



Understanding the Six Days of Creation

Sunday, Oct. 6/19 --- Genesis 1:1 – 13

Ancient myth tells of a threatening and unpredictable world where the gods operate, placing society at their mercy. Ancient religion celebrated the gods but also attempted to control them through cultic ritual... Against this backdrop the Genesis account speaks volumes regarding the uniqueness of Biblical revelation. Indeed 'revelation' was required to liberate antiquity from its superstitions and fear of the world that was viewed as a playground for capricious deities.

– Kenneth A. Matthews

The narrative (of Genesis) starts with a world 'without form and void' (1:2). It then describes how God speaks, and through His creative Word, day by day, step by step, shapes and fills the world, so that it is finally fit for habitation for creatures that uniquely bear God's image and likeness – human beings.

– John C. Lennox

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. – Genesis 1:1 – 2

I. Origins of Life: Biblical Creationism or Scientific Naturalism

- Biblical Creationism defined –
- Scientific Naturalism defined –

II. Background and Structure of the Genesis Account

- Other Ancient Near Eastern Creation Accounts –
- The Torah (Genesis to Deuteronomy) –
- Tóldót (12 Sections) – 'These are the generations' –

III. Three Main Views of the Days of Creation

- The Day-Age View –
- The Framework View –

IV. Keys for Interpreting the Days of Creation

- Tōhû wābōhû – 'without form and void' (1:2)
- Days 1 – 3: Forming Order from Chaos (unproductive to productive)
- Days 4 – 6: Filling the Emptiness (uninhabited to inhabited)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- What is the main difference between the two opposing beliefs about the origins of life? How do people come to a belief in one or the other?
- Is it upsetting to learn that there are other creation accounts that pre-date Genesis? What might this teach us about the reason God gave Genesis to Israel when He did?
- Of the three views of Creation, which one were you taught? Is it hard to think about other interpretations? What new insight did you gain from this message that might cause you to re-examine your position?
- What kind of sequential order do you see in the Days of Creation? What is the author teaching us about God? About humans? About His purposes for humanity? How is this a good introduction to the Bible?