

Devotions – June 2-8, 2019

By Linda Stoetzer

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Sunday, June 2, 2019

Day 1:

Text: Genesis 1:1-5

First this, God created the Heavens and Earth – all you see, all you don't see. Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss.

God spoke: "Light!" And light appeared. God saw that light was good and separated light from dark. God named the light Day, he named the dark Night. It was evening, it was morning – Day One. (The Message, Eugene Peterson)

I love the Creation story. I love telling children and youth the Creation story. There are many Bibles gathering dust somewhere that are highlighted and underlined and otherwise marked up in the first chapter of Genesis.

What was God doing and/or thinking. Brooding, hovering, moving, breathing (Ruach), are all words used in translations. I have come to accept that God simply was – the great I AM – and I don't have to give God any human action attributes.

This winter was my first being totally in charge of snow removal, the plowing was hired out, but I was doing the hand shoveling of the dog's yard. With the winds that were a lot stronger than Ruach (the breath), I contended with 4-6-foot drifts that my dog was able to climb and tour the neighborhood before my shoveling around the fence kept him contained. I did a lot of brooding about the white, frozen-watery abyss.

The real solution to the vast whiteness was Light which came in increasing amounts as the Days became longer. This Light God created and named on Day One. It is that important!

Let's pray: *Creator God, you are awesome! Your creation is a continual marvel to behold. Thank you for what you have given us. Make us mindful of our job as trustees and forgive us when we fail to keep the Earth as you intended. Give us what we need for today. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*



Monday, June 3, 2019

Day 2:

Text: Genesis 1:6-8

God spoke: “Sky! In the middle of the waters; separate water from water!” God made sky. He separated the water under sky from the water above sky. And there it was: he named sky the Heavens; It was evening, it was morning – Day Two. (The Message, Eugene Peterson)

God’s plan continues to be revealed. God gave us Day and Night the first day and now all that watery abyss has been separated into two parts – the water above sky and the water under sky.

Looking out an airplane window during flight, particularly on a stormy day, has given me a sense of this separation. Above the clouds is an immense stretch of blue sky while below clouds stretch just as far. The bumps and jolts passing through those clouds upon landing are a prologue of the water under sky.

That God did the separation on day two instead of day one now seems so logical. I’m not sure my brooding would have figured this out.

The pattern of evening, then morning, continues. My day begins with morning whereas God’s day is evening then morning. The Hebrew celebration of Sabbath follows this pattern.

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Tuesday, June 4, 2019

Day 3:

Text: Genesis 1:9-13

God spoke: Separate! Water-beneath-Heaven, gather into one place; Land, appear!” And there it was. God named the land Earth, He named the pooled water Ocean. God saw that it was good. God spoke: “Earth, green up! Grow all varieties of seed-bearing plants, every sort of fruit-bearing tree.” And there it was. Earth produced green seed-bearing plants, all varieties, and fruit-bearing trees of all sorts. God saw that it was good. It was evening, it was morning – Day Three.” (The Message, Eugene Peterson)

God sure was busy the third day: separating the waters on land into a certain space, then growing all those plants and trees. And it was good!

There are puddles in my yard that I wish would gather in one place, but they truly seek their own place. Weeds are the same way.

As a novice gardener I've never had any luck just telling things to grow, let alone by command. I've tried whacking tree trunks with a rolled-up newspaper in early spring to get them greening. They green up when they're good and ready to.

What a wonder that God just spoke and all this stuff happened! And God's plan is shaping up even more. The spaces God created are now being filled. What is the purpose of the vegetation? Tune in tomorrow.

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Wednesday, June 5, 2019

Day 4:

Text: *Genesis 1:14-19*

“God spoke: “Lights! Come out! Shine in Heaven’s sky! Separate Day from Night. Mark seasons and days and years, Lights in Heaven’s sky to give light to Earth.” And there it was. God made two big lights, the larger to take charge of Day, the smaller to be in charge of Night; and he made the stars. God placed them in the heavenly sky to light up Earth and oversee Day and Night, to separate light and dark. God saw that it was good. It was evening, it was morning – Day Four.” (The Message, Eugene Peterson)

I'm a little bit confused. Why weren't the lights all created on the first or second day? This would have been helpful for all the growing day three's vegetation was supposed to be doing.

How did we get the Bible? And, while we're at it, why are Genesis 1 and 2 so very different?

Along my faith journey, I've learned to accept that some of my questions cannot be answered, but I can learn from others' understanding. It seems that there weren't computers, or paper and pencils, or any other means of written communication. These God stories were handed down from one to another, from generation to generation. Eventually the stories were written down and, to my way of thinking, one person wrote Genesis 1:1-2:4 and another wrote Genesis 2:5-25.

As to the progression of creation, I accept that God had a plan and carried it out by God's own timetable. Who am I to question God?

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Thursday, June 6, 2019

Day 5:

Text: *Genesis 1:20-23*

“God spoke: “Swarm, Ocean, with fish and all sea life! Birds, fly through the sky over Earth!” God created the huge whales, all the swarm of life in the waters, and every kind and species of flying birds. God saw that it was good. God blessed them: “Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Ocean! Birds, reproduce on Earth!” It was evening, it was morning – Day Five.” (The Message, Eugene Peterson)

The spaces God created are being filled. That God created spaces for living things before they were created makes sense to me, now.

There's a fishing tournament going on as I write. How do all the fish get into the waters? There are fish hatcheries and often children get involved with releasing the juveniles. This process takes a while, unlike God's command for the ocean to swarm with fish and all sea life.

It is amazing to see birds return to the north when there's still snow on the ground. They trust that food and shelter will be provided. And it is! Then they reproduce, especially the Canadian Geese that swim by in a train with all their babies.

Like everything else so far, it was good.

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Friday, June 7, 2019

Day 6:

Text: Genesis 1:25-31

“God spoke: ‘Earth, generate life! Every sort and kind: cattle and reptiles and wild animals – all kinds.’ And there it was: wild animals of every kind, cattle of all kinds, every sort of reptile and bug. God saw that it was good.

“God spoke: ‘Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature so they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, and, yes, Earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of Earth.’ God created human beings; he created them godlike, reflecting God’s nature. He created them male and female. God blessed them: ‘Prosper! Reproduce! Take charge! Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air, for every living thing that moves on the face of the Earth.’

“Then God said, ‘I’ve given you every sort of seed-bearing plant on Earth and every kind of fruit-bearing tree, given them to you for food. To all animals and all birds, everything that moves and breathes, I give whatever grows out of the ground for food.’ And there it was. “God looked over everything he had made; it was so good, so very good! It was evening, it was morning – Day Six.” (The Message, Eugene Peterson)

Frankly, I could do with a little less reproduction of weeds. Exactly why they exist might be explained in Genesis 3 so for now I have to simply accept and spend time pulling them out so desired vegetation can grow. Hands and knees time for sure.

Humans have been given an awesome task: we are to be fruitful and multiply, filling and subduing the earth, and having dominion over the fish and birds and land animals. I have tried several things to subdue the Canadian Geese that do a superlative job of fertilizing my lawn, even though it is unwanted. These, too, are God’s creatures and I admire the way they parent their offspring, partners for life. Both mother and father are present, one leading the train, the other bringing up the rear. On land, as the young feed, one parent eats while the other keeps watch. At any alert, the young scamper off to the parents who lead them quickly to safety. What an example!

Let’s pray: *Creator God, you are awesome! Your creation is a continual marvel to behold. Thank you for what you have given us. Make us mindful of our job as trustees and forgive us when we fail to keep the Earth as you intended. Give us what we need for today. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.*



Saturday, June 8, 2019

Day 7:

Text: Genesis 2:1-4

“Heaven and Earth were finished, down to the last detail. By the seventh day God had finished his work. On the seventh day he rested from all his work. God blessed the seventh day. He made it a Holy Day because on that day he rested from his work, all the creating God had done. This is the story of how it all started, of Heaven and Earth when they were created.” (The Message, Eugene Peterson)

Sabbath. Rest. Renewal. Reflection. Worship.

“Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it Holy” is the third commandment as I memorized it in Confirmation class many years ago. Although Christians typically keep Sunday as their holy day, worship services take place many days of the week. My church has a Wednesday evening service which I prefer because of its length and informality as well as the small group of believers who gather there.

Our man-made busy lives have negated the example given us by God: to rest and look at all that was made. I often wonder if I spend enough time reflecting on what God has made. Job and his friends spent a lot of time commiserating about the state of Job’s life. They each had a theory. But God brought Job up by the bootstraps. “Where were you when I created the earth? . . . Who came up with the blueprints and measurements? How was its foundation poured? . . . Do you know where Light comes from and where Darkness lives. . .?” My Sabbath “work” will be to read and study Job 38-39 and reflect what God tells Job, and by implication, me as well.

Let’s pray: *Creator God, you are awesome! Your creation is a continual marvel to behold. Thank you for what you have given us. Make us mindful of our job as trustees and forgive us when we fail to keep the Earth as you intended. Give us what we need for today. And, let us use Sabbath time reflecting on your glory. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.*

