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IN SIX DAYS: DAYS TWO AND THREE

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It is worth repeating that I said to you a few sermons ago that it's not wrong to be skeptical. I don't want anyone to divorce their reasoning to accept something I say blindly by faith. Be skeptical--but be willing to evaluate what you hear honestly. God gave you a brain to use, and He expects you to use it! My goal is to share with you why I believe what I believe, and to show you that faith and reason are not only compatible but ultimately are inseparable. If you follow your thoughts far enough, you will see that *your reasoning is based upon your faith*, whether you consider yourself to be a person of faith or not. I will qualify that statement as we progress, but for now let me put it in these terms: what you believe about the origin of life and the universe influences and drives how you interpret the facts relating to the origin of life and the universe.

If you believe that reality consists solely of time, space and matter, and that there is nothing real outside the realm of what can be tested and observed, then you will interpret the evidence in light of that belief. However, you will note that *this belief in itself cannot be tested and observed*; it is an assumed metaphysical underpinning.

You might say at this point, "I don't do it that way. That's insulting! I look at the evidence and from that I draw my conclusions." If you are honest about this, then you will be totally willing to follow the evidence, no matter what it leads to. "That is exactly what I do!" you may reply. Very well--let's continue to examine the evidence. It may very well be that you remain convinced that the evidence supports your original belief; but at least you will know why I--and others like me--find it reasonable to believe what we believe.

In Job 38:4, God asks Job this probing question among others:

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

It's obviously rhetorical. Job wasn't there. No human was there. Only God was present at the creation of the world and the universe. He is the only eye witness, and He has given His own testimony to that fact, as we discussed before. We have a choice: we can believe the One who purports to testify to His sole creative acts, or we can attempt to piece together a history of the world and the universe from our own limited perspective thousands or millions or billions of years after the fact. In either case, we will look at how the evidence we find supports our model.

Let us turn to Scripture. We have already discussed the first day of creation in a previous sermon, in which we understood that God created the building blocks of the universe--time, space, and matter--and then established the laws by which light exists. It is interesting to note here that time, space, and matter have no meaningful existence apart from each other. What we call the universe is really a "tri-verse" of time, space, and matter, and if you think of it in those terms, you might have an easier time accepting the reality of the tri-unity of God; just keep in mind that time, space, and matter are finite, but God is infinite! We see God the Father creating the heaven and the earth through His Word, which the New

Testament identifies as Jesus Christ, the Son. We see the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the deep. I need to pause here. That word “moved upon” or in some translations “was hovering over” means to flutter or vibrate. Did you know that the energy in the universe is in the form of waves or vibrations? So God created the heaven and the earth, the basic building blocks, on day one, through the spoken Word, His Son; and the Spirit moved upon, hovered over, or vibrated upon it. Did the Spirit energize the building blocks of the universe? It would seem so from this passage. The very next act was the formation of light, which is a form of energy. We also find the mass that will become earth having night and day, which is an indication of rotation--and rotation comes from gravity, another form of energy, neither of which are understood very well to this day.

We move now to God’s account of the second day of creation:

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 (Gen. 1:6-8).

Let’s pause here for a moment and look at that word “firmament.” What exactly does this mean? Some scholars, especially skeptics, posit that it means a solid dome and that therefore the Bible teaches a primitive view of the cosmos. However, that word *firmament* is actually a bad translation in a long line of bad translations. You see, the ancient Jews did think the heavens were a solid dome, and so when they translated the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek, they used a Greek word that carried that idea. Then later, we have Jerome’s Latin translation of the Bible, in which he used the Latin word *firmamentum*. The King James translators followed that same tradition. The Hebrew word actually refers to something that is beaten or hammered to spread it out. It is not really precisely defined, which is exactly as it should be. Think about it--God could not give to humanity the exact scientific nature of the cosmos at that point in time, but He could, and did, give us a basic description which we would come to understand as our knowledge increased. One thing is clear, though: the heavens--the “firmament”-- are not described as a solid dome by God’s very own words in verse 20:

... fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

God must have really messed up! I feel bad for those poor birds who had to fly *in* (not *before* or *in front of*) the “firmament.”^{1,2}

God made the expanse of the sky then, and separated the “waters from the waters.” What does this mean? We recall that the earth, on day one, was covered with water. Here on day two, God separates water on the surface of earth from another body of water with the expanse of the sky. Now, we know from verse 20 that this expanse is our atmosphere, in which the birds were to fly; so what is, or was, this water above the atmosphere?

There really are two possible explanations for this. The fact is the the creation account simply does not mention these waters again. One theory put forth by some is that these waters were a sort of vapor

1 For an understanding of “firmament,” see “Is the Raqia’ (“Firmament”) a Solid Dome?” by James Patrick Holding in *Creation Technical Journal* 13(2): 44-51. Available at <http://www.answersingenesis.org/tj/v13/i2/firmament.asp>.

2 For other instances in which the Bible seems to promote a “solid dome” cosmology, see “The Bible Teaches That the Heavens Were a Solid Dome, Embedded with Stars?” by Rich Deem. Available at http://www.godandscience.org/apologetics/dome_of_heavens.html

canopy above the earth that collapsed at the time of Noah's flood. The water vapor was not what you would think of as clouds or fog, but water vapor high up in the atmosphere, far higher than we currently find any real amount of water vapor. Numerous benefits of such an arrangement have been put forth and would seem to fit well with both the description of the pre-Flood world and with the events of the Flood itself.³ There is plausibility to this idea, but we must be careful about imposing our own ideas into a text. We will look more at this possibility when we come across other portions of Scripture that seem to support this idea.

The other theory, which seems very reasonable, is that the "waters above" were the materials that God would use in constructing other parts of the universe. Water is understood as a metonymy; that is, the word "water" stands for water and any other materials mixed in with it. It is a means of simplifying the statement. Is this so unusual? Not at all. We call a manner of things "water" in daily use, from fresh, pure water, to dishwater, to waste water. We say that a river is made of water, although we know that there are many other things in that water, especially after it comes through Atlanta!

God doesn't mention this water again in the creation week. The point here is that God, the eyewitness to His own creative acts, revealed to us something about the creation process which is apparently no longer as it was on day two of creation, just as the earth is no longer as it was on the first day--formless, void, and covered with water.

At the end of day two of creation, what do we have? We have the building blocks of the universe, time space, and matter; we have light fashioned and directed; we have an atmosphere on earth, apparently largely as it is now, with the right composition of inert gases and breathable gases, because as we shall see, no adjustments were made to it within that week; and we have the surface of the earth covered with water, and a mass of water removed beyond the atmosphere. In short, we have earth's unique atmosphere and hydrosphere, which, as far as we know, are unique to earth and are required for life in the finely tuned way in which we find them even now. Introduce just a minor change to either and life as we know it is impossible. For example, we need oxygen in a certain concentration. If there is too little, the cells in our bodies can't function. If there's too much, every spark would become an explosion. We have the proper amount of water at the proper temperature to support life. I need not give you a dissertation about this--you are able to live comfortably because of the atmosphere and hydrosphere which are unique to earth and which we largely take for granted.

This brings us to day three:

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 his 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 (Gen. 1:9-13).

God continues His creative work, focusing on the surface of the earth on the third day. Here he "laid the foundations of the earth," not (as in creation myths from pagan cultures) on the backs of elephants

3 See Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 59-61.

or turtles or even a giant human being, but in the true sense of the phrase.

The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him (Zech. 12:1).

Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands (Ps. 102:25).

God gathered the waters “unto one place” but which obviously had more than one basin because He calls them *Seas* (plural). They were all apparently connected. The crust was formed and molded, the dry land was brought up to the surface, the waters receded down into the basins, and the basic structure of the earth was completed. It was pronounced by God to be “good”: it was well-ordered, complete, and without defect. There was no way to improve this system.

It is very important for us to realize that the earth so formed is not exactly the same as the earth we see today. A great catastrophe has altered it, which we will get to in a few chapters. The earth has changed substantially since this original creation period.

At this point God introduces vegetation to the earth, specifically in three groups: grass, herbs, and trees. Evolution teaches that plant life must have started with “simple” plants which then diversified and became more complex, with some kinds eventually evolving into fruit trees, the highest, most complex plant life. Here God says that he made the plants essentially as we find them today, all in one day. Not only that, but these plants were created specifically with the ability to reproduce “after his kind”; and this is exactly what we find today. When we plant tomato seeds, we expect to find tomatoes growing up. We can make various hybrids within these created “kinds” or varieties; we find that kinds or varieties may be able to adapt to certain conditions--but only because the ability to do so *is already within the genes of that kind!* One kind never changes into a different kind. Variation within a species is not the same as changing into another species. We do find variation, which is the evidence of the highest level of design because it allows for adaptation to conditions as they arise; but we never, ever find evidence of one kind changing into another. We have millions of printed pages of speculation but not one piece of evidence of one kind of plant changing into a different kind. God made the plants with the ability to reproduce after their own kind, and that is exactly what we find today.

Notice also that full grown versions of the plants were created. That is, three grass was already grown up, the bushes, and even the trees. Now let’s say you were able to somehow witness the end of the third day of creation. You observe a primeval forest, with trees perhaps twenty feet tall or thirty feet tall; perhaps much, much taller. From what you know about trees right now, wouldn’t you think those trees must be decades or even centuries old? Not so! They are less than one day old but they appear to have been grown much longer. So the world, on day three of creation, has the appearance of age!

This appearance is not limited to the trees, either; there are mountains and beds of granite and deposits of ores in the earth itself. These, too, were formed on the very same day as the trees, and yet from what we know, or think we know, of geological processes, we might assume these to be very, very old--*but they are brand new!*

God has a word to say about all of this: it was good. That is, it was perfect, just as He intended it to be.

There was absolutely nothing created within these three days that needed to be improved upon. That is not to say that He is finished! The things that He has made so far appear are perfect and incapable of improvement in and of themselves. The time-space continuum, the energy, the laws which govern them, the atmosphere, the hydrosphere, the land, the seas, the plants--all function perfectly in beauty and harmony. It was good.

And the evening and the morning were the third day.