

Genesis 1

¹ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, **the first day**.

⁶ And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷ And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸ And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, **the second day**.

⁹ And 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 God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. ¹² The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. 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 heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶ And God made the two great lights--the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night--and the stars. ¹⁷ And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, **the fourth day**.

²⁰ And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." ²¹ So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." ²³ And there was evening and there was morning, **the fifth day**.

²⁴ And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds--livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ²⁹ And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, **the sixth day**.

^{2:1} Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ² And on **the seventh day** God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

The Days of Creation in Genesis 1

Three proposals for reading Genesis 1:

- Six-day view
- Day-age view
- Literary view

Arguments for literal 6-day view

- (1) majority view in church history
- (2) follows plain reading of the text
- (3) 4th commandment is grounded in 7-day week in Genesis

Exodus 20:11

For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Problems with literal 6-day view:

(1) Day 1 / Day 4 problem

- God creates light on first day, but the sun on the fourth day
- what “evening and morning” referring to on Days 1-3?

(2) Seventh day

- notice absence of “evening and morning” refrain
- how do account for this everlasting day?

John 5:16-17

¹⁶ And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

Problems with Day-Age view:

- exegesis driven by accommodation to science
- still have Day 1 / Day 4 problem

The case for the Literary view

- 7-day week is literary framework to structure the theological message

(1) Genre: Genesis 1 is a song, with poetic elements

- read poetry differently than read historical narrative
- Bible often has 2 accounts of same event: history and song

Genesis 1 is written in highly stylized poetic Hebrew

- just like in a song, you have repetition
 - “God said...and it was so”
 - “And God saw that it was good”
 - “there was evening and morning, the first day”

(2) The strangeness of verse 2

- did the earth, deep waters and darkness exist before Day 1?
- verses 2ff is not about *when* God created, but *for what purpose?*
 - Genesis 1 is poetic/theological, not historical/chronological

(3) We can clearly see a literary structure in the days

	Kingdoms		Kings
Day 1	Day and Night	Day 4	Sun, moon and stars
Day 2	Heavens and Seas	Day 5	Birds, sea creatures
Day 3	Land	Day 6	Animals man

Day 7	God is enthroned
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The kings of Days 4-6 rule over the kingdoms of Days 1-3

- humanity rules over all creation, as God’s vice-regent
- Genesis 1 is about the ultimately kingly rule of God

(4) Climax of creation is the 7th Day

- “rest” is enjoyment and satisfaction in work completed

7th Day is holy and eternal – symbol of heaven

- points to a future age to come | glorified, resurrected world

Hebrews 4:3-4

³ For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, “As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest,’” although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. ⁴ For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.”

Conclusion

- creation “week” is not about chronology
 - story is told in format of a “week” – future world to come
 - Sabbath is symbol of New Heavens and New Earth
 - not that God happens to rest on 7th day, so we should rest too
-

Did Adam and Eve really exist?

- genetics shows that humanity did not descend from a single pair
- can Adam and Eve be read as figurative people?

The gospel depends on Adam as a real person

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

Romans 5:18-19

¹⁸ Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹ For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

The New Testament speaks of Adam as a real person

Luke 3:38

³⁸ the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

1 Timothy 2:12-13

¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

How can a historical Adam be reconciled with modern genetics?

- one possible solution:
 - God designated Adam and Eve out of already existing population

Ultimately, why do we have to resolve tension?

- there are many unanswered questions in Genesis:
 - where did Cain get a wife?
 - how account for extreme longevity in Genesis?
 - where is evidence of a worldwide flood?
 - does Tower of Babel really explain the origin of languages?

Genesis records real events, but in a compressed, stylized manner

- read Genesis as a real story, but not as journalistic science
- unresolved tension between science and Genesis – that's okay!
- read Genesis theologically, not scientifically
 - “theological narrative” does not mean didn't actually happen
 - but we shouldn't try to harmonized Genesis with science

Notes

3 proposals for reading Genesis 1:

- Six-day | Day-age | Literary
- Christians can disagree

Arguments for Six-Day view

(1) Majority view in church history

- respect church history | greater burden of proof to change

(2) Follows plain reading of the text

- most natural reading
- “there was evening and there was morning” (1:5)

The “evening and morning” refrain – natural day

- not using word “day” figuratively or symbolically
- one major problems with Day-Age view | “yom” = age
 - “there was evening and there was morning, the first age”

(3) 4th commandment is grounded in creation account

Exodus 20:11

For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Parallel between our work-week and God’s work-week

- structure of 7-day week is based on God’s creative act
- God worked for 6 days and rested on 7th | same for humanity
- Sabbath is grounded in this historical event

Problems with literal 6-day view:

(1) Day 1 / Day 4 problem

- God creates light on first day, but the sun on the fourth day

Day 1

³ And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.

⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Day 4

¹⁴ And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. ¹⁶ And God made the two great lights--the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night--and the stars. ¹⁷ And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

How can there be light on Earth without Sun?

- both 6-day and Day-age view say – “non-solar source of light”
- light was cosmic radiation before stars formed
- but how explain – cycle of day and night?
- cosmic light blinks on and off every 24 hours | then disappears Day 4?
- tortured explanation

Makes “evening then morning” all more strange

- Days 1-3, simulation of natural day, light fading in and out, until Day 4

Ancient people understood “day” based on Sun

- suggests, understood this non-sequential
- not strictly chronological telling of story of creation
- but something else is guiding story | deeper theology at play

(2) Seventh Day

- notice absence of “evening and morning” refrain

Genesis 2:1-3

¹ Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

² And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³ So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

Very odd – why is closing refrain left out?

- did writer forget?
- or did intentionally left out?
- if so, why? | writer is telling us 7th Day never ends

John 5:16-17

¹⁶ And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

Jesus’ argument assumes an eternal Sabbath

- God’s 7th day rest never ended – continues to this day
- yet God is working, continually upholding the universe

What does an eternal Sabbath mean?

- (1) 7th day is non-literal | non-literal element in story!
- (2) break in pattern – signaling climatic point of story
 - as explain, Literary view has best explanation

Problems with Day-Age view:

(1) Exegesis driven by accommodation to science

- this interpretation doesn’t come out from text
- both Six-day and Literary views trying to read text faithfully

(2) If “day” means age, why “evening and morning”?

(3) Still have Day 1 / Day 4 problem

- non-solar source of light that blinks on and off every 24-hours

(4) What about 7th Day?

- because Day-age view is mostly science, thin on theology
- which is exactly wrong way to read Genesis 1

The case for the Literary view

- 7-day week is literary framework, not chronological account
- point of story is theological, not explaining material origins
 - not telling us how universe was actually created

(1) Genre: Genesis 1 is a song, with poetic elements

- read poetry differently than read historical narrative
- Bible often has 2 accounts of same event: history and song
 - examples: Exodus 14 and 15 | Judges 4 and 5
 - and Genesis 1 (song) and 2 (history)

Genesis 1 is written in highly stylized poetic Hebrew

- just like in a song, you have repetition
 - “God said...and it was so”
 - “And God saw that it was good”
 - “there was evening and morning, the first day”

(2) The strangeness of verse 2

v. 1 – In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth

- two ways to read verse 1
 - 6-day view: summary title
 - literary view: this is actual account of creation

²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Problem – still not into Day 1

- yet speaks of the earth, deep waters and darkness already existing
- when did God create the earth? | 3rd day?
- when did God create the oceans? | 2nd day?
- when did God create darkness? | 1st day?

Better to see v. 1 as the creative act

- all subsequent verses is God ordering and structuring creation
- v. 2 sets up the scene: disorder and chaos | like a lump of clay
- days 1-6 is God creating order and purpose | shaping clay

Thus, Genesis 1:2ff is not a chronological account of creation

- but poetic telling of creation | main point is theological

(3) We can clearly see a literary structure in the days

	Kingdoms
Day 1	Day and Night
Day 2	Heavens and Seas
Day 3	Land

	Kings
Day 4	Sun, moon and stars
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Notice also the language of dominion and rule

¹⁶ And God made the two great lights--the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night--and the stars. ¹⁷ And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness.

Function and purpose of heavenly objects is to rule

- “to have dominion, to govern” | kingly function

Why use this language?

- just poetic description?
- no, there’s deeper theological message

²² Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.

This is dominion language

- consider the mandate given to humanity

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them.

And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Humanity exerts its dominion over creation

- by being “fruitful, multiplying and filling the earth”

In Genesis 1 – theme of dominion and rule

- God creates kingdoms in Days 1-3
- God fills those kingdoms with kings to rule in Days 4-6

And the crowning act of creation is man

- man rules over the rulers | he is king over all creation
- v. 29-30, man exerts his dominion over plants and animals

Why is man given this exalted status?

- because uniquely, made in “image of God”
- humanity rules over all creation, as God’s vice-regent

Therefore – telling us of ultimately kingly rule of God

(4) Climax of creation is the 7th Day

- what is purpose of 7th day?
- why does God “rest”? is it because God is tired and winded?

“Rest” is enjoyment and satisfaction in the work completed

- after a great project is done, commemorate the moment
- enjoy and take satisfaction in the work
 - after Lego creation, my kids show us
 - display it prominently, look at it and marvel at it
- “rest” is state of enjoyment and reward and satisfaction
 - not just *absence* of work, but *presence* of appreciation
- kingly act of rule | like a king who builds, and then sits on throne
 - the 7th Day, God is enthroned

Genesis 2:3 – “God blessed the seventh day and made it holy”

- deeply significant – heightened state of bliss and glorification

The fact that 7th Day does not end is significant

- history is not an endless loop, repeating over and over again
- progressing towards end, which is God enthroned in heaven
- 7th day is pointing to “heaven”

7th day is a symbol of “heaven”

- New Heavens and New Earth in Revelation 21-22
 - future age to come, glorified world of bliss and enjoyment
- this was goal of God’s creative acts all along – new creation

Rest means glorified enjoyment with God forever and ever

Hebrews 4:3-4

³ For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, “As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest,’” although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. ⁴ For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.”

Therefore, 7th Day is a promise of a world to come

- parallel to Tree of Life – reward for fulfillment and obedience

So why does Genesis 1 tell us that God created world in 6 days?

- not b/c giving chronological information about material origins
- purpose of story is 7th Day – Sabbath Day
- Sabbath is promise of a resurrected world to come

This is why Sabbath day changes in NT to Sunday

- because Jesus rose from the grave on Sunday
- he is first-fruits of new creation

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- Sabbath is symbol of New Heavens and New Earth
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Did Adam and Eve really exist?

- genetics shows that humanity did not descend from a single pair
- can Adam and Eve be read as figurative people?
 - Adam and Eve as allegory of sinfulness of all humans
 - Adam and Eve as personifications of whole human race

The gospel depends on Adam as a real person

- gospel isn't just that all human beings are sinful
- gospel is that Adam is our representative head
 - his actions are imputed (credited) to us
- we are saved because in Christ, we have a new representative head
 - Christ's actions on cross are imputed to us
- otherwise, if Adam is not our head, how can we be saved?

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

Romans 5:18-19

¹⁸ Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹ For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

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