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“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”

Colossians 2:8

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In this issue, we don't have space for news and announcements. So, we hope you will enjoy the extended teaching segment of our newsletter!

Following the Biblical Stream:

By Philip E. Busby

“In the beginning...” The Bible starts with these simple words, because for us as humans and this creation, there had to be a beginning. It's difficult for us to understand that God has always existed. He had no beginning and He has no end. He is truly eternal! Unlike God, we live in a thing called time. It's kind of like living in a fishbowl. (I grant you our universe is a large fishbowl.) Our actions have to be one step in front of the other. Without this kind of continuity, we have trouble understanding just how things might work. This being true, the Bible tells us there was a starting point, not for God, but for us and the place God created to put us in. The fact time was created for us and that we must live in it, is why men who choose not to serve God try so hard to figure out how we could have gotten started. They have never come up with any good theory for the beginning. To believe in creation is to believe in God, that He has always been there, and He started all of this. To believe in evolution is to leave a gaping hole in the beginning. Where does everything or anything come from in the beginning? If we believe the Bible, we find that everything came from God! Even time itself!!

The Bible tells us, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” There are many who believe there is a gap between verse 1 and verse 2. They believe there may have been other cycles of creation that took place between the time in which God created the heaven and the earth, and the time in which He began the creation cycle that we know. The truth of the matter is that we don't know! The Bible gives no indication there was any other creation cycle on this planet, other than this one. We have no idea what other things, in what we can only understand as “other places,” God has created. We only know what the Bible tells us. What God has chosen to tell us is that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, and then He went on to create everything we see and know, in the course of just six days.

We look at those six days and talk about what God did; because in those six days, He created a world that had certain principles, certain physical truths to it! It's our desire to rebel against those physical truths that cause us to stumble. Verse 2 of the first chapter of the Book of Genesis says that the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. When it says the earth was without form, and void, I believe it means simply that! There was nothing organized about this mass. There was nothing energized about the substance that existed at that point. However, verse 2 does tell us The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. So, we can speculate that the form of the beginning step was much the way the earth must have appeared during the flood of Noah's time. There was simply water that covered everything, and there was no dry ground. Beyond that, there was no life and truly no light. So, the first thing God does is create light. Right off, we see the Bible telling us that God simply speaks these things into existence. Throughout the entire Word of God, the concept that God simply

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does things by speaking, is prevalent. The reference to the return of Christ and a sharp twoedged sword coming forth from His mouth is a reference to the idea that Jesus will simply speak words. (Rev. 19:11-16) God's Word is life and existence. When Jesus was being tempted after His 40 day fast in the wilderness, the devil wanted Jesus to turn the stones into bread. Jesus' response to this was, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4:1-4 Our physical lives and existence are due to God's words. Yes, God formed our bodies with His hands, but He used the dust of the ground as the substance. (Gen. 3:19) So, He speaks it; we live by it. This is the first and most basic principle of the creation cycle. When we desire not to have God in our life, we truly desire death, because our existence is based on God's Word. If we do not want God's Word, then we have not chosen life; we have chosen death. The Gospel of John tells us Jesus is The Word (John 1:1-14), and so there is no clearer message throughout the entire Scripture from Genesis to Revelation than the fact that we must receive Jesus Christ or perish. Jesus simply said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6

This brings us to another important aspect of verse 3. Note here that God speaks light into existence. He does not create the sun, the moon, or any stars. He creates no source, no reaction of matter! He simply says, "Let there be light: and there was light." It wasn't until the fourth day that we see God actually creating the sun and moon. It's important that as we look into the Bible, we notice things like this. It's important we don't pass over these facts but that we pay attention. The fact that light came before the sun is something fascinating, and some may believe it's nothing more than a fascination. However, we need to think about the fact the Bible specifically points out that light was created by God. God did not create the sun in which to emit light; God created light! Today, scientists believe they understand that the light which we see and utilize on this planet comes from the fact our sun is a big ball of gas. That, in the most simplistic terms, it's burning just as any fire burns and gives off light. Scientists believe they understand that light from the sun is then reflected by the moon. The Bible tells us this is simply how we understand it, in our physical way. To us, light is emitted from some source. When we start a fire, light and heat are emitted. We send electricity through a light bulb, and the reaction that takes place there will bring light. The fact that this is simply how we understand it, but not really what is going on, points out that we can study our world, we can manipulate and utilize the things God has created, but we cannot understand where things come from by studying the physical. Once again, all things that have been created come, simply, from the mouth of God. When scientists tell us they understand the universe or things in the universe - It's OK to accept the fact they may understand physical properties we can manipulate or utilize. They may find the physical handles - if you will - that God built into the system: those things truly physical that give us the ability to reach out and use the faculties God has given us, such as taste, touch, sight, smell and hearing. However, we will never truly understand how it all works and where it all comes from. No study of the physical world will ever disprove the existence of God. Rather, the existence of anything physical shows there must be a God, because there's no way to explain the existence of anything without Him! (Rom. 1:20-21)

The fourth verse tells us that God saw the light was good. All through the creation, we find the wording that God saw it was good. Of course, God is perfect so anything He makes is good, but in many ways this is a reference to the fact it was complete. It was not just something God set in motion to see where it would go. When it comes to us, as humans, God gave us a free will, and where we go and what we do is a choice; but with the world He gave us to live in, it was stable, complete, and good! God cannot be blamed for anything that went wrong! When He was finished with creation, it was perfect.

Verse 4 goes on to tell us that God "divided" the light from the darkness. It's as if light and dark were mixed together or one covered the other. Later, we see God commanding the water to remove itself off of the dry ground, and maybe that is the closest we will get to understanding the idea that God "divided" the light from the darkness. It's as if God put a harness on the light or set limits on it so the dark would also be available. Now remember, once again, there is no sun and there is no moon. Today, we understand day and night take place because the earth is turning, and as it turns, the side that faces the sun has light; the side that is not facing the sun is essentially in the shadow. As we understand it, this is what creates day and night and the cycle of day turning to night and back to day. Once again, the Bible shows us that even though this may be how we physically understand the events, it's not actually what causes day and night. Day and night are literally part of creation, not just the results of physical actions being set into motion. In other words, God did not create light from a source and then begin the world turning. God divided the light from the darkness and created day and night. This is the closest thing we have to a

description of God literally creating time. It's the first creation of a cycle. This shows us the basis of time. The idea that one event must follow another. Verse 5 tells us He calls the light day, and the darkness He calls night. This brings us through the first process of an evening and morning, which was the first day. Now, try to understand what I just said about day and night being truly a part of creation, and not just the results of physical events like the earth turning. God was not revolving on this planet. He was not standing stationary in one spot on the planet while it went round and round. When it says the evening and morning were the first day, it's a result of an actual day taking place in the course of time. This is not something that can be fully explained, and our finite minds are likely incapable of fully understanding. However, this strikes at the idea that some people want to believe God created the earth by using the process of evolution. They say a day is just a reference to an arbitrary time period in which things evolved. Let me just say that people say these things mostly because they feel pressure from the world to incorporate man's ideas into their beliefs. If they knew just how ridiculous the theory of evolution really is, maybe they would think twice about being so drawn to just follow the herd! If we would take time to meditate upon these kinds of things in the Word of God, we would come to a better understanding of just how great God is, and be less tempted to incorporate the way that seems right unto man. (Prov. 14:12) The reference to day and night, here in the first part of Genesis, is not a metaphor for a time period like it is in some parts of prophesy. Here, we have the description of a day being created. These verses are not just telling us how the world came into existence, but time as we know it! The seven day cycle is not just convenient, it's part of the very world we live in. Six days of labor and one day of rest is as much a part of creation as the birds and the bees!

Moving on to the second day of creation, verse 6 tells us that God created a firmament. The closest word we have for what God created on the second day is atmosphere. Now with this, we have to understand that since the time of Noah's flood, to now, the atmosphere - as we would call it - is not the same as it was then. When we get to the story of the flood in this study, we will talk about the changes that took place during the flood. Here the Bible tells us, God created a firmament that would separate the water. This wasn't just the idea there were clouds in the sky. I believe clouds and the way we understand the atmosphere today is a result of what God did to bring the great flood. Now, some people have speculated it was a shield of ice that was up in the sky, but the truth of the matter is that we, once again, may never know. We do know, from the description here in Genesis, it was water, and there was a collection of water above just like there's a collection of water below, here on the planet. The firmament is a reference to what we would call the air that exists in-between. At this point in the creation cycle, the water below (here on the planet) had not been commanded to recede and show dry ground. So, if God divided the water that was on the surface of the planet so there was air and space in-between surface water and water above, then I believe it only stands to reason the water up above had no break within it. It was a full shield of water that covered the entire planet just as the water on the surface covered the entire planet. Verse 7 emphasizes the division between the two water surfaces. I don't believe verse 7 is just a redundancy, but it's the emphasis that God literally sliced in a space between the water and filled it with air that obviously would be utilized by living creatures like plants, animals, and humans later on. There were no clouds as we know them, and the process of evaporation and condensation, which creates clouds and causes rain to fall from the sky, does not appear to be part of this original process. Verse 7 tells us God divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament and that it was so. This emphasizes there was not water transferring in-between the water above and the water below. How this may have looked physically before the time of the flood, we don't know; but we do know the flood was not just a destructive force from the basis that flooding water can cause great destruction, but God actually touched the process He put into motion on the second day of creation, and changed it. He changed it in such a way that the planet would not be cared for in the way it originally was cared for. Just as God cursed the ground when man was taken from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:17-19), the process of the flood was God touching another part of His perfect creation and changing something that would make the planet less desirable to live on. This is one of the reasons why the statement is made, after the flood, that God would not again curse the ground for man's sake. (Gen. 8:20-22) It wasn't just that God would never send a flood like He had done this time, but it was the emphasis that God would not continue to touch and change what He had created, in order to deal with the heart of man. God would work with other things to reach out to man.

Verse 8 simply tells us God calls the firmament heaven. In the weakness of the English language, we use the word heaven interchangeably with the idea of saying our atmosphere, to talk about the place that Jesus said "I go to prepare a place for you," as well as outer space. Because of this, I believe many get tripped up as to what the place Jesus was talking about really is. Some people believe that place will simply be clouds and air; but remember,

Revelation tells us very clearly there is a new heaven, a new earth, and the new Jerusalem that comes down from above. (Rev. 21:1-2)

Well, that's all the space I have for this issue. So, dream of that land where the streets are like pure gold, and I'll see you next time!

The Evolutionary Beaking Point!

By Philip E. Busby

When Charles Darwin laid out his theory of evolution, he based most of his ideas on an observation that evolutionist call "natural selection." This is a simple idea, and Darwin was not the first to observe it! Through the course of time, man has domesticated many animals. This is the process of taking something that is wild and making it tame. Further, man has bred animals to encourage certain traits and/or features. If you want cattle that give more milk, then you find the cows in the herd that give the greatest amounts and you only breed them. If you want a taller horse, then you find the tallest horses and breed them. It's a simple process of selecting the animals with the traits you want and only allowing those animals to give birth to the next generation. The idea of natural selection is simply the idea that natural forces can do this same thing. The best example that most scientists will point to is a breed of finches in the Galapagos Islands. Amongst these little feathered friends there are those who have large beaks and there are those who have small beaks. Depending on the weather patterns during the year - mostly wet or dry - there will be seed that is easier for the large beaked birds to eat, or the seed will be better for the smaller beaked birds. The obvious result is the fact that when the food supply favors the finches with larger beaks, they are the birds which do better, and, therefore, have the greater number of offspring. The opposite is true when the food supply favors the finches with the smaller beaks; and that, is the shorthand of natural selection. The fact this is the shorthand is where we run into the big problem. It seems to me there is a growing tendency amongst teachers of evolution to state that they can "prove" evolution. Once this statement has been made, they go on to point out small examples (like the little finches) that seem to show the process of natural selection, and then go on to say, "There, I proved it." The truth is, this is a lot like doing a magic trick. It is all in the presentation and slight of hand. Evolutionist are depending on the idea that if they run this past people fast enough, and say it long enough, then people will simply believe it's true. The sad thing is, they're right! Many people will simply take what they say at face value, and say, "Well, there it is! No more guess work, no more wonder. Evolution is a proven fact!"

However, the little finch story falls so short of proving anything even remotely like the theory of evolution, you would have to write a good sized book just to point out all the shortcomings. The fact that God built into His creation the ability to adapt to some changing conditions is simply an example of how much God gave humans a free will. You see, it's our fault the world is not the perfect place God created. It's our sinfulness that brought the curse of the ground and the deterioration of the planet. (Isa. 51:6) If it had not been for our sinfulness, there would not be years when there was drought and then flooding, and animals would not have to adapt to changing conditions all the time. Furthermore, we thank God for giving us a place of great variety: a place to explore and find new things; a place with conditions we can be creative in! After all, we were made in the image of God. We like to be creative, and God showed us in His creation that He is too!

"Natural selection" may be observed to some degree, but it's in no way "proof" of evolution. God said the animals would give birth to offspring, "after their own kind." So, some years there may be bigger beaks, some years there may be smaller. Some years there may be more elephants with big ears, and some years there may be more with smaller ones; but never in a million years (or more) will you ever see an elephant fly.