

Genesis: The Days of Creation, part 2 – Light and Living Creatures

Genesis 1:14-25

MPS God reveals Himself as the One who originates, shapes and sustains the life of all creation by His Word.

OBJ Every person should believe God's Word because of four works that He performs.

READ Genesis 1:1-13

And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." ²¹So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. ²⁵And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. **Genesis 1:14-25**

"You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in Thee." – Augustine.

In our longing, our yearning and learning we find that God is the One who created us. He is the Origin and Source of all of life. He is the Creator who designed us for relationship with Him.

TRANS Today we proceed to learn that God's creating includes His filling.

Day 4 .14-19

And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶And God **made** the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. **And God saw that it was good.** ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, **the fourth day.** **Gen 1:14-19**

God continues His work of creation to bring further definition. Where Days 1-3 focused on atmospheric, Day 4 brings focus to environmental, a place that will sustain life and our habitation. God speaks to place lights in the sky and separate the day from the night. This is not new light, but the light created in the beginning now separated and designated for life-sustaining purposes. **God's work in creation creates not only matter, but also time and space, and the full laws of operation that govern all within these spheres.**

God creates to govern by the purpose for which He designates the light; "for signs and for seasons, and for days and years". "Signs" are ways in which God uses the heavenly bodies to convey knowledge and reveal Himself. The signs and seasons of light are used innumerable ways. Author K. A. Mathews states, "The luminaries were a source of fascination for ancient peoples, who were dependent upon them for directing travel and for anticipating the seasons."¹ People have used the luminaries in varied ways for both good, seasonal changes, and for perverse idolatry, such as horoscopes and astrology. What we now glean from our devices people once looked up to read the signs of light and luminaries. "Seasons" refers to the changing from one season to another. All creation is governed by these seasons, both intricately in ways that

¹ K. A. Mathews, [Genesis 1-11:26](#), vol. 1A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 154.



signal the season of reproduction for animals and magnificently in ways that signal the migration schedule of birds and fish of sea. “*Days and years*” establishes our calendar, the passing of a second, minute and hour, to the completion of a day, week, month and year. [God created light in all its varying degrees to rule and govern on the earth by its variance.](#)

TRANS God’s designation of light by heavenly luminaries establishes the earth’s positioning to the ongoing source of light. Many scientists do believe that if the earth were not located exactly where it is, life could not be sustained.²

ILLUS Earth’s precise position for Life

“The Earth’s overall orbit or distance from the sun would make a difference if it was located where, for instance, Mercury is or where Pluto is. As Dr. Jack Hall from ecology.com’s Dr. Jack’s Natural World says: “It’s the three bears syndrome. We’re not too close to the sun, and we’re not too far away. We’re j-u-u-u-st right!”

All this does not explain why our planet maintains its relatively warm, life-sustaining temperatures and climates that can — for the most part — sustain life. It also does not explain why life on Earth doesn’t burn up. For Earth to maintain its average temperature of 61°F (16.1°C), it requires a very delicate balance within its atmosphere, oceans and solid Earth.

Earth’s [coldest temperature](#) averages about minus 60°F (-45°F to -97°F) and its [hottest temperature](#) averages about 130°F-plus. While these extremes make most life impossible to naturally exist or thrive, they occur only in remote areas of the planet, such as the Antarctic (coldest average temperatures) or the Sahara Desert (hottest). Still, these temperatures are relatively warm (or cool) compared to other planets.

Earth’s “Checks and Balances”

Earth has a built-in, naturally-occurring “force field” around it that creates and helps maintain viable living conditions for its plant and animal inhabitants. The atmosphere contains [greenhouse gases](#) like carbon dioxide to keep the Earth warm, and an [ozone layer](#) to protect the Earth from harmful and incinerating (burning) radiation.

The Earth also has other checks and balances that help it absorb and retain the sun’s heat and energy (such as the oceans) as well as reflect its energy back into space (such as the polar ice caps). Wind and ocean currents also help distribute this heat around the globe, all within the Earth’s protective atmosphere. The point is that Earth is unique in its ability to create and maintain sustainable living conditions, because all of its systems and influences are connected to each other, from its atmosphere, oceans and land, to its seasons, its living inhabitants and the sun.³

Genesis 1:4 describes the macro-governing of time and all that occurs in its passing. God’s designation in creation is a revelation of His good gifts.⁴ **Who’s ready for Fall?** The author emphasizes seasons. God created the changing seasons as good. He loves the days of bonfires amidst the colors of Fall; the snowy white-out days and brilliant white winter nights of snow-blanketed landscapes. He loves the breaking forth of new life in an explosion of color in the Spring and the brilliant glory of the summer sun. Life is governed by the reality of seasons that come and pass and come around again, the same yet altogether new. And yet with each passing and coming of a season, God is present, governing the change, sovereign and ruling. [God created the seasons by which the world and all that is in it would be governed for His glory.](#)

The light designated is now purposed. Verse 16 gives greater detail and purpose to the light designated in verse 14 and 15. God made the varying degrees of light to rule the day and night. He establishes their purpose, as one commentator

² Eric McLamb, “The Tilting of the Earth: Shaping our Seasons and Climates” September 10, 2011.

<https://www.ecology.com/2011/09/10/tilting-earth-shaping-seasons/>. Last Accessed September 20, 2019. “Earth’s solar system is located on the outer edge on the [Milky Way](#), about 28,000 light years from the center of the galaxy. Most of the Milky Way’s 200 billion other stars and their planets are clustered in the center. This leads many scientists to believe that if the solar system were located more toward the center of our giant galaxy, life on Earth would be impossible because of the overwhelming heat and energy emitting from those stars.”

³ Eric McLamb, “The Tilting of the Earth: Shaping our Seasons and Climates” September 10, 2011.

<https://www.ecology.com/2011/09/10/tilting-earth-shaping-seasons/>. Last Accessed September 20, 2019.

⁴ Derek Kidner, [Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 53. Kidner States, “Sun, moon and stars are God’s good gifts, producing the pattern of varied seasons (14) in which we thrive (cf. Acts 14:17) and by which Israel was to mark out the year for God (Lev. 23:4). As signs (14) they will speak for God, not for fate (Jer. 10:2; cf. Matt. 2:9; Luke 21:25, 28).



states, “The threefold function of the heavenly bodies, to “divide,” to “rule,” and to “give light,” are thus each mentioned twice, so as to underline their real function.”⁵ This whole of creation on Day Four God looked upon and pronounced good.

Day Four is unique in many ways. John Sailhammer explains the uniqueness of Day 4 when he states, “The writer is intent on showing that the whole world depends on the word of God. The world owes not merely its existence to the word of God, but also its order and purpose.”⁶ The whole of all God accomplishes is done by His speaking. Remember the activities of creation include origin, order and pattern that brings separation, definition, assignment and boundary or limitation, to give value, designation and meaning, as well as divine purpose to all. [What God did in creation was not simply of stuff \(matter\), but the creation of all things space and time as well, the establishment of the system and structure, function and operation of all of creation.](#)

SONG Day Four takes us simply back to the elementary song of learning; “He’s got the whole world In His Hands.” [God as Creator declares that He is the Origin, Source and Sustainer who “upholds the universe by the word of his power”](#).^{Heb1:3}

TRANS Now that God has created a world that is inhabitable, He fills it. Look next at Day Five.

Day 5 .20-23

And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” ²¹*So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.* ²²*And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.”* ²³*And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.* **Genesis 1:20-23**

God fills His creation with the glory of its inhabitants. The firmaments now stretched out, the waters and the skies, now swarm with living creatures. These verses may be some of the easiest for us to see and understand by creation.

ILLUS **Starlings in Murmuration.** Starlings flying in intricate patterns. Fish swarms swimming in intricate patterns.

“**Murmuration** refers to the phenomenon that results when hundreds, sometimes thousands, of starlings fly in swooping, intricately coordinated patterns through the sky. A few years ago, George F. Young and his colleagues [investigated](#) starlings' "remarkable ability to maintain cohesion as a group in highly uncertain environments and with limited, noisy information" — a nice description of what goes on in a murmuration.

Going in, Young et al. already knew that starlings pay attention to a fixed number of their neighbors in the flock, regardless of flock density — seven, to be exact. Their new contribution was to figure out that "when uncertainty in sensing is present, interacting with six or seven neighbors optimizes the balance between group cohesiveness and individual effort."

Young et al. [analyzed still shots from videos](#) of starlings in flight (flock size ranging from 440 to 2,600), then used a highly mathematical approach and systems theory to reach their conclusion. Focusing on the birds' ability to manage uncertainty while also maintaining consensus, they discovered that birds accomplish this (with the least effort) when each bird attends to seven neighbors.

In following this role of seven, then, the birds are part of a dynamic system in which the parts combine to make a whole with emergent properties — and a murmuration results.”⁷

ILLUS **Fish School** Fish also school in large numbers to move through the waters. Schooling provides a defense tactic for the fish. Schooling fish makes them appear much larger as one to intimidate and scare off predators.

⁵ Gordon J. Wenham, [Genesis 1–15](#), vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1987), 22.

⁶ John Sailhammer, [Genesis Unbound: A Provocative New Look at the Creation Account](#). (Colorado Springs: Dawson Media, 2011), Loc 1552.

⁷ Barbara King, “Video:Swooping Starlings in Murmuration”. Jan 4, 2017. <https://www.npr.org/sections/13.7/2017/01/04/506400719/video-swooping-starlings-in-murmuration>. Last accessed September 20, 2019.



The glory of God's creation holds much for Christians to learn and even apply regarding the value and potency of Christian community in observing and learning from the birds that swarm and fish that school.

And now God speaks of His creation. He blesses them, empowering them to reproduce and fill the earth in ongoing manner.

TRANS Day Six begins by completing this portion of creation.

Day 6 .24-25

*And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. ²⁵And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. **Genesis 1:24-25***

God creates living creatures to fill the ground. These verses continue the wonder of Day Five as God continue to fill His creation with more of His creation, ordering all things by different kinds and each according to its kind. There are wild beasts and domesticated animals. And God pronounces it good.

The glory of God's creation is without end, but there is something even greater for us from the Days of Creation.

When we pause and reflect, we see far more. Commentator John Sailhammer states what we've already witnessed, but with increasing glory and wonder, "While it is true that on most of the days God does "make" something (at least in the broad sense of the term), a more fundamental observation of the events of each day suggests that He did something much more significant. What the writer wants most to show in this narrative is not that on each day God "made" something, but that on each day God "said" something. The predominant view of God in this chapter is that He is a God who speaks. His word is powerful. As the psalmist who had read this chapter said, "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made" (Psalm 33: 6)."⁸ On Sailhammer's point, John Walter states, "Sailhamer accurately picks up the text's interests when he notices the consistent emphasis on God speaking."⁹ In the glory and wonder of the Genesis creation account in which we are caught up, we should not miss this one, overwhelming fact, God speaks.

TRANS And to this focus I point our attention. As we build our doctrine of creation, we must centralize all recognition on this, God reveals Himself as the One who originates, shapes and sustains the life of all creation by His Word.

OBJ I want us to see Four works that God performs that reveal why we should believe in His Word.

If Day 4, 5 and 6 state anything, it tells us that God speaks. Creation introduces us to the power of God's Word. From the beginning God speaks and all that is comes into being. He speaks in creation and He speaks TO His creation.

Work 1: By His Word, God originates. From nothing, all that is, space, matter and time.

Work 2: By His Word, God shapes. From formless and void to ordered and patterned for value, purpose and meaning. The work of God in creation is not merely to add form and substance but to establish boundaries within which all that is lives.

Work 3: By His Word, God sustains. From beginning to its end, God who brought all into being and set it all in motion holds is in its designed place and for its designed purpose. God creates and fills the earth and sets in motion the means by which creation will fill the earth.

HYMN This Is My Father's World.

†This is my Father's world, And to my listening ears, All nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.

⁸ John Sailhammer, Genesis Unbound: A Provocative New Look at the Creation Account. (Colorado Springs: Dawson Media, 2011), Loc 1539.

⁹ John H. Walton, Genesis, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 125.



This is my Father's world: I rest me in the thought
 Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas--His hand the wonders wrought.
 2This is my Father's world: The birds their carols raise,
 The morning light, the lily white, Declare their Maker's praise.
 This is my Father's world: He shines in all that's fair;
 In the rustling grass I hear Him pass, He speaks to me everywhere.
 3This is my Father's world: O let me ne'er forget
 That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet.
 This is my Father's world: Why should my heart be sad?
The Lord is King: let the heavens ring! God reigns; let earth be glad!

TRANS THIS is how creation should affect the Christian at every glance! Creation teaches us that when God wants you to know who He is, He speaks by His Word. There is one final work of God's Word in which creation points us.

READ John 1:1-5, 14

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 12But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. **John 1:1-4, 12-13***

By His Word, God originates. By His Word, God shapes. By His Word, God sustains. And praise be to God, **Work 4: by His Word God re-creates.** The power of God's Word at work in creation is the same Word that awakens us to new life by Holy Spirit when we believe. **God gives new life when we are born again by the power of His eternal Word, Jesus Christ.**

God's Word creates life! The Word of God is powerful beyond imagination or comprehension! God worked by His Word! God is still working by His Word! The Word of God is alive! The Word of God gives new life. **The One who spoke and created all that is by His Word speaks today for new life through Jesus Christ.**

Have you recognized this, friend? The God who spoke and created all that is by His Word in the beginning is the One speaking to you today. He reveals Himself to invite you to believe in Jesus Christ, the Living Word, to receive the new life that only He can create in you.

God reveals Himself as the One who originates, shapes and sustains the life of all creation by His Word.

