

God Created the Heaven and the Earth

Key Verse: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 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.” —Genesis 1:1,2

Selected Scripture: Genesis 1:1-25

THE SETTING OF THIS LESSON takes place during the first day of the creative week—not at the beginning of our universe, but of our planet Earth. Since the word ‘Genesis’ signifies creation, beginning the act of producing or originating, the Bible points out God as the great first cause of all things.

The account of the days of Creation show that the earth was already in existence. It does not tell of the creation of the materials that make up the earth, but it describes the bringing of order out of the matter. A distinction is also made between the creation of the heaven and the earth, and the subsequent regulation and ordering of things.

There was no light in the earth prior to the time when Divine energy moved on the surface of the waters. Since there was no sun, the days were apparently marked by a dull light, which was eventually enough to distinguish day from night. “God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.” (vs. 5) The wording of the order of

evening and morning, compares with the Hebrew solar days.

The question may be asked, how was so much accomplished in one day? The scripture says, "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (II Pet. 3:8) We understand from this verse that a creative day was not a twenty-four-hour day, and that God counts time much differently than we do. There were six creative days, after which the Lord rested from his work on the seventh day.

During the second day, after creating the atmosphere, God caused the "dry land" to appear. (Gen. 1:7-9) Vegetation began on the third day, although it did not reach perfection of growth until after the light of the sun penetrated the atmosphere. Next, during the fourth day, came the appearance of the sun and the moon. "Let there be lights" (vs. 14), "The greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also." (vs. 16) The implication is that the sun, moon, and stars were created long before, but had never shined their light upon the earth because of the veil around it.

On the fifth day, "God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth, . . . and God saw that it was good." (vss. 20,21) He next created the "living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so." (vs. 24) During this sixth day, he created the 'living creature,' (*Nephesh*, Hebrew for a breathing creature, a sentient being, *Strong's Bible Concordance*, #5315) It implies a self-conscious life, as distinguished from plants.

It is important to note that our account leaves out entirely the other worlds/planets in our universe. It discusses only the things pertaining to this world, and relates to the ordering of it for human habitation. ■