

September 6, 2009

THROUGH ADAM'S EYES

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It's the sixth day of creation, and the heavens and earth are prepared for God's most special creation, mankind. God forms man's body and imbues it with life. The eyes flutter open, the man sits up and gazes in wonder at his Creator. He can see; and the Creator has *many things* to show him. He can hear, he can communicate, he can taste and feel. He has a sense of curiosity and wonder. The Creator shows him his home, his domain, his servants, his food supply, and a sample of all that is under his authority. All of this is captured for us in the second chapter of Genesis.

Yes, the second chapter of Genesis records this, and more. If you read the narrative carefully, you'll observe that it seems to have been written by an *eyewitness, from his own point of view*; that it seems to have been written some time after the fact, perhaps even in the twilight of the life of the eyewitness, recounting for posterity his first moments and days on the earth. The perspective is that of one who is looking back, telling later generations what things were like in those early days--before even the foundation of civilization, which is agriculture.

Many critics of the Bible allege that there are contradictions between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2; they use these alleged contradictions to try to cast doubt on the authenticity of the record. However, there are no contradictions. We simply have to realize that Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 are written from two different viewpoints and for two different purposes. It should also be noted that semantic difficulties play a role here as well, arising from misunderstood translations and the cultural differences that separate us from the author and his original audience. When we clear up the issues of perspective, translation and culture, we will easily see that Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 are complimentary, not contradictory.

Having said that, we also understand that human nature is subject to bias; there are some who absolutely will not give up the idea that the Bible is full of errors, even when those errors can be shown to be a misunderstanding on the part of the reader. Some people just won't be convinced, even in the face of a preponderance of evidence¹--such as those who deny the Holocaust or that men have walked on the moon. There is not much we can do to convince people who will not honestly appraise the evidence; but I hope that if you are skeptical of what I say, you will at least hear me out, and perhaps do some research on your own. You *can* know the truth!

Adam begins his story:

in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,

And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.

But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

¹ For example, see Frank Sherman, Brian Thomas, and Christine Dao, "Harvard Ph.D. Lecture Exposes Prejudices of Evolutionary Atheists." Available at <http://www.icr.org/article/4898/>.

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Our account starts with the words, “In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.” One alleged contradiction is that in Genesis 1, creation takes a whole week; but here in this verse, it’s all compressed into just one day. This actually is a translational issue. The Hebrew word *yom* does mean a day, and when it is used with a number, as in the first day, and so on, it always means a literal twenty-four hour day. When it is not used with a number, it can mean an indefinite period of time, like the *day* of Jacob’s sorrow in Genesis 35:3. However, that’s not even the issue here. This time, the word *yom* is a compound word, *be-yom*, which just means *when*. That’s all it means! “*When* the LORD God made....”

It is also important to remember that Adam is writing from his own perspective. He’s not giving an overview of creation; he’s telling of his relationship to creation. In this narrative, Adam is shown to be different than and separate from the rest of creation, and in fact is in authority over it.

Notice also that we have the first appearance of a new name for God, the LORD God. Whenever you see the word “LORD” in all capital letters, you should know that it is God’s special name in Hebrew. Some translations spell it Jehovah, and others Yahweh, but it is the same, just different English letters. This is God’s special name--I AM. It means He exists eternally, and He causes all other things to exist. It stands to reason that the person witnessing God’s actions in this passage would call Him the LORD God.

Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee (Jeremiah 32:17).

The author gives background information to his story:

in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.

It’s important to grasp the author’s meaning here. Let’s consider the original language and then attempt to uncover the cultural meanings so that we can understand why the author is telling us this. First of all, the word *earth* here is not the Hebrew word for *world*; it means *field*, as in a piece of ground. If one of you were to ask one of our farmers on a given day why she feels tired, if she replied that she had been *tilling the earth*, you wouldn’t assume that she meant the whole thing! You would understand that she had been tilling a piece of land. That’s what this word is here. Now let’s take that understanding and think about the original author and his audience. An eyewitness to the world’s earliest days is telling his descendants what the world was like in those early days. By the time this was written, there would have been a large population on the earth. I mentioned this earlier, but what is the foundation of any society? The answer is agriculture. Everything else is secondary, whether art, literature, architecture, law, medicine, leadership--all depends on agriculture. William Jennings Bryan, a famous politician and orator in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, made this statement in his famous “Cross of Gold” speech:

I tell you that the great cities rest upon these broad and fertile prairies. Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic. But destroy our farms

*and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country.*²

Food is essential to life, and agriculture is essential to civilization. This early witness describes the earth *before* agriculture, *before* civilization. Agricultural cycles had not yet begun. What are the two things most necessary for agriculture from a human standpoint? Regular patterns of rainfall and the labor of men. We know that people have introduced agriculture to areas with little or no rainfall by means of irrigation. Egypt comes to mind as an example, but there are other places as well. Ancient Mesopotamia, now known as Iraq, depended largely on irrigation. The same also goes for the Hopi Indians of the American Southwest. However, these are exceptions rather than the rule; and in any case, it is only by the attention and labor of man that agricultural enterprises are carried out. Animals do not engage in agriculture, except to get into and ruin it!

At this point, there was no organized agriculture. However, God Himself will establish agriculture by setting up a special place for this first man to work. We'll get to that in just a second, along with some of the important lessons that this teaches. For now, just understand that the writer is showing that no agriculture existed and that he is getting to the introduction of agriculture and therefore of society.

Some critics cite this passage as stating that no plants had been created at all, and that this is a contradiction of Genesis chapter 1, in which God made plants on the third day. This is a false criticism, though: the passage does not say that plants were not created on the third day; it just says that plants pertaining to agriculture were not yet established in fields because there was no rainfall yet and there were no men to work the land.

We turn now to the next verse:

But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

In those early days, there was no rainfall. How long this situation lasted is not recorded for us. The writer was familiar with both rainfall and this early hydrological cycle. It may have lasted only through the first week of creation, since that is the time being immediately referenced here, or it may have lasted until the Great Flood of Noah, in which case an editor, perhaps Moses, made a clarification about the rainfall and the mist. The important thing for us to remember is that the early earth, first formed, was different by far than the world we see today. If we look back at Genesis 1:6, we read,

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

The *firmament* is the sky, and this verse suggests that the early earth had water vapor trapped high in the atmosphere. At least, that's one possible understanding. Such an arrangement would have maintained a relatively equal global temperature, and as you probably know, it is differences in temperature that make wind and bring changes in weather. A mass of warm air rises, creating a low pressure area, and a mass of cold air descends, creating a high pressure area, and air moves from high pressure to low pressure, making winds and weather. If air temperatures were equalized, there would be no large-scale movements of wind and very little weather, which means God would have originally used a different system. Since everything God created was "very good," we do know that whatever weather was present was only beneficial. Hurricanes and tornadoes were not part of the original workings of weather on the earth.

In any case, we simply take this for what it is worth. The author is simply telling us in his own way that things were different back then. He's talking about the world before man, before agriculture, before

2 William Jennings Bryan in a speech delivered to the Democratic National Convention, July 9, 1896. Available at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5354>.

civilization. God is about to change all that.

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

The author here sums up the magnificence of human creation in a very tender, affectionate manner. God did not simply “speak” man into existence with a “Let there be”; no! He directly involved Himself in a very tender display. He could have spoken man into existence, but He instead formed man and breathed life into man.

Now I ask you: Does it seem at all obvious that man is made of earth? Of course not. Human flesh does not resemble earth or rocks or anything else, except other flesh. Yet today we know that the human body does share a commonality with the elements of the earth. Why do you suppose we are instructed to take mineral supplements? We are made from the dust of the ground.

Even so, we are more than just dust. We are incredibly complex creatures--physically, chemically, emotionally, spiritually--by any standard of comparison.

I’m going to read excerpts of an article called “Mankind: The Pinnacle of God’s Creation” by Dr. Jerry Bergman. I wish I could read all of this; if you’re interested, I can get you the rest of the article. I want to close with these astonishing facts:

Mankind has been fascinated with the form and function of the human body from the very beginning. For beauty and sheer simplicity of line, it is unmatched. As a machine, the human body is the pinnacle of God's work, formed on the sixth and last day of creation, after which God declared, “It is very good.”

Chemically, the body is unequalled for complexity. Each one of its 30 trillion cells is a mini-chemical factory which performs about 10,000 chemical functions. And every cell has 10^{12} (one trillion) bits of data—equal to every letter in ten million books! Each one also replaces itself every seven years. Each one is independent, yet cooperates with many millions of other cells.

...

The body's billions of parts all work together as a team—its 206 bones provide the framework and its 639 muscles enable it to move with incredible split-second timing. Its skill to balance is such that we can perform feats of acrobatics and yet have such strength that official human weight-lifting feats abound. Even demonstrations of incredible strength by normal people under adversity are common in medical records. Maxwell Rogers once lifted the end of a 3,600 pound car. The jack holding it up had collapsed and the car had fallen on his son.

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Our body is controlled and coordinated by over 16 billion neurons and 120 trillion “connection boxes” packed together into an unfathomably complex set of neuro-passways. The system is much like a modern nation, inter-connected by billions of telephone wires. All of this in a brain and spinal column that weighs slightly over three pounds! ...In the large gauge fibers, nerve impulses flash along at 300 miles per hour. All told, the human brain and nervous system is the most complex arrangement of matter anywhere in the universe.

The whole body system functions as a unified whole to enable a human to run, sing, remember, create and achieve the myriads of other phenomenal tasks we usually take for granted.

We are *incredibly complicated* in other ways as well. The adjectives in an unabridged dictionary

which refer to human dispositions number a staggering 17,958. All of these words describe ways in which individuals can potentially categorize themselves—brave, kindly, liberal, powerful, *ad infinitum*. When the possible behavioral tendencies, talents, abilities, tastes, interests, attitudes and values—such as enjoying stamp collecting, travel, music or even one's inner thoughts and feelings—are added to the list, an almost infinite number is produced. One scientist estimated that our brain, on the average, processes over 10,000 thoughts and concepts each day—and some people process a much greater number.

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The body has a remarkable and complex system to keep its temperature at about 98.6°. Humans, though, have been known to survive at abnormally low temperatures for long periods of time. Dorothy May Stephens experienced an internal temperature drop to 64.4' —more than 34 degrees below normal. She was found unconscious one winter morning in 1951. Mrs. Stephens survived only because of the flexibility of the body and the heroic efforts of the hospital. The record is held by two-year-old Vicky David who, in 1955, was found unconscious with an internal temperature of 60 and survived.

These extremes illustrate only the [survivability] of the body—it has an incredibly efficient system which almost always keeps the temperature within extremely narrow parameters and normally experience less than a degree or so variation....

To convey information about temperature and other body conditions to the brain, the skin alone has about four million structures which are sensitive to pain. In addition it has about one-half million sensitive to touch and 200 thousand to temperature. These “report stations” keep the brain attuned to conditions all over the body. It is an elaborate “spy” central intelligence network without parallel in the man-made world.

Some people say that all of this “just happened” through mistakes in reproduction (mutations) and the very few beneficial ones were accumulated via “natural selection” and chance. Yet, the more we learn about the body, the more we realize that there is much more yet to be discovered. One could spend a lifetime studying a single organ or organ system (and many people do). Thus we have cardiologists, hematologists, urologists, protologists, gynecologists, neurologists, psychiatrists, *ad infinitum*. We are indeed, as the Psalm states, “fearfully and wonderfully made,” and God's creation is worthy of praise. As Psalm 139:14 says “marvelous are Thy works!”³

3 Available at <http://www.icr.org/articles/view/238/288/>.