

## Formed and Filled 8-20-06

Genesis 1:6-25 (NIV)

<sup>6</sup> And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water."<sup>7</sup> So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. <sup>8</sup> God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning--the second day. <sup>9</sup> And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup> Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. <sup>12</sup> The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup> And there was evening, and there was morning--the third day. <sup>14</sup> And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, <sup>15</sup> and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. <sup>16</sup> God made two great lights--the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. <sup>17</sup> God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, <sup>18</sup> to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup> And there was evening, and there was morning--the fourth day. <sup>20</sup> And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." <sup>21</sup> So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." <sup>23</sup> And there was evening, and there was morning--the fifth day. <sup>24</sup> And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. <sup>25</sup> God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

Last week we saw that God (*Elohim*) began creation with space, matter, and light. We looked at the separation of light from darkness and saw the spiritual parallels that the writers of the New Testament saw in this separation. But we should never forget that this was written by Moses to be read by the Israelites. They had just left Egypt with its many gods. As shepherds in this advanced culture of Egypt, they were tempted to adopt the gods of this culture that seemed to so superior to their own. Remember how many times in the wilderness wanderings they were tempted to turn to the gods of Egypt when things got tough. (Exodus 32:1) Egypt worshipped creation. Everything in the creation story we are reading, Egypt saw as one of their many gods. Moses was

**Commented [notes1]:** 1 When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him." Ex 32:1 (NIV)

declaring that all these things are created by the one true God, the Creator. He was establishing the inability of creation to be any kind of god. It should have spoke to the Israelite heart that the God of their fathers was infinitely superior to all the things the world worshipped in spite of their cultural disadvantages.

It is often that way for the children of God. We can look at those who worship the things of this world and wonder if money or education or power is not something that should be worshipped. (Psalm 73:3-5) Not that we bow down to it or make a graven image of it, but our hearts seek after it as something that can satisfy our emptiness. In our American culture, it is hard to see that the man that lives in his camper with an eighth grade education but that loves the Lord with all his heart is better off than the CEO multimillionaire with a string of business degrees who is living for self-gratification. How seductive the world can be! Moses was declaring that they were better off as slaves that knew the Creator than their masters who worshipped the things that are made. Can we see with eyes of faith that what truly satisfies is a relationship with God? (John 2:17)

There is great debate in the Christian world about the meaning of the word "day" in this passage. That it may be a geological age says more about man's faith in our ever-changing scientific theories than it does about the text. The Hebrew word is used to mean various periods of time. Those who would insist it is a 24-hour day argue that morning and evening qualifies this as such. The problem with that is the first three days did not have a literal evening and morning because there was no sun. So what does evening and morning mean? The problem is further confounded by the fact that the writer of Hebrews insists that we are still in the seventh day. (Hebrews 4:3-4) Believers who love the Lord, believe the Bible is the inerrant word of God, and who are defenders of the faith are on both sides of the argument. When we face these kinds of issues, we should not make disparaging remarks about those who disagree with us. Instead we should graciously accept that there are legitimate differences that are not essential to our faith. (Philippians 2:14)

A local Christian radio station has a wonderful creation ministry, but every time I hear it denounce those who believe in anything other than a 24-hour day as those who would undermine Biblical truth, I cringe. Frances Schaffer, among other great defenders of the faith, thought that the text could mean something other than 24-hour periods. In these areas that are unclear, we need to learn to disagree agreeably. (Romans 14:5) Both sides believe that Genesis chapter one is God's revelation of creation. None of these great defenders believe that we are an accident of nature. Let us not argue over questionable interpretations or condemn those who don't hold our favorite viewpoint. (2 Timothy 2:24)

There is an amazing symmetry in this first chapter. Last week we talked of the formlessness and void (*tohu wabohu*) in verse two. Most of the first three days of creation are dedicated to forming what was formless. The second three days, days 4-6, are dedicated to filling the void. The literary form we see in Genesis

**Commented [notes2]:** 3 For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.  
4 They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong.  
5 They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills.  
Psalms 73:3-5 (NIV)

**Commented [notes3]:** 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.  
1 John 2:17 (NIV)

**Commented [notes4]:** 3 Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest." And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world.  
4 For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work."  
Heb 4:3-4 (NIV)

**Commented [notes5]:** 14 Do everything without complaining or arguing,  
Phil 2:14 (NIV)

**Commented [notes6]:** 5 One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.  
Romans 14:5 (NIV)

**Commented [notes7]:** 24 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.  
2 Tim 2:24 (NIV)

chapter one is the same symmetry we see in creation. That shouldn't surprise us since the same God designed both. In day one, space is created and in day four space is filled with the sun, moon and stars. In day two the sky and seas are created and in its counterpart of day five they are filled with birds and fish. In day three the dry land appears and in its counterpart of day six the land is filled with creatures. On days three and six there is the double "God said" and "it was good" perhaps because one completed the forming of what was formless and the second the filling of what was void. Do you see the pattern of formed and filled throughout chapter?

I believe the Lord works the same way in us. We first come to Jesus by His grace, and He takes the formless void of our heart and begins to shape it. He forms a desire to know Him within us. Then He fills us with Himself. A life of faith is a life that is shaped and filled by our Creator. (1 Corinthians 14:33)

There is a systematic orderliness and numerical harmony in these seven days. Seven is a number of completion to the Hebrews. There are three nouns in the first sentence, God (*Elohim*), heavens (*samayim*) and earth (*eretz*). They are repeated in multiples of seven. God occurs thirty-five times (5x7), heaven twenty-one times (3x7) and earth twenty-one times. The first sentence is composed of seven Hebrew words. The second has fourteen. The seventh paragraph is about the seventh day and consists of three sentences of seven words each. The middle phrase of that paragraph is "the seventh day".

With all our admiration of its literary perfection we might think of it merely as literature, but this is an actual account of the beginning of created things. Francis Shaeffer writes: *"The mentality of the whole Scripture... is that creation is as historically real as the history of the Jews and our present moment in time. Both the Old and the New Testament deliberately root themselves back into the early chapters of Genesis, insisting that they are a record of historical events."* In other words, if we choose to believe the Bible, then we must believe that God inspired Genesis. (2 Peter 1:21)

Consider that the eternal God is a spirit. (John 4:24) He does not have vocal chords and yet He can speak. When He began creating living things He thought through their DNA pattern and chemical interactions, the environment in which He would place it and how it would fit into an interrelationship with other living things. He thought through the enzymes that would aid the chemical processes and how it would deal with toxins and mutations. For every plant in the plant kingdom and every animal in the animal kingdom, for every insect and every microorganism, God thought of every detail and called it into existence and instilled each with instincts. Incredible! (John 1:3)

Every family of living things reproduces after its kind. You'll never get cat that mutates into a dog, or frog that mutates into a snake. You can give it all the time you like, every species reproduces after its kind, just as God designed it. You can hybridize, but the hybrid is sterile and the mutation is always inferior. God made

**Commented [notes8]:** 33 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints,  
1 Cor 14:33 (NIV)

**Commented [notes9]:** 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.  
2 Peter 1:21 (NIV)

**Commented [notes10]:** 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."  
John 4:24 (NIV)

**Commented [notes11]:** 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made  
John 1:3 (NIV)

it the way it would function best. Science is now discovering that adaptation within species is from already existing genes, not mutations. In other words, God had it all figured out from the beginning and you can't improve on what He did.

There is so much variety of living things that one could spend a lifetime looking at them and not see them all. (Psalm 104:24) Mankind is still discovering new species. One of the latest interests of biologists is tiny colonies of living organisms in the seas. You must look very closely to see them, but they are utterly fascinating and we are only now beginning to understand their function and requirements.

*"He also made the stars."* Now there is one of the greatest understatements ever recorded. Now that the Hubble records images of expanses we can't fathom filled with billions of stars, many of which make our own sun look like a miniature, we should get a little glimpse of the creative power of God. After creating all that, black holes, countless planets, galaxy upon galaxy, God simply had Moses record, *"He also made the stars."* (Psalm 19:1)

We look at planets light years away and see elliptical orbits on various planes and wonder at the extremes of temperature, how inhospitable they are to life and the inevitability of collision with another of the planets orbiting that sun. Then we look at this earth set in orbit by the divine hand and we see something very unique, a circular orbit on the same plane with the other planets. We see our planet earth at a perfect distance from the sun and at the perfect 23-degree tilt of axis so that water vapor can fall in the form of rain and water the huge variety of plants that God made throughout the earth. (Ecclesiastes 1:7)

And then there are the microcosms. As far as we can go outward into the vastness of space, we can go inward into the space between atoms. In making all these things that God mentions in the six days, He laid a foundation for them in the elements of the first day when He created the earth. There are molecules made up of atoms of which we are familiar with about a hundred. Each of those atoms is made up of protons, neutrons and electrons and still we can go deeper. There are subatomic elements known as quarks and leptons of which we are trying to study to understand. They react in ways that don't make sense to us. All of these elements operate under laws and order that we are trying our best to understand. In fact, all of science is trying to understand what was in the mind of God on those first six days. Most scientists agree that the more answers we come up with, the more questions we raise. We realize we are only scratching the surface of scientific knowledge. (Ecclesiastes 12:12)

Order and fullness! We have so much to see and enjoy. I watch the blue heron fly up the canyon in the morning and down in the evening. I see the ducks and geese in their seasonal comings and goings, the little hummers on their summer vacations like bees around my mom's feeders. I saw a gray fox stalking my cat while the chipmunk tried to avoid the cat. I've seen the mountain lion in the path, waiting for a faun, the rattler waiting for a passing mouse, the bear eating

**Commented [notes12]:** 24 How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.  
Psalms 104:24 (NIV)

**Commented [notes13]:** 1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.  
Psalms 19:1 (NIV)

**Commented [notes14]:** 7 All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again.  
Ecc 1:7 (NIV)

**Commented [notes15]:** 12 Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body.  
Ecc 12:12 (NIV)

blackberries and manzanita berries and stealing my peaches. These black oaks in our canyon drop their leaves in Spring and immediately grow them out again. But before that, the beautiful Arizona Sycamore with their naked writhing white branches catch my eye in winter as they wait to hide in the snow. I've swam over the backs of whale sharks five times my size, and yet they live on tiny plankton. I've swirled phosphorescent plankton while diving at night and marveled at it turning its light on and off like a firefly, and watched the octopus at night transform its color to whatever background it happened to crawl across. And even as I write this, red rock cliffs are illuminated by rays of sunshine while black thunderclouds form the backdrop bringing the much needed rain. I see it is good. He does all things well. (Play Chris Tomlin, You Do All Things Well)

Let us go from earth to heaven and find out what it is all about. There the twenty-four elders are enthroned. John recorded a particular scene when they threw down their crowns before the instrument of creation, Jesus, and said, <sup>11</sup> *"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."* Rev 4:11 (NIV)

There is a popular expression that was going around a year or so ago, "It's all good." That is what God said of each day of His handiwork. It's all good, because it all declares the glory of God. Isaiah looked in on the throne room of God and saw another creation of God, the seraphim, <sup>3</sup> *And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."* Isaiah 6:3 (NIV) The earth is full of His glory because He filled it with good things. Even in this world's fallen state we marvel at the glory of God that shines through the wonder of the things He has made.

Next week we will go on to the crowning act of creation. The God who made it all made you and me. We run from that fact because it calls us to recognize we are not our own. Man would rather believe there is no God to explain the complexity and order we see around us. If it is a big accident, we will be indebted to no one, free to do as our heart desires. We are the one thing in (earthly) creation that can choose to rebel against God. What amazing liberty! What a frightening thought! I ask you this morning what role you have decided to play in this wondrous creation, God glorifier or rebel? It is only by His will that we have our being. Put your life in His hands, and let Him bring order and fullness to your life. If He can bring order and fullness to the cosmos, He can certainly bring order and fullness to the chaos and emptiness of your life. Call on the Creator this morning to create a new heart within you. (Psalm 51:10)

The One who formed and filled this earth is ready to form and fill your heart, if you will come to Him.

**Commented [notes16]:** 10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Psalms 51:10 (NIV)