

The Seven Days of Genesis 1

Genesis 1-2:4

The early Jewish editions of the Old Testament included 2:1-4a as part of chapter 1, but the Latin Vulgate changed the structure of Genesis 1 to our current form for no explainable reason.

Genesis 2:4 is to be noted as a transitional verse from the First Creation Table to the Second.

Background For Genesis 1:

What is the background and purpose of Genesis 1?

- 1- Genesis 1 was not written to combat Evolution.
 - a. I state this because I feel the only time I hear Genesis 1 referenced by our brethren is in a discussion of Creation Vs. Evolution.
 - b. I am in no way advocating that Evolution agrees with Genesis1; we simply should not approach the chapter as if it were an apologetic defense against Evolution.
 - i. Evolutionary Theory is less than 200 years old (1859 – Origin of Species)
 - ii. The Book of Genesis is about 3400 years old.
 - c. A book cannot mean something different than it originally meant to its original audience.
 - i. Our obligation as Bible students is to figure out – to the best of our abilities – what a writer originally intended his audience to understand, and then if possible, make applications to our lives.
 - ii. There is great danger in interpreting a 3400 year old book in a modern context with modern application, to the exclusion of its original setting and purpose.

Having said all of that, I do want to say one thing about Evolution:

If you are going to buy into the false theory of Evolution, sell out to it entirely and reject everything that the Bible is and stands for. **The two are not compatible.**

- A. Evolution (even Theistic Evolution) has man being made in the likeness of animals.
- B. The Bible has man being made in the likeness of God (Gen.1:26)**
- C. Evolution argues that it took millions and billions of years for the earth to form.
- D. The Bible argues that everything that is was formed in 6 days.**
- E. Theistic Evolution's argues that Days=Eons of time
- F. The Bible argues that evening and morning constituted the division of a literal day.**
- G. Evolution argues that it took millions and billions of years for the earth for form. **Major problem:** Death before sin.
- H. The Bible teaches that death came after and was the result of sin (Genesis 2:17)**
- I. Evolution has plants and trees created after marine life
- J. The Bible has plants created on Day 3 and marine life created on Day 5.**
- K. Evolution has birds evolving from reptiles long after fish and probably after mammals.
- L. The Bible has birds being created on Day 5 and reptiles and mammals on Day 6.**
- M. Evolution has creeping things among the earliest things on earth. (Trilobites)
- N. The Bible has creeping things being created on Day 6, after birds, and before mammals.**
- O. Evolution has the sun appearing before vegetation.
- P. The Bible has the creation of plants on Day 3 and the creation of the sun of Day 4.**

Evolution contradicts almost every fundamental statement of Genesis 1. If you are going to believe in Evolution, you cannot believe in the Bible and vice versa: If you are going to believe in the Bible, you cannot believe in Evolution. The two are diametrically opposed to one another.

Theistic Evolution is the creation of a false god who is in competition with the God of the Bible, yet does not possess a thimble full of God's almighty power.

Remember: Though Genesis 1 is not compatible with Evolution, Genesis 1 was not written for the purpose of combating Evolution. If that is the way we view the introductory chapter of the Bible we are robbing it of its grandeur and intended purpose.

So I ask again: **What is the background and purpose of Genesis 1?**

First, the Book of Genesis was written by Moses around 1400 B.C. In reference to the first chapter, Moses was clearly not alive at the point of creation – nor was any man. When Moses writes of these events he is doing so by the inspiration of God and is doing so for the sake of the Children of Israel primarily, and for rest of creation secondarily.

Second, the purpose of Genesis 1 must be understood within its immediate context. There is a curious thing that occurs in the first part of Genesis: In chapter 1 we have an account of creation, and then in chapter 2 we have a second account of creation. Have you ever considered why there are two accounts of creation in back to back chapters of the Bible?

Bible scholars refer to these two accounts as the Two Tables of Creation. The first table covers Genesis 1-2:4a and the second covers 2:4b-3.

The reason for Two Creation Tables or Two Creation Accounts is because each Table addresses a different needs for Israel.

History begins in Table Two. Table One represents the Preamble to the Pentateuch and Scripture as a whole.

Preamble: Introduction. ILL: Preamble to the Constitution

There are some differences between the First Table and the Second Table that you need to be aware of:

1st Table:	2nd Table:
1. The main characters are not named – they are simply created male and female.	1. The main characters are named (Adam and Eve) and the story of their creation is given.
2. God is not referred to by His traditional name; He is referred to as Elohim .	2. God is referred to by His traditional name Elohim YHWH (Lord God Almighty).
3. The vantage point is from above: “Heavens and Earth” (1:1; 2:1,4)	3. The vantage point is from below: “Earth and Heavens” (2:4)
4. The focus is God as contrasted with creation. a. God creates; everything is created by Him. b. God blesses; everything is blessed by Him. c. God speaks; everything else is silent.	4. The focus is man’s relationship to God.

In our study today, we will be focusing on the First Table: The Preamble, so keep these points in mind.

The Structure of The Preamble:

The first Six Day of creation are as follows:

Day 1: Creation and division light and darkness. (Gen. 1:3-5)	Day 4: Creation of sun, moon, and stars to “rule” day and night. (Gen. 1:14-19)
Day 2: Division of heaven and earth within the earth. (Gen 1:6-8)	Day 5: Creation of fish and birds to fill the seas and skies. (Gen. 1:20-23)
Day 3: Division of land and sea. (Gen. 1: 9-13)	Day 6: Creation of cattle, creeping things, and beasts of the earth; Creation of Man. Both man and beast were to fill the earth, only man was given dominion to “rule” the earth. (Gen. 1:24-31)

3 ways we must view this data:

The Simple Structure:

1. The Universe
2. The Earth
3. Land and Sea

The Progressive Structure:

1. Sun, moon, and stars govern.
2. Fish, birds, cattle, creeping things, and beasts fill.
3. Only man fills and governs. Man is a special part of creation being fashioned in the image of God.

The Parallel Structure:

Day 1: Creation and division light and darkness. (Gen. 1:3-5)	Day 4: Creation of sun, moon, and stars to “rule” day and night. (Gen. 1:14-19) Key Term: Rule
Day 2: Division of air and water (Gen 1:6-8)	Day 5: Creation of fish and birds to fill the seas and skies. (Gen. 1:20-23) Key Term: Fill
Day 3: Creation of land (Gen. 1: 9-13)	Day 6: Creation of cattle, creeping things, and beasts of the earth; Creation of Man. Both man and beast were to fill the earth, only man was given dominion to “rule” the earth. (Gen. 1:24-31) Key Terms: Rule & Fill Man was created to take care of the creation of his Creator.

Two Special Notes:

1. Day Four is special because it points both backwards and forwards.
 - a. The creation of sun, moon, and stars points backwards to the first day of creation and adds to the division already created between Day and Night.
 - b. The creation of sun, moon, and stars also points forward to the seventh day, for they are to govern signs and seasons, days and years. This is a reference to the “Sabbath” principle associated with Israel’s feast days.

2. Genesis 2:1
“Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished.”
 1. Creation of heavens and earth
 2. Creation of “hosts”
 3. Genesis 2:1 demonstrates the division of six days into two categories that parallel one another

The 7th Day:

Major Point: Each day has a parallel in the Preamble except Day 7.

Major Point: The whole structure of the Preamble is designed to point to the 7th Day and to give God glory for His creative power.

There are 7 Days of which the 7th is the most important. (The recognition of completeness and perfection) If you have ever wondered why the number 7 is so important in the Bible, you really have to look no further than Genesis 1.

How emphasis is placed on the 7th Day:

1. 7 times you read the phrase “And it was so” (completeness) and “It was good”. Not on the 7th, for it was a contrast.
2. After each day of creation you read the phrase “So the evening and the morning were the first day.” Not on the last. (Side Point: Theistic Evolutionists have no explanation for the meaning of this phrase)

Question: Are we to understand the rest as endless? No. The seventh day simply did not have to be distinguished for one that followed.

3. Of the 7 Days recorded in Genesis 1, only Days 6 & 7 have a definite article with them; i.e. “The sixth day” and “the seventh day”. This is done to emphasize their importance in God’s eyes.
4. The Seventh Day is the only day to be introduced with a double article; literally “the day, the seventh” – a double emphasis.
5. The Seventh Day is the only one to be introduced before it is described.
6. The Seventh Day is the only one to be mentioned more than once – it is mentioned three times.
7. The positioning of the word “seventh” in the sentence structures of Genesis 2:2-3 is important.
 - a. In Hebrew, Genesis 2:2-2:3a consists of three verses, each containing seven words, of which the middle word is always the word “seventh”.

Question: Have you ever wondered why God outlined Seven Days of creation?

Answer in Layman's Terms: You go through the six days so you can better appreciate the seventh.

1. If it were not for the seven days, we would not appreciate the methodical, logical, and progressive care God took in creating everything that is.
 - a. God's methods reveal His nature.
2. If it were not for the seven days, we would likely fail to recognize God as the central focus of all creation, including the sun, moon, stars, birds, plants, fish, cattle, insects, and humans while also probably placing too much emphasis on the creation of mankind.

Point: We have the seven days, yet how often do we fail to recognize Him for who He is.

3. If it were not for the seven days of creation we would not have the resounding cry that every created thing was "Good".
 - a. The reason things are bad in life is because we (men) loused them up; not because God made a mistake.
 - b. The seven days should cause us to reflect on how we care for creation.
4. If it were not for the seventh day being preceded by six days of work, we would not understand the basis of the Jewish Sabbath. **See Exodus 20:9-11.**

The Sabbath

A few words about the Sabbath and then we are through.

I don't want you to walk away with the wrong impression today:

What The Seventh Day Did Not Do:

God resting on the Seventh Day did not establish the Jewish Sabbath as a perpetual Sabbath for all mankind.

- a. There is no evidence that anyone ever observed the Sabbath before Exodus 26:26-29.

What The Seventh Day Did Do:

1. It established the principle of working and rest that the Jewish Sabbath was to be based upon.

The Jewish Sabbath was a sign between God and Israel to cause Israel to reflect on her creation as a nation in the same sense that God created the universe. It was designed to reflect God's creative power and pleasure in His work.

- a. The Jewish Sabbath was a covenant between them and God –

Exodus 31:13-17 (NKJV)

"Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. ¹⁴You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. ¹⁵Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. ¹⁶Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. ¹⁷It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.'"

The Sabbath was designed to be a blessing for the people; it was designed to be a day of rest and a key feature of feasts. There were weekly Sabbaths, feast Sabbaths, and Year Sabbaths – all of which were designed to be a blessing for the people.

Yet Israel failed to:

1. Recognize the blessing (Mark 2:23-28)
2. Realize her special covenant with God

We will talk more about this in the near future.

When God was finished with Israel, He put an end to the sign of the Sabbath.

Colossians 2:14-17

having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. ¹⁶So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, ¹⁷which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

2. The rest on the Seventh Day also established the basis of the eternal rest that yet remains.

Hebrews 4:8-10

For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. ⁹There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. ¹⁰For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God *did* from His.

Take Away Point: On the Seventh Day, God Rested. He rested not because He was tired, but because He had completed His work and sought to enjoy it. His rest typified both His covenant with Israel and the rest that awaits all of the faithful.

Conclusion

I hope that when you read through the first chapter of Genesis that you will pause and reflect on the awesome creative power of God and look forward to the rest that yet remains for us.

Closing Thought: The Bible begins where it ends: In the Throne Room of God giving Him praise. When we read Genesis 1, may we never miss the focus placed there on the Awesome Creator resting from His perfect work.