inhabitants for Creation - Part 2

Genesis 1:20-26a, 30b - 2:3

²⁰ And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." ²¹ So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² 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." ²³ And there was evening, and there was morning--the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. ²⁵ God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness ..." / ³⁰ ... And it was so.

³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day.

^{2:1} Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

^{2:2} By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ^{2:3} And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

[We will examine the creation of man (v. 26-30) in greater detail, at a later time.]

Day 5 - Inhabitants for the Water and the Air

What did God create to inhabit the sea (v. 20a)? _____

There are two categories mentioned, apparently focusing on size. What are they (v. 21a)? _____

- Note that the "great" sea creatures would include a number of huge animals that are now extinct, and today are observable only in fossils.

What did God create to inhabit the sky (v. 20b)? _____

What characteristic would this category of creature have, according to v. 21b? _____

- This passages focuses on *flying* birds. Non-flying birds would have also been created, though not mentioned.
- As defined here, this category of "flying creatures" does not quite match our modern category of "birds." The only requirement was its *wings* (with the necessary bone structure, muscles, etc.). It would include bats, because bats have wings (Leviticus 11:19) - even though our modern categories would place bats under the classification of "mammals" (because of similarities to mammals in other respects).
- Insects are probably among the "creeping things" that were created on Day 6. Their wings are actually a flexible part of their exoskeleton, and are often present for only part of their lifespan.

How were these sea and air creatures made (v. 21)? "According to... _____."

- See the previous part of this study, "Making Inhabitants for Creation - Part 1," for a look at the meaning of the word "kind."

What was God's evaluation of what he had created (v. 21c)? _____

What was God's command to these creatures (v. 22)? _____

- This ability to reproduce came into existence as the response to a *command* by God. It is no different than any of the other "creative commands" that God spoke.
- This was a *blessing* (v. 22a) for the animals. The plants would reproduce (form seeds, etc.) with no control or conscious awareness of what was happening. The animals would *choose* to reproduce, and they would obey this command instinctively. Humans, because they bear the "image of God," would fulfill this command *morally* and with conscious reflection on what sexuality represented (such as, the concept of oneness - Genesis 2:23-24). [Unfortunately, sin has greatly distorted the human response to this blessing.]

Day 6 - Inhabitants for the Land

Though there are some physical *similarities* between animals and humans, the non-physical *differences* form a huge gap that cannot be crossed. Because of this, animals and humans are created as two separate events on Day 6.

During the first part of Day 6, what did God create (the general category - v. 24a)? _____

What three sub-categories of these creatures are mentioned in this passage (v. 24-25)? _____

- This was a simple, basic classification of land animals: domestic animals, wild animals, and the small creatures that move close to the ground - which would probably include reptiles, amphibians, insects, etc.

What phrase, repeated several times in this passage, indicates *how* they were made? _____

- We live in a day in which many people constantly deny this. They want to blur the distinctions between the "kinds," and claim that different "kinds" slowly changed into other "kinds." God is very emphatic that this was *not so*.

What was God's evaluation of this first part of Day 6 (v. 25c)? _____

What was created during the second part of Day 6 (v. 26)? _____

What is the unique characteristic of this created being, something that is *not* said in reference to any other aspect of creation (v. 26a)? _____

- "In the image of God" means that humans were created in such a manner that they would be as much like God as a *created* being could be. They were created to *reflect* God's character and moral nature. In other words, humans are not merely "advanced" animals; rather, they possess something that is unique. (Physical similarities or differences are not the issue. You would expect some physical similarities to other creatures, simply because they were all made by the same Creator!)
- The creation of the man and the woman will be examined further, in a later study.

What was God's evaluation, after *all* had been made (v. 31)? _____

At this point, was there anything left to be made (2:1-2a)? _____

- Many people have invented false teachings and myths about how things came into existence. Some claim that "creation" is an ongoing activity (over countless millions of years), and they often deny that God has anything to do with it. Others have claimed that creation contained imperfection or evil, or that Adam *had* to sin (because of the way God made him), etc. But Scripture affirms that the entire creation act was completed in six days... and that it was *very* good. (Anything in creation that is less than "very good" occurred at a later date.)

Day 7 - Rest

On the seventh day, what did God do (2:2)? Why? _____

- Does this mean that God doesn't do *anything* today? Look at John 5:17. The focus in Genesis 2:1-3 is on rest from his *work of creating*.

In what way did God make this day special (2:3a)? _____

Why did he do this (2:3b)? _____

- "Holy" refers to being "set apart as special." This one day was set apart from the other six, as having a special significance.
- God would later use this as a pattern for our 7-day week. Under the Old Covenant (given through Moses), Israel was to set aside one day in seven as special - a time to "rest" from daily activities and to focus on God. Under the New Covenant, we have been given "rest in Christ" (Hebrews 4:9-11).

Some Common Questions about Plants and Animals

How does the Bible's names and descriptions of plants and animals compare to modern-day names and descriptions?

The names and descriptions are often quite similar to modern-day concepts. But sometimes there will be differences.

- The difference in the concept of a "bird" has already been mentioned. (Technically, the Bible says "flying creature," which is slightly broader than our modern concept of "bird.")
- Another example is the reference to the "cud chewing" animals, listed in Leviticus 11:4-8. The Bible's definition of the concept focused on the movement of mouth parts, not on the nature of the animal's digestive tract. Because of this, the "rabbit" (v. 6) could be included in the list - even though the *modern* definition of "cud chewing" would exclude it.

There are instances in which we do not know for certain the exact identity of a plant or animal mentioned in the Bible. (Some may even be references to creatures that are now extinct.)

What about Dinosaurs (and similar fossilized creatures) - where do they fit in?

All dinosaurs (and similar creatures) were created during these six days. The specific day would have depended on what type of creature they were.

- This means that they would have been on Noah's ark (if they were birds or land animals). They did *not* have to be full-grown. Also, they weren't necessarily meat-eaters before the Flood (see Genesis 1:30), so Noah and his family would have been safe!
- The description of behemoth (Job 40:15+) fits the descriptions of a dinosaur, better than it fits the description of a currently-living animal. The leviathan (Job 41:1+) is another interesting creature whose description resembles the traditional "dragon" that is mentioned in many ancient cultures... and on up to modern times.
- In the Bible, many of the passages that use the word "dragon" would also make sense if you referred to a type of dinosaur (those that have a "dragon-like" shape). There is no reason to object, unless you wrongfully *assume* that dinosaurs and humans didn't co-exist! (Early English translations didn't use the word "dinosaur," because the word hadn't yet been invented! Most modern translations simply follow the pattern of previous translations, and continue to use the word "dragon.")
- Down through recorded history, there have been reports of dinosaur-like creatures (or "huge lizard-like creatures") - even by people who knew nothing about dinosaurs and had no reason to pretend. Even today there are occasional claims of sightings of dinosaur-like creatures. (Some of the claims are obvious hoaxes, but others seem to be quite credible.) We don't know for sure if these dinosaur-like creatures actually exist today, but if they do, they may be located in some of the dense jungles of the Congo, in the depths of the oceans, or in some other isolated area of the world.

Why are there so many extinct species of plants and animals (including dinosaurs)?

Many plants and animals probably became extinct soon after the Flood, unable to survive the radical environmental changes that had occurred. Humans have also contributed to the extinction of many species. (This is still happening today.)

Where do animals go when they die? Will there be animals in heaven?

The reason humans will exist forever is because they are created in the image of God. Animals do not have this characteristic. There is *nothing* in Scripture to suggest that animals continue to exist after their deaths (and a few verses that suggest that they *don't*). If we - the humans - hadn't sinned, it wouldn't be an issue. (If you don't like the fact that they are "gone" when they die, remember this: It's not *God's* fault, but *ours*, that they die.)

- Both humans and animals have "souls." The word "soul" refers to having "creature life" (something more than the type of "life" that plants have), and the words are often interchangeable. The word "soul" (or "being"), used in Genesis 2:7 in reference to man, comes from the same Hebrew word as does the word "creature," in Genesis 1. (Many people mistakenly think that the difference between the two is that people have "souls" and animals don't. This is not the case.)

There will be lots of things in "heaven" (technically, on the *new earth*), but we are not given very many details about them. God tells us what we *need* to know - things pertaining to life and godliness - but not everything we might *want* to know. The only way to find out for sure is to be there. In the meantime, we can trust God, who does all things well.

- There is no statement that says there *won't* be animals.
- The book of Isaiah mentions animals in the "kingdom." Many believe that this refers to a time prior to eternity. Yet it may give us a partial glimpse into what things may be like in eternity.