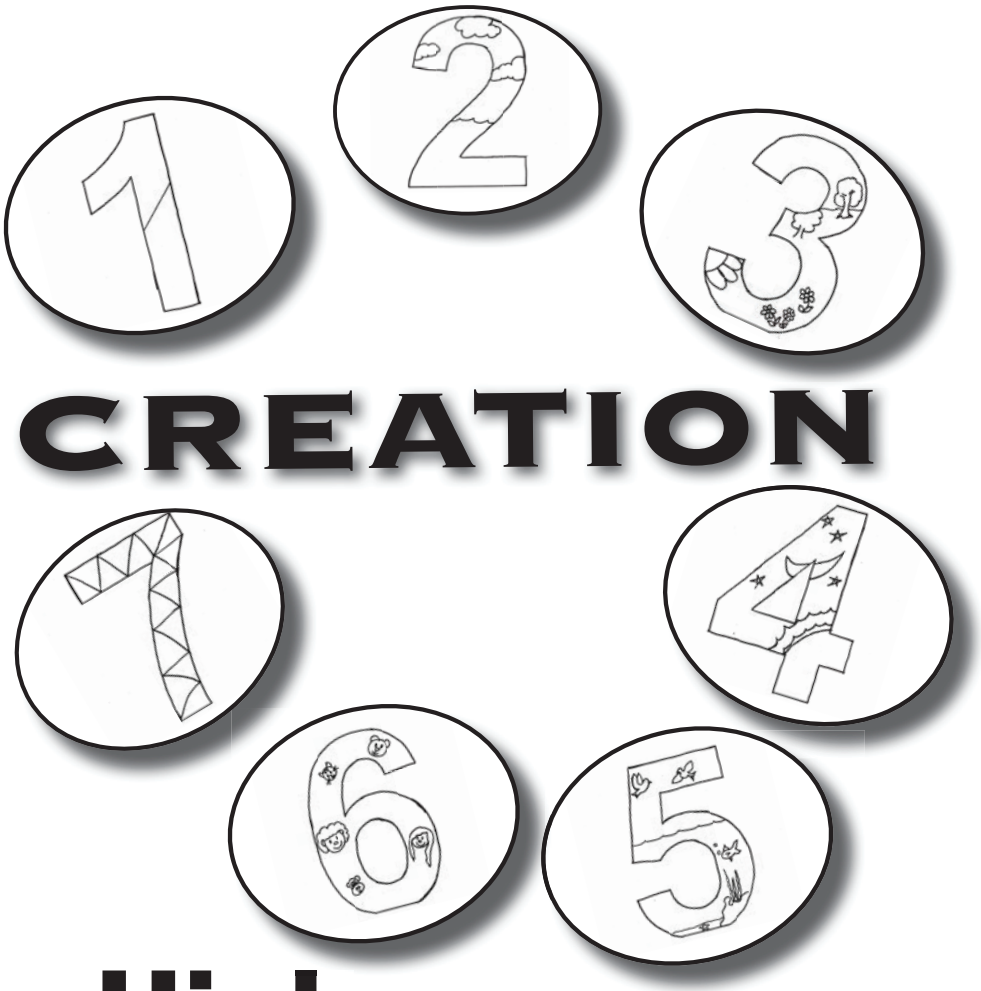

CREATION

High School

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

The Missionary Baptist
Vacation Bible School Literature Committee presents

CREATION

Vacation Bible School Lessons for High School
Written by Brother Danny Hayes

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LESSON ONE

In The Beginning ...

LESSON TEXT
Genesis 1:1-13

WRITTEN BY
BROTHER DANNY HAYES

Genesis 1
1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.
5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.
6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.
7 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.
8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.
9 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.
10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.
11 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.
12 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.
13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

Beginnings

Look around you. Whether you're inside or outside, you are surrounded by the material world, made of things that we can see, touch, hear, smell, or even taste. These are things we can manipulate, evaluate, and/or appreciate with our natural senses and capabilities. We think of this as the "real" world, made of tangible things. We can see this "real" world as far up into the sky as our various sensors let us. We can see it as far down into the microscopic as the mechanisms that we've built will allow. Yet as far as we are allowed to see, we are persuaded that this "real" world extends even farther in both directions – enough to strain the imagination.

Where did it all come from? That's a simple question, one even small children can conceive and ask without prompting from anyone else. A simple question, however, sometimes takes in such an epic scope that no man can answer it. The vastness and grandeur of the universe has drawn the minds of men from very early times. There are neolithic sites built by early man that are obviously tied to the movements of the Sun, Moon, and stars. We have writings and works of early scientists, philosophers, and other men of learning that document their attempts to understand why the cosmos is the way it is and how it got here. All through history, there have been divergent theories that attempted to answer our simple question. Why just theories? Because no one was there when it happened. Under such a circumstance, evidence would have to be sought and evaluated in order to try to come up with an explanation, but even then, with no understanding eyewitness, all it can be is a theory. Of course, when we have many different theories, at the very most, only one can possibly be correct, and it's very possible that none at all are correct.

But what if we didn't need a theory? What if we had a bona fide eyewitness who understood everything that they saw happen? Better yet, what if that eyewitness was also the one who made it all happen? Then, that person wouldn't be making a theory. It wouldn't be a far removed person's best guess, but a declarative statement by the prime mover for the entire event. There is just such a person who answers our simple question. That person is God, His statement was given to Moses, and it appears in the book of Genesis. It is this statement that we advocate in these lessons as an answer to our simple question.

That being said, people far removed from the event such as we are, would have to decide whether to believe God's statement. Some people might think that He could just be taking credit for something that He didn't do. Since the statement is second hand, some might think that a follower of God might have manufactured the statement in order to make his God appear more powerful than He really is.

There are many people today who put forward theories of how everything began. These theories change quite often with new scientific discoveries. They are constantly being tweaked as some discoveries contradict current thought, while others fill gaps in knowledge. This is the way that science works. New discovery does this and scientists have made great strides in learning the mechanics of our universe. There is nothing inherently wrong with the discoveries that they have made. This is merely data. Truly objective data isn't good. It isn't bad. It's just data. However, what you do with the data can take you in the right direction or in one of the many wrong directions. Quite often, the direction you take with the data can sometimes be heavily influenced by where you've already decided that you want to go. A scientist

has to be careful to remove such prejudices from his mind before interpreting data. If he doesn't, he may end up making conclusions that are incorrect and one of the goals of science is to make correct conclusions.

Ten thousand years from now, if an archaeologist finds a perfectly preserved Ford automobile, he could bring in all types of special knowledge to work on it. From this work, he might gather enough data to know exactly how the car works. There are a lot of physical disciplines involved in the working of a car, but science could dismantle the processes that make it work. What would be subject to interpretation is where it came from and how it got to where they found it. Barring any labels referring to a place of manufacture, it would be at best an educated guess. If this archaeologist held the idea that there was never a place called Detroit and that the manufacturing capacity that existed there was a myth, he would theorize that the car came from anywhere else but there, no matter how much evidence pointed to the motor city.

If a scientist not only does not believe in God, but is prejudiced against the belief in God, he will be sure to interpret scientific data in a way that leaves out God's work in the creation of the universe. We who are writing these lessons, of course, do believe in God and that the cosmos is the work of His hands. We believe that the data gathered impartially as evidence relating to the origins of everything will either back up a belief that God created it all or will not contradict that belief.

It should be noted here that where you begin in this search for an answer is important. Although it is possible, gathering data about the origins of the universe won't necessarily lead a man to the conclusion that God made it if that man has had his mind trained in such a way as to doubt the existence of God or at least His involvement in creation. The proper place to start is with not just a belief in God, but knowledge of Him. If we know God, then of course, belief is implicit. We have not just belief, but knowledge of His great power and capacity. We have knowledge that His word is truth and that He will never mislead us. Having this knowledge and His witness to our hearts through His indwelling spirit, it is not hard for us to have confidence that He created everything just as He said He did.

Believers don't say that there was no big bang. They only say that whatever the mechanisms were in the beginning, God created, initiated and controlled them all. The secular scientists can make their own conclusions, but they weren't there. Believers know the One who did it all.

In this series of lessons, we ask that no matter what your background is or what your current beliefs are, that you keep an open mind as you read through them. The fact is that God's word on this subject was recorded thousands of years ago –

long before science as an institution ever got involved. He did not give a scientific analysis because even though He created everything that science now studies, the science was just a means to an end and not even close to the most important thing. God was speaking to man to answer our simple question: "Where did it all come from?" His answer was that it all came from Him. He knew that man was capable of working out many of the details as we have done. He also knew that the most important thing was not the how, but that it is all here because He put it here and did so because He wanted to, that He is our God and we are His creation.

So let's look at God's record of creation, not to try to solve scientific mysteries, but to see what He said about the beginnings, and to get a sense of what He placed importance upon.

Day Minus One – God Was

Before there was anything, there was God. Nothing else. There wasn't even time, so our subtitle of "day minus one" is really a misnomer, since there couldn't have been days. Although we see indications in scripture that the universe was preceded by the creation of angels and other spiritual creatures, God was first.

So our universe was non-existent just before God created it. There was nothing – no raw materials of any kind. Man gives himself a lot of credit for being creative and we are indeed, up to a point. But any creation on our part involves taking matter that already exists and changing it's form or properties. It's true that we conceive something that we may not have seen before and then make it, but it's not on the level that God creates. God didn't start with rock, wood, molecules, atoms, or even subatomic particles. He simply decided that where nothing had been, there would be matter.

Day One – Foundations: Matter and Light

In verse 1 of our lesson text, we are told that God "...created the heaven..." We shouldn't mistake this as the dwelling place of God because He preceded everything and His dwelling place would have long been with Him. The Hebrew indicates that this would refer to that which we see when we look into the sky at night – the universe, but only the expanse of it and not the contents, which were yet to be added.

Verses 1-2 speak of creation of the Earth and that "...the Earth was without form, and void". Now the Hebrew word "bohu', which is translated as void means a vacuity or emptiness. That would mean that there was no Earth there, but verse 1 says that God created the Earth, so how do we reconcile that? If God had created it, but it was without form and emptiness, it must mean that God had created the raw materials for the Earth, but had not yet given it form. By Earth

being paired with heaven in verse 1, perhaps what it is telling us is that this is where God created the expanse of the universe and the matter that would populate it.

In order for matter to exist as we know it, there would have had to have been physical laws that govern that matter and also space itself. Since there was nothing but God before time, we have to conclude that He created the laws of physics. If they existed independent of God, He might be subject to them (which could not be), but if God created the matter that is governed by those physical laws, then He must have created the laws as well.

Yet, there was space and matter without light. Verse 2 says that "... darkness was upon the face of the deep", but God "...moved upon the face of the waters." God at that point commanded that there be light and light began to exist. We just talked about physical laws. They are the framework that controls our physical universe. Along with the laws that govern matter are those that preside over the electromagnetic spectrum of which visible light is only a part. God created light that we can see, but He also created the framework for infrared and ultraviolet light as well as x-rays, radio waves, and radiation. God has now created the building blocks and the rules for everything in our universe.

We should point out that God had created light and there was visible light present because God divided the light - called "day" - from the darkness - called "night". Since day and night are a phenomenon specific to a planet caused from its rotation, we can take from this that God had by that time given at least enough form to the Earth for it to rotate, but there had been created no physical source of light. So where did the light come from? Since there was nothing else there capable of producing light, we have to assume that God was the source of this light.

So far, God has created the basis for all science, but here we see the supernatural actually affecting nature by lighting it. It's certainly not the last time, since God throughout time has controlled and even superseded nature, such as with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the parting of the Red Sea, the re-animating of the dead, and destroying vast armies with His angels. Again, with light, we see God producing something out of nothing.

Day Two - The Firmament

The Hebrew word used for "firmament" is "raqiya", which is properly stated as "an expanse". This is generally understood to be the sky - not the depths of the universe, but the blue dome that we see in the daytime - our atmosphere. This particular passage makes it clear that this expanse was to "...divide the waters from the waters..." (v. 6). It has been suggested by some that this expanse was atmosphere with a large amount of waters above it held in store for the great flood of Noah. Others say that this is only talking about the atmosphere as we know it with its ability to hold water as vapor.

The flood theory does provide for some interesting speculative explanations for Carbon-14 dating and the great longevity of people before the flood, none of which we'll try to get into here. If you're interested in that, there are many internet sources of information. The normal atmosphere theory is also entirely plausible, however.

The important thing to focus on here is that God created an atmosphere and not just an atmosphere, but one that would support life. He was making the Earth habitable. According to what we see in following verses, the Earth at this time was completely covered in water. It was just a watery ball hanging in space. Astronomers have found amazing things about other planets within our own solar system, but in recent years have been able to gather data on planets circling far-away stars. Many planets and planetoids have been found with little or no atmosphere, such as our moon. Many others have been found with atmospheres, but not capable of sustaining life as we know it. Venus and Mars have atmospheres composed mainly of carbon-dioxide while those of Jupiter and Saturn have high quantities of ammonia and those of Uranus and Neptune are methane based.

This is not to say that there couldn't be other planets somewhere that have an atmosphere similar to ours, but there has been no evidence found to date that would suggest one. God, in creating our atmosphere was in effect putting up a roof to go over our heads and creating much of our global infrastructure that we take for granted. Our atmosphere provides us with air, of course, but also the water cycle that provides us with water for everything. It protects us from the most harmful solar and cosmic radiation and from most objects hurtling wildly through space. It shapes the land and moderates our temperatures. The firmament that God put in place was yet another building block put into place to make the universe complete.

Day Three - Dry Land and Plant Life

With an atmosphere, God was ready to make the next modification to the Earth. In verse 10, we see that God made dry land appear. It was already there. It was just underwater, but God gathered the waters to let the land appear. This is an interesting way to put it, but it had to involve the land lifting to rise above the water as we see it today.

So we see the land and oceans. We aren't told if this was in the form of the continents that we see today or if it was the Pangaea supercontinent for which scientists have found at least some evidence. All we are told is that it appeared, which of course is the most important thing. Now we have dirt, so we have a good place for things to grow. But wait...

we don't actually have anything yet that's living, do we? But this was next on God's list, so He spoke, and plant life came about.

We've seen so far that many of the details that science concerns itself with have not been present in God's account, but now we see an interesting detail that is pointed out not once, but several times in verses 11 & 12. It is stated that all these different kinds of plant life were made to reproduce and yield fruit, but only "after his kind". This is an important detail and we'll be talking about it more in a later lesson, so remember it.

It Was Good

We've now gone through 3 days of creation. All of creation at this point consists of a mostly empty expanse of universe populated with only the Earth. The Earth is being lit daily by what we assume to be a supernatural source. Earth has dry land covered with vegetation and surrounded by oceans.

It seems to us at this time to have been incomplete and indeed it was. But God on the third day had begun to survey His creation-to-date. Twice during the third day, God looked upon His work - the dry land and the plant life - and He "...saw that it was good." What does that mean? What is required for a completely perfect Being to consider something to be "good"? Wouldn't that thing need to measure up with their standards? Perfect Being implies perfect standards, so anything good by those standards would have to be perfect.

So we see that God's creation so far was observed by God to be perfect. There were no defects. The Earth, with its new atmosphere and oceans and dry land was perfect. The plant life - from the tiniest blades of grass, to the mightiest redwood trees, from large riotous red tropical blooms, to small delicate blue flowers growing between prairie stalks, - was a source of great delight to the great God who created it all. He was intimately familiar with every particle, every design of every single part of everything and He found nothing that did not delight Him.

In our next lesson, we continue with creation and gain natural light sources.

LESSON TWO

The Heavens Declare ...

LESSON TEXT
Genesis 1:14-19

WRITTEN BY
BROTHER DANNY HAYES

Genesis 1
14 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:
15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.
16 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.
17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,
18 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.
19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

Days

(Disclaimer: Before reading this section, you should know that your writer is a "young earther". This refers to a mindset that includes a belief that the Earth was not only created in 6 days as we now know them to be, but that the Earth itself is only around 6000 years old. This belief is not held to as a "condition of faith or fellowship". It is merely how I view God's creation based upon what I have come to know of God's power and faithfulness, and how His word has never steered me in the wrong direction. If you disagree with me, I won't scorn you, but I may challenge your opinion, as you are welcome to do with mine. I don't claim to have all the authoritative answers, and will listen to reasonable arguments. My belief causes me to neither hate science nor sniff at scientific discovery, as God created the basis for all true science. I do, however, disagree with some of the conclusions that some "scientists" arrive at, because I sometimes see in them the desire to explain the universe by leaving God out, which I personally know to be an impossible task.)

Let's talk a little bit about what the word "day" means. It seems silly, but it bears mentioning because there are people who try to take the six days of creation and turn them into epochs or eons or long periods of time. These are usually folks who are trying to make the Bible make sense in terms of current scientific thinking. They see that science has declared that the universe is around 14 billion years old and they feel that rather than choose sides, they must make the Bible agree with science, since they don't feel that they can make science come toward the Bible for whatever reason.

Let's first take a look at the Hebrew word "yom", which is the word used for "day" in the creation account in Genesis. It is also the word used for "day" in the rest of the Old Testament. It comes from a root meaning "to be hot" and refers to the hot period of time when the Sun is shining. In other words, it refers to a single day in the same way that we usually use the word "day" to refer to a single day. While the English word "day" can be used to refer to longer periods of time, we shouldn't try to force the usages of our language upon Hebrew. It just doesn't work that way. A single word in a specific context of one language may require paragraphs to describe in another. Take the French word "Entrepreneur" and try to accurately translate it into a single English word. You can't.

So on the whole it's just a bad idea to try to make the word "day" in Genesis mean a longer (necessarily much longer) period of time than a 24 hour day. Let's look at a couple of other reasons that turning days into epochs just doesn't make sense for Genesis.

Light-less eons: The first 2 verses of Genesis is one of the main places that these folks hang their hats. They say that since light had not been created yet, there was no basis for measuring time, so it could have been any length of time. Let's forget for a moment that all there was before light was an Earth without form and waters (no life yet created). What about heat? Every single source of heat in our universe also produces electromagnetic energy of some type, such as light. Yet there was no light, and therefore, no source of light, and therefore, no source of heat. You can't have life as we know it - as has ever been on Earth - without heat. Even if it could, how would life ever come about without it? Now look at verses 3-5. God created light, separated it from darkness, called light "day" and darkness "night". Verse 5 then says that the "evening and the morning were the first day." The evening is set right next to the daylight (which would have been just a normal period of light) and calls both of them together the first day. It isn't logical that a billions-of-years epoch would be set next to a twelve hour light period and be called one day. The evening and the morning were equal periods of time - a 24 hour day.

Days as evolutionary periods: Some say that the Genesis account is an allegorical representation, mirroring the major periods of evolutionary development of life. If this is true, then somebody has something wrong. According to current evolutionary theory, life began in the seas. Genesis says that the first life was plant life on the dry land, which according to evolution would be an inhospitable place for life to spontaneously develop. You can't reconcile the two without assuming that either the evolutionists or God's word got it wrong. If you assume that the evolutionists are wrong, what basis do you have for doubting the Biblical account? If you assume that the Bible is wrong, why would you try to reconcile it with evolution in the first place?

These and other reasons are why these lessons are being written from a perspective that considers the term "day" to mean just that - a single day.

Day Four - The Heavens Populated

On the fourth day, God turned His attention away from the Earth in order to create natural sources of light. The Hebrew word used for "lights" in verse 14 - "mawore" - is different from the one previously used. While the word in verse 3 - "ore" means "illumination" or light itself, "mawore" refers to "luminous bodies". So on day four, God created those bodies that produce light, not the light itself, because He had already created that.

God said that these lights would be for measuring time, for marking seasons, and also for "signs". The Hebrew word for "sign" also means "flag", "beacon", or "omen". One prominent example of this sort of thing is when we read about events surrounding the birth of Jesus in Matthew chapter 2. The wise men came from the east to King Herod and said "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east" (v. 2). From this we can surmise that there is significance in the position of a heavenly object or group of objects. In the old testament, there is mention of the practice of astrology and with what we read in our lesson text, we see that God intended it. That being said, let's not confuse this with the modern new-age practice of astrologers. These folks believe that absolutely everything about us can be predicted by the stars. Moreover, they believe that we can use this information to control our fate. There is nothing in our Genesis account to suggest this in any way, but the idea that heavenly bodies were given for signs is an important one.

The universe is, of course, incredibly, inconceivably, unfathomably, complex. Every object in it is connected, either directly or indirectly, to every other object in it. If we're talking about a hydrogen atom in our sun, it is affected by all the other atoms surrounding it, which all together affect other groups of atoms, which all together affect the others to make up the Sun. Our sun is affected by the planets that circle it and affects them in turn. Our Solar System is affected by the other stars of the Milky Way galaxy and orbits along with them all in a slow swirl. The Milky Way is affected by other galaxies in our local group, which is in turn affected by the local supercluster, which is affected by other superclusters and so on until everything is moving in concert with everything else.

It truly boggles the mind, but when you look at it like this, the design of a very large, very complex clock comes to mind. An orrery is a mechanical model of the Solar

System. The large ones are amazing, whirring masses of gears, sprockets, chains, arms & pivots that mimic the movement of the planets around the Sun and moons around the planets. But when you look at the universe in this light, an orrery pales in comparison. The scale is immense, the precision breathtaking, but you can see that it is a gigantic machine capable of keeping time.

Now remember that God, even when creating everything, knew every what and when of every single event that was ever going to happen - big or small. Also, when He created the stars, He set them in motion. The universe, as we've said, is alive with movement and God at its creation, knew where every particle was going to be at every instant for all time. Since He had control over the motion of the universe, doesn't it make sense that He could have "timed" it all for celestial events to coincide with events here on Earth?

Now we see how a celestial event could have spoken of the birth of our Savior. In this, we see the possibility of God "programming" the heavens to cause a heavenly event to happen at exactly the correct moment to herald His Son's birth. The size, grandeur, and precision of such a machine causes us to feel small as it should. It is no wonder that David in Ps. 8:3-4 said "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

The next time you look at the stars, think about this and see how you feel. Try to see as far into the abyss of the heavens as you can and know that there is an infinity yet beyond that. And see that this vast machine was put there in order to show us the glory of our almighty Creator who put it there. And feel humble, because that is how we should feel when faced with the glory of God.

It Was Good

After the fourth day of creation, God had added to His creation lights. They would be used to light the world in the daytime and to a lesser degree at night. The Sun was the main source of light and its light reflected off the Moon would dimly light the night. They and the stars would measure time - days and years.

Again, God declared all of this to be good - perfect. It was just what He wanted. It would perfectly serve the purposes that He created it for and would last for all time.

But this was an Earth that seemed to be just waiting for something else. There was land, sea, and plants of all kinds, but to what purpose? We'll see more in our next lesson.

LESSON THREE

BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY...

LESSON TEXT
Genesis 1:20-25

WRITTEN BY
BROTHER DANNY HAYES

Genesis 1
20 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.
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.
22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.
23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.
24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.
25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

After Their Kind - Addressing Evolution

As with the plants in lesson 1, we will see the phrase "after his kind" or "after their kind" being used several times in our current lesson. All living creatures and plants were designed and created by God to produce offspring after their kind, or like the organism from which it came. This is an important point, because many scientists have brought forth their conclusion that over a period of millions or billions of years, a species of plant or animal can actually change into another completely different species.

Of course if the young Earth mindset is true, this would be impossible since 6000 years is not nearly long enough for evolution to happen (even if it could). But look at the separation between these conclusions and what the Bible says. The Bible says that an animal will have as offspring animals of the same species. A dove would hatch little birds that were doves. They would never hatch ostriches. This is also saying that doves would never produce anything except doves - not even something just a little bit different from a dove. If the conclusions of the secular scientists were true, that species of dove that God created would eventually become something else. But if that happened, at some point, a dove would produce offspring that were not doves. This idea is contrary to the Biblical account of creation, so once again, trying to reconcile the Bible with current scientific thought becomes problematic.

Some even within Baptist ranks try to deflect this by saying that the Bible was just written by men and subject to each man's own incorrect ideas and prejudices. They forget that one of the tenets of our Baptist beliefs is that the Holy Bible is "divinely inspired" and "has God for its author" (New Hampshire Confession of Faith). If we throw the Bible out as the authoritative Word of God when it is not convenient for us, then what is the basis for any belief that we might have? It becomes an inconsistent tool that is sometimes fit for use and sometimes is not. Any handyman will tell you that a tool that he cannot depend upon is one that he will never use.

It is a mark of our time (or perhaps this is how people have always been) that people often declare their "individuality" by following the crowd. It is true that in today's world, laughter and ridicule are often heaped upon those who choose to believe God rather than a man with several letters after his name. But you have to ask yourself some questions. Who is most likely to have a hidden agenda - God or man? Who is most likely to want what's best for us - God or man? Who was there from the beginning - God or man? Which of those two can protect us from the other? Which is most likely to care for us even when we can't possibly do anything for them in return - God or man?

There are a lot of questions out there. Some don't matter at all. Some do and some only matter as to how we stand on them. If we don't begin our search for truth with the only One who is true and faithful, how can we expect to find it? It is essential that we align ourselves and give our loyalty to He who truly loves us and will care for us absolutely.

As to evolution, it is true that if God wanted to create the universe through a process of billions of years, He most certainly could have done it. But consider this - God told us he created the Earth and stars, the plants, animals, and everything else. He also told us that He would send a Savior to us and He did. He gave us a chronicle of His people through the ages that told of what they did and what He did as well. He told us what our great need is and how we must be reconciled to Him. He has told us the truth. Given all this, why would He have created the universe over billions of years and then lied to us by telling us that He did it in six days?
Our God doesn't lie to us. Don't open your mouth and swallow theories just because someone that you assume to be smarter than you came up with them. You have a responsibility to find the truth. It works the same way with God. He has never expected us to just open our mouths and swallow. He expects us to search for Him. Reading His word and accepting it isn't enough. This is the same God that said "prove me now herewith" (Mal. 3:10). He doesn't want us to just accept His word. He wants us to know Him, to

prove Him faithful, to be shown and convinced. Why should we not deal the same way with theories of our fellow man? Be warned that the goal of some "scientists" is to turn people away from a belief in God. If you are skeptical of that statement, go to your local bookstore and look at the anti-God books in the science section.

Okay, sermon is over...back to our lesson.

Day Five - Sea Life and Birds

On the fifth day, God turned back to the Earth to create a new kind of life. Life up to this point consisted of plants. Plants are certainly alive by any standards that man has come up with, but this was something new. God called it "the moving creature that hath life." He created aquatic animals and birds. These creatures were not just mobile, but had brains and nervous systems, which the plants lacked. Not only could they move, but they had some ability to perceive their environment and to react to it. Some even seem to have some small ability to think and to remember.

We again see that the progression given in Genesis is non-evolutionary because the first (and only) type of animal that is specifically mentioned is the whale. Now the word translated as "whale" could possibly mean sea-serpent or dragon (which we might call "dinosaur"), but it doesn't matter. It's talking about an animal that is, evolutionarily speaking, one of a higher order. In other words, evolutionary theory says that these animals should come later. But here they are mentioned at the same time as everything else.

We don't know how many of each animal God created, but in verse 22, God commanded them all to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth." We can probably conclude from this that while the seas were well populated, there was still plenty of room for expansion of each species.

Day Six - Land Animals

On the sixth day, God created more moving creatures, but this time, He created them to live on the dry land. Once again, we read that each species was designed to reproduce after its own kind. Once again, God created life that was even higher in its form and capability. While there are land-based species that are very simple, among these animals were the highest in complexity and intelligence that God had created up to this point. Hopefully, you can see that as God's overall creation came closer and closer to completion, each day saw individual creations that were even more glorious than those of the day before.

The Biosphere

Now we have a nearly fully populated Earth. The seas teemed with life and the land was crawling (literally) with living creatures. With the atmosphere, we have a complete water cycle, with vapor being evaporated into the air and redistributed back across the land, which supplied plants with water

to their roots and animals with water from streams. The dry land provides nutrients to the plants, which are then given to the animals by eating the plants and the animals in turn gave nutrients back to the ground for the plants. According to Gen 1:30, plants were all that the animals ate, so we are given a picture of nature quite different than what we see today. Apparently, there were no animals preying upon each other - no death.

It Was Good

The situation in the biosphere created to this point is outside of our experience, but to God, it was good. We might think that with animals not dying, it would not be a sustainable situation, but remember that God designed it. If God said it was good, it was perfect. And the crowning piece of His creation was yet to come and we'll see that in our next lesson.

LESSON FOUR

...In His Own Image

LESSON TEXT
Genesis 1:26-31

WRITTEN BY
BROTHER DANNY HAYES

Genesis 1
26 And 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 fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.
27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.
28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.
29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.
30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.
31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Let Us

In the first verse of our lesson, God says "Let us..." He didn't say "I will". He didn't say "Let there be" as He has in previous verses. He said "Let us." It seems curious because this was obviously said to another, someone who was clearly participating in the act of creation.

God was there as the three Persons with whom we are familiar through the scriptures: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is important, because God was talking about a co-act of creation, which means that He was talking to co-equals. The only other beings anywhere were created beings, not co-equal with God and therefore incapable of participating in creation. When God said "Let us", it was a determination made among these three persons who are God, perfectly united in mind, will, presence, and action so as to be three always acting as one.

Day Six - Mankind

On the same day that God created the animals on the land, He went a step further and created something different. He created man. Verse 26 says that God determined to make man "in our image, after our likeness". This is different. Nowhere does it

reference anything that had been created being anything like God, but now, man is created after God's own likeness. This single thing sets man apart from all the rest of creation, but what does it mean?

Does man physically look like God? We can't really answer that, since we have no record of anyone living actually seeing God. It's true that Moses saw God pass, but he only saw His "back parts" and we're given no description of what Moses saw. But even if we did physically resemble God, would that be all that sets us apart from the animals? Even at their best, our bodies are merely flesh and blood like animals. Still, it seems obvious that we are far beyond the animals in many aspects.

Many philosophers and scientists alike have spent many lifetimes trying to answer the question of what makes man different and the more we learn, the more many are stymied. Man has intelligence, but so do some species of animals, albeit to a far lesser degree. Man makes and uses tools, but it has been shown that some animals use very crude objects to perform some tasks. Man loves, but consider how a dog acts toward its master. Man has language, but some apes, while lacking the facial structure to speak, have been taught to communicate through sign language and some of these have even taught it to their young. These animals with language have even shown an ability to grasp abstract concepts such as love, hate, and even to display altruism.

What makes man different and what science often will not consider is that he was created in God's image (v. 26.) Gen. 2:7 says that "God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." This is not said of any other animal that God created. This is what makes us different from all the rest of the living things that God created. We are His offspring. But how? Even though our bodies are created mechanisms like other animals, God put a soul in us that came from Him. The essence of our existence is in His image. The Hebrew word used for soul is "nephesh" - properly a breathing creature - alive. Not alive like a dog or cat, but eternally alive. The soul continues eternally. Further, the word "nephesh" comes from the root "naphash", which means to be breathed upon. Man was breathed upon by God and thus became an eternally living soul. Thus and again, we are His offspring.

How else can you explain the vast difference between the capability of man and the most intelligent of the great apes? Sure, our brains are more complex than theirs, but is the difference in complexity enough to explain the difference between the heights of the things that man is capable of understanding and achieving and the utter simplicity of thought demonstrated by apes who have been taught sign language? There has to be some other reason that man is capable of not only grasping, but also perceiving very high things such as God Himself.

The fact that God made man specially and made him His offspring is evident in the fact that God then gave man dominion over all of His creation on Earth. Man was given control over all the plants, animals and resources of the planet. This didn't mean that man was at liberty to wastefully and irresponsibly exploit the Earth. God gave man dominion, but expected him to use this power wisely and with compassion.

But man was not created for the sole purpose of presiding over the world that God had created. That wasn't even the main reason. Man was created with a spirit that came from God, who is spirit, so that he and God could commune together. He was intended to serve God in all that he did. His soul and body was to be in harmony with God and everything that he did was to be an act of worship to the One who created him and the creation over which he was to rule.

It Was Very Good

Man, like everything else, was perfect, but with man that perfection went a good bit further. Nothing else in the universe created before man was both physical and spiritual. Only man had that distinction. And being perfect in body and in spirit means that man was perfect in time and in eternity. Perfection with creation and with God at the same time.

It was all in harmony, from the lowest depths of the oceans to the most remote corners of the universe, from the deepest part of man's soul to the very throne of God. Everything worked perfectly. Nothing went awry. God was pleased and this is why He created it all in the first place. In God's Revelation to John, when the 24 elders fall to worship God, they sing of their knowledge of why God created it all. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev. 4:11).

So, at the end of the sixth day, God declares His pleasure and delight by beholding it all and proclaiming it to be very good. In the next lesson, the celebration.

LESSON FIVE

God Ended His Work

LESSON TEXT
Genesis 2:1-3

WRITTEN BY
BROTHER DANNY HAYES

Lesson 5
Title: God Ended His Work
Subtitle: Gen. 2:2 - And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made
Lesson Text: Gen. 2:1-3
Gen 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.
Gen 2:2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.
Gen 2:3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

The Week

Have you ever wondered where the seven day week comes from? Did you know that there is an astronomical basis for most of our measurements of time? A day, of course, is the time it takes for the Earth to spin around one time. A year is the time that the Earth takes to completely circle the Sun once. A month is somewhat more arbitrary, but is based upon a full cycle of the Moon. There is no such basis, however, for the seven day week. Yet it is as old as mankind. From the earliest records that we have, there were seven day weeks.
The week is the only period of time that we have that comes directly from God Himself. It comes from the fact that He took six days of creation and added another day to rest. In His wisdom, He gave us the basic cycle of days that we still fit our lives to. Even those who do not know God still run their lives according to the schedule that He set around 6000 years ago. Businesses, markets, industries, and people all conform to this cycle, whether they are aware of it or not.

Let's look at the last day of this cycle - the Sabbath.

Day Seven - God Rested

God wasn't tired. Let's get that out of the way first of all. The Hebrew word "shabath" is what is used here. It means "to repose" or "to desist from exertion". We can take it to mean "pause", or even "celebrate", which is one of the possible meanings of "shabath". "Celebrate" seems at first to not go along with the other definitions until you consider what God's purpose was in this pause. God had just finished creating the entire universe, ending with man, His ultimate creation. We humans have never known anywhere near such an achievement and yet we often pause to celebrate or commemorate things that have just been achieved or were achieved long ago. God was celebrating what He had just done. He paused to consider it all.

While celebrating the end of His work, God also blessed the seventh day and set it apart. He gave it its own special status as a day for pause, celebration and contemplation of His wonderful creation. In fact, this is where the Sabbath was instituted as a day of worship and celebration of God and His glorious works. The Hebrew word "Shabbath", which is what they use for Sabbath, means "intermission" and is taken directly from the root word "shabath", so we see the direct correlation to God's rest on the seventh day of creation.

Even today, among Christians, there is a day that is set aside for the same purpose. We take the day of Sunday as was begun to be used among early Christians as a day of worship. Take this day as celebration times two because not only do we worship, contemplate and celebrate the great works of God, but also the finishing of the work of His Holy Son, who died to pay the penalty for our sin and then rose from the dead to lead the way for us to resurrection and eternal life! Keeping our sabbath should not be an onerous task if we love the Lord, but a peaceful, pleasant pause from the worries and cares of our day to day life.

God paused, not to rest, but to commemorate His work of creation. Try to imagine the delight that He felt when He surveyed the perfection of all that He had set in place, and you can't do it. If we could only get a small sense of a small bit of His delight over one little corner of it, we would be overwhelmed. But we too, can feel delight. The Psalmist said in 94:19, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul." When we consider the great works of God, His Son and His Spirit both in time and in eternity, we are humbled, but we also take comfort and delight in the peace that He brings to our souls and our minds. It is then that the cessation of our daily pursuits is not a task, but a joy. David said "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD." (Ps. 122:1). He didn't say it because he thought he was supposed to or because it sounded good, but because he was close to the Lord and worship and service to God was not a drudgery, but a pleasure. May we all draw so close to God that we delight in giving Him of our time and service.

But God's rest on the seventh day was not just a parallel to the future Sabbath of the Jews and the Day of Worship for the Christians. You could say that God's rest and the Jewish Sabbath and Sundays are all just a looking forward to something even better.

All Very Good

We've been talking about creation, so we haven't talked about what happened pretty soon afterwards, but the scope of our lesson has become such that we must now discuss why the Earth is no longer perfect. To be blunt, God created man perfect, but not infallible. Why? God wants obedience and love, not a

robotic adherence to the rules. God expected man to do the right thing because he loved God, not because he didn't have a choice. But man tried to decide his own way. We looked away from God.

To go some way other than God's way is sin, pure and simple. We sinned. We ruined it all. That's why nothing is perfect anymore. If you have a glass of absolutely pure water and pour in just a teeny-weeny bit - perhaps just a few molecules - of poison, it's no longer absolutely pure water, is it? Sin was introduced and poured into the perfection of creation... and creation was no longer perfect. We had it so good, so perfect. We messed up everything and lost our own souls.

But God loved us. He provided a way to restore our souls - the eternal part of us - to perfection. Jesus, the eternal Son, became human and did not sin so that mankind could be redeemed in the eyes of God. It's not automatic. We don't take part in this redemption by just being born. We must be born again. We must repent to God of the sin that is a part of our human heritage. When God is satisfied with our repentance, he re-makes our soul and gives it life again - this time infallible, sealed. Though our bodies are still just as imperfect as the rest of the universe, our souls are prepared to live forever with God.

Why is this important? Because as central as the Earth is to our current existence, it will not always be here. There will be a time that God will bring an end to this sin-corrupted universe. Sin, everything corrupted by it, and all who cling to it will be utterly cast away. Even the bodies of those of us who have been born again will be gone, but we won't need them anymore.

This is when God will once again perform an act of creation. In a God-given glimpse forward to that time, the apostle John said "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (Rev 21:1). God is going to re-create the universe. Or perhaps "re-create" is not a proper term to be used, because the old will not compare to the new. God will CREATE! He will create a new universe. It will all be new and perfect and will always be. And to go with our re-born souls, He will create for us new bodies that won't ever fail and we will be like Jesus, glowing with the glory that flows from God himself. Perfectly delightful, perfectly peaceful, perfectly joyous.

Says John, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." (Rev. 21:3-7)

It is then that a great celebration will begin that will not end. It will simply always be. We will with one perfect voice, and one perfect heart, and one perfect mind sing praises to the God who created, then destroyed the corrupted, then created once again, yet brought us out of that corruption to live incorruptible. It will be the true rest that God looked forward to on that seventh day – the rest that we look forward to when we with a full heart celebrate our Sabbath today.
And we will see that it is all very good.

Seeing God's Work of Creation

If you get a chance tonight, go outside and look up into the heavens. Look at the ground under your feet. Look at the trees as they sway in the wind that comes from one direction, flows toward another, following the air in front of it and leading the air behind it. Watch the river flowing. Hear the birds sing. Notice that all of creation is in constant motion, from the massive stars and planets in their orbits to the smallest of subatomic particles in their frantic dances that make up everything that we can see. Look at it all together and notice that it all moves in harmony. All of creation is one gigantic machine. Everything is connected whether by the powerful bonds that hold atoms and chemical compounds together or by the gravity that can move whole galaxies. Look at the unity of it all and you will begin to see evidence of a grand design even if the design itself is too big for us to comprehend.

The element gold may appear very different from the element carbon, but look at the atoms and you will see the same philosophy of design. A tree and a whale appear very different, but look at their individual cells and you will see the same philosophy of design. A rock and a planet appear very different, but look at what each is made of and what binds them together, and you will see the same philosophy of design. God told us through His written word that He created everything, but that is not the only record that He left. His creation is itself an artifact, a testament to His great power and wisdom. It bears witness to the great God who created an unimaginably complex, inconceivable, wonderful, delightful device, and then with His own hands set it all in motion.