

God Called the Light Day and the Darkness Night

1:3-5

DIG: Why does Elohim first *form* the world on days one through three and then *fill* the world on days four through six? What is the meaning of ADONAI's spoken word: *And God said, and His sovereign power resulting in: And it was so?* What did the rabbis teach about *the memra*, and how did John relate *the memra* to Yeshua?

REFLECT: How aware are you of the created world in your everyday life? What do you find most remarkable about it? How does it affect your opinion of God?

The pattern for each day of creation is established here. There are seven steps, but not all are in the same order or used every day. First, except for the seventh day, each day begins with the phrase: **And God said**. Secondly, Elohim says: **Let there be**, which is one word in Hebrew. Thirdly, there is an *action*: **God created, God called or made**. Fourthly, there is a *fulfillment* of that action, which is again one Hebrew word: **and it was so, and there was or and it was so**. Fifthly, there is a *naming or blessing*: **and Elohim called or blessed**. Sixthly, the LORD *evaluates the situation or gives an expression of Divine satisfaction*: **And God saw that it was good**. Lastly, *the numbering of each day*: **And there was evening and there was morning, a first day, a second day, and so on**.

There is symmetry to this first chapter of **Genesis** where the *form* of the first three days is *filled* in the last three days. Therefore, the light and the darkness of **day one** are filled by the sun and the moon of **day four**; the sun to govern the day and the moon to govern the night. On **day two** Elohim formed the sky and the sea, which suggests that the earth was moisture before it was formed. On **day five** God filled the sky and the sea with birds and fish. The land and the plants of **day three** are filled by man and animals on the **sixth day**; they were to live on the land and eat the plants.

After the creation of the original material universe, the most significant feature of the first day was the creation of light.¹⁷ All things came into being by God's word. By the word of ADONAI were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; He puts the deep into storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere Him. For He spoke it, and it came to be, He commanded, and it stood firm (Psalm 33:6-9). This is the first record of God speaking in the Bible. And He said: Let there be (*yehi*) light (1:3a). God the Father is the creator of all things (1:1), God the Spirit is the energizer of all things (1:2), and God's Word is the revealer of all things (1:3).

The gospel of John explains this concept of the Word in a very unique way. John writes: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us; And the Word was with God, and we have seen His Shechinah glory, the Shechinah glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father; And the Word was God, full of grace and truth (John 1:1 and 14). The rabbis taught that this was the work of *the memra*, which is an Aramaic word that means *the word*. In Hebrew it is *davar*, and in Greek it is *logos* but they all mean the same thing, *the word*. By the time Christ was born, the TaNaKh had been translated into Aramaic, and whenever the Hebrew Scriptures used *davar*, the Aramaic translation used *memra*.

And out of the Aramaic translation the rabbis had seven things to say about *the memra*. First, they taught that *the memra* was a person (Isaiah 45:23). They taught that *the memra* had intellect, will, and emotion. Secondly, the rabbis taught that *the memra* was the means by which ADONAI made His covenants. Thirdly, they taught that *the memra* was the means of salvation. Fourthly, the rabbis taught that *the memra* was the means of revelation (Ezekiel 1:3). Fifthly, they taught that *the memra* was the author of creation (Psalm 33:6). Sixthly, the rabbis taught that at times *the memra* was the same as Elohim, while at other times it was distinct from God. And lastly, they taught that *the memra* was the visible appearance of the LORD in the TaNaKh (Exodus 3:5; Joshua 5:13-15).

Accordingly, the apostle John was telling those first century Jews that Yeshua was *the memra*. Because the rabbis taught that *the memra* was a person, John could say to them: The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us (John 1:14a). Because the rabbis taught that *the memra* was the means by which God made His covenants, John says to them that the Torah was given through Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17). The Jews believed that *the memra* was the means of salvation, and John said: to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become the children of God (John 1:12). The rabbis taught that *the memra* was the means of revelation, and John said that no one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known (John 1:18). Although the rabbis taught that *the memra* was the agent of creation, John would say about the Messiah: He was with God in the beginning (John 1:2). The rabbis taught that *the memra* was at times the same as Elohim, while at other times distinct from the LORD, and John said: The Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1). And even though the rabbis taught that *the memra* was the visible appearance of ADONAI in the TaNaKh, John would say: The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). So everything that the rabbis taught about *the memra* was true of Yeshua. John brought them back to their point of reference and communicated to them in terms they could understand.

The fulfillment: and there was (bayehi) light (1:3b). The light that came into existence on the first day was different from the light of the sun because the sun will not be created until the fourth day. Therefore, this provided light for the first three days. This was a necessary first step in creation. The picture this suggests is that of someone who comes to arrange items in a dark room, and before he does anything else, he turns on the light.¹⁸ This light is the Shechinah glory, the visible presence of ADONAI. For the LORD, who said: Let light shine out of darkness," made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Messiah Yeshua (Second Corinthians 4:6). The rabbis recognized that this was a unique light, a special light that functioned only during the first three days of creation and did not function thereafter. Both let there be (yehi) and there was (bayehi) are related to God's name. Yud Heh Vav Heh or the name is the source of to be, or I AM (Exodus 3:14).

God, who is the I AM, said: Let there be, and there was. The rabbinic interpretation of this verse is that when Elohim said: Let there be light, it was to reveal the light that He will ultimately illuminate Isra'el with. It was the light of the Messiah, of whom it is written: Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon You. See darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon You and His Shechinah glory appears over You. Nations will come to Your light, and kings to the brightness of Your dawn (Isaiah 60:1-3).

The rabbis teach that there are two reasons why the word light is mentioned 5 times in this passage. The first reason is that the 5 lights represent the 5 books of the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). The second reason is that there are 5 kinds of lights (the light of creation, the light of redemption, the light reserved for one who repents, the light of the Temple, and the light of the Torah and its commandments).

The evaluation: God saw that the light was good. This phrase referring to something that Elohim created being good runs through the biblical creation account. This statement stresses the divine origin and perfection of all that was created. Creation is good because the LORD is good. All that He created was good. He declared the light to be good because He is good.¹⁹ And He separated the light from the darkness (1:4). Light and darkness would function simultaneously, but in opposite spheres. This is the first of five separations in this chapter (1:4, 6, 9, 14-18, 26). The rabbis teach that ADONAI saw that the wicked were not worthy to enjoy the light; therefore, He set it apart for the righteous in the Messianic Kingdom (Isaiah 4:2-6, 11:1 to 12:6, 54:11-17).

The naming: God called the light day and the darkness he called night (verse 5a). The act of naming in Scripture shows ownership, lordship or sovereignty. To demonstrate this, one will name or even rename someone, for example, Abram and Sari to Abraham and Sarah,

Jacob to **Isra'el**, and Saul to Paul (**Second Kings 23:34; 27:17**). In this way, the kings displayed their sovereign control over the throne of Judah. Furthermore, in the Bible, naming emphasizes the nature, the essence, and the quality of that being named.

The numbering of each day: And just to guard against someone thinking that this was a long evolutionary process, **1:5b** states emphatically: **And there was evening, and there was morning - a first day**. Because the definite article before the word **day** is not included until **the sixth day**, I will be using the phrase **a first day**, and so on, to denote a difference. The Hebrew word for **day** is *yom*. Like Clarence Darrow in the Scopes monkey trial, people try to create "dinosaur space" to say that the word *yom* does not mean twenty-four hours, but could mean longer, even billions of years. It is true that when used by itself, this word could mean a longer period of time, but the context of how the word is used gives us some direction as to how it can be interpreted.

There are four important points to remember when interpreting the word *yom*. First, **whenever it is used with a number it always means a literal twenty-four hour day**. And here in **Chapter 1** it is *always* used with a number, **a first day, a second day**, and so on. Therefore, this chapter is speaking of twenty-four hour days.

A second important point is that not only do you have **a day** with a number, but you also have the phrase: **and there was evening, and there was morning**. This is because the Jews counted their days differently than the *Gentiles*. The Jewish **day** starts in the **evening, and then there is morning**. The **day** is reckoned from sundown to sundown. Taken at its natural meaning, it begs for a twenty-four hour **day**.

A third important point is that the Sabbath commandment that was given to **Isra'el** in the Torah is based on the six days of creation and the seventh **day** of rest. These commandments would become meaningless if these were not twenty-four hour days.

Lastly, within **a fourth day** there is the mention of **signs to mark seasons and days and years (1:14)**. This is already showing that in **Chapter 1**, you have the normal system of time. Again and again the natural reading of the chapter is a twenty-four hour **day**. Thus each **day** had distinct boundaries and was one in a series of days. Moshe was trying to guard in every possible way against the thought that these were not literal days.

Both **light** and **darkness** were part of **God's** creative plan. This same cycle of **light** and **darkness, day** and **night**, has been the same since **the first day** of creation. The word **light** is found five times in this verse and **darkness** is found two times, for a total of seven times. It doesn't describe a billion-year process (see <http://creation/how-old-is-the-earth>). It describes the first **day**, one cycle of **light** and **darkness**, one cycle of **evening** and **morning**. This is how it all began.