

Genesis 1-2

Order and Content

A third reason frequently served up by *theistic evolutionists* or *evolutionary creationists* to sustain their claim that the two creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2 “cannot be harmonized” and “were never intended to be” is that these two records “have distinct descriptions of what happens next, both in order and content”¹. To substantiate this argument, the two chapters are summarised in sequenced stages with contrasts drawn between them.

Genesis 1 is summarised as having two stages in the following sequence:

- first, God creates the habitable space: light, separation of waters, dry land (days 1-3)
- second, he fills the space: plants, heavenly lights, sea and sky creatures, land animals, and humans (male and female) together at the end (days 4-6)

Genesis 2 is summarised by four stages sequenced as follows:

- first, God creates man before there is any plant life
- second, he creates a garden and puts the man to work there
- third, God creates animals for him as helpers
- fourth, not finding a suitable helper among the animals, God forms the woman out of the man’s side (rather than forming humans together on the sixth day as in Ge 1)

Based on these summaries, the *theistic evolutionary* reading is that the sequential order of creation laid out in Genesis 1 is completely overturned in Genesis 2: for example, while man is the last made in Genesis 1, he is the first made in Genesis 2. Furthermore, this reading claims, for example, that Genesis 1 portrays the creation of man and woman concurrently while Genesis 2 has them formed separately.

Fundamental to the *theistic evolutionary* argument here is that Genesis 1 and 2 are co-extensive geographically and chronologically:

- the *garden* of Genesis 2 is presumed to be co-extensive with the *dry land* of Genesis 1
- the creative work of Genesis 2 is presumed to take place across the six days of Genesis 1

mis-reading upon mis-reading

But we have already seen that this is not an accurate reading of the text. Rather, Genesis 2:4ff deals with the Lord God’s completion of his creative work on *the sixth day*, a completion that awaited the creation of man². Furthermore, we have seen that Genesis 2 presents a different perspective from the creation of Genesis 1; one in which the *garden* of Genesis 2 is a part of the *earth* of Genesis 1 now set aside for man’s *service* through his tending of the new forms of *plant life* that God placed in the *garden*³.

As we trace through these *theistic evolutionary* readings of and claims about Genesis 1 and 2, we witness mis-reading of the text compounding earlier mis-readings. Nevertheless, the third and fourth stages of this *theistic evolutionary* reading of Genesis 2 are new aspects that need to be evaluated:

- what are we to make of the claim that the animals of Genesis 2:19 were created after man whereas Genesis 1 says they were created before man?

¹ For example, <http://biologos.org/blogs/archive/israels-two-creation-stories-part-1> [referenced Nov 30, 2015].

² Peter Heavyside, *Genesis 1-2: the duration of creation*, available here: www.globalorient.com/aigraphai/aigraphai1.php#Genesis.

³ Peter Heavyside, *Genesis 1-2: portrayals of the beginning*, *ibid.*

- what are we to make of the assertion that the creation of male and female together in Genesis 1 is contrary to the woman being made separately out of the man's side in Genesis 2?

the animals

Are the animals *formed* and *named* in Genesis 2:19-20 the same animals as those *made* in Genesis 1:20-25? Or, akin to the creation of specific vegetation for the *garden*⁴, are these separately created domesticated animals pertaining to the *garden* in which Adam is appointed to *serve*?

If they are the same animals:

- does Genesis 2:19-20 record, as claimed by *theistic evolutionists*, that the order of creation of man and the animals is different here from that we see in Genesis 1? or
- is Ge 2:19-20 a parenthetic retrospection on the animals' earlier creation to provide some background and explanation about the suitability of "a helper fit for [the man]" (Ge 2:18⁵)?

When we examine Genesis 2's reference to the animals we find a strong correspondence with the language of Genesis 1:20-25 as it relates to the terminology referring to animals:

<u>Genesis 2:19-20</u>	<u>Genesis 1:20-25</u>
<i>beast (hyt)</i>	<i>beast (hyt)</i> <i>beasts (hyt)</i>
<i>bird of the heavens ('wp hšmym)</i>	<i>birds... the heavens ('wp... hšmym)</i> <i>bird ('wp)</i> <i>birds (h'wp)</i>
<i>living creature (npš hyh)</i>	<i>living creatures (npš hyh)</i>
<i>livestock (hbhmh)</i>	<i>livestock (bhmh)</i>

This consistency of language across Genesis 1:20-25 and 2:19-20 could suggest these two records speak of the same animals. If this is the right reading, is the order of creation represented in Genesis 2 in conflict with what we see in Genesis 1? Or are we to read Genesis 2:19-20 as a flashback to the animals' earlier creation?

Theistic evolutionists pre-empt the latter reading by claiming a pluperfect rendering of Genesis 2:19, such as we find in the NIV⁶, is not warranted because "the simple past" is used in the Hebrew throughout Ge 2⁷. But this is a simplistic handling of Hebrew verbs for which rather, attention to contextual reference, narrative logic and syntax is also required in order to determine temporal meaning⁸. The significance of these aspects can be seen from considering a later narrative in Genesis where a verb with precisely the same form and syntax is used and which obviously has pluperfect sense.

When scripture records "Now the Lord had said unto Abram..." (Ge 12:1,KJV), it is evident that the KJV accurately catches the temporal sense of the opening Hebrew verb because:

- the content of what the Lord said in Genesis 12:1 includes the command that Abraham leave his country; this was Ur of the Chaldeans (Ge 11:28,31)
- prior to the narrative of Genesis 12:1 we have the record of Abraham and others leaving his country, Ur, and travelling to Haran *en route* to Canaan
- Genesis 12:4 refers to Abraham's obedience to the divine command: "So Abram went, as the Lord had told him"; and yet this departure has already been narrated in Genesis 11:31

⁴ Peter Heavyside, *ibid*.

⁵ Scripture citations are from ESV unless stated otherwise.

⁶ "Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground..." (Ge 2:19,NIV).

⁷ For example, <http://biologos.org/blogs/archive/israels-two-creation-stories-part-1> [referenced Nov 30, 2015].

⁸ See, for example, C John Collins, "The Wayyiqtol As 'Pluperfect': When And Why" in *Tyndale Bulletin* 46.1 (1995),117-140 (available here: http://www.tyndalehouse.com/tynbul/library/TynBull_1995_46_1_08_Collins_WAYYIQTOL_Pluperf_ect.pdf).

- consequently, the KJV rendering of Genesis 12:1 accurately captures the pluperfect sense of the scriptural record⁹

Thus, since the verb form and syntax of “Now the Lord God had formed...” (Ge 2:19,NIV) is the same as “Now the Lord had said unto Abram...” (Ge 12:1,KJV) and since also the narrative logic of Genesis 1-2, assuming the animals of Genesis 2:19-20 are the same animals as those *made* in Genesis 1:20-25, demands it, the pluperfect sense of Genesis 2:19 as a flashback to Genesis 1 can be a proper reading of this verse.

domesticated animals

But between Genesis 1:20-25 and 2:19-20 we also see a few changes in the language about the animals’ origins and their habitat consistent with the shift in the change of perspective from earth to garden that we saw in the context of Genesis 2’s account of man’s *formation*¹⁰:

Genesis 2:19-20	Genesis 1:20-25
<i>out of the ground (mn h’dmh)</i>	<i>Let the earth bring forth (twš’ h’rs)</i>
<i>beast of the field (hyt h’sdh)</i>	<i>beast of the earth (hyt ’rs) beasts of the earth (hyt h’rs)</i>

Within the change of perspective we saw that *field* is employed for the first time as a part of *the earth* of Ge 1 in relation to Adam’s *formation* and his appointment to *serve* in the *garden*. While *the ground* has featured previously in Genesis 1:25, this was to characterise the behaviour of those animals and, unlike Genesis 2:19, not to describe the material from which the animals were made. On the other hand, that the animals of Ge 2:19 are said to be *formed out of the ground* resonates strongly with Adam’s origins in Genesis 2:7.

These things powerfully suggest the animals of Genesis 2:19 are actually different animals from those in Genesis 1:20-25 and that, consistent with a major theme of Genesis 2, these are domesticated animals associated with the *field* and *garden* in which Adam was appointed to *serve* and especially created for this purpose. Such a reading would also explain the mention of the *birds* being *formed out of the ground* in Genesis 2:19. This need for an explanation arises from the fact the *birds* of Genesis 1 are portrayed as *swarming* associated with *the waters* on day 5 (Ge 1:20) and not as *being brought forth from the earth* on day 6 (Ge 1:24). If Genesis 2:19 speaks only of the special creation of domesticated animals on day 6, a separate creation from the animals of Genesis 1:20-25, then the apparent discrepancies just mentioned are removed¹¹.

Finally, if this reading is correct then the temporal meaning of the opening Hebrew verb in Genesis 2:19 which lies behind ““Now the Lord God had formed...” (Ge 2:19,NIV) is rendered irrelevant in the argument pushed by *theistic evolutionists*.

purpose

With either of the possible readings considered above, the claim of *theistic evolutionists* that Genesis 2 presents a different and conflicting order of creation compared to that in Genesis 1 is shown to be wrong. And again, the pursuit of a historical reading of Genesis 1-2 by *theistic evolutionists*, in order to evidence disharmony between the two chapters, overlooks the spiritual meaning that God intends we take from the *formation* of the animals in Genesis 2:19.

This includes at least that the animals spoken of in Genesis 2:19 share some commonality with Adam himself in that the material from which they were made was of the same stuff from

⁹ Any residual doubt about this is authoritatively removed by Stephen’s spirit-filled testimony that “The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, ‘Go out from your land and from your kindred...’” (Ac 6:5; 7:2-3).

¹⁰ Peter Heavyside, *ibid*.

¹¹ Likewise, a common criticism of Genesis 2:19 that there is no possibility that Adam could name all the species of animals created in Genesis 1 within a single day 6 is removed; if the reading of Genesis 2:19 is properly about domesticated animals, the population of animals paraded before Adam is significantly reduced.

which Adam was made. Indeed, other scriptures make this same point about sinful man without hope:

“What happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity” (Ecc 3:19)

And yet, this commonality was not sufficient that for Adam there could be found “a helper fit for him” (Ge 2:18,20). The appropriate characteristics of such a one would not be found in physicality alone but in the spiritual domain, in his own likeness of God (Ge 1:26-27; 1 Co 11:7). The principal purpose of this chosen *helper* was to assist Adam in maintaining God’s image and glory.

the woman

What are we to make of the *theistic evolutionary* assertion that the creation of male and female together in Genesis 1 is contrary to the woman being made separately out of the man’s side in Genesis 2?

If one were to ask people to summarise the content of Genesis 2, it would be reasonable to expect that many would do so by stating it is about the creation of man and woman. Consequently, it is entirely reasonable to employ the words of Genesis 1:27, “male and female he created them”, to summarise the events of Genesis 2:7,18-22. Given this, it stretches credulity that some would claim that the records in Genesis 1 and 2 are in conflict; rather such an argument seems very much like special pleading for one’s cause.

purpose again

Yet again, the pursuit of a *theistic evolutionary* argument misses the point of the differing details in Genesis 1 and 2 about the creation of man.

As we have seen previously¹², while Genesis 1:26-28 describes the ultimate glorious purpose that – for both male and female – God has for his creation and with mankind at creation’s head, Genesis 2 moves on to describe essential means to that end. The profound “mystery” (Ep 5:32) portrayed in Genesis 2:18-25 is that God’s glorious purpose of mankind filling the earth and showing forth his image and likeness will only finally be realised through the atoning work of the true husband. The truth of this atoning work is founded on the historicity of the Lord God’s formation of Adam and the making of the woman out of his rib.

As the gospel record tells us, “beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] interpreted to [the disciples] in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself”, including that Christ must suffer (Lk 24:26-27).

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¹² Peter Heavyside, *ibid.*