

GENESIS 1-3
Message 7

INTRO: The other day a telephone man was here. This morning Genesis 1:1-8 were read for us. These are tremendous facts. I don't know if you noticed those little red flags out there. The telephone man was out here. He marked out where the telephone line runs underground so that we don't dig up the telephone line when we put up the church sign. He said, "After I'm done I'll come in and have you sign some papers." I said, "Well, are you a church man?" And he said, not really. And I told him I'd like to show him what goes on in a church. And he said he wasn't that interested. And so I said, "Well, what do you think of the Bible." And he said he thought he was a little too open minded for just the Bible. And I said that was great. To be open minded is great, are you open enough to consider the Bible. But he found out he was not nearly as open minded as he thought he was. He said he really stuck with things like facts and scientific things; factual things. I said that was wonderful. Then I said, "Have you considered the fact that you must die? You see, we have seen from every body else that some day we have to die. Now if you are a factual person, have you considered this?" Now he found out he wasn't as interested in facts as he thought he was either. I trust he went home and considered what life is all about.

You see, when we come to Genesis 1:1-8 we have a list of facts that is staggering. I am sure we get only a small part of what is there. I'd like to read verses 6-8. I trust we'll cover these verses this morning (read). Well, we have looked at day one. Three things have come into existence in Genesis 1:1-5. The heavens and the earth and light. It is not necessary to point out how necessary those are to life. I would like to point out that these three things will always exist; heaven and earth and light. They will exist forever and ever and ever.

Now you remember from our series on the pilgrim's progress that this present world is going to be remade and we will have a new heaven and a new earth. So I expect the ozone will be fixed up some day and things will be back in order. Well, it is exciting to me that there is going to be a new heaven and a new earth. And I can look forward to the future. And so this morning we are going to consider day two. I don't know if you have spent any time considering day two, what God did on this day. Let me ask you, to kind

of arouse you? What day did God create the heavens and the earth? Sunday. Right. Sunday is the first day of the week. So creation began on the day we call Sunday. So the day He created the firmament is Monday. Now you know what Mondays are like. When you look at day one God created the heavens and the earth and the light. Now that is a lot. But when we come to Monday, it seems that He didn't get that much done. He made the firmament. And that was day two.

When I thought of this, I thought of how Monday sometimes is. Someone told me of the man who said to his sons, "Boys, its time to get up. The day after tomorrow is Wednesday and we haven't accomplished a thing this week yet." Monday, that's what we have here and not a whole lot seems to have been accomplished. Well, possibly it is more than it seems at first sight.

B. Day Two (1:6-8)

1. The events of day one (1:6-8a)

Now on day two God is continuing on making this world habitable for mankind. Man could not have inhabited the earth as it was on day one, he could not have as it was on day two, but it is becoming more so now, because He is going to create the firmament. In His work of making this earth habitable, He first created a source of light in the heaven, for He commanded the light to shine out of darkness. But we want to look now at His work on day two. First of all we have the plan of the firmament. Look at verse 6 (read). Picture again the earth in its original state. It is without form and void. It is covered with water. And the water is on the earth and in the heavens so that it is an indistinguishable mass of water and mud. There is no dry land. All you see is mud and water. Maybe here and there it is not conformed to anything. It is without form and void. It is uninhabitable. That is a picture of the world in its initial state.

It was then that God said, "Let there be a firmament." So we must ask, "What is a firmament?" The Hebrew word for firmament is

raqia. And it basically means an expanse. That is the basic meaning of the word firmament; an expanse. It comes from a verb meaning to beat out or to spread out, as when you spread out your jam or peanut butter. That is the idea. And Doctor Henry Morris says it is, "...spread out thinness." You put your hand out and move it and you can feel the firmament. So thus came into existence our atmosphere. When Doctor Henry Morris, the renown Christian scientist speaks of the firmament he calls it a tent to dwell in. Turn to Isaiah 40:12 (read). Now verse 22 (read). So it is a tent to dwell in. You see, if you take an airplane and fly too high without special equipment, you die. You must stay within this tent. So if we want to go past this then we have to take some of the tent with us. Otherwise we can't exist up there.

Now notice the words in our text, "And God said, 'Let there be a firmament...'" and here are the words, "...in the midst of the water." Have you thought about that? What does it mean, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water?" I encouraged the SS class to be a thinking people. You have to think when you read and ask questions. What does it mean, a firmament in the midst of the waters? You see the firmament existed in the midst of the waters. It was not above or beneath or beside. It was in the midst of the water. I marvel at how God has penned the creation account. So simple and so profound, in so many ways.

Well, we want to look more closely at this watery tent to dwell in and consider these words, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters." Here is factual evidence for how this world came into existence. Here we have facts. Now it's not hard to identify the waters which were under the firmament. That refers to water in liquid state on the earth. We have those today. But there is water above the firmament as well. It is in the midst of the waters. There is water underneath and

there is water above the firmament. I want to ask you now about these words, "...the waters above the firmament." God said let it divide the waters from the waters. Which waters from which waters? Thus God divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. What waters is He talking about in the waters above the firmament? What is He talking about? It is difficult. But I want to introduce you this morning to a theory called the canopy theory.

I believe this is a credible theory, one that is well possible. It may be what God is talking about when He speaks of putting a firmament in the midst of the waters, and having the waters above the firmament and beneath the firmament. So the idea is like this; the waters underneath, then the firmament and then the waters above the firmament. That is the idea in our text this morning. The canopy theory says this, before the flood there was a water shield over the entire earth. That is way over top, then there is the firmament in between and the water beneath. So they had this vapour canopy all around the earth. That is where we get the idea of this tent to dwell in.

But this theory says this canopy no longer exists. I want to explain that. First let me give you several arguments for this canopy view. If this canopy theory is correct, several conditions would be different than they are today. You do not need to accept this theory but it may make sense once you understand it. First, this watery canopy would have strained out much of the radiation which comes from the sun. Radiation which decreases our life-span. This harmful radiation speeds up the aging process. So if there had been this watery canopy around the earth, they should have lived much longer under the system before the flood. Question: did they? Look at Genesis 5. This chapter gives us the genealogy of ten people spanning a time period of approximately 2000 years. I'd like you to look at this chapter (5, 8, 11, 27). So Methusaleh

lived 969 years. Now is that possible? You see it is possible if there was this watery tent over the earth and it strained out these harmful sun rays, that man would live a lot longer. That is one evidence that would indicate that this theory is possible.

There is another one. If there was such a canopy over the earth, the earth should have enjoyed a kind of a green house affect. That is the temperature at the north pole could have been the same as at the equator. Is there any such evidence? You see, there would have been no snow at the north pole and the temperature in Canada and Israel and the north pole could all have been much the same because it had this canopy over top, which makes it like a green house. I've been told that experiments have been done to create this type of watery canopy and they had a tomato plant under this canopy with 5000 tomatoes on it. Now that comes from a creation research video if you want to pursue that to check it out. So, is there evidence that this world enjoyed a canopy like that so that there were tropical conditions over the world?

Maybe when you went to school you learned of the mammoths up north. Mammoths have been found up north in the perma frost, as a matter of fact they were harvested for their tusks. They are still there. From time to time the ice thaws and more mammoths appear, sometimes moose, sometimes lynx. I have heard that they have found some of these mammoths with green grass in their mouth. They are buried in the ice up north. Question: How did they get up north into the ice? Maybe you have a hard time believing this. Well, that is ok. Check it out. I trust you are open to facts to. Not only that. They have found sub-tropic plants all around the Atlantic north. Where did they come from? Well, the canopy theory would answer that for at some time the conditions up north would have been like that. And so these animals existed there on this vegetation. So there is evidence for this canopy theory.

I want to give you one more evidence. Go to Genesis 1:7 (read). Now go to Genesis 7:11 (read). The windows of heaven were opened. I love to drive through the Rocky Mountains. One of the places I like to stop is a little place called Silver Sands. There are some kids there that collect rocks and they sell them. They find these rocks with sea shells in them. And I like to stop there to check to see what they have found. And if they have any nice ones I like to buy them for a dollar or two and put them in my office. There is evidence for the flood. We're talking about the flood here. It says, that the deep was broken up. When I drive through the Rockies, I can see that. You can see the rock strata that once was level now runs at 50-70 degrees upward. It's been broken up and then the water came up out of the earth. And covered the earth.

But not only did the water come out of the earth, not only was the deep broken up but the windows of heaven were opened. What windows? It may have been that at this time watery canopy rained down, forty days and forty nights. And so the water canopy is no longer there. And so therefore, all of a sudden the north got cold. That's what happened as soon as the canopy was gone. The north got cold and the animals froze in the water. That is why they are there in the water. That's why there are sub-tropical plants in the north.

You see, some people think sometimes you are scientific, you cannot be biblical. That is so untrue. The biblical person is the most scientific. That's where the facts are. I would have loved to challenge this man on evolution the other day. There is not a single fact in evidence for evolution. And the more they study this, the more the facts are falling towards creation. In the end when it is all said and done, everyone will say, Genesis 1 is absolutely correct in every point. You see God said, "I'm going to set the rainbow in the sky." You see, there was no

rain on the earth from the beginning until the flood. Turn to Genesis 2:4->. I understand that before the flood, the earth was watered by a mist that went up from the earth. After the flood, after the canopy was taken away evaporation and clouds came into being and we have it as it is today.

b. The purpose of the firmament

Well, all of that possibly explains the longevity of man before the flood. So let's look at the purpose of the firmament. We find it in Genesis 1:6 (read). It says, "...let the firmament divide the waters from the waters." It was the firmament that kept the waters above the firmament. Now, I'm not sure how the original firmament differed from ours. The firmament we now have causes the evaporated waters to rise above the earth while it pushes on the water on the earth. Then it rains. And this cycle has been well known for many thousands of years. And the pressure that the firmament exerts on the waters on the earth is estimated 14.7 pounds per square inch. So the firmament cause the evaporated waters to rise and pushes on the water on earth. Apparently the cycle of evaporation and rain was not there in the original firmament because it did not rain on the earth until the flood.

Most likely these waters above the earth affected evaporation and rain. It also seems that all this changed in Genesis 7:11. When the flood came and the rains came for forty days and forty nights this world underwent a change. Now I noticed something late last night as I was reading in Genesis. On day two, God does not say it was good. It says it on the other days, twice on one day. But on day two He does not say this. But it is possible that God did not call the heavens and the earth good on the first day either because it would undergo change. Maybe He also did not call this good because it also would undergo change. Or it was not permanent. When He

created the light He called it good. It has always been the same and never changed.

c. The making of the firmament

All right, let's look at the making of the firmament (Genesis 1:7). "Thus God made the firmament." It is interesting that the word translated made here is *asah*. The Hebrew uses two words with regard to creation. *Asah* is one. In Genesis 1:1 it is *bara*. And now we have two words used. These words have caused great amount of debate among theologians. Now it is possible that the distinction of these two words is that *bara* is to create out of nothing, whereas *asah* is to make something out of something that exists already. In other words, on day two God did not create something, He made something. He made something from something already in existence. He put something together out of things that existed already and made an atmosphere conducive to man to live in on day two. So we have these two words, *asah* and *bara*.

Now the TWOT says that *bara* emphasizes the initiation of an object while *asah* emphasizes the shaping of an object. And that is what we are always involved in, in *asah*; shaping things out of things already in existence. So we have these two words. I suggest then that when God created the heavens and the earth all the gases that are in the atmosphere were already there. On day two He mixed all the right amounts of gases and all the things that are needed for life, so that we could live on this earth. In other words, He is in the process of making this earth inhabitable. A place where you and I could exist as we do today.

Now when we consider day one and the creation of the heaven and the earth and light, and then look at the creation of only the firmament on day two, we said earlier, maybe it's like some of our Mondays. We just didn't get that much done. But I'd like to give you

some of the things that exist in this firmament. In our present atmosphere, scientists find that the constant gases, the gases that don't change, in our present atmosphere are nitrogen, 78.084%. Oxygen, 20.946%, and then the more minor gases, argon, neon, helium, methane, krypton, hydrogen, nitrous oxide and (trina?). Now these are constant gases and they are there. What God did on day two as I understand it, from the things He had made already He mixed these gases and put the laws in place that would keep these gases within a certain distance of the other heavens, and would keep them in a place where man could exist. You see, all God would have to do is change these gases and we're gone. No more existence. We're dependent on Him to keep these things mixed right all the time. You know in our day is the great concern of the ozone.

Well, there are minor gases as well. Gases which change. Gases that are higher at some times than others. They are called the variable gases. And the amount changes from time to time and place to place. And so we have rain and don't have rain, which is affected by these things. Let me give you some of these. There is water vapour, 7%. Carbon dioxide, .01% - .1%; then the ozone which is .01% and then sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide. Now these are all necessary in order for us to exist and I suggest that what God did on day two, He made the firmament. He made this place livable. He mixed up all of this so it would be conducive to our respiratory system.

d. The naming of the firmament

Well, we recall here that God created everything mediately. He said, "Let there be a firmament." It was Jesus Christ that made the firmament. God said, "Let it be so." God gave the instructions and Jesus did the doing of it. So let's look for a moment at the naming of the firmament, Genesis 1:7 (read). "And God

called the firmament, heaven." We need to consider a few things with regard to the naming of the firmament. I teach a course called, "Man, Sin and Salvation." I taught the first part of it here last winter, man and sin. And in this course on man and sin, I deal with a topic of the makeup of man. You see, in the area of the make-up of man, Christians are not agreed. Some view man as being made up of body, soul and spirit and others say it is not so. Man is made up body and soul/spirit. They say that soul and spirit in the Bible are one and the same thing. Now I make a big point in the course on that. I challenge students to find two words in the same language that mean exactly the same thing. That is a challenge for you this morning, school teachers and any one else. When you have two words that mean the same thing you can chuck one out. You don't need two. Soul and spirit cannot mean the same thing because there are no two words that mean the same thing. Now that is a challenge and you can work on that.

Now what I will say with that is this: Look at Genesis 1:8 again, "And God called the firmament heaven." Question: Is the firmament exactly the same thing as heaven? What is God talking about here? He called the firmament heaven. Are they one and the same thing. Well, we find that God called the firmament heaven. In 2 Corinthians 12:2 we find that there are three heavens. Paul talks about a man who was caught up to the third heaven. That tells me that there are three heavens. Can you tell me this morning what the first heaven is? The atmosphere? Yes. Second heaven? Don't feel bad. I haven't taught on this before. The second heaven is the home of the stars and so on. So it is what we call outer space. The first heaven is the area in which we dwell. But the second heaven is also heaven. Now tell me, what is the third heaven? Yes, where God lives. There are no other heavens. There are only three. Where man exists, outer space and where God exists. Those three are heavens. Now the first heaven is called a firmament. Heaven

is a broad term which covers all three places. Do you see it? It covers all three places. But the firmament is a definitive term and covers only the first one. Do you see it? You cannot call the next one a firmament because it isn't. You can't call where God lives a firmament, because it isn't. You see, heaven is a broad term and herein lies the difference between these two words. So firmament and heaven are not one and the same thing.

2. The conclusion of day two (1:8b)

Well, the conclusion of day two, Genesis 1:8 (read). So the evening and the morning were the second day. In this second day of creation we see planet earth beginning to take some shape. There are the waters above the firmament, there is the firmament, and the waters below the firmament. It's beginning to take shape. And its becoming more and more habitable. We have to have the firmament to exist. So we now have two heavens have come into creation and the earth and light. We are only on day two. In four more days, this world will have man and animals and will be inhabitable and will be inhabited.

I wonder, how could man have penned a creation account like this 3000 years ago, it would by now have had much scientific evidence against it. Scientifically, there is no evidence against the creation account. Scientifically. Factually speaking. As a matter of fact, there is growing evidence for creation. More and more scientists leaning to a younger and younger universe. Well on day two God mixed all the gases and made this a place in which we could live and move and have our being, as Paul speaks about in the book of Acts.