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Q&A#101 Creation Days in John's Gospel

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Alastair Roberts

Today's question: "What are we to make of the echoes of Genesis 1-2:3 in John 1-2:11? Is there any correlation between the days in Genesis and the days in John?"

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Transcript

Welcome back. I've been away for almost a month, or over a month, and it's good finally to be back doing these videos again. Today, I'm going to be discussing a question from John's Gospel about the opening chapters of John's Gospel.

And the question is, what are we to make of the echoes of Genesis chapter 1 to 2 verse 3 in John's Gospel chapter 1 to 2 verse 11? Is there any correlation between the days in Genesis and the days in John? It's a very good question, and there have been many suggestions put forward on this. First of all, we can see at the beginning of the Gospels, certainly in Matthew, Mark, and John, there are allusions back to the creation account. So Matthew begins with the book of the generations of Jesus Christ, or the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

That, immediately, should draw our minds back to the story of Genesis, where that is a

familiar recurring formula, the book of the generations, or the genealogy of. We see it in chapter 5 verse 1, for instance, and various other points within the narrative. It's a framing formula for the story of Genesis.

And if you read the story of Genesis and pay attention to that formula, it occurs at key pivotal moments. And it can be seen, perhaps, as something that frames the narratives that follow. Other things to observe, that within the book of Mark, Mark begins with the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God, etc.

And that beginning would connect us with the story of Genesis, which begins with in the beginning. These texts are then associated together in significant ways. John's gospel, the allusions are even more pronounced.

It starts off with a similar opening to Mark's gospel. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made that was made. So here we have a very explicit reference back to the first creation account. And the creation themes that play throughout John's gospel find an initial expression in the very opening verses of the book.

So this gives us an initial warrant for seeing creation themes playing out within these chapters. What about the creation days? The suggestion is that as we look through John's gospel, chapter one and two, we see a succession of days mentioned. And these successions of days are significant, it is suggested, that they are filling out this broader creation allusion with specific references to particular days.

So you have that original account at the beginning of the gospel, then you get into the baptism of John and his witness, but then you see a succession of days. In verse 29, the next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And then talks about Christ and his witness through baptism, or what was the sign that he was given that Christ was the Messiah.

And verse 35, again the next day John stood with two of his disciples. Some have suggested a further day in verse 40 to 42, as the Andrew finds Peter. And then the next day, the following day, Jesus wanted to go to Galilee in verse 43.

And then finally in verse one of chapter two, on the third day, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Now how these days play out is not entirely clear. Here's one suggestion.

We have at the very outset of the book, the creation, the coming of light, the light that comes into the world. This man came for a witness to bear witness to the light, that all through him might believe. He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light.

That was the true light, which gives light to every man who comes into the world. The first day of creation is the creation of light. And so that would be the first day of creation.

The second day of creation is the division of the waters above from the waters beneath. And that could be associated with the testimony of John that immediately follows in verse 19 following. That there is a distinction between John's ministry, ministry on earth, and then the ministry of Christ, perhaps.

That's what's being referred to. But also the division of waters. That the division of waters associated with baptism.

The next day, the third day, is associated with the creation of land and the division of the waters and the land. Christ is borne witness to by John the Baptist, who says, I did not know him, but that he should be revealed to Israel. Therefore I came baptizing with water.

And John bore witness saying, I saw the spirit descending from heaven like a dove and he remained upon him. I did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, upon whom you see the spirit descending and remaining on him, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. That could be connected with the division of the waters from the land.

The descent of the dove upon Christ. That might draw our minds back to the story of the flood. And the descent of the dove upon the land as the first land that rises up after the flood.

So the dove descending on Christ. Christ is the land rising up after the waters. He's the first sign of the new earth emerging on the third day.

Fourth day is associated with the lights and the firmament. So you have the light on the first day and then you have the lights and the firmament on the fourth day. That would be the disciples that are brought alongside Christ and will be the key figures alongside him.

So you have presumably you have John and you have Andrew. And then later, the next day, there's the multiplication. The fish that multiply and the birds that multiply in the air on the fifth day.

This is a more tenuous connection. I'm not sure of this. Even the day itself is not marked out very clearly.

So at this sort of point it becomes unclear. These are very loose connections. We shouldn't put too much weight upon them.

But I think there's a more general sense there's something going on here. And then it's

associated with the stone. There's something about the land that's being established here.

The sixth day would be associated with Philip and Nathaniel. And Nathaniel being this man that's called this faithful Israelite, this true man that's being established. But Christ also as the one who will be one day seen.

The heavens opened and angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. Christ is the Son of Man. He is the archetypal man.

He's the one who brings together heaven and earth. He's the one who stands as the mediator of these great realities. That could be what's going on.

So that would be the sixth day. Then in verse one of chapter two, on the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee and the mother of Jesus was there. The third day would be counting inclusively from the sixth day.

So the sixth and then rest on the seventh day, the Sabbath. And then the eighth day, or the first day of the new week, which is also the third day, now you should be twigging here that there's something significant taking place. There is the water changed into wine.

That water changed into wine is a sign of new life, a sign of something dramatic occurring. And recognize all the themes of water that have been playing within these chapters. Light and water.

These are key themes within the creation account. And here we have them within John's account. Light and water and stones and rocks and these sorts of things are playing within this text.

So there is a creation theme playing out. Whether it's played out in this specific way or in this detail, I'm not sure. I think it probably is.

But how much weight we should put on that, it's not entirely clear. The sixth day brings about the sixth disciple in all probability. If we consider that John probably called James.

This is maybe what we're led to suppose. So we've got Philip, Nathaniel, Peter, Andrew, James and John. Those are the six disciples.

And then on the eighth day, there are six water pots, cleansing water pots that have water in them changed from water to wine. That may be associated with the disciples. Peter Lighthouse has suggested that.

I'm not sure. It might be. There are a number of these connections that then play out in the rest of the book.

That this transformation of the waters maybe is also associated with what we see at the very end with the great catch of fish, which may allude back to Ezekiel chapter 47. The healing of the waters and the fishing within the Dead Sea. Again, I'm not sure.

They might be connections there. But this is an indication of the sort of ways that John's gospel is using these creation themes. John is a very subtle, he's a very brilliant writer.

Lots of theological details held in this symbolism that has expressed. And we see many references to the creation. We see the first day of a new week at the very end.

And so that if that was connected with this event of the transformation of the waters into wine, it would be significant. The third day, the first day of a new week. And then the encounter with the woman in the garden, Mary Magdalene.

And supposing Jesus to be the gardener. Again, drawing our minds back to Adam and Eve in the garden. These are significant themes.

And if we're not paying attention, we'll miss a lot of what's going on. So it's a good question. I think that there is something going on here.

I'm not sure if that is the right organization of the days, but it is one possible one. And it would suggest a number of illuminating connections. It would suggest that Christ has his baptism.

It's the rising out of the water of a new land. The spirit descending in the form of a dove is connected with the dove descending on the new land after the flood. And so Christ is the first land of the new creation.

The first sign of the new heavens and the new earth. Then also the vision of the waters above and beneath associated with the baptism of John. The light on the first day.

All these themes, they're playing out. Now, I hope this is of some help. If it is, please leave any further questions that you might have to follow up.

There's a lot more that can be said about John's gospel. If you would like to support this and future videos, please do so using my Patreon account or my PayPal account. The links to those will be below in the show notes.

And if you have any further questions, please leave them in my Curious Cat account. Thank you very much for listening and Lord willing, I'll be back again tomorrow. God bless.