

studies in

GENESIS



Book I:
Introduction
Chapter One

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by Dr. Lehman Strauss



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Book I

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTORY

Millions of intelligent persons have realized the need and importance of an adequate knowledge of the Bible. This is obvious when we consider that there has been a continuous flow of books and commentaries attempting to explain the Bible from its very beginning. At no time in history has there been a lack of interest in Bible study. The most brilliant scholars and common people alike have derived spiritual, moral and intellectual profit from this great Book.

Every Christian must be made aware of the fact that personal Bible study is necessary and profitable. When I was first taught that the Bible was God's inspired and inerrant word, it never occurred to me to doubt anything I read in it. It is now fifty-five years since I became a Christian, at which time I was given my first Bible. Not all of those fifty-five years have been given to Bible study. It was not until eight years after my conversion that I began to take an interest in a serious study of God's Word.

Through the years since that time I have discovered that the Bible is, for me, the one indispensable Book. I learned that it calls for more than a mere casual reading; it demands a careful and thorough study. I never found Bible study to be easy, but it has always proved most rewarding.

No doubt there have been numerous fruitful methods for studying the Bible, however, I will venture the suggestion that the book method of Bible study should take first place. It has never been denied by scholars that God directed the writing of the Bible one book at a time. While it is true that all sixty-six books form a vital and integral part of the whole body of truth which makes up the Bible, it is equally true that each individual book is an entity in itself and contains its own peculiar message. Inasmuch as the Holy Spirit directed the writing of the Bible one book at a time, it seems to me that this is the best way to study it.

It is important to remember that the Bible is unlike any other book, therefore it cannot be treated like other books. The Bible is God's Word to you and me. While it, like other books, does provide knowledge, it is unique in its demands for obedience. It is here where we discover God's secrets for a happy and successful

life, and it is in the Bible only where man can know how to prepare for eternity.

So that we might derive the greatest possible benefit and blessing from our study of the Bible, there are a few necessary requirements to be considered:

1. The Bible must be read and studied *daily*. The Berean Christians “were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures *daily*, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). Whether in the morning or at night, we must make time each day to include the reading and study of the Bible. The Psalmist wrote that the blessed man’s “delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night” (Psalms 1:2). With him, God’s Word was a must twice daily.

2. The Bible must be read and studied *diligently*. Look again at Acts 17:11 and take note of the fact that they *sought* the Scriptures. They were not merely browsing lightly over God’s Word. They examined it closely and inquired carefully. The Apostle Peter tells how the Old Testament prophets “inquired and searched *diligently*” their own writings (I Peter 1:10,11). Our Lord commanded the Jews to “search the Scriptures” (John 5:39). We must exercise earnestness and zeal in our study of the Bible.

3. The Bible must be read and studied *devotionally*. After we have taken the time and exercised the toil to search the Scriptures, we must make certain that their truths are applied to our own lives. Our Lord left us a fine example when Satan tempted Him. When first approached to turn stones into bread, Jesus replied, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). He was quoting Deuteronomy 8:3. Inasmuch as “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable . . .” (II Timothy 3:16), then it is all necessary to sustain spiritual life just as bread is to sustain physical life.

Now by devotional reading and study of the Bible I do not mean what some Christians refer to as their “devotions”. As a traveling Bible teacher I have stayed in many homes for a week at a time. I can recall some of those experiences. One in particular lingers in my mind. Every morning at breakfast the family had their “devotions.” There was no Bible on the table, only a small booklet prepared by a Christian organization and sent free of charge. The contents of that booklet were excellent. But I was confident that neither the parents nor the children remembered

what was read. Everyone was rushed to the table. Dad read hurriedly through the portion assigned for that day. They all gulped down their breakfast, Dad rushed off to work and Mother drove the children to school. At the evening meal I asked if anyone remembered the Bible text and the comments read at the breakfast table. No one remembered the Bible verse. The nine-year-old daughter only could give a fair account of the reading. I do not encourage that kind of “devotions.” To read and study the Bible devotionally means to meditate on what we have read, to go over it many times, to think about it. The Psalmist said that the blessed man’s “delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he *meditate* day and night” (Psalm 1:2).

4. The Bible must be read and studied *doctrinally*. The word *doctrine* means *teaching*. It is in the Bible only where one finds the basic and essential doctrines of biblical Christianity. Each doctrine is in itself important. Now it is true that some doctrines are more important than others, but all are included in what Jude calls “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Without the Bible we would know nothing about the doctrines of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, sin, salvation, regeneration, justification, sanctification, heaven, hell and future events.

5. The Bible must be read and studied *dependently*. We must always keep in mind the fact that the Bible is a divinely - inspired Book, that is, the very words are inspired. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God . . .” (II Timothy 3:16). It was the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the blessed Holy Trinity, who directed the human penman in writing the books of the Bible. “Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (II Peter 1:21). Therefore we must learn to depend upon the Author Himself to teach us. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26). “Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth . . .” (John 16:13). The Apostle Paul wrote, “The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (I Corinthians 2:10). Every child of God has a built-in Bible teacher in the Person of its Author, the Holy Spirit. Before beginning a study of any part of the Bible, pause to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to give you a clear understanding of that Scripture. Come to your study with a Spirit of dependency upon Him, the

Author and Teacher of all that is written in the Bible.

6. When we study the Bible daily, diligently, devotionally, doctrinally and dependently, we will discover it to be delightful. Of the blessed man the Psalmist wrote, "His *delight* is in the law of the LORD . . ." (Psalm 1:2). The great Apostle testified, "I *delight* in the law of God" (Romans 7:22). The Prophet Jeremiah testified, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart . . ." (Jeremiah 15:16). The Psalmist wrote, "I will *delight* myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word" (Psalm 119:16). The most delightful reading to engage my time has been the Bible, God's holy Word. It brings joy and satisfaction to my soul as does no other book. I am continually finding in it counsel, courage, comfort and confidence.

With these few introductory thoughts and suggestions before us, let us begin our study of the Book of Genesis. Now I must remind you that it is imperative for us to know what the Book of Genesis contains. By that I mean we must acquaint ourselves with what it says. The first step toward an understanding of what any passage of Scripture means is to know what it says. Therefore the Book we are about to study must be read many times until we are thoroughly acquainted with its contents. If possible, read all fifty chapters once every day. Reading time will be approximately two and one-half to three hours. If you cannot give this time to reading each day, then discipline yourself to read at least seven chapters daily so that you will read the entire Book at least once every week during the course of study.

This first Book in the Bible is, in my judgment, one of the most interesting and informative portions of Scripture. Omit it from the Bible and the remaining sixty-five Books are, to some degree, meaningless. In any course of study the place to begin is at the beginning. Genesis is a book of origins, a book of beginnings, and as such it stands correctly and logically at the outset of the whole body of the sacred and inspired Scripture.

The word "Genesis" does not appear in the Book. It takes its name from two words, the Hebrew word *Bere'shith*, meaning "In the beginning," and *Geneseos*, meaning "origin, source." The name "Genesis" is from the Greek word *geneseos* which appeared in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. From these two words, *bere'shith* and *geneseos*, the Book is correctly called *Genesis*, "the Book of beginnings." As such, it is uniquely indispensable to the other sixty-five canonical Books. The Book

of Genesis cannot be divorced from any part of the Old or New Testaments. It is a Book of firsts and a Book of facts from which all subsequent teachings in the Bible are developed.

There is a certain literary structure of Genesis which divides the Book into ten sections, each being introduced with the words, "These are the generations" or "The book of the generations." It will prove helpful if you locate them now and mark them in your Bible. They are as follows:

1. "The generations of the heavens and of the earth" (2:4 - 4:26)
2. "The generations of Adam" (5:1 - 6:8)
3. "The generations of Noah" (6:9 - 9:29)
4. "The generations of the sons of Noah" (10:1 - 11:9)
5. "The generations of Shem" (11:10-26)
6. "The generations of Terah" (11:27 - 25:11)
7. "The generations of Ishmael" (25:12-18)
8. "The generations of Isaac" (25:19 - 35:29)
9. "The generations of Esau" (36:1 - 37:1)
10. "The generations of Jacob" (37:2 - 50:26)

Genesis not only stands at the gateway to all the Scriptures, it is part of a unit of the Bible called the Pentateuch, a word meaning "five books." It is from the Greek word *penta*, meaning "five," and *teuchos*, meaning "implement" or "tool." The Pentateuch is the first of the three parts of the ancient Hebrew Scriptures, known as the Law or Torah. This five-volume division is referred to as "the Book of the Law of Moses" (Joshua 8:31) and "the Law of Moses" (I Kings 2:3; Luke 2:22).

These first five Books in the Bible have much in common. They all have one common human penman, they deal with one common religion introduced by the God of the Bible, and they have to do with a particular group of people chosen by God to whom the religion was revealed and upon whom it was enjoined.

Though the name of Moses does not appear in Genesis, that Book is indubitably of Mosaic authorship. Ancient Jews considered Genesis to be *The First Book of Moses*. Our Lord Jesus Christ believed in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch (John 5:46, 47), as did the writers of the New Testament Books (Matthew 8:4; 19:7; Mark 12:19, 26; Luke 24:27, 44). No part of the Bible has given rise to more controversy and criticism than the Book of Genesis. But whatever problems may arise in the thinking of scholars, I will state my belief in the fact that the Holy Spirit imparted to Moses the words he inscribed in the Book of Genesis.

This brief introduction would be incomplete without an outline of the entire Book of Genesis. I do not have in mind a detailed outline, but a bird's-eye view, an airplane view, a telescopic view of the Book. In the book method of Bible study it is always helpful to the student if he can get an over-all view of the general contents of the book. This outline will not give attention to the details in this large Book of fifty chapters, but to the main division of the Book. The Book of Genesis divides itself into two main parts: Part 1 (chapters 1-11); Part 2 (chapters 12-50). These two parts divide themselves into four logical subdivisions each as follows:

Primitive History (1-11)
Four important events

1. The Creation (1,2)
2. The Fall (3-6)
3. The Flood (7-9)
4. The Nations (10,11)

Patriarchal History (12-50)
Four important persons

1. Abraham (12-25)
2. Isaac (21-28)
3. Jacob (27-37)
4. Joseph (37-50)

CHAPTER ONE

OUTLINE: Creation
Catastrophe
Construction

CREATION

This first chapter in the Bible is considered by many scholars to be one of the most controversial and highly criticized. It is not my intention to add fuel to the fire of controversy nor to fight the critics. As your teacher it is my intention to point out what this chapter teaches. Certain facts are stated clearly.

Verse 1: *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."*

First, there is the *Creator*. The existence of God is not argued; it is assumed and asserted. God's existence is not debated; it is declared. Verse one destroys the philosophy of Atheism, namely, "there is no God."

The God of the Bible, who is the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the Creator of the universe of which planet earth is a part. The Bible begins with God. I am drawing your attention to that word "God." The translators have given it to us correctly. It is God, not GOD. In that word, as in all of God's names, we have the first description of God. The word that Moses used is *Elohim*. *El* means *strength, might, energy, force, power*. God (*Elohim*) is the strong, faithful God, the God who is in Himself unlimited, unqualified Energy. Now read through this chapter again, mark each mention of the word "God." It appears not less than thirty-two times. What a marvelous introduction to the Bible! The Book is about God first of all. He is introduced as the Creator of heaven and earth.

Here we have Energy, Force personified. There is much talk today about our earth running out of energy. I don't think so! The Creator, who was the energizing force in the beginning, is also the Controller and Sustainer of the Universe He created. The Apostle Paul wrote that "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:17), meaning that *in Him all things hold*

together. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are reminded that He is "upholding all things by the word of His power" (Hebrews 1:3). By His own powerful word God is sustaining that which He created. *Elohim* is the God of unlimited energy.

How did God create this immense, vast universe? What method did He use? The answer is stated clearly in this chapter. Now read again the thirty-one verses and mark the ten appearances of the phrase, "*And God said,*" The fact is that God spoke the universe into being. By His Divine fiat, by His authoritative decree it all came to pass. The mind of the unbeliever cannot see this, he cannot understand it, so he rejects it. But the method whereby God created His universe is reiterated in both the Old and New Testaments. "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Psalm 33:6). "For He spoke and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:9). Read Psalm 29 and take notice of what the powerful voice of the Lord accomplishes. The Apostle Peter wrote, "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water" (II Peter 3:5). The unbeliever deliberately dismisses from his mind this great truth. But we Christians can testify, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3). This verse states clearly that faith begins with the creation of the universe. The person who rejects Genesis 1:1 will reject the rest of the Bible. It is the purpose of this first chapter in the Bible to focus our attention upon God as the sole Source and Sustainer of all things.

Second, there is the *creation*. By creation I mean the product or consequence of the created act. Read through the chapter again and mark the three creations (Verses 1, 21, 27). The first appearance of the word "created" is in verse 1: "In the beginning-God *created* the heaven and the earth." This refers to the material universe and all of its systems. All physical matter is included. "*Created*" comes from the Hebrew word *bara*, and is used exclusively of the activity of God. In this first mention of the word *bara*, I take it to mean that God created the universe *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), however, this is not required by the term itself. The context must determine whether the product of creation was created *out of nothing*, or is fashioned from material already in existence. The main point here is that when *bara* is used it suggests a direct and distinct act of the Creator who is God.

The second appearance of the word "created" is in verse 21: "And God *created* great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good." Here we are told that the beginning of animal life was the result of a direct and distinct creative act of God. At this point the evolutionary hypothesis is shattered to shreds. Animal life did not evolve from some lower form of life. It was an entirely new creation brought into existence by the command of God. Here I will not insist that "created" (*bara*) means *out of nothing*. God might have created animal life from existing material. But I will insist that animal life was the product of a direct creative act of God.

Now take a closer look at verse 21 and note the expression "*after their kind . . . after his kind.*" Go back, read the chapter again and mark in your Bible the ten times this expression occurs. God has decreed that all living things must reproduce "after its kind," and that there be no reproduction from one "kind" to another "kind." We know that mutation and change within a given "kind" are possible, but no "kind" has ever been changed into another "kind." Here is an obstacle that evolution cannot hurdle. God is a God of order, not of confusion. The theistic evolutionist reads into the language of the Bible his hypothesis of creation by evolution, but his scheme cannot stand up under the Divine decree that all kinds have a distinctive character of their own.

The third and last appearance of the word "created" in this chapter is in verse 27: "So God *created* man in His own image, in the image of God *created* He him; male and female *created* He them." Here again the word "created" (*bara*) is used, however, we know it does not mean *out of nothing* because in the next chapter we are told that God "formed man out of the dust of the ground" (2:7). The body of the first man was formed from materials created by God in 1:1.

In considering the creation of man we should not disassociate verse 26 from verse 27. In verse 26 we read, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . ." Again *Elohim* is used. Conservative scholarship is agreed that *Elohim* is a Hebrew plural, and there are those who see in the words, "Let us" a suggestion of the Trinity. The late G. Campbell Morgan said, "Personally I am never convinced that there is anything of value in this." One as limited as I hesitates to disagree with a brilliant mind like Dr. Morgan's, but I am convinced that there is something of

value in it. I see here plurality in unity. Though the word "Trinity" does not appear in the Bible, there is sufficient evidence to support the tri-personality of God.

On the sixth day of creation, God created man, the apex of all His creative work. Man was created; he did not evolve. He was superior over all the preceding works of God's creation in that he was made in the likeness and image of God. God said, "*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . .*" (1:26). In his image and likeness of God, man was a special creation. We know that the image was not a physical image, because God is spirit (John 4:24), and a spirit does not have flesh and bones (Luke 24:39). Personally, I do not see any great difference between *image* and *likeness*. Unger suggests that the double expression is for the purpose of giving strength and emphasis to the idea of Godlikeness in man as set forth in Genesis 1:26, 27. The image and likeness of God in Adam presents a clear and sharp difference between man and lower forms of animals. This biblical concept of man is fundamental in Christian theology. We see its significance in the fact that the sacredness of human life is based upon it. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man" (Genesis 9:6).

When we study chapter 3 it will become obvious that through man's fall in sinning, the *likeness* was blurred but not completely blotted out. Now if you were to ask me to explain precisely and explicitly what that likeness was, at best I can only offer some suggestions. First, I believe that the God of creation is a tripersonal Being, that there is only one God, one Divine nature, involving the distinctions of three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and that there is a unity of these three Persons. The same attributes and activities are ascribed to all three. (See Matthew 28:19; John 14:16, 17; I Corinthians 12:4-6; II Corinthians 13:13; Ephesians 4:4-6; I Peter 1:2). I believe man is a tripartite being, with three constituent parts, namely, spirit, soul and body. (See I Thessalonians 5:27; Hebrews 4:12). In the idea of a trinity, there is likeness.

Second, I believe that God is a personality, and therefore He possesses the three essential attributes of personality, namely, *intellect*, *emotion* and *will*. God can think, He can feel and He can make decisions. In this respect man is like God. Man has intellect with which to think, emotions whereby he has feeling and a will with which he makes decisions.

Third, I believe that God is holy, and that holiness is an essen-

tial attribute of the Divine nature. (See Exodus 15:3; Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 15:4; etc.). God is the only One in whom this eternal sanctity resides. "There is none holy as the LORD . . ." (I Samuel 2:2). "Thou only art holy" (Revelation 15:4). God's moral creatures, unfallen angels (Matthew 25:31; Mark 8:38), and men (II Kings 4:9; Mark 6:20; I Peter 2:5), are said to be holy. Now the holiness of God is holiness of the most exalted type; it is absolute holiness, the perfection of His own Being. I believe that there was in that first man whom God created, holiness. In his original holiness there was *likeness* to God. But one distinction must be borne in mind: The holiness of the creature is less than the holiness of the Creator. The holiness of God is inherent in Himself. It resides in Him eternally, who is Himself the root and ground of holiness. Nevertheless, there was in the first man a likeness in holiness.

Before leaving the thought of God's *creation*, there is in the context the fact of the woman: "*Male and female created He them*" (1:27). Both man and woman, male and female were created on the sixth day. Chapter 1 does not give details as to how God created the man and the woman. That information is withheld until Chapter 2. This is the first mention of woman in the Bible. And inasmuch as she has an important role in subsequent history, we should take note of her introduction into the world scene. She is an important part of God's creation of which the Scripture testifies, "*And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good*" (1:31).

The creation story in Chapter 1 concludes with a description of the crowning glory of man. He became a creature of great *privilege*. That privilege was in the marriage relation. (We will consider this sacred privilege further in our study of Chapter 2). Then there was the added blessing of *posterity*. "God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply" (1:28). Further, God bestowed upon man a certain *power* to subdue the earth and have dominion over it. Finally, there was the blessing of an abundant *provision*. God gave him an abundance of fruits and vegetables for his enjoyment and sustenance. It is written of the first pair on earth that "*God blessed them*" (1:28). The ability to procreate and to use his mental powers to master his environment were a Divine bestowment of the Creator upon His creature.

Now go back and read the chapter again and mark the seven times where God's work is pronounced "good" (Verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). We are left with no doubt as to the perfection of all

that God created. God could not create anything that was not good. "But," someone might say, "there is plenty of bad in this world. If God did not create it, how did it all get here?" As we continue our study the answer will be forthcoming.

CATASTROPHE

We are going back to the beginning of the chapter and pick up at verse 2: "*And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep*" (1:2). These seventeen words in verse 2 have given occasion for much discussion and debate. Good and godly men of reputed scholarship are not in perfect agreement in their interpretation and application of this statement in the Bible.

Does verse 2 follow concurrently upon verse 1? There are those who teach that it does, and that the undeveloped earth was of God's making; only that creation, in its fullest sense, still had a long way to go. They teach that God's normal method is to work from the formless to the formed, thus the whole process being a part of His creation. Those who hold this view teach that the activity of the six days following are a part of God's original creation filling up the "void" or emptiness stated in verse 2. As one writer states it, "The whole process is creation." Those who hold this view are forced to concede that God did not complete His creation at the same moment He commenced it. They are forced to the conclusion that God developed His own crude cosmos in stages. As one writer stated it, "We suggest that Genesis 1:1 refers to the creation of the material which is to make up heaven and earth. The following verses then describe God's activity in forming this material into various finished products."

Then there is a wide range of Bible expositors and exegetes who explain the first sentence of verse 2 to mean that the earth was not originally in the condition here described. They point out that the Hebrew verb translated "*was*" should be rendered "*became*": "*And the earth became without form and void.*" The same verb is translated "*became*" in 2:7 where it stated that "man *became* a living soul." This view postulates a time period, or "gap" between verses 1 and 2 during which a catastrophe occurred. Those who hold this view emphasize strongly that the six "days" in this first chapter of Genesis do *not* describe the original creation of the earth, but rather the construction (or reconstruction) from a

calamity or cataclysm which desolated the earth after its original creation. Genesis 1:1 simply states the fact of the original creation which, as to time, a dateless past. This view provides some support for those scientists who believe the earth to be millions (or billions) of years old. In support of their view the following Scripture is cited: "For thus saith the LORD who created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:18).

In support of this latter view, the late Dr. Barnhouse wrote, "The earth that became a wreck and a ruin was not made so in the beginning." The late Dr. Morgan wrote, "The words '*waste and void*' do not describe the earth as God created it, but as it became through a cataclysm." Dr. McGee writes, "I believe that the entire universe came under this great catastrophe. What was the catastrophe? We can only suggest that there was some pre-Adamic creature that was on the earth. And it seems that all of this is connected with the fall of Lucifer, who became Satan." The late Hebrew scholar, Franz Delitzsch, believed verse 2 "describes a catastrophe that overtook the original creation." We cannot say how this is possible or why God permitted it.

The origin of evil has in it much that remains a mystery. However, I share the view that at some time, in the prehistoric past, there was the fall of Lucifer and the ruin of everything over which he ruled. And this leads me to the conclusion that God's work on the six days in Genesis 1 was a work of construction, or reconstruction. I do not associate those six days with the original creation of the earth.

And now the question arises, "Are the days of Genesis 1 to be taken as literal days of twenty-four hours, or are they to be understood as geological ages?" We know that the Hebrew word *Yom* is used figuratively in several ways, but always in relation to a definite period of time. The time could be an era, a season, or an unusual event. Verse 4 of Chapter 2 mentions "the *day* that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens." Frequently the prophets wrote of a time period of trouble on earth which they called "the *day* of the LORD" (Joel 2:2, 11; 3:14; etc.). Here the word "day" is used figuratively for a period of time. In John 9:4 our Lord used this word to express one's entire life span as a season of active labor. And of course, we all use the term "day" in a literal sense when referring to a specific solar day of twenty-four hours.

In Chapter 1, there is the reference to six *days*; “the first day” (11:5), “the second day” (1:8), “the third day” (1:13), “the fourth day” (1:19), “the fifth day” (1:23), “the sixth day” (1:31). I see no problem in accepting these six days as solar days of twenty-four hours each. In each one there is the reference to “evening and morning.” The fact that these “days” are regulated by this recurring change represents to me that each was a solar day. It is true that the day was not divided from the night until the fourth day, so it might be argued that there could not have been an evening and a morning without the rising and setting of the sun. But such an argument would be too weak to stand. In some parts of the world, where there is six months of day and six months of night, each running continuously, the people who live there consider each day as having its evening and morning. They have their twenty-four hour days whether or not they see the sun.

It seems to me that the convincing and conclusive evidence is in the Bible itself. Read the following verses: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:8-11). Most assuredly the *day* in verse 8 is a solar day; the *days* in verse 9 are solar days, the *day* in verse 10 is a solar day. Contextually we must conclude that the *days* in verse 11 are likewise solar days. I cannot see any justification for making a change in verse 11. The “*six days*” in verse 11 are viewed as a positive link with the days in verses 8-10. There is no hint of differentiation between those days. Am I not correct, then, in concluding that the *days* in Genesis 1 are solar days?

CONSTRUCTION

During the six days God proceeded with the work of bringing form and fullness out of the chaos which resulted from the calamity. He is going to make the earth and the atmosphere habitable for the man He is about to create. I do not believe that God needed six days for His work of renovating the earth. He might have done the whole job in six hours, or six minutes, or six seconds or

even instantaneously. We only know that He did choose to use six days.

In 1946 the late W. H. Griffith Thomas published his book on Genesis. He divided the six days into two triads and arranged them in parallel columns:

First day:	Light
Second day:	Air and Water
Third day:	Land and Plants
Fourth day:	Lights
Fifth day:	Fowls and Fish
Sixth day:	Animals and Man

At a glance there can be seen the correspondence between the first and fourth days, the second and fifth days, and the third and sixth days.

DAY ONE: LIGHT

“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day” (1:3-5).

God’s first act in renovating the earth was to dispel the darkness and display the light. After all, light is one of the characteristics of God’s nature. “God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (I John 1:5), and when the light shines in the darkness, the darkness can never overcome it (I John 1:5). The creation of light was, in a real and practical sense, God Himself invading the universe He created. This resulted in a separation, a division, for we read that “God *divided* the light from the darkness.” Light and darkness mark the difference between a holy God and sinful man. Our Lord said, “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil . . . I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 3:19; 8:12). God called the period, when the light appeared, *Day*, and the interval of darkness He named *Night*. In both the realms of the physical and spiritual, light is essential to life. “For

God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (II Corinthians 4:6). Light marks the first step from chaos to order and from spiritual death to spiritual life.

DAY TWO: AIR AND WATER

"And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And 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. And the evening and the morning were the second day" (Genesis 1:6-8).

Perhaps a better word for *firmament* is *expanse* or *atmosphere*. Precisely what did God do on that "second day?" A simple explanation would be that He divided the cloud-water above from the land-water beneath. By separating the two bodies of water, He created an open space between them. This is the atmospheric heaven which surrounds the earth, where the bird flies and from which we derive the air we breathe. We can see the necessity of such a division if the earth was to be a habitable place for man. We conclude therefore that before God made this expanse (the atmospheric heaven), the cloud-water and the earth-waters were merged with no intervening air space between them. If God had created man and put him on the earth before He finished His work of the "second day," the earth would be neither a habitable nor a happy place for man. He would have been seriously hampered in such an inappropriate sphere. The air space which encircles the earth is one of God's remarkable provisions for man. Imagine, if you can, an existence on earth without sunlight. Let us thank God for His work on the "second day."

DAY THREE: LAND AND PLANTS

"And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind,

and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day" (Genesis 1:9-13).

On the third day of His construction program, God's first act was to continue His work of separation. On the first day He separated the cloud-water from the land-water. Here on the third day He separated the water from the soil by gathering the terrestrial waters in specified areas, thereby leaving other areas dry. The dry areas He called *Earth*. These are the continents and islands. Now we can see how the work of the third day follows logically upon, and completes, the work of the second day just as the work of the second day follows logically upon, and completes, the work of the first day. On the second day the earth-waters are still merged with the solid matter. Leupold suggests that this is possibly why the Divine approval, "And God saw that it was good," was withheld. The *seas* mentioned in verse 10 include all bodies of water such as lakes, rivers and oceans. The student should turn now to Psalm 104 and read verses 1-13.

Also, on this third day God brought plant life into existence. With the dry land separated from the waters, the earth is now ready to produce vegetation. It was at this time that God created the process by which plant life would be produced on the earth. This was the second half of the work of the third day. Did the plants come first, or did the seeds come first? It appears to me that the grass, the herb and the fruits came first and that they in turn produced seed, each after its own kind. The context seems to indicate this inasmuch as nothing is said to suggest a prior creation of seed. In either case, a work of creation was required.

DAY FOUR: SUN, MOON AND STARS APPEAR

"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day" (1:14-19).

As I mentioned earlier, there is a correspondence between the

first and the fourth days. On the first day God said, "*Let there be light.*" On the fourth day the *lights*, or *light bearers* were formed, namely, the sun, moon and stars. When God said, "*Let there be lights*" (1:14), he was not calling the sun, moon and stars into existence, that is, He was not then creating them out of nothing. On this fourth day God is calling these luminaries to function for the purpose for which they were created.

It seems that the main function of these heavenly lights was to establish time divisions, "*to divide the day from the night.*" Such a division was not for God's benefit, for He is eternal and timeless and not subject to time. God's work on the fourth day was part of His preparation of the earth for man so that man could divide time into usable segments. *Seasons, days and years* apply only to time and the earth, not eternity or heaven.

The sun, moon and stars were in existence before this "*fourth day*" being a part of the creation of 1:1, but they had not functioned as lightbearers to the earth. On the fourth day God merely called these luminaries to become bearers of light to divide the day from the night. So, for the benefit of man whom God planned to create, this first purpose of the luminaries is stated.

A further function of these luminaries are said to be for "*signs*". Now do not misconstrue this word so as to give credence to astrology. The *signs* are associated with those fixed time periods of *seasons, days and years*. God intended them "*to give light upon the earth*" (1:15) for man's blessing and benefit.

Now let us give closer attention to verse 16, "*And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.*" Here the sun is said to be the greater light, and the moon the lesser light. But how did Moses know that the sun was larger than the moon? Ancient Egyptians believed that the moon was much larger than the sun, and that the reason for the moon not giving off as much heat as the sun was its greater distance from the earth than that of the sun. But those ancient Egyptians were wrong. The sun is several million times larger than the moon and millions more miles away from the earth than the moon. Moses was correct. He had to be because he wrote under the inspiration and control of the Holy Spirit. Had man written the Bible it would be a book of blunders. And what a terrible tragedy it would be if the first page of the Bible declared the moon to be larger than the sun!

DAY FIVE: FISH AND FOWL

"*And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after its kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day*" (1:20-23).

On the second day God separated the cloud-waters from the earth-waters thereby clearing the atmosphere. The entire work of these first four days was to make preparation for two varieties of beings, namely, fish and fowl. At once we can see the corresponding relationship between the second and fifth days. The water and the air are now ready for fish and winged birds. Both were created by God, not necessarily out of nothing, but possibly out of existing material, as was man. God is proceeding in an orderly fashion in preparing the earth for man, His highest earthly creature.

The blessing of God in verse 22 is no mere expression of wishing His best for the creature He Himself had just created. Leupold says, "It is a creative word of power which makes possible the things that it commands, and it continues in power to this day." A point for emphasis is that the perpetuation of these living creatures which God created depends upon His power and blessing. God is both the Source and Sustainer of life.

Here are two creatures, fish and winged birds, entirely different from each other. They are given power to reproduce, but each can reproduce only "*after their kind*" (1:21). They are two different species, and their "*kind*" limitation prevents cross-breeding. This is the barrier evolution cannot hurdle.

DAY SIX: ANIMALS AND MAN

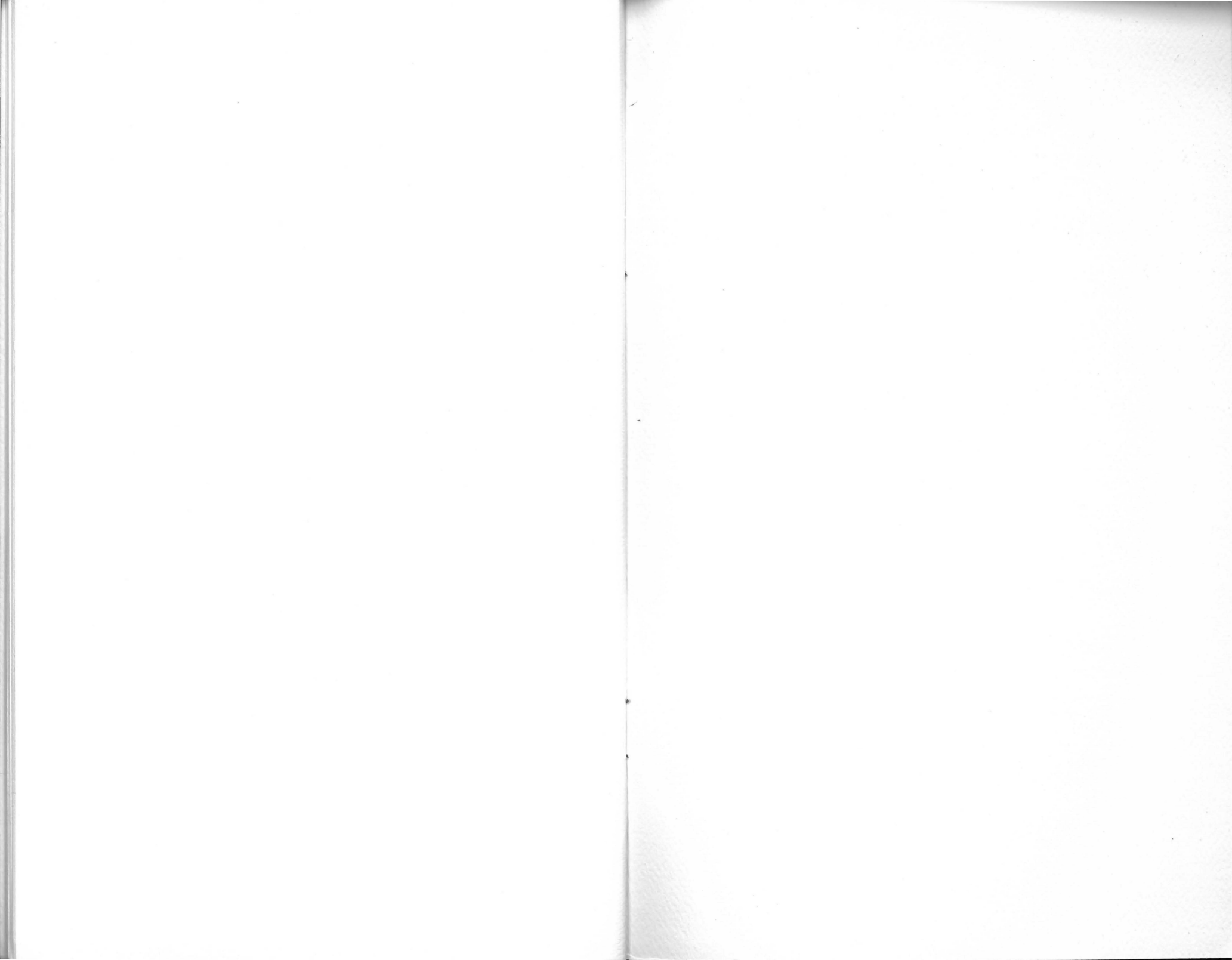
Coming to the work of the sixth day; it appears to be the busiest of the six days. God will now create the higher forms of animal life and finally, man himself. Again, notice how the work on day three corresponds with the work on day six. On the third day God prepared the dry land which He called Earth, and then He brought forth grass, herbs and fruit trees, thereby providing food for both animal and man.

Two kinds of animals are mentioned here, domestic and wild. The wild animal is "*the beast of the earth*;" the domestic animals are the "*cattle*." Both would come under the one category of "*the living ceature*" (1:24). Again, a point for emphasis is the fact that each species is a separate inter-breeding family and can reproduce only "*after their kind*". The species cannot mix, they cannot cross-breed.

Man, God's masterpiece, was reserved for His final act of creation. He was the crowning glory of all that God created and the caretaker and custodian of all of life around him. There was nothing lacking that man would ever need.

With the creation of man, we have the first mention of sex, for we read, "*Male and female created He them*" (1:27). God further stated the purpose of sex when He said, "*Be fruitful and multiply*" (1:28). At this point we are introduced to the institution of marriage and its primary purpose. A further discussion on this will be taken up in Chapter 2.

To be continued



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