

Genesis 2:1–3 — Thus the Heavens and the Earth Were Finished

God's Rest, Created to Make, the Typical Bearing of Genesis 1, the Earth Dignified by Christ, and the Idolatry of Evolutionary Theory

Scripture Reading: Genesis 2:1–5

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”

God Finished His Work: The Goal Is Rest

The opening words of Genesis 2 are a declaration of completion: thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. God has a work and he will bring it to an end. That is a wonderful thing to know. Man has an insatiable appetite for new projects, building higher and higher, never coming to rest — the Tower of Babel principle, reaching without arriving. But God finished. And on the seventh day he rested from all his work.

The goal of all God's work is his own rest. He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. The rest was not because he was tired or because the work had exhausted him. It was the rest of completed purpose. And that purpose — the eternal rest of God — is what he has purposed to bring us into as well. We have entered into his rest in one sense, as the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of those who believe entering in. In another sense we have not yet entered fully. That awaits the new heavens and the new earth, when sin is entirely put away, when

the outer darkness has received all that belongs to it, and when God's glory in Christ is in continuous display in the assembly to the ages of ages (Ephesians 3:21). That is the true Sabbath — the eternal rest into which the blessed seventh day points.

The Lord Jesus said in John 5:17: my Father worketh hitherto, and I work. That statement proves that God's rest was broken by sin. He is not resting now. He is working, and the Son is working with him. God does not rest until sin is entirely put away and the new creation is fully established. The present age — including the millennium, which ends with the great outburst of Satan's deception and God's judgment upon it — is not yet God's rest. His rest is the eternal state, the new heavens and the new earth.

Created to Make: The Distinction Between the Two Words

J.N. Darby's translation at the end of verse 3 renders the closing phrase: which God created in making it. A marginal reading is created to make. This distinction between created and made is not pedantic — it goes to the heart of understanding what God was doing in Genesis 1.

Creating is the bringing of something entirely new into existence out of nothing. Making is the forming and ordering of what already exists. Man is created — there was a production of something entirely new, a living soul, which had no prior existence. But the characteristic work of Genesis 1 in the six days is making — the ordering and forming of the earth for the purpose of displaying God's glory in Christ. Isaiah 43:7 uses all three words about man: I have created him, yea I have made him, yea I have formed him. Each word contributes something distinct. To collapse them into synonyms, as many do in order to argue that God created everything in six days, is to be unfaithful to the text. The six days are the days of making, not of creation in the absolute sense. Within the making there were some acts of creating — man among them. But the whole work is not the

same as the original absolute creation of verse 1.

The Typical Bearing: Genesis 1 and the Soul, the Ages, and Christ

Genesis 1 carries a typical bearing in two directions. First, it traces the operations of grace in the soul. The first work is light — the entrance of thy word giveth light, giving understanding to the simple. Then there are further operations, progressing from conversion onward, because not every work of God in the soul is accomplished at the instant of new birth. The second day brings separation — two things in the soul, the new nature above and the old nature below, answering to the two natures in the believer as Romans 7 describes them. The third day brings the raising of the dry land and fruitfulness — the deliverance that comes at the end of Romans 7, and the tone of Romans 8 that follows. The soul brought into the good of the third day is in the real sphere of fruit bearing.

Second, it traces the unfolding of God's ways with man through the ages, from ruin to new creation. Man was created upright, stood in innocence, fell, and was totally ruined. God covered him with skins — there was a sacrifice. That is the beginning of the operations of grace. So also, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; then something happened and in verse 2 ruin is found — the earth without form and void, darkness on the face of the deep. Then the Spirit of God moves, and the making process begins. The analogy is exact: man created upright, man ruined, God begins his work of grace. Earth created, earth ruined, God begins his making. The typical bearing of the passage is not imagination; it fits with a precision that satisfies the spiritual mind.

The sixth day brings the man and his bride set over the whole creation — pointing to Christ and the church in the millennial reign. The seventh day is God's rest, pointing to the eternal state. The whole unfolding of God's purpose is traced in miniature in Genesis 1 and the opening of Genesis 2. This is why Genesis is called the seed plot of Scripture — everything that follows is already

in germ here.

The Earth Dignified by the Creator

The host of heaven — billions of galaxies, immeasurable distances, the swirling immensity of the universe — makes the earth appear as nothing. Scientists train their instruments outward to find other intelligent life in the sea of the cosmos. But they do not find what is most important, because what is most important happened on this insignificant speck. God the Creator, the one by whom and through whom all things were created (John 1:3, Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:2) — the Word who was with God and was God — came down to this earth. He walked on it. He allowed the creature to do to him what the creature did: to spit on his face, to beat his back, to press a crown of thorns upon his head, to nail him to a cross. And he finished the work the Father had given him to do. He glorified the Father on the earth.

That is what has dignified the earth beyond all the host of heaven. The stars and galaxies declare his handiwork — his eternal power and divinity — but they are the physical sphere. The moral sphere is greater than the physical sphere. And the moral sphere centers on this earth, where the Son of God came in incarnation and accomplished the work that will have eternal consequences, not for the present order of things but for the new order of the new heavens and the new earth, where God's glory in Christ will be displayed to the ages of ages.

Idolatry in a Scientific Dress

The host of heaven has always been a temptation to idolatry. Throughout the Old Testament the recurring charge against Israel is that they went and worshipped the host of heaven. They worshipped the creature. Romans 1 calls it worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator. The words are absolute, not comparative: they did not retain God in their knowledge.

The theory of evolution and the cosmological speculations of modern science are idolatry in a disguised form — the worship of the host of heaven under scientific language. The Big Bang has become the new creator: it is to the Big Bang that origin and meaning are attributed, not to God. The theory of spontaneous generation of matter — that atoms simply appear, without cause, in space — has been abandoned by its own advocates because it is contrary to all reason. No one has ever observed matter generating itself from nothing. But the desire to have a creator that is not God is so strong that the most absurd propositions will be entertained and defended by learned men.

The reason is moral, not intellectual. Romans 1:28 says they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. The psalmist says the fool has said in his heart: no God. It is said in the heart, the seat of the will, before it is said by the intellect. The intellect follows the will in unregenerate man. He does not want the interference of a Creator to whom he has obligations. So theories are invented to get away from the Creator, and some Christians then interpret Genesis to make it comport with those theories. That is altogether wrong. No Christian should attempt to reconcile Genesis 1 with a cosmogony that begins by excluding God.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished... and God rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.