

Day Two and Three and the Age of the Earth - 1

⁶ Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." ⁷ Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament; and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day. ⁹ Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry *land* appear"; and it was so. ¹⁰ And God called the dry *land* Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that *it was* good. ¹¹ Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed, *and* the fruit tree *that* yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed *is* in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. ¹² And the earth brought forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed according to its kind, and the tree *that* yields fruit, whose seed *is* in itself according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good. ¹³ So the evening and the morning were the third day. (Genesis 1:6–13)

Dr. George Wald (co Nobel Prize winner in Biology and professor of Biology at Harvard) said: "There are only two possibilities as to how life arose; one is spontaneous generation arising to evolution, the other is a supernatural creative act of God, there is no third possibility. Spontaneous generation, that life arose from non-living matter, was scientifically disproved 120 years ago by Louis Pasteur and others. That leaves us with only one possible conclusion—that life arose as a creative act of God. I will not accept that philosophically because I do not want to believe in God, therefore I choose to believe in that which I know is scientifically impossible, spontaneous generation arising to evolution."

At least Dr Wald understand himself. He says, I do not want to believe in God, therefore I choose to believe in what I know is impossible. Everyone chooses to believe in the direction of his or her desires. If you would prefer God not exist, surprise, surprise, you will find theories of natural evolution quite compelling. I hope that is not you today.

To study Genesis 1 is to listen to the only observer who was there to relate to us the order of creation. We have already seen the marvellous events of day One: the primordial heavens and earth made, the preparation of the elements by the Spirit, the creation of light, the dividing of time into day and night.

Day Two and Day Three of creation are marked by separation: separating things out, so that the Earth can become a habitable home. On Day One, God separated time into Day and Night, but on Day Two and Three, God is separating space and matter. Three major events mark out days 2 and 3: water separated, land separated from water, and plant life created on earth.

I. Water Above and Water Below

⁶ Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." ⁷ Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

It appears that the Earth at the end of Day One was a very basically shaped planet, but essentially a huge globe of water. It was undifferentiated, all the elements that would make up our home: the solids, liquids and gases, were melded together in one watery mix. No atmosphere, no air, no ground, perhaps not even a clear crust.

The first action that God takes with the Earth is to make a space between water. Water above, water below. He does this with the firmament, which is the Hebrew word *raqia*. It is a word that means a surface that has been beaten out or stretched. The firmament is the space between water below, meaning oceans and even subterranean water, and the water above, water in vapour form. In other

words, God was creating the marvellous atmosphere, in layers we now call the troposphere, the stratosphere, the mesosphere, the thermosphere and the exosphere. God is creating both a breathing space for living creatures, but also a kind of boundary and barrier for where the Earth is enclosed, and the heavens begin.

The absolute primacy of water in the creation is one fundamental difference between the Genesis account and other cosmologies. God tells us that He began with water and extracted the elements; evolutionary cosmology still has multiple theories for where the water on Earth came from, including a mass bombardment by comets, or meteorites. It's still considered a puzzle from an evolutionary point of view as to where Earth's water came from.

In the last twenty years or so, astronomers have begun to detect planets outside our solar system. Some of these planets seem exotic. One orbits a twin system, meaning there are two suns in its sky. One is so hot that the heat tears molecules apart on the side facing its sun. One that orbits its own sun every 1.1 days. Most are gas giants, or too close to their star or too far away. What everyone is looking for, and has so far been unable to detect, is water. Water is at the heart of life on earth.

Peter tells us that Earth was originally in the water and then out: ⁵ For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, (2 Peter 3:5)

Now among Bible believers, verses 6 through 9 created something known as the Canopy or Vapour Canopy Theory. This was held by some quite prominent Young Earth creationists such as Henry Morris and John Whitcomb. Basically, the theory suggests that these verses which describe water above indicate that the Earth once had a large layer of water vapour or even ice in its upper atmosphere, either like an additional layer above the breathable atmosphere, or something like the rings we see around some of the other planets. They suggest it would explain the source of the water that fell during Noah's Flood, and perhaps produced other benefits such as: less solar radiation, uniform and warmer temperatures, and even a kind of hyperbaric pressure conducive to better growth and health.

But other creationists have objected that the theory has some serious problems. According to them, it would have increased the temperatures on Earth to where it would have made life unsustainable, it would have blocked out starlight and sunlight, destroying plant growth, the pressures of a Vapor Canopy holding even 13 metres of water would have had such high pressure that its base would have exceed 220 degrees F, and even the question of how a canopy would have survived ultraviolet radiation, and not been stripped away into space, condensed and fallen or vaporised altogether. Whether or not there was a water canopy is speculative, and I think according to the latest research probably unlikely. The bottom line is: Genesis 1, verses 6-7 are telling us God created the atmosphere, and made a space for terrestrial creation and creatures.

God names the Firmament Heaven, because Heaven is the general biblical term for what is neither land nor sea. Heaven itself has its own division: the firmament we call atmosphere, in which birds fly and clouds gather; the firmament in which the sun, moon and stars have their abode, and the abode of the angels and the manifest presence of God.

Now a brief note: Day Two does not end with the usual statement "God saw that it was good." We aren't sure why. It may have to do with the fact that Day Three really completes the separation so that we have a proper separation into air, land, and sea, and that is when God pronounces it.

But we do have that time marker again: the evening and morning were the second day. Cyclical, repeating, 24-hour segments of a creative process. The second day is complete.

II. Land From Water

Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry *land* appear"; and it was so. ¹⁰ And God called the dry *land* Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that *it was good*.

Now the separations continues and now the separation is a further separating of the water by allowing the continents to appear. Earth goes from being a shoreless ocean to now having mountains rise, some water receding into subterranean parts of the land. Even the boundedness and stability of Earth's oceans, so that tsunamis do not regularly sweep over the lands is pictured and magnified in Psalm 104:7-9: ⁷ At Your rebuke they fled; At the voice of Your thunder they hastened away. ⁸ They went up over the mountains; They went down into the valleys, To the place which You founded for them. ⁹ You have set a boundary that they may not pass over, That they may not return to cover the earth. (Psalm 104:7-9)

Now this is the right time for us to begin to talk about the age of the Earth, because many of the arguments about the age of the Earth have to do with the calculated age of several features in the physical crust, of the earth, as well as evidences related to the sea, sea-bed, riverbed and deltas. We've already dealt with the Gap Theory, as well as the Day Age Theory and the six-day 24-hour theory. We said that the exegetical evidence points to a six-day, 24-hour creation, though this does not necessarily commit us to one age of the Earth over another. Genesis does describe a young human race, less than 10 000 years old, and a young habitat in which we live, but it does not specify the age of the earth.

Old Earth creationists are those believers who hold to creation ex nihilo, but hold some form of the Gap Theory, or the Day Age or the Framework theory that allows them to hold that the Earth and cosmos are billions of years old. The Young Earth creationists are those who hold most often to the six day theory, and hold that the Earth is younger than 10 000 years.

So at this point, we have to leave the book of Scripture, and examine the book of nature. We examine rock formation, geological columns, ice cores, lake beds, coral reefs, and in fact, many thousands of lines of evidence. We'll leave starlight, comets, moon dust and all extraterrestrial phenomena for next week.

Old Earth Creationists present their evidences that the Earth is old. And, if you are going to be intellectually honest, there are many, many evidences, that on face value appear to show a very old earth. These include geological columns many thousands of metres deep, with fossils embedded in them; phenomena created by annual processes like silt layers in lake beds or strata within ice cores, mountain ranges with both igneous and sedimentary rock, coral reefs. Rocks are also dated with one of over 40 different kinds of radiometric dating methods.

Now Young Earth Creationists also have their evidences that the Earth is young. They point out that salt levels in the Earth should be higher, that there should be far greater sedimentation on the ocean floor if the Earth is billions of years old. They point out that if erosion rates were constant, then the continents should have been eroded to sea level 3 billion years ago. They point out that the Earth's magnetic field is decaying, and could not be older than 20 000 years old. They point out that the human population matches reproduction rates for 4000 years, not much longer. The population should have been exponentially larger, if we had been on the Earth longer than these few thousand years.

Now how do we adjudicate between these positions? Well, these are two things to bear in mind. The first is that the Bible does not teach pure uniformitarianism. Uniformitarianism teaches that the physical changes, growth, and maturity of features on Earth has always and only come through continuous and uniform processes. In other words, if the continental rock grows at a rate of about 1 cubic kilometre per year (which it does), then that means it has always grown at that rate, and then we calculate backwards to get the age. You can apply uniformitarianism to geological columns, coral reef growth, silt layers, just about anything. Now the Bible does teach some uniformitarianism: "While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease." (Genesis 8:22)" But at the same time, the Bible also teaches catastrophism. Catastrophism teaches that the Earth has faced sudden, short-lived cataclysmic events that reshaped it, sculpted it and aged it. In particular, the Flood of Noah, which included water, but undoubtedly massive tectonic action, volcanoes and earthquakes. If I take your brand new car, have 30 men hit it with sledgehammers, and then throw it into a saltwater tank for 1 year, when we take it out, how old will it look? Indeed, if we have someone date it, do you think they will correctly date it to be being 1 year old?

Peter tells us that uniformitarianism is a false assumption. He says that scoffers say, "4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation." 5 For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water. (2 Peter 3:4-6)"

The second is that the Bible does not teach pure naturalism. That is, it describes the initial creation as miraculous, and the processes that took place after that as natural and providential. Evolutionists have of course been looking for purely natural causes to account for nature. The Bible teaches both: miracles and providence; supernature, and nature. Genesis 1 describes six days of miracles, followed by years and years of normal processes. But what we should expect is that in the miracle of creation, God compressed natural processes into a highly accelerated time frame. If Adam was a fully grown adult male, then even though he was one day old, his bones would have shown all the signs of growth. In other words, he would have had a biological history. I don't mean he would have had a faked history, as if God was deceiving anyone. I mean he would have had an actual history that was highly accelerated, miraculously made to happen at speeds internally consistent with one another, but relative to an outside observer, incalculably fast. If you had done an X-Ray on Day 7, you would have, on uniformitarian principles aged him at twenty or thirty years. And you would be right in that you would be seeing 20 or 30 years worth of bone growth in him. But you would be wrong about his actual age, because he would be one day old. His creation was a miracle. There were trees in Eden, and had you cut them down, I believe you would have found annular rings corresponding to their mature state. But they would have been days old, not decades, because they had been miraculously made and grown by a miraculous process.

I believe this is much of what took place on day three. The vast amount of time needed for large structures to form such as magma-mixing, fractionation, partial melting, gravitational differentiation, these were taking place at the right speeds relative to each other, but from an observer's eyes, in highly accelerated form.

Some aspects of creation week are instances of true, ex nihilo creation. But many of the aspects of the creation week involve process. I don't mean the gradual, undirected processes of evolution. Instead, the processes created by God that would carry on through the Earth's life, but were used and directed by Him in highly accelerated forms during the creation week.

In other words, within rock formations, mountain ranges, sedimentary layers, mineral deposits and formations, these things have an actual history, which if you use uniformitarian dating, are millions or billions of years old. But in order to give mankind a mature, liveable environment, these were accelerated to be done in an actual day. Perhaps there's a theological lesson for us: one workday for God contains billions of years of work for creatures and creation. Add to that original creation the later catastrophe of the Flood, and you will have a world that looks old, though it is not.

III. Plants After Their Kinds

¹¹ Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed, *and* the fruit tree *that* yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed *is* in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. ¹² And the earth brought forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed according to its kind, and the tree *that* yields fruit, whose seed *is* in itself according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good. ¹³ So the evening and the morning were the third day.

Once again, we see the Lord bringing about fully formed, mature plants that already have seeds and can reproduce.

The Bible classifies animals and plants differently to modern biology, and here the classification is either three: grass, seed-yielding herb, and seed-yielding fruit, or two: with grass (Heb. *dese*) being the general term, and then the two types being plants and trees, seed within fruit or not.

Here you have the phrase "according to its kind" repeated three times. Here is an important idea that has been confirmed by modern DNA. While some adaptations are possible, living organisms remain within their biological family. They do not cross over and become entirely new genus' or new species.

Plenty of variation and adaptation, or what you might call micro-evolution has been seen and observed. But Darwinism has yet to produce a single example of one kind evolving into another, or of a primitive kind developing itself into a more complex kind. The fossil record is notoriously lacking in transitional forms. We see changes, as it were on the same branch, but we do not see organisms ascending into higher life forms. Evolutionists believe that given enough time, random mutations would produce entirely new species. But scientists experimenting on fruit flies have found that mutations are seldom helpful to the organism, and there are never enough of them to transform the creature from one kind to another.

Of course, we should not miss the momentous fact that Day Three is the creation of life on earth, at least plant life. And here is a second Achilles Heel for Darwinism: accounting for the actual beginning and origin of life. Darwinism gives us mechanisms for how life may have developed and produced variety, but it actually has no mechanism for how life came about in the first place. Charles Darwin himself did not include that in the "Origin of the Species". He once wrote in a letter to a friend, an incomplete sentence; "But if (and oh what a big if) we could conceive in some warm little pond with all sort of ammonia and phosphoric salts,—light, heat, electricity present, that a protein compound was chemically formed, ready to undergo still more complex changes"

"As the first origin of life on this earth, as well as the continued life of each individual, is at present quite beyond the scope of science,"

But in fact, naturalistic scientists have attempted to explain it, and they did so with a theory called spontaneous generation or abiogenesis. This means that simple chemicals combine to form organic compounds, which become DNA and eventually a single-celled organism. Scientists in the 20th century began trying to combine chemicals to produce amino acids or proteinoids. But they always

had to rig the experiment to get their result, such as removing oxygen altogether.

In fact, in the 1970s, one of the best known proponents of this was Dean Kenyon, who wrote a book called *Biochemical Predestination* which argued. origin of life was necessary based on the chemical bonding of the amino acids, which formed into proteins and cells. But as understanding of the cell and of DNA progressed in the next decades, it became obvious that this was impossible. The cell does not only have a structure, it contains information, a sequencing structure. You cannot account for this information with a random coming together of chemicals. In fact, Dean Kenyon abandoned his own theory, became a defender of Intelligent Design, and even of Young Earth Creationism.

The fact is, there is no secular theory that adequately explains the origin of life. When Darwin wrote, he had no idea of the complexity of a single cell, of the information within the cell, that includes information storage, reading, copying, and proof-reading, when the cell replicates or performs a function. Information belongs to rational minds, and that implies design, not random, undirected natural forces. The complexity of life, the information contained within DNA is leading modern evolutionists to abandon Darwin and to look for theories of extraterrestrials who seeded our planet. They steadfastly refuse to pursue the idea that God could be the author of life, even though their noses are pressed to the wall to admit that life is designed.

To all life Thou givest, to both great and small;
In all life Thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish, but nought changeth Thee.

Now, at the end of this third day, comes the evaluation again. God saw that it was good. God evaluated it as beautiful, as glorious, as delightful. He now had a gloriously beautiful blue planet robed in green everywhere. Living things, basking in the warmth and light of His presence, soon to be delegated to the sun and moon.

So we should agree with the psalmist:

¹ The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)