



The Crown of Creation



In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1).¹

The Days of Creation

Genesis 1 presents the six days² of creation. On the “sixth day” God created man.

Genesis 1:26 – 31 (NIV)

(26) Then God said, “Let us³ make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” (27) So God created man in his own image,⁴ in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (28) God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

(29) Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. (30) And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground – everything that has the breath of life in it – I give every green plant for food. And it was so. (31) God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning – the sixth day.

Genesis 2:15 – 18, 22, 25 (NIV)

(15) The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (16) And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; (17) but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,⁵ for when you eat of it you will surely die.” (18) The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

Verses 19 – 21 describe the man’s responsibility of naming all of the living creatures, and his need for a suitable helper, whom God provided by taking one of the “man’s ribs” while he was in a deep sleep.

¹ Before God created the universe, nothing else existed except God himself. Only God is truly eternal. In the beginning God created everything. See Psalm 33:6, 9; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11.

² Christians differ in their interpretation of “days” in Genesis 1, primarily including 1) the “days” are six successive 24-hour days (“young earth view”); 2) the “days” are six sequential ages of unspecified duration (“day-age view”); 3) the “days” should be interpreted symbolically as part of a literary framework (“literary framework view”); and 4) the “days” should be interpreted analogically as “God’s workdays” (“analogical day view”). Views 1-3 are debated in *The Genesis Debate*, edited by David G. Hagopian. View 4 is defended in *Science & Faith, Friends or Foes?*, by C. John Collins. Also, various views are discussed in *Redeeming Science* by Vern Poythress (available online). For a brief discussion of creation vs. evolution, see Jay’s *Doesn’t Evolution Contradict Genesis?*

³ “Let us” - The Bible consistently describes God as One. Scholars differ on their interpretation of the plural here, but it most likely refers to the plurality in the Godhead (though the Trinity would not be fully revealed until the NT).

⁴ The “image of God” is commonly described as the reflection of God’s communicable attributes (those qualities of God for which at least a partial counterpart can be found in his human creations). The image of God in us includes spiritual life; moral consciousness; ability to think abstractly, appreciate beauty; creativity; capacity to relate to God and other humans, and to represent God (to exercise dominion over the earth). Human beings are special, and given a status and role superior to all other visible creation.

⁵ “the knowledge of good and evil” – Interpretations include (1) consequential experiential knowledge of good and evil; (2) God-like wisdom, but some knowledge is God’s sole preserve, and knowledge must be sought in the right way; (3) moral autonomy. Only God has the authority to decide what is right, and seeking “the knowledge of good and evil” is an expression of autonomy (moral independence from God), which is contrary to submission to God.

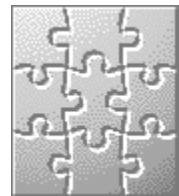
(22) Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

(25) The man and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame.⁶



Discussion Questions

1. The Bible says that God “created” the universe, including human beings. However, many people say that human beings “evolved” from more simplistic life forms (ultimately from non-living chemicals) through purely naturalistic processes. Does this make any difference concerning “meaning” and “purpose?” Explain.
2. Among the created things, only humans are made “in the image of God” (1:27). (See footnote 4 on first page.) Why is this significant?
3. What responsibilities are given to the first humans?⁷ In what specific ways does this apply to us today?
4. What is temporarily lacking for the first man? God removes this lack by providing what man needs. Why is this provision so important?⁸
5. What three relationships are evident in these verses? 1) man & _____; 2) man & _____; 3) man & _____.⁹
6. What seems to be the character or mood of the earliest human setting, and how does it compare to now?



Reflection/Application`

- Continue to think about question 1 above. If you have difficulty accepting the belief that “God created,” investigate available resources that present valid alternatives to pure naturalism. For books, videos, and other resources, contact Jay (HISbburg@msn.com).
- The creation described in Genesis 1-2 was “very good.” There was blessing and harmony. However, in today’s world, there seems to be much trouble and disharmony. Yet we still seek blessing and harmony. Reflect on Genesis 1-2 and ponder the question, “How can we truly have blessing and harmony?”
- To what extent can we experience that blessing and harmony today?¹⁰ As Christians, what specific things can we do to experience more blessing and harmony in our daily lives?
- Re-read Genesis 1-2, and read Genesis 3 before the next study.

⁶ The original human condition involved harmony with God & each other. It was a condition of moral innocence.

⁷ Humans are to 1) rule over creation (1:26, 28) on God’s behalf; 2) reproduce and fill the earth (1:28); 3) work and take care of the earth (2:15), which is connected to (1); 4) follow God’s commands (2:16-17); 5) name the living creatures (2:19-20), which is connected to (1); and 5) help one another (2:18, 20b-21).

⁸What is lacking? A suitable helper (2:18, 20b) – that is, woman. It is not good for man to be alone. Human relationships are necessary for the creation to be “very good.” Of course, the man-woman relationship is significant because the sexes compliment each other, and reproduction requires it (otherwise humans could not fill the earth!). But the need for human relationships, in general, is the broader significance.

⁹The relationships include: 1) man & God; 2) man & earth; 3) man & woman (other humans).

¹⁰The Bible says, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17), that is, the person is part of the new order. We can find purpose, peace, and harmony in Christ, through faith in Him as Savior & Lord. This is spiritual. We still live in this messed up world, but one day those who are “in Christ” will enter the ultimate peace & harmony. Still, even in the present, we can experience blessing, peace, and harmony, in part, as we live in Him.