

THE CREATION NARRATIVE

GENESIS CHAPTER ONE

Written by Graeme Purdie - November 2007 for
Talmidei Yeshua Messianic Kehilah - Auckland, NZ

Scriptural References

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Introduction

This paper is a verse by verse explanation of how I believe the creative process took place. Opinions within the Judeo-Christian community, range from creation of the heavens and the earth having taken just six literal, twenty-four days, to more than six billion years. However, somewhere between these two extremes must lie the answer. Man's ability to launch out into space and land on the moon, has shown clearly that the physical laws of the solar system must be observed without any deviation. Therefore, it seems to me to be reasonable that, God as the creator of those laws, would apply the same natural laws and principles in creating the heavens and the earth. Hence, I conclude that the creation narrative of Genesis Chapter One follows the same laws of the universe, that have been explained in scientific terms, ever more clearly, over the last two hundred years.

Verse 1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

- We see here that God (Elohim) created both the heavens and the earth. That is simply an emphatic statement. It has no time factor and no detail about the extent of the reference. It does not say that any party other than God was involved. It simply gives a starting point for the rest of Scripture to follow. The gap of time between the creation of heaven and earth and direct reference to the condition of the earth in verse two, is not indicated. How long God waited before commencing the preparation of planet earth for habitation by humans is not stated.

Verse 2

The earth was unformed and void, darkness was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God hovered over the surface of the water.

- The words 'unformed and void' suggest that the earth was shapeless and contained nothing. The surface of the planet must have been concealed from view, which is borne out by the next phrase which says - *darkness was on the face of the deep* - suggesting that rocky form of planet earth was concealed deep under water. Lastly - *the Spirit of God hovered over the surface of the water.* That implies that the waters covered the whole earth surface.

Verse 3

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

- From verse two, we see that the surface of the water was in total darkness, so God introduced light. But, how could there be light at that early stage, because so far there has been no reference to either the sun, moon or stars. So, what could cast light upon the surface of the waters? Many suggestions have been put forward about how that could occur. But, if we acknowledge the works of solar mechanics that scientists have discovered particularly during the last two hundred years, we can clearly see that planet earth, in verses two and three must have been a dead lifeless lump of rock travelling through space along with the other planets of the solar system attached to the star we call 'The Sun'. So, what is God saying when he states - *'Let there be light'*- I believe he is saying let the light from the sun, which already existed from the creation of the universe in verse one, now to shine upon the surface of the waters covering the lifeless planet.
- But, why did the sun's rays not shine on the waters back in verse two? Consider for a moment what scientists say about the effects of volcanic eruptions. Many large eruptions throughout the history of mankind have thrown up millions of tonnes of dust and ash into the atmosphere, with the result that

the rays of the sun are substantially obscured from the earth's surface. If we assume that in the early stages after the creation of planet earth, there had been extremely high temperatures and most likely molten rock for long periods of time, the atmosphere surrounding the earth would have been choked with dust that would reflect the sun's rays back into space, not allowing light to penetrate down to the surface of the waters, which must have slowly formed as the planet's outer surface cooled.

Verse 4 & 5

God saw that the light was good, and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. So there was evening, and there was morning, one day.

- The statement - *God divided the light from the darkness* - appears to refer to the planet's natural rotation, which would only become apparent, when the light reached the surface of the waters. In the absence of light on the surface of the water there could be no way of seeing the rotation.
- The light God saw was considered good and a name was given for the difference between light and darkness. Hence, our first introduction to 'day and night' as a concept that cannot be considered in the absence of planetary rotation. Primitive sundials were an early attempt by humans to break the passage of time into measured portions we now call hours, minutes and seconds.
- The verse ends with a statement by God - *So there was evening, and there was morning, one day* - which has possibly caused more confusion about the timescale of the creative process, than any other. The Hebrew word for day is 'yom' which denotes a period in that case reference to evening followed by morning, one complete 'yom'. But, does that mean one 24 hour period as we know a day according to the earth's rate of rotation at that point in history?
- Looked at in context of the events that have unfolded in verses 3 to 5, it is hardly likely that 'day' is here referring to a single cycle of planetary rotation. Scriptural proof that God is not talking about a single 24 hour day, is given by the fact that after God had completed his creative works he rested on the seventh day, calling it a Shabbat. Was his rest from creation just one 24 hour cycle or is it still in progress? Consider the words of Hebrews Chapters 3 and 4 where the author speaks about Israel entering God's rest. The talmidim of Yeshua, alive in the first century were being warned, in those chapters, about the possibility that like their forefathers in the wilderness, if they turned their backs on YHVH, they would not enter God's rest. So, if in the 1st century CE it was still possible to enter into God's rest, then it follows that as yet in this 21st century, God is still at rest. Hence, the evening and morning referred to in Gen 1:5 must be referring to a much greater period of time than one literal 24 hour day.
- How then should we consider that most important period? Bearing in mind that the whole of Scripture was written by the people of Israel for the people of Israel, we need to look at the context in which the opening words are couched. Evening throughout the Tanakh refers to the period from sundown to sunrise, which in an agricultural society, means the period when a man ceases from his labours. No work could be done during the dark hours, so evening was a time for rest. Come the sunrise a labourer of the land would commence as early as possible, before the heat of the day. Hence, it follows that in the creative programme God saw that what he had achieved in one complete period of creation was good. So, he rested for some unspecified period of time to allow his work to achieve its goal, before starting into the next development phase.

Verse 6 - 8

God said, "Let there be a dome in the middle of the water; let it divide the water from the water." God made the dome and divided the water under the dome from the water above the dome; that is how it was and God called the dome Sky. So there was evening, and there was morning, a second day.

- Having allowed the sun to shine through the atmosphere to the surface of the watery deep. God moves to the next phase of development. God says - *Let there be a dome in the middle of the water; let it divide the water from the water* - what is meant by that latter phrase? The clue is given in verse 7 where God states that the waters will be divided vertically. Too, create a separation between the waters below and the waters above, would require a substantial volume of water to be raised to the

upper limits of the atmosphere surrounding the surface of the planet. The dome between the upper and lower bodies of water God called 'sky'. As we know from space exploration, the planet is surrounded by sky up from the surface of the ground and sea to the edge of space. There are various layers within the sky, which scientists have called the atmosphere. Now, what verses 6-8 are saying is that during the second 'day' of creation, some of the water on the surface of the planet was lifted into the upper layers of the sky.

- Raising large quantities of water would require a complete transformation of the terrestrial dynamics. Vast amounts of heat would be required to enable the surface water to vaporize. That possibly took place as a natural event as the sun's rays warmed the surface of the deep, immense quantities of water would vaporize and rise to the upper limits of the atmosphere, where it would be suspended as cloud, finally defusing the light on the surface of the lower waters to a point where equilibrium would be reached and no more water would vaporize.
- Doubtless the transformation of liquid water into vapour, would take a considerable period to reach the total balance between liquid water remaining over the rocky surface of the planet and the canopy of water vapour in the upper reaches of the atmosphere. Hence, the arrival of the second evening and morning.
- I believe Scripture gives weight to its own arguments, because when God decided in Chapter Six of Genesis that he was greatly displeased with all created beings because of the corruption that had taken place. God called upon Noah to build an ark - why? Because God was going to flood the earth. Much of the water that had risen from the surface of the planet during the second creative day was now to be dumped back down upon the surface of the earth in the form of a flood. As Gen 7:12 says - *It rained on the earth forty days and forty nights. The water vapour of the 'waters above the dome' condensed and fell back to earth. The terrestrial dynamics changed yet again, with the initial upward process being reversed.*
- But, will the waters that fell back to earth in the flood of Noah's time remain forever on the surface of the earth? I believe not, as in 2 Peter Chapter 3 we see the author is talking about the creation, the flood in the time of Noah and the present world that has existed since the flood. This present world being saved by God, for destruction, not by water collapsing as in the time of Noah, but rather for destruction by fire. Verse 7b says this is destined to occur in the Day of Judgement, when ungodly people will be destroyed, as verses 12b - 13 say:- *That Day will bring on the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt from the heat; but we, following along with his promise, wait for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness will be at home.* So, if the elements are to melt, there will be intense heating of the earth's surface. Corresponding with those verses we see in Revelation 21:1 that:- *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had passed away, and the sea was no longer there.* If the sea is no longer there, where has it gone?
- Before considering where the sea has gone let's consider again the fact that Scriptures are only ever speaking about one planet, in many different forms. Firstly, we have seen in 2 Peter Chapter 3 that the original heavens and earth are the ones that were part of the creation. They were destroyed by the flood and that the present heavens and earth are now stored up for destruction by fire. Hence, from those words, we see the planet, which survived the flood of Noah's time, will also survive destruction by fire. The Chapter concludes by saying there will be a new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness will be at home. All this has and will happen to our own home - planet earth.
- Following the same line of reasoning, if the waters were separated during the second day of creation, with some of the water being raised to form a canopy above the sky, then at the time of the flood the same water crashed back to the surface of the earth, it seems reasonable that at the time of God's judgement, the elements being intensely hot, some of that the same water on the surface of the planet will be all vaporized and raised yet again to the upper reaches of the sky. Hence, I believe that both 2 Peter Chapter 3 and Revelation 21:1 are speaking about the same event and the same outcome. What God designed for humankind at the time of creation will be restored after his judgement upon the world. Therefore, following the time of God's wrath upon the nations, those who

are left over on the earth will again have access to the Tree of Life, as stated in Rev 22:2. So, we can see that following the return of Yeshua the earthly environment will be brought back to the condition God created for humankind originally and man's relationship with their creator will finally be restored to where it was meant to be in the beginning, before the intervention of the adversary.

Verse 9 - 11

God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let dry land appear and that is how it was." God called the dry land Earth, the gathering together of the water he called Seas, and God saw that it was good. God said, "Let the earth put forth grass, seed-producing plants, and fruit trees, each yielding its own kind of seed-bearing fruit, on the earth"; and that is how it was. The earth brought forth grass, plants each yielding its own kind of seed, and trees each producing its own kind of seed-bearing fruit; and God saw that it was good. So there was evening, and there was morning, a third day.

- As the waters of the deep slowly vaporized and ascended to the upper limits of the atmosphere, the remaining water would diminish in depth. As a result of reduced weight of water over the rocky lithosphere, allowed the shape of the planet to distort and adjust. The lighter surface rocks in the crust, would slowly emerge from the water. Hence, dry land was formed, with the waters of remaining on the surface slowly drain into smaller area. These God called Earth and Sea.
- The emerging land would slowly dry out as a result of heating from the sun. A process that would provide additional water vapour for the upper canopy. During the third day, God stated - *Let the earth put forth grass, seed-producing plants, and fruit trees, each yielding its own kind of seed-bearing fruit, on the earth"; and that is how it was. The earth brought forth grass, plants each yielding its own kind of seed, and trees each producing its own kind of seed-bearing fruit; and God saw that it was good.*
- Slowly the dry ground became covered with oxygen releasing plant life that would fill the sky (dome) with breathable air in preparation for animal life, which were yet to follow. Over a long period of time the seas would also absorb oxygen and become capable of supporting marine life.
- So, ends the third 'day' of creation. Again we are not told how long that development process took. Our only possible clue is that as God's rest has not yet ended; and we know that Yeshua's reign of restoration must last for one thousand years, we can conclude that the total Shabbat of God's creative rest will be a full seven thousand years, so it seems reasonable to assume that each creative day would also be at least seven thousand years long.
- Even the world's oldest living tree the Giant Sequoia based on ring count is only 3,200 years old. So, it is easy to see that all the vegetation needed to cover the entire land mass at the time of creation could have developed within a seven thousand year period between the evening of day three and the morning of day four.

Verse 14 and 19

God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to divide the day from the night; let them be for signs, seasons, days and years; and let them be for lights in the dome of the sky to give light to the earth"; and that is how it was. God made the two great lights—the larger light to rule the day and the smaller light to rule the night—and the stars. God put them in the dome of the sky to give light to the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. So there was evening, and there was morning, a fourth day.

- As plant life developed on the dry ground, God ordained that there should be lights in the dome of the sky to divide the day and from the night. It follows from what we know of plant life that green leafy plants can't grow in the absence of sunlight. But, from verse 14 it appears God is saying that he will place the lights (sun and moon) in the sky for the first time. Is that a conflict between our knowledge of nature and the words of God? I believe not. As God spread seeds on the ground; and plants of many kinds began to grow, they would have been growing at a very rapid rate, possibly far faster than they do today - why? Because the upper water canopy above the sky, that was created on day two, would have produced a biosphere trapping considerably more of the sun's radiation within the atmosphere than we have today, because since the days of Noah the upper water canopy has been back down on the earth.

- If we accept that the earth environment was a biosphere at that stage and plants grew far faster than they do today, they would also have released vastly larger quantities of O₂ (oxygen) into the atmosphere while at the same time absorbing copious quantities of CO₂ (carbon dioxide) and other noxious gases from the atmosphere. The result would have been a rapid cleansing of the air. What would have been up until that point a very hazy cloud cover, would now begin to purify and become transparent.
- The upper canopy becoming transparent would allow the sun moon and stars to become visible in the dome of the sky, for the first time. As we know the sun is approx. 93,000,000 miles from earth and the moon 240,000 miles away, it is clear to us that God did not literally put them in the dome of the sky between the waters, as verse 17 suggests, rather their light became visible as if they were in the dome.
- God says in the latter part of verse 14 - *let them be for signs, seasons, days and years* -
 - days - one earthly rotation,
 - years - one orbit round the sun,
 - seasons - that would have required God to adjust the tilt of the earth's axis in relation to plane of the sun. God could well have brought about that shift and part of the adjustment of the earth's surface when the seas receded and dry land emerged.
- At that stage the fourth creative period was complete. However, the full appearance of the lights in the sky may have again taken at least seven thousand years to be achieved completely.

Verse 20 - 23

God said, "Let the water swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open dome of the sky." God created the great sea creatures and every living thing that creeps, so that the water swarmed with all kinds of them, and there was every kind of winged bird; and God saw that it was good. Then God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful, multiply and fill the water of the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." So there was evening, and there was morning, a fifth day.

- Having planted seed bearing fruit and grass on the dry land during day three, God now turns his attention to the waters of the sea and the air of the sky. He places swarms of living creatures in the waters and birds in the dome of the sky.
- In the early stages of the creative process, the cleansing of the water canopy and the air within the dome of the sky, would have doubtless resulted in much chemical fallout that would have landed in the sea. Hence the sea would have remained a soup of particles that needed to be settled out to the bottom. That would require a vast quantity of marine life of low form, to help cleanse the waters. Verse 20 starts the day with swarms of living creatures. If we look at the cycle of the sea, we see that plankton plays a very important role in the ecology of the sea. Firstly, it grows in abundance near the surface in the presence of sunlight and like green leafy plants on land it turns carbon and other chemicals present in the seas into harmless particles that settle slowly toward the bottom. High initial sea temperatures and an abundance of nutrients would mean that plankton and other algae type organisms would have flourished in large numbers, turning the seas from chemical soup into clear oxygenated water that could support higher forms of marine life. Hence, in verse 21 - *God created the great sea creatures*. The food for whales is primarily plankton, so by creating the "great sea creatures" God is balancing the volumes of plankton with higher forms of life. The same verse also talks about *every living thing that creeps*. By creating crayfish, shellfish and other bottom feeders, God enabled the cycle of cleansing to be completed. Plankton on or near the surface to photosynthesize the carbon and other chemicals, into crustaceans that sank to the bottom as debris. Hence, the bottom feeders having digested the descending material would neutralize it into sediment, that deposited and under increasing pressure would become limestone, sandstone and other sedimentary rock formations.
- Is it any wonder that God in his wisdom told his chosen people Israel that they were to abstain from eating any marine life other than finned and scaled fish. Shellfish and other creeping things are the cleaners of the oceans and not suitable as food for his people.

- In the same manner the abundance of green leafy vegetation growing in the warm atmosphere of the dry earth, would be oxygenating the air in the dome of the sky. Hence, in verses 20 and 21 we see that God filled the air with all kinds of birds. As birds breath oxygenated air, the dome of the sky had become a place suitable for their habitation. The presence of birds flying over land and sea, would allow seeds of the land plants to be spread over ever wider areas. That would help mix the different kinds of plant life all over the land mass.
- *So there was evening, and there was morning, a fifth day.* Yet again God rests from his work, to allow all that he had created on the fifth day to generate and develop, further preparing the planet for habitation by his ultimate creation - humankind. But, not yet. God has more preparation work to do before the earth is ready for humans. So, the sixth creative period starts not with humans, but with land animals.

Verses 24 - 25

God said, "Let the earth bring forth each kind of living creature— each kind of livestock, crawling animal and wild beast"; and that is how it was. God made each kind of wild beast, each kind of livestock and every kind of animal that crawls along the ground; and God saw that it was good.

- God brought forth all the land animals and livestock upon the land. Imagine how the land must have looked before grass eating animals appeared. In the biosphere conditions, grass and other leafy plants would have grown in such abundance that it would be impossible for humans to move about. Scientists have proven that in supposedly geological times (millions of years ago) dinosaurs and similar large vegetarian mammals roamed the earth. Did it need to be such a long time ago? I believe it makes a lot more sense that these creatures were roaming the earth from the beginning of the sixth day until the flood of Noah swept them away. Their sole function would be to reduce the vegetation quantities to a level where smaller and high forms of air breathing land based animals could survive and multiply. Only at that stage would the planet be clean and lush enough for God to create his final and highest fleshly form – human beings.

Verses 26 - 28

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, in the likeness of ourselves; and let them rule over the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the animals, and over all the earth, and over every crawling creature that crawls on the earth." So God created humankind in his own image; in the image of God he created him: male and female he created them. God blessed them: God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea, the birds in the air and every living creature that crawls on the earth."

- Finally, after that long slow development process God finally had the planet molded into the condition he wanted for the being that he would create I his own image. God had used all the natural laws of the universe to transform a dead and lifeless rock covered in water and enveloped in dense cloud, into the jewel of the solar system, ready for habitation by humans. The beauty of this planet was marveled at by the astronauts as the stood on the surface of the moon and saw the earth rise from below the horizon of the moon. There was a bright blue-green sphere dotted with red-brown patches of dry land and lightly covered with wisps of cloud.

Verses 29 - 30

Then God said, "Here! Throughout the whole earth I am giving you as food every seed-bearing plant and every tree with seed-bearing fruit. And to every wild animal, bird in the air and creature crawling on the earth, in which there is a living soul, I am giving as food every kind of green plant." And that is how it was.

- Even the plant life that God placed on the dry land, had specific roles as food for his animal and human creation. Seed-bearing fruit for humans and green plants for the animals and birds. There was to be no competition for food. Instead, peace and harmony was the way God wanted humans to enjoy his creation.

Verse 31

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good. So there was evening, and there was morning, a sixth day.

- God was well pleased with what he had achieved. It was now time for God to rest from all the work he had undertaken. So, began the evening of the sixth day.

Chapter 2:1 - 3

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, along with everything in them. On the seventh day God was finished with his work which he had made, so he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. God blessed the seventh day and separated it as holy; because on that day God rested from all his work which he had created, so that it itself could produce.

- The time had come for God to step aside and let the next seven thousand years be a time for humans to multiply and subdue the earth and fill it with their off-spring. God, could rest until the morning of the eighth day, when all things will be the way they were when he ceased working at the end of the sixth day, because the Sovereign Plan of God cannot be thwarted by either the actions of Satan or the disobedience of humankind.

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