

Day 3, Genesis 1:9-19

⁹ Then God said, “Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good.

Here, God continues the work of fashioning His creation, this consisted of multiple *separations*. The first was the separating of darkness and light, then the waters below and above, and now the waters from dry land.

¹¹ Then God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation: plants yielding seed, *and* fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them”; and it was so. ¹² The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good. ¹³ There was evening and there was morning, a third day.

On the same day the dry land emerged, God called forth vegetation from the earth, and here we see two distinct miracles. The first is the emergence of life itself. Just as we cannot create something out of nothing, we cannot create life out nonlife. The second is the ability of plants to reproduce “after their kind.” We can *modify* existing seeds, but we can’t *produce* seeds that reproduce after their kind.

¹⁴ Then 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 for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so. ¹⁶ God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; *He made* the stars also. ¹⁷ God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the

darkness; and God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

It's important to observe that the creation of the earth is not mentioned on any of the six days. This is because it was created (*bara*), along with the heavens, before the six days began. What then did God do when He made (*asab*) the two great lights and the stars on the fourth day (v. 16)? He was arranging and aligning the raw materials He had already created (see comments on Gen. 1:6-8).

This is consistent with what we see in the previous days of creation. When God separated the waters above from the waters below, and when He separated the land from the water, He was not creating anything out of nothing; He was fashioning what He already created. This is how we should understand the sun, moon, and stars that God *made* on the fourth day. In fact, this comes through in the language of Gen.1:17: "God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth." This is the work of arranging what He had already created.

On each of the first six days, God's acts are introduced by the words, "Let there be ..." or simply "Let..." (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 15, 20, 22, 24, 26). In each case, this language is used for fashioning what already existed, not creating what previously did not exist, and this includes His arranging of the heavenly bodies (v. 16). What is the significance of this?

To begin with, because the word used for "day" on each day of creation (*yom*) is the same as the word used for an ordinary day in the Old Testament, we should see the first six days as actual days, just like ours.¹ And based on the chronology of the Bible, we have every reason to believe these days took place recently (thousands

¹ In Ex. 20:11, we should note that the command for the Sabbath is based on God's labor during the previous six days, and the word used for "days" is the same word used for each day in Genesis 1 (*yom*).

of years ago rather than millions or billions of years ago). This would include the bringing forth of all living things. However, because the heavens and the earth were *created* before the six days began, it's possible that this took place quite some time earlier. If this is the case, the heavens reveal God's glory, not just in their vastness, but in their distant age,² and this moves us all the more to say with the Psalmist:

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained;
What is man that You take thought of him,
And the son of man that You care for him? (Psalm 8:3-4)

Indeed, this is our prayer O LORD. Quiet our souls, we pray, in the wonder of Your glory—and the wonder of how You, being so great, could care so deeply for us.

² This would account for dating methods (e.g. radiometric methods) that yield ages that are quite old for *non-living matter* (rocks). Dating methods for previously *living matter* (e.g., Carbon 14 methods) are reliable only for thousands of years rather than millions. This would also account for the significant amount of time it takes for starlight (at currently measurable speeds) to reach the earth.