

Session 2

At our first meeting we discussed how humans had difficulty conceiving of the true nature of 'the world' because of their lack of perception of Earth's motion or conception of the enormity of time and space. We also touched on how we humans have come to a truer understanding of the nature, history and interactions within the universe.

It is interesting to compare the Genesis story of creation (below) with our current understanding. See which events match most closely in 'sequence' and which are 'misplaced'. Why might this be so?

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the world, the world was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the deep. And God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness God called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. ¹God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together God called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights—the sun to rule the day and the moon to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.' So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.' And it was so. ²⁵ God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in **our** image, according to **our** likeness; and let them have **dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' So God created humankind in God's image, in God's own image, male and female. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and **fill** the earth; and have **dominion** over the fish of the sea and over

the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth. 'God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the six day

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that God had done, and God rested on the seventh day from all the work that God had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that God had done in creation.

We now understand that the Universe flared forth some 13.8 billion years ago, as the pure Energy of Creation and seems to have begun with a definite set of rules as to how the 'game of existence' is to be played. Those rules (laws of nature) are Gravity, Electromagnetism and the Strong and Weak Nuclear forces (those last two only 'work' in the nuclei of atoms). These rules seem to encourage play (experiment) among the bits of stuff that exist in the Universe. Energy transforms into matter. Matter 'clumps up' and breaks apart and can transform back into energy. In doing so the Universe builds beings; Gas clouds and dust, Galaxies and Stars, some hundred different kinds of atoms, molecules, both simple and complex. And, through the eons of time the Universe plays, building up and breaking apart, often slowly and gently, sometimes quickly and violently, experimenting with new beings, some that can replicate themselves. We call them *living* beings. Some have self awareness and can seek a clearer truth of Existence. We humans fall into this latter category.

But how do the lives of different types of beings 'play out' in the grand game of the Universe? Gas cloud beings, formed from the Energy of Creation, shred and clump and play through gravity and give birth to star and planet beings. Star beings squeeze and heat themselves through gravity, to the point where their heart temperatures ignite the nuclear forces and transform some of their matter back into the Energy of Creation and radiate it out into the universe. In their cores stars also play with transforming some of their simple atoms into heavier ones. Hydrogen into Helium, Helium into Carbon, Carbon into Oxygen and so on. And the most massive stars, in their fiery supernova deaths, fling their heavy element creations out into the space between stars and become available to be resurrected as new star and planet beings. And the shock waves of these explosive deaths help compress gas cloud beings to densities high enough for their own gravity to collapse them into new star beings.

Planet beings, who also pull themselves together through gravity, absorb some of the Energy of Creation shed by their parent stars and also warm themselves from the inside with heat from decaying heavy element star debris. They also play electromagnetically, combining atoms into molecules, some simple some complex. And, here on Earth and most likely on many other places, some molecules form that can replicate themselves as *living* beings. Earth's earliest living beings 'ran' on heat energy from Earth's core. Eventually some living beings experimented with ways to 'run' directly on the Energy of Creation liberated and radiated by the Sun. We call these beings green plants and their successful creation, photosynthesis. And it wasn't long before other living beings learned to absorb (eat) the sugary produce of photosynthesis and thus indirectly capture the Energy of Creation liberated by the Sun.

Initially individual living beings just made exact copies of themselves and as a result their 'play' in inventing new forms was extremely slow, relying on externally induced mutations. But, some 500 million years ago, some living beings on Earth played with mixing genetic material of two different individual beings. And with that invention, evolution and diversity proliferated. On Earth, and presumably myriad other places in the Universe, living beings play and evolve with other living and non living beings, experimenting with symbiotic and competitive relationships, manipulating materials and ecosystems, both simple and complex. Name 3 examples.

With the advent of what we call 'intelligence', living beings became able to **anticipate** the results of their play/experiments and thus control their environment and accelerate their evolution.

One can imagine the life of an individual being or species of beings like the flow of sand through an hourglass. The matter and energy of the Universe flow, mix, play and evolve together through the 'Laws of Nature', collecting through the immensity of time and space, coming together for a cosmic instant at the 'neck' of the hourglass and then dissipating back out into the Universe as part of the endless flow through space and time. If there is a 'goal', Divine Plan, to all this, for those beings who have choices, it might be to enhance the play, promote the harmony and revel in the joy of the process.

Where is the Energy of Creation today, that we each utilized last week to contemplate this story?



And, last week we also spoke of the possibility that, because of the commonality of the growth/evolutionary process shared by all beings, there may be an innate, though hidden, 'awareness' of the process that breaks through with certain individuals that we call sages or prophets or saviors. If so, what are we to make of the passage in Genesis **3:22** "Then the LORD God said, 'Humans have become like one of us; they know good and evil. We must keep them from eating some of the fruit from the tree of life, or they will live forever.'" Your thoughts?