

# OpenTheo

## Genesis 1 - Spiritual Application



### Genesis - Steve Gregg

In this spiritual interpretation of Genesis 1, Steve Gregg proposes that the creation story has a dual purpose: to describe historical events and to depict heavenly realities. Quoting from both Old and New Testaments, Gregg points out that the original creation was made without resistance, unlike the new creation of believers which meets with obstacles and requires intentional growth. The speaker suggests that the goal of the Christian life is to become more like Christ, with the Holy Spirit playing an important role in this maturing process.

### Transcript

I'm going to do something unusual with Genesis 1 that I'm not really going to do with any other chapter in the Bible when we come to it, and that is to make a spiritual application. I've tried to make it very clear that I take Genesis 1 very literally as historical, as a description of the way God really did make things. But we have to remember that when God made things, he did things purposefully.

And one of his purposes certainly was to communicate things to us through what he did. I think of the tabernacle in Exodus. It's made to a specific pattern.

Remember, God kept emphasizing to Moses, make sure that you make it according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain. As if it's very essential that the tabernacle be made just so, and not some other way. And why? Well, the Old Testament doesn't tell us why, but the book of Hebrews does.

The book of Hebrews says the reason that God made sure that Moses made the tabernacle just a certain way specifically was because it was intended to depict heavenly realities. And of course, if God has designed something on earth to depict heavenly realities, then it has to be done just the right way so it corresponds. And if you do it the wrong way, if it's designed wrongly, then it doesn't correspond and it communicates the wrong message.

In my opinion, the New Testament gives us ground to think that this is so with the way that God created the whole universe and the earth. I didn't always think this way, but

some years ago, when I was young and perhaps more imaginative than now, I was reading 2 Corinthians chapter 4 and I came across this verse. In 2 Corinthians 4, verse 6, it says, For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

That's the New King James. I've never really liked the New King James rendering as much as I liked the King James or even, for that matter, almost all other renderings, because the New King James says, It is the God who called light to shine out of darkness, whereas all the other versions say, For God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, or who said let light shine out of darkness. It's referring clearly to Genesis chapter 1, the activity of the first day when God said, Let there be light.

God commanded the light to shine out of darkness. But Paul says that the same God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness back in Genesis 1, has more recently, in our own experience, shined the light of the knowledge of the glory of God to us, which we have gained through seeing, as it were, Jesus, in the face of Jesus. Now, the wording of that verse, where he says, He has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

It's interesting that's a rather stumbling kind of phrase, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. A lot of of's in that sentence. But Paul is echoing deliberately certain language from the Old Testament.

I'd like for you to look at real quickly. For example, if you look at Numbers chapter 14. Numbers chapter 14 and verse 21, God says, But truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.

Now, bear that in mind as you look over at Isaiah chapter 11. God said, All the earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord. But in Isaiah chapter 11, we have a somewhat similar statement.

And in verse 9, it says, They shall not hurt nor destroy all my holy mountain, meaning the animals. We'll not worry about that part of the verse. But the last part of Isaiah 11 says, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Now, in Numbers, God said, The earth will be full of the glory of the Lord. And Isaiah says, The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. And he adds, As the waters cover the sea.

And these two verses in their contents are put together in the prophet Habakkuk. In Habakkuk chapter 2, that's right after Nahum, you know. Habakkuk 2.14, it says, For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the

sea.

So in Numbers it says, The earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord. In Isaiah it says, The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And Habakkuk puts those two together.

The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. As the waters cover the sea. But that expression, the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, is the expression Paul echoes in 2 Corinthians 4.6. God has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

The light of the knowledge of the glory of God. In the face of Jesus Christ. Now, Paul seems to see what God has done in our own hearts as, among other things, something that God is going to do globally.

The earth is going to be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God. But that's already happened to us individually. We have all come to know and been enlightened by the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ.

But notice Paul compares that with what happened in Genesis 1. He says God, who originally, back in Genesis 1, God called the light and commanded the light to shine out of the darkness. He's done something similar in us. He's enlightened us.

We were in darkness. And he's given us light. Now, when I first saw this verse some years ago, I thought, well, I wonder if I'm making too much of this, or if Paul is thinking of the creation account as having some parallels to the spiritual activity of God in the life of the believer.

And then I remembered that in this same epistle, one chapter later, in 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 17, it says Paul said, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away, behold, all things become new. If you are a Christian, you are a new creation.

As in Genesis 1, we read of the original creation, and we read that God did certain things, including at the very beginning to call light to shine out of darkness. So you, if you are a Christian, are a new creation. And it began with God causing the light to shine to you, the light of the glory of God made known to you through your knowing Christ, through the gospel.

Now, these thoughts made me take a harder look at Genesis 1 from a different perspective, in addition to the perspective that I accept as a literal history of the creation. And I would say that this idea I had never had before, but I remember thinking at the time, oh, I'm really onto something profound. And then sometime later, at least a year or more later, I was reading one of A. W. Tozer's books.

It was a sequel to his book, *The Pursuit of God*. He called it *The Divine Conquest*. It's now issued under a different title.

I think it's now called *God's Pursuit of Man*. The publishers have renamed it. But in the days when I read it, it was called *The Divine Conquest*, A. W. Tozer's sequel to, or it might even be a prequel, as they call it, to *The Pursuit of God*.

But in that book, very early on, I can't quote exactly what he said, but he said, I was reading this once and he said, he says something like, what could be more obvious than that the creation account in Genesis 1 prefigures the work of God and the believer? And it made me feel not so profound anymore, because I thought I'd seen something very clever, and as it turned out, Tozer said it's obvious. Who wouldn't see that? Well, it took me many years to even think of that possibility, but once I did think about it, I began to look again at the story in Genesis 1 and think of it in terms of, maybe Paul was thinking of it that way, too. Paul said that I, as a Christian, I am a new creation, and he makes the direct comparison of the very first acts of God in creation, making light, at the beginning of God's activity there after he made the heavens and the earth.

And that's also the beginning of God's work in a believer, to bring them to the knowledge of himself through Christ, to bring light to them, to enlighten them. The expression enlightened is used sometimes in scripture, Hebrews uses it, for example, to speak of the person who's first come to Christ, they've been enlightened. There was an old hymn sung by the early Christians, it's represented in Ephesians, Paul seems to preserve it, and it says something like, Arise thou that sleepest, and Christ will give you light.

Most scholars think it's a baptismal hymn of the first century, it's in Ephesians 5, verse 14. Therefore, he says, Awake you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light. That arising from the dead is not a reference to the resurrection, but it's a reference to regeneration, to coming to life from spiritual death, as Christ gives you light.

As God says to the darkness, let there be light. Now, as you look at Genesis chapter 1, you see that God first made the heavens and the earth, and this becomes the stage upon which all the other activity is conducted. And one might say it corresponds to our very coming into existence as human beings when we're born.

And what is the condition of the heavens and the earth described in Genesis 1-2? It says the earth was formless, it was void, that means empty and fruitless, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And that certainly is an accurate description of people before they're enlightened by Christ. Our lives have not taken shape yet, certainly not the shape that God intends for them to take, and they are fruitless, unfruitful lives.

Remember Paul said, What fruit had you then in those things of which you are now ashamed? Speaking of your older life, you didn't have any fruit in that that was worth speaking of. You had a void, empty, unproductive life as far as spiritual things and

eternal things are concerned, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. Certainly we were in the dark.

Paul said that the Gentiles are blind because of the darkness that is in them. This description of the heavens and the earth before God spoke appears to be a description of the human condition as it were, before God's word comes to us. And having mentioned God's word, of course this is an important thing to note.

Because the creation occurred, first of all, it occurred by stages. Now God could have created everything in a moment. After all, in a single command he created all the living creatures that live on land.

That's got to be millions of species. If God could do all that with a single command, couldn't he do the whole thing with a single command? Couldn't he just say, Let there be a complete creation, and it would be so? But he didn't do it that way. He deliberately did it in steps.

Six steps, six days, each one taking the project a little further along toward its completion. And so we can see that God works toward his goal in stages. Although presumably he could have made it all at once, he didn't do it because I believe he wanted to correspond with something that it was illustrating.

And that has to do with our own spiritual development. Now one thing you find at the end of the creation week, we find that God finally gets what he's looking for on the sixth day. He has a man and a woman in his own image.

And that is of course the work that God is doing in us to bring us into his image. And that by stages. So that Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3.18, We all with unveiled face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed from glory to glory into that same image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

As we are gazing upon, learning from Jesus, looking at his glory, which has, we've been enlightened, we've been given the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus. Well as we behold that glory, as if through a glass, Paul says, which means as if in a mirror. And I might just clarify that.

A mirror in those days was not what we think of. A mirror was a polished piece of brass. They did not have glass yet.

They didn't have high resolution mirrors. The best they could do is finely polish a piece of brass so they could get kind of a, they could kind of see themselves in it a little bit. But it was kind of a hazy image compared to what we think of as a mirror image with our modern glass mirrors and so forth.

But Paul says we see the glory of the Lord as if, as through a mirror, which I think means

not quite as clearly as we would like, not quite as clearly as we shall. Because in 1 John 3 it says, when he, it says, beloved now we are the sons of God and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we will be like him because we will see him as he is. Is that something we don't quite see yet, we don't see clearly.

And that's the one thing that prevents us from being entirely like him apparently. We will be like him because we will see him as he is. In the meantime we see him as it were somewhat of a hazy distorted view perhaps.

But even so, that vision of Christ brings about successive stages of sanctification, of Christlikeness into that same image, Paul says. By the way that's also in 2 Corinthians, so we've got a number of these verses that are relevant are found in Paul's writing to the Corinthians in the 2nd epistle. But you see that's what God was aiming at in the creation week.

He started with nothing. He created a world that was in darkness and shapeless and so forth, or a universe or whatever. But by the end of his activities he had something in his own image.

And that's what he wanted. And that's what he wants with us. When we're born into this world we're in the darkness.

We are not shaped into the image of Christ. But that's what God wants for us. He wants us to become like him.

And when he is finished with his work in us, then he will have in us something in his own image also. And that is the end goal of creation. And the end goal of the new creation which is you and me.

Now, as we look at Genesis 1 we see not only that things are done in stages, but they are accomplished through the word of God. And I pointed out in an earlier lecture that a preacher I used to sit under thought it was amazing that God could accomplish this wonderful universe in six days. And yet Jesus who said, I go to prepare a place for you and I will come again has not returned in 2,000 years.

And he said, you know, it took God only six days to make all of this that we see. Obviously he's been working on our new home for 2,000 years. It must be really something fabulous if it takes that long for a God who can make everything in six days to work on it for 2,000 years.

But as I said, as much of maybe a preaching point that is, there's a simple reason that it has taken longer for God to finish the new creation. That's because the new creation has the power to resist. The original creation did not.

God spoke to darkness and said, let there be light, it came. Light. He said, let the dry

land appear, it appeared.

Let the life appear in the oceans, it happened. There was no resistance from God. The elements could not say no.

But the new creation is being wrought in us, and we still have us to deal with. We still have our own preferences, we still have our own resistance, we have a will. We can say no, we can be rebellious.

And we are, sometimes. There's at least a part of us that is. Paul said, the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit lusts against the flesh.

And these two are contrary to one another, so that you cannot do the things you wish. In Galatians 5, 17. So, there is a part of us that resists.

And therefore, it's a slower process. But it is progress. God does progress.

And that which conquers in us, is the same thing that conquered the darkness and the lifelessness of the new creation. That is the word of God. God spoke and it was so.

He commanded and it stood fast. Remember 1 Thessalonians 2. We saw this in our series on the authority of scripture. This verse.

In 1 Thessalonians 2. And verse 13. Paul said, for this reason we also thank God without ceasing. Because when you received the word of God, which you heard from us.

You welcomed it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God. Which also effectively works in you, who believe. The word of God works in you.

Well, work. When something is at work, there is a project. There is something seeking to be accomplished through that work.

The word of God is at work in us, just as the word of God works in the creation. God spoke and it was the only work that was done, was done by the word of God. And God said it and it happened.

God's word came, a command, and change occurred. And the word of God, the same word of God that created everything. Is now at work in us.

We receive the word spoken to us. If we receive and do not resist. If we believe it.

Paul said it is at work in you who believe. If we mix it with faith, as the writer of Hebrews says. The word profits, the word changes, the word brings about changes.

And so all the transformation in our lives, from what we were at the beginning to what we will be when we are like Christ. Is being wrought through the power, the creative power of the word of God. Which works in us as it works in the creation in Genesis

chapter 1. And so the agent of change is the word of God.

In the book of Genesis and in our own lives. And we see in Genesis how powerful that word is. Because with a single command, life appears from non-life.

Scientists with all their machinery and all their knowledge have not yet been able to make that happen. Not even the simplest life has been generated out of a non-living original batch of ingredients. But God can do that instantly.

Not only life, he didn't just create an amoeba. He created all the complex living things with a single word. He created all the planets and the stars and all the energy that is stored in those stars.

All the energy that is in the sun, which is not really one of the largest stars. All of that, that all came out in one command. Let these stars appear.

And there they were, all that energy just came right out of the word of God. The word of God has all that power in it. And that is the word that effectively works in you who believe.

If you believe, of course, that's the important thing. If we put our trust in his word. If we obey his word.

Then it works in us. We talk about cultivating the word of God in one of our lectures in the series, The Authority of Scripture. Talk about the need to receive it, implant it like a seed.

To love the word of God, as David said, how I love your laws, my meditation all the day. We need to meditate on it, we need to believe it, we need to obey it. In this way, the word of God has its effect upon us and changes us over time.

I cannot overemphasize the power of the word of God to make changes in a person's life. Because of my own experience, I've had actually no education of any kind except to know the scriptures. And to meditate on it day and night.

And I consider that I'm an entirely different person than I was when I first started. Of course, part of that is just growing up. Everyone who's my age is a somewhat different person than they were when they started.

But the progress that I feel that has been made toward sanctification and so forth, has been wrought through no other means except the Holy Spirit using the word of God. And the Holy Spirit is also seen, of course, in Genesis 1, right at the beginning hovering. Before anything begins, you see the Holy Spirit is hovering.

The Spirit of God is hovering over the face of the waters in Genesis 1-2. And I mentioned that the word hovering there, the Hebrew word is used also in Deuteronomy 32.



Speaking of the Mother Eagle hovers over or broods over her young.

Here we have a dark creation in Genesis 1 verses 1 and 2. And yet, the description is very bleak when you see it in verse 2. The earth was without form, it was void, darkness on the face of the deep. Nothing positive in this description. But there's something hopeful in the verse.

Because the Spirit of God was brooding like a mother eagle over her chicks, her eaglets in Deuteronomy 32-11, the same word is used, over the face of the waters. This dark, shapeless, fruitless reality, there's sort of a hint there that's about to change. The Holy Spirit is present.

The Holy Spirit has a plan. The Holy Spirit has a vision for this. He's brooding there.

Just like a mother eagle has a vision for her eaglets to come to maturity and to leave the nest and be just like herself, and fly, and soar. So, the Holy Spirit broods over this shapeless, dark mass. And the mention of that means that things are not as bleak as they appear in the description of the rest of the verse.

Because things may be dark, things may be shapeless, things may be lifeless. But if the Holy Spirit's brooding there, that means He's got a plan, He's got a vision here. And the Holy Spirit is the one who brings transformation.

Because I mentioned 2 Corinthians 3.18, it says, As we behold the glory of the Lord, we are changed from glory to glory, into that same image, the last line of that verse is, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. So the Spirit of God is the one who brings up the sanctification, the change in us, imparts Christ to us, imparts the life of Christ. And you know, Paul said to the Galatians in Galatians 4.19, He said, My little children, with whom I travail again in birth, until Christ is formed in you.

I love that phrase, until Christ is formed in you. Galatians 4.19 That's what the new creation is about. God starts with people who don't look anything like Jesus in their character, or their ways, or their thinking, or their values, or their, you know, agendas, and changes them into people of whom it can be said, Christ has been shaped and formed in you.

And so that is the work of the Holy Spirit in us, to impart the life of Christ. It could be probably well said, that God's intention is to reproduce Christ in you. And just as Christ was brought into being in the womb of Mary, through the Holy Spirit coming upon her.

Remember the angel said to Mary, the Spirit of God will come upon you, the power of the highest shall overshadow you. Therefore, that holy thing that shall be born of you, will be called the Son of God. Jesus was conceived and gestated through the working of the Holy Spirit.

So also He is formed in us. He was formed in the womb of Mary, from this little zygote, into the baby Jesus, who became the man Jesus. So as this gestation took place within Mary, there's a sort of a spiritual gestation of Christ being formed in us until we're actually like Him.

So, we've got the Holy Spirit involved here, in Genesis 1, and also in the work that God does in us. But even though the Holy Spirit is brooding there, and we don't, you know, we don't know how long He brooded before, before, I mean, how many hours it may have been before God said, let there be light, but it wasn't until God spoke that something changed. The Holy Spirit was present, but no change came without the Word of God.

When God said, let there be light, suddenly there was activity. When the Word came, and the creation received that Word, things changed, the lights went on. And that's the beginning for each of us when we come to Christ.

The lights go on, we begin to see differently. We're no longer in darkness. Now, interestingly, once the lights went on, it got dark again.

There was evening, and morning, and another day. As I said, this progress took place in measurable stages. There are six, of course, mentioned in this story, but there's no reason to make the exact number the same in any given life.

There are different steps and stages by which God takes us into His likeness. But there's also darkness at times. There are times when the Word of God comes, and there's all this burst of creative progress that takes place, and then it's tested.

You know, when God said, let there be light, and the darkness disappeared, and it was light, if there had been somebody on the earth at that time to observe it, it would have been wonderful if the darkness had passed. But within a few hours, the sun went down, or whatever was giving the light over the horizon, and it got dark again. And it might have seemed as if, whoa, what God did wasn't permanent.

What God did has been overcome by darkness again. But it was just brief. It was dark for a while, then it got light again.

Then it got dark for a while, then light again. There were these seasons where the thing that God did in a creative day seemed to have undergone some testing in darkness. They had to endure the darkness.

When God made the animals, they were made to flourish and eat and reproduce in the daytime. Then it got dark, they had to go to sleep, you know, they couldn't do anything. Activity ceased.

And my own observation would be that the individual Christian progress has these kinds

of cycles. God will reveal something new to you, he'll speak something new to you from his word. It'll take root, it'll bring change.

But the Christian life isn't just a continual revival. I know some people say it can be. People who study revivals, and I have been very fascinated to study revivals in history myself, and people who study revivals observe that a revival breaks out, sometimes at the most unexpected place in time, but it, you know, sweeps a region, maybe a whole country, maybe several countries, for several years.

There's a huge harvest, all this influx of life into the body of Christ. People saved, people filled with the Spirit, miracles being done. And everyone says, oh man, isn't it glorious? Usually when that happens, people think the coming of the Lord is near.

It's almost a characteristic of every revival. Oh, this is so amazing that certainly this must be an indication that we're near the end. And we're going to be, you know, the coming of Christ is near.

Well, it is nearer than when we first believed, but it's not necessarily very near. And there have been revivals in every century, somewhere in the world, almost every generation. If you take the global picture, there's almost been a revival in every generation in modern times.

There were plenty of them throughout history. But what we find is the revival is like a spiritual party, in other words. It's so fun.

It's so fun seeing people saved. It's so fun being filled with the Spirit. The worship is wonderful, you know.

It just seems like it's a big spiritual party. And people say, oh, my Christian life from now on is going to be different than ever before, because God is so real to me now. But revivals then go away.

And then there's dry spells. Now, there's different theories about this, and there are those who believe that a revival is entirely sovereign from God, and others believe that a revival is something that man can whip up by proper, you know, preaching and getting people to pray and repent sufficiently and so forth, and men can bring a revival. Finney was somebody who thought that, and he was a great revivalist, but his theology and mine are not the same.

And I personally believe a revival is more or less sovereign. I do believe it is. I believe it never happens without prayer and without repentance, but for people to come to a place where they pray and repent is something of a work of God, a prior work of God.

But the point I'm making is that those who see it as a work of man somewhat, to bring about a revival, they often say the church should live in continuous revival, and there's

no reason why revival should ever diminish. Once you've got a revival, it should just go on and on and on and never change. But that's not, there's nothing in the Scripture that says that, and I don't think there's anything in history that would confirm that.

As a matter of fact, there was a great revival after Pentecost, and I believe without any compromise on the part of the apostles, that revival tended to fade, and still people got saved and so forth. But near the end of Paul's life, some bad things were happening. He said, all those in Asia have forsaken me.

You know, I left Trophimus sick. Demas the lawyer has forsaken me, having loved the present world. There's some attrition going on here.

In what was once a great harvest, there's some falling away going on. And I don't think it was any fault of Paul's or the apostles. I believe that there are cycles of God's dealing, where I believe he deliberately wants to test the fruit of the revival.

When the word of God comes, and this is true, I believe, of us as individuals, as well as the collective church in revival, I believe we experience seasons of fruitfulness and revival, where God is real to us, we learn something new, he reveals something new to us, and we experience great elation and growth. We make some real progress, and it may be permanent progress, hopefully. But the emotional gratification sometimes just, I mean, it diminishes.

And we think, oh no, am I backslidden? Well, that is something certainly to ask yourself. But it may be that you're not at all backslidden. You might be as faithful to God at that time as any other time.

And you're not required, God does not require you to pump up your emotions artificially. God does not require you to keep on a high continually. He requires you to remain faithful to him, at times where there's the highs and times where there's the lows.

At the times where the sun is shining and God's speaking new words, at times when the dark comes. And, you know, some of the great Christians of the past actually referred to experiences they called the dark night of the soul, which is temporary. But you see, what happens when the night comes is that it tests the permanence of what happened in the daytime.

And I believe that this is intentional on God's part. I believe that at times of revival, he harvests in, he pulls the net in, you get all the fish in, but then it's time to sort out the good and the bad fish. And the revival doesn't haul in a whole bunch of fish for a while.

Instead, the fish that came in are being sorted out. Those that came in who were drawn in simply by the emotional gratifications of the revival, a lot of those don't stay. Those who are fearful and unbelieving, those who are of shallow roots, like seeds sown on rock, persecution comes, hard times come, the emotional gratifications are gone, they quickly

fall away.

This is a sad thing, but it's a necessary thing, because when there is revival, there's genuine influx, but there's also flesh that gets involved. And the time when the revival fades for a while is the time where the flesh and the spirit get sorted out, I think. And so I believe that as with the whole church age and its cycle of revival and then dryness, revival and dryness, I believe that's God's pattern.

I think it happens in our lives too. I know it has happened many times in my life. You know, times when I was so excited in Jesus, I thought, wow, what could be, why would anyone not be a Christian? You know, there can't be anything in the world as good as this, as enjoyable, as pleasing, and so forth.

And then comes a time when it's not so pleasing. And, you know, you wonder, is it over? Is it over for me now? Have I drifted from God? And you examine yourself to see if you're still in the faith, like Paul said to do it. You know, I'm still in the faith.

I'm still serving God like before. It's a dry spell. It's a nighttime, but it's a season of nighttime.

It passes, the dawn comes again, and then there's more of that. And we need to understand that this is the way it works, because otherwise we will be among the casualties of the night. The way I heard it described by a teacher many, many years ago, not using the illustration of day and night, but he used the term tunnels.

If you've seen my comic books, the growth books, I've illustrated this as a little child, a baby Christian walking on a path, and he comes to a tunnel. And the tunnel is right there on the path. It's the right path.

But when he goes in the tunnel, it's dark. And it's damp and cold. And he doesn't feel the presence of God.

He doesn't see a vision of God at that time. And he feels like he's not on the right road. He wonders if he's turned off the right road.

But he's on the right road. The tunnels are there to turn back the fearful and the unbelieving, and those who jumped onto the road because their friends were doing it, or because there's a lot of fun in the revival. But the time comes for God to say, Okay, now all you folks who came in, I want the good fish.

I'm going to keep the good fish. I'm going to sort out the bad fish. And those who come to Christ because it feels good and it's enjoyable, obviously you need to know, are they going to still be with Jesus without those self-gratifications that come along with it? There's great joy in being a Christian, but not always emotional happiness.

And so when the tests come, and you're not feeling the presence of God like you did before, that is going to determine, will you be faithful? It's the same thing as marriage, you know. You get married, you have a honeymoon, you're all excited. I mean, some of you have never been married, but you can imagine it.

But if you haven't been married, what you can't imagine is the end of the honeymoon. You can picture this Cinderella story where Prince Charming comes along and they ride off into the sunset and they live happily ever after. And it is true, you can live happily ever after if both people are on board with that, but not equally happy at all times.

C.S. Lewis said, would anyone really wish that married life would always have the same ecstasy that their honeymoon has? How would you get anything done? You'd never get anything done. But people can have second honeymoons and third. I mean, certainly even between those times when they feel that ecstasy about each other, they can still be very fond of each other and certainly loyal and faithful to each other.

But their love is tested at the times when it's not as fun. We get addicted to fun. And there's, you know, I think God is the creator of good, clean fun.

But, I mean, look at some of the animals he made. They just have fun. I mean, there's something God, I think God likes fun, if it's wholesome, holy, good, clean fun.

But the trouble is we become addicted to that. And then, you know, do we idolize the fun or do we worship God? Well, God's going to find out. Let's take away the fun for a little while and see if you're still a worshipper.

See if you're still a disciple. See if you still follow. Let the night come again for a little while.

There'll be another day, but the night tests the quality of the work and the permanence of the work. So we have the word of God comes and brings that new creative activity. Then it's tested again at night.

And we see as the days progress that there's sort of a linear improvement. And everything that God did on one of the earlier days prepares for something on a later day. So he creates light.

That's necessary. He creates a firmament. That's necessary for breathing.

He creates dry land. Okay, now he's made all the ecospheres. Now he needs to put something in it.

So he creates, in the heavens, he creates the sun, moon, and stars. And then, of course, in the seas and the air, the fish and the birds and so forth. Then on the land, animals and people.

Now, each one of these days could be said to correspond to something that goes on in our Christian lives. Paul himself is the one who identified light. Let there be light.

That corresponds with when we're converted. What does it correspond to to make the firmament and divide the waters above the firmament and the waters below the firmament? Now, I'm going to have to be speculative here because Paul doesn't tell us what he would make of that particular event. But certainly, waters above and waters below the firmament differ from one another, it seems to me, in this respect.

At least they do now. What it was the case when God made it, I don't know. But right now, we have waters up in the firmament.

There's clouds up there. They're just water. They're just all water hanging up there in the middle of the sky.

And then there's water down here on the ground. At the early stages, we don't read of any lakes or rivers. Just there was the seas.

Now, the seas are salty. The water up in the sky is not salty. It's pure.

The saltiness of the sea, although it sustained some kinds of life, it would not sustain our life. We could not drink it. If you were shipwrecked on a lifeboat out in the middle of the sea, you'd find water, water everywhere.

But you wouldn't find a drop to drink unless you brought some with you, because you can't drink salt water, it'll kill you. In fact, if there's enough salt, even animals can't live in it. Like the dead sea.

They call it dead because there's nothing alive, nothing can live in it. Why? Too salty. Too much salt.

Salt water is deadly, although the ocean obviously does sustain some forms of life. The kind of life as we live it, it cannot be sustained. Now, the difference between salt water and fresh water, when I think of that, I think of James 3, I believe it is.

Beginning at verse 13, it says, Who is a wise and understanding person among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done with meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.

For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing will be there. But the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now, here we have wisdom of two types.

There is wisdom below and wisdom above. Even as on the second day, there was waters

above, the ferment was below. And in fact, a few verses earlier, on essentially the same subject, look what James says in verses 9 and following in chapter 3. He says, With our tongue we bless our God and Father, and with our tongue we curse men who have been made in the similitude of God.

Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing my brethren, these things ought not to be. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? And at the end of verse 12, Thus no spring can yield salt water and fresh water. He's talking about different wisdom that informs different speech, of course.

You don't get salt water and fresh water from the same spring. They are unlike each other. There is wisdom that is from above, like the distilled water in the cloud.

It's pure, it's first pure. The wisdom which is from above is first pure. The wisdom below is earthly and sensual and devilish and not good.

Now, I don't want to press this too far because I don't know that it's intended to, but I just find some verbal similarities here that make it interesting to me. One of the first things that God does after you become a Christian is change your thinking. At least begin to do so.

Before God made the firmament, there was only presumably the ocean waters, salt waters. Now, this is a little different than the Frank paradigm, but on the view that the ocean was covering the earth on the second day, it was salt water. And then God distilled some of it and suspended it higher up in what would be, if not a vapor canopy as some people call it, in clouds.

One way or another, it was distilled water, pure water, water from above. And once you become a Christian, your wisdom has to change. You have earthly wisdom before, but now you need to have your wisdom purified.

And it's different. It's heavenly wisdom. It's above the firmament.

And so the changing of the mind, the renewing of the mind, is an important process that begins essentially as soon as you get saved. As soon as you are enlightened, then God begins to introduce a different wisdom based on different premises and different values. You see, what is wisdom after all? Wisdom is simply the ability to decide what is the most expeditious course to a desired end.

If we say that somebody is doing something unwise, we mean that this is not going to lead them to an end that they really will want to reach. A person may have wisdom in the area of business or in relationships or something else. And when we say they have wisdom, it means that they know the right thing to do to make it work right, to make it the way they want it.



Now, wisdom sets a goal and knows or can figure out the most expeditious route to that goal. And somebody who has a goal and does not get there is foolish. Now, also someone who has the wrong goal is foolish.

And when you're not a Christian, your goals in life are entirely different. You have worldly wisdom. You value earthly security.

You value possessions. You value popularity. You value all kinds of things.

And then your earthly wisdom is set about to seek those things. How can I make a lot of money? How can I protect myself? How can I make myself popular? But see, that's foolish. That's worldly wisdom, but it's foolish because the goals are inadequate.

When you become a Christian, you have heavenly goals. And your wisdom is therefore associated with how to reach those goals. It's spiritual wisdom.

You care more about being pure and peaceable. And without hypocrisy, that's the wisdom which is from above. And I suspect, though I will not insist, that this is perhaps what the activity of the second day of creation corresponds to.

You know, it says in Proverbs that counsel or wisdom in a heart of man is like deep waters. And the counsel is like a flowing stream. It says that in Proverbs.

But the point I wanted to make is that waters and wisdom in some cases are compared. And certainly the change from terrestrial waters to heavenly waters above the firmament may well correspond, and it does in real life, to the next thing God does after we're saved. And that is, of course, to begin to change our minds and make us think along godly ways.

After the dry land appears, then there's fruitfulness and seeds. And obviously God wants us to be fruitful. Now, in Colossians chapter 1 and verse 10, Paul said... Well, actually, verses 9 and 10, very important to include 9. Colossians 1, 9 and 10.

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. That sounds like what I was just talking about. That you may have a walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Here we have spiritual understanding, spiritual wisdom. That you are filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, and so that you'll be fruitful. That God will produce fruit in you.

What is the fruit? You'll be fruitful in every good work. Your faith produces good works. Now, good works doesn't mean religious works.

It means simply good behavior. It means obedience to Christ. Paul said what matters is not circumcision or uncircumcision, but it's a faith that works through love.

Loving works. Works simply means actions. And what it is saying is that your actions, when they become transformed by your obedience to Christ, those become the fruit of the work of God in your life.

As the creation had the introduction of fruit on the third day, so we have the introduction of fruit in our lives. As we begin to be filled with knowledge and spiritual understanding, then we are fruitful in every good work. On the fourth day, God made the sun and moon and stars, or at least caused them to become visible.

And what was that for? So they could give light on the earth. I believe that the stage comes in our Christian development where we are a light to the world. Hopefully early on.

Although some Christians grow rather slowly and their lives do not provide much light. But at a certain point, you certainly must come to a point where you are illuminating the world by your very life and by your very presence. Actually, on the third day, when we talk about fruitfulness, it emphasizes the seeds.

The fruit has seed in itself, and we become reproductive spiritually. We begin to reproduce ourselves through sharing, evangelism, and so forth. And as such, we become a light to the world.

I mentioned how the moon corresponds in many ways with the church, because it sees the sun after dark. It's seated in heavenly places. And therefore, when the earth can no longer see the sun, but the moon can, the moon reflects the sun's light to the earth, just as the church does Christ, since the world no longer sees him.

Him who was, while he was in the world, the light of the world. Now we are the light of the world. And God made the sun and moon and stars to give light on the earth.

Now I didn't make this point earlier, because we just had so many things to say. If the sun, moon, and stars were made to give light on the earth, it raises serious questions as to whether there's life on other planets. Because the stars, we presume, we would have thought they were there to give light on other planets, if there are beings there.

But even the stars are there for us. People say, well isn't that kind of egocentric to believe that this vast universe exists for the benefit of this puny little planet here? Well, how big do you want this planet to be, to make it significant? It's a pretty big planet, it's very tiny compared to the universe, but you could make the earth a million times larger and still be tiny compared to the universe. The significance of a thing is not determined by its size.

As C.S. Lewis pointed out, a man is more significant than an elephant. You don't determine something significant, a dime is worth more than a nickel, and a dime is smaller. But you see, it's the value of the thing intrinsically, not the size of it, that determines its value.

And it's entirely possible that this earth is the only inhabited planet in the universe, small though it may be. Like I said, make it as large as you want it, it'll still be small compared to the universe. How big do you want it to be? God made these orbs that give light, he made them to give light on the earth.

And that's what he made us for, to give light to the world, to give light on the earth through our lives. Then of course on the fifth and sixth days we have animal life before human life. I don't generally, when I'm thinking about this or talking about this, try to make exact correspondences between the life in the sea, life in the air, and so forth, and what that corresponds to spiritually.

We could simply say that God made life, animal life, of which we seem to be an improved version, because we have biological life like the animals did. And so also you see a progressive quality of life. You've got fishes, you've got birds, you've got animals, you've got man and woman.

And so also in our spiritual lives we grow from one degree of quality of God-like life to another. God adds more improved, new and improved life as time goes by in our lives. It's possible that we could even, you know, going to the animal world, find individual cases, perhaps every species might provide some such case if we knew enough about it, where the animals illustrate things about our own spiritual life.

So that God made sheep so he could compare us to sheep. And he made eagles so that he could compare those that wait upon the Lord with eagles, mounting up on their wings and so forth. And the ants, he made the way they did, so that he could say, go to the ant house, slugger, consider your ways and be wise.

There are spiritual lessons that God built into nature, both in the plant world, so that Jesus continually talks about planting seeds, sowing seeds, you know, a mustard seed and all that. And there's illustrations that God, and we see it certainly in the Old Testament in Solomon and in Job, and in the New Testament, animals that God made on these days do depict different spiritual lessons about spiritual life. I simply feel like they're too numerous to mention, and therefore I pass over it rather quickly.

But the point I made at the beginning was what God was after is what he has at the end, and that is he has a man and a woman who are made in his own image. And when God is done working on the new creation in you, when Christ is formed in you, then he will have the very same thing in your life, in you, a man or a woman, in his image. And so that is what I believe, I believe Paul, in his own mind, was making that comparison between

Genesis 1 and the spiritual life of Christians when he made that offhand comment that God, who commanded the light to shine in darkness, has shined in our hearts.

I doubt that Paul could have said that and thought that without his mind going further through the process, though he didn't expound it. And I believe that he was, I think that was a revelation he had. Because if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, and the old creation is the paradigm of God's work in creation.

And therefore it provides, I believe, correspondences and parallels to what we can see being done in our own spiritual development, and also what the end result will be. That we will be in his image, and we will have dominion, because we are going to reign with Christ. God gave man and woman dominion over everything he had made.

And so we will reign over all things with Christ when he has brought us to our full maturity. And this maturing process that I've been talking about it in terms of individual maturity. God is certainly a great economist and can get a lot of mileage out of one chapter.

He might also wish for us to see it in terms of the maturing of the body of Christ, the Church. As the Church will come someday in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a mature man. To the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ, said Paul in Ephesians 4 verse 13.

And that not only us as individuals are being brought into the image of Christ, but the body of Christ collectively as a new man. Remember Paul said in Ephesians 2 that God took the Jew who believed in the Gentile belief, and he broke down the middle wall of partition between them, and made in himself, that is in Christ, one new man. That's the body of Christ, that new man.

Made of the Jew and the Gentile in Christ, that's the new man. And that new man is going to become a mature man, according to Ephesians 4 verse 13. To the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ.

Or vice versa, measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. But it's possible that even that is another layer of meaning that God wishes to show. That not just you and I being transformed into the image of Christ, but all the body of Christ collectively through the centuries.

Being moved forward through these days and nights of God's creative activity, being brought into the likeness of Christ collectively, and reigning with him ultimately when he returns. Well, that's the thoughts that I wanted to share about Genesis 1. I say, I don't do that with any other chapter, so it's not like when we go through Genesis 2, then I'll take another lecture to do this, and Genesis 3, and so forth. This is the only chapter in the Bible that I've ever had these kinds of musings about.

That is to see a secondary meaning, which I would not have bothered to teach if I didn't think that Paul had identified it. And so, we'll quit there. Thank you.