

THE STORY OF CREATION

The record of creation as given in the Bible is the foundational entry into the bedrock of our beliefs. As any member of Christchurch for any length of time will tell you, when it comes to creation, Pastor Pope is a literalist. I literally and without apology believe that God created the heaven and the earth in six literal days. Although we could go outside the Bible to help prove the point, it is not necessary. If one chooses to disbelieve that a day is not a literal day in Genesis one, my question is, when is a day not a literal day and who and what determines this? One of the references a day is used figuratively is found in II Peter 3:8: *"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."* We easily see the Holy Spirit through Peter identifies figurative language is being used by saying *"one day is as"* and *"a thousand years is as."* In the Bible whenever day, night, evening, morning and/or numbers are used, the days are always literal. Genesis 1: 5b, 8b, 13, 19, 23, and 31 all say, *"...And the evening and the morning were the first day,...second day,...third day,...fourth day,...fifth day and sixth day."*

Contextually, we can easily recognize when God is speaking figuratively or literally. For instance, in the book of Joshua 6, God commanded Joshua and his men of war to walk around the city of Jericho seven days. On the seventh day, after marching around the city seven times, the priests blew the trumpets, the people shouted and the walls fell. Now if a day could be millions of years, no man in the Bible is recorded to have lived long enough to perform such a feat! The Bible says, *"Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights"* (Jonah 1:17). If we have permission to make the days of Genesis anything other than twenty-four hour periods of time, we can put Jonah in the whale for a few million years. And that will not work.

Let's look at this great story of our beginning.

1. This is our beginning, not God's beginning.

The Bible says, *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"* (Genesis 1:1). God was creating in our beginning. In other words, before we had a beginning, God was here. He has no beginning. *"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by him all things consist"* (Colossians 1:16, 17).

2. God began with nothing.

Genesis 1:2: *"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."* Before God there was no one and nothing. He declares, *"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me"* (Isaiah 45:22, 23). This is a great reminder that God can still take that which is without form and void and make something beautiful out of it. Every time He saves a lost soul, this is what happens!

3. Day One: God Created Space, Earth and Light and Darkness.

Genesis 1:1-5. God places the Heaven in existence, the area outside of our atmosphere that we can see as well as that area where our most magnificent telescopes have not yet reached. We should all be touched that God focuses His attention in the mighty universe on this little blue marble called earth. From our point of view this is when the tracking of time begins. God, the great I AM THAT I AM, the Eternal Present One who steps out of eternity, creates time and enters time, while never losing His eternal link to forever. It is important to note, the phrase, *"And God said"* appears 10 times. God spoke everything into existence. Psalm 33:4-9 reaffirms this truth. Although in Genesis 1 the Bible tells us that God spoke and there was light, the Bible also says, *"Thou makest darkness, and it is night..."* (Psalm 104:20a).

4. Day Two: God Created Atmosphere.

Genesis 1:6-8. In all of the universe there is no place like earth that has been found to sustain life as we know it. God controls the atmosphere of life itself.

5. Day Three: God Created Dry Land and Vegetation.

Genesis 1:9-13. Psalm 104:5-18 illustrates this day of creation.

6. Day Four: God Created the Sun, Moon and Stars.

Genesis 1:14-19. Some have problems with God making light before He made the sun. As our Creator, He has the prerogative to do what He will, the way He will. No need to be bothered by this fact because the Bible also says, *"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof"* (Revelation 21:23). Christ Himself is the light source of heaven, not our sun. God designates the alignment of the heavenly bodies to help us separate our seasons, *"He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down"* (Psalm 104:19).

7. Day Five: God Created Birds of the Air and Creatures of the Sea.

Genesis 1:20-22. Psalm 104:24 says, *"O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein"* (Psalm 104:24).

8. Day Six: God Created the Animals on the Land and Man and Woman.

Genesis 1:24-31. We see a clear separation from man and beasts. There is not even a hint of evolution. God even specifies that man was created in His very own likeness. We can take no credit for our existence, *"Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves..."* (Psalm 100:3a).

9. Day Seven: God Rested.

Genesis 2:1-3. God was not weary or tired. He had just performed a masterpiece in creation and took time to appreciate it. I would be remiss not to say, we too take a special day called Sunday to say, "Lord we appreciate your finished work of redemption." (Hebrews 4:9,10). What a Creation! What a Creator! What a Savior!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in black ink and features a large, decorative initial "J" and a long, sweeping horizontal line at the end.