

"IN THE BEGINNING: A Study of Creation"

THE SECOND DAY

Our study on the first day of creation revealed to us just how much we have grown to rely on our childhood memories of what we were taught, and Bible commentaries now that we are adults. We seem to "know" and "remember" far more about the first day than God's word actually says. I believe this should encourage us that we really do need to study what God's word says about creation.

(NKJV, Gen 1:6), "Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters."

Once again, by the power of God's word, He creates. The phrase "divide the waters from the waters" could imply that the water covering the earth on day 1 was not completely water in solid form. Perhaps it was the earth covered with water in liquid/solid form covered by a layer of water in vapor form.

(NKJV, Gen 1:7), "Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so."

From an ancient perspective, since rain falls from the sky, it would be viewed as "waters". This separation of waters below the firmament from waters above the firmament give us a little more specific clue as to what is being created. This time He creates the atmosphere or visible sky.

(NKJV, Gen 1:8), "And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day."

In the King James and New King James, the word used is "Heaven" and it is capitalized. It implies the place called "Heaven" (dwelling place of God). But is that really what is being referred to in verse 8? Let's examine this verse in the New American Standard.

(NASB, Gen 1:8), "God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day."

Here the word "heaven" is not capitalized. Next, let's look at the New International Version.

(NIV, Gen 1:8), "God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day."

At this point, we have "Heaven", "heaven", and "sky" describing the firmament. Which is correct? One thing that appears to initially be a minor point is that God said let there be a firmament, but He didn't see that it was good. On the first day He said let there be light and saw that it was good. Later on we will see that when God says "let there be...", He then sees that it is good... except Heaven/heaven/sky. Why would that be?

(NKJV, Eph 2:2), "in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,"

(NIV, Job 1:7), "The LORD said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?' Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it."

(NKJV, Eph 6:12), "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."

From these verses we can conclude that Satan has been given (temporary) control of the atmosphere... the outward covering of the earth. Without Jesus, and God's Holy Spirit dwelling INSIDE us, the outward covering of this world would have control of us.

Given the chronology and the context, it appears that the NIV translation of Gen 1:8 is the most accurate. Although the NIV is frowned upon for its New Testament translation (primarily for the manuscript source it used), its translation of the Old Testament more accurately conveys the meaning of the original Hebrew text. The NIV method of translation is more suitable for the poetic nature of Hebrew than the methods used by KJV and NKJV.

God created something that He didn't see as "good". It was a subtle distinction, and one that most of us have skipped over perhaps dozens of times. Without exercising care and deliberation, we might have skipped over it yet again. Perhaps this is an illustration of how we are to take the same approach to identify those things in our lives that are not "good".

GROUP DISCUSSION

- Before this study, did you know that God did not call the creation of the atmosphere "good"? If so, did you recognize the significance of that fact?
- In studying the 2nd day of creation, how important was our choice of Bible translation in understanding, interpreting, and applying those verses?