

## Creation Week: Day Five

*Genesis 1:20-23*

<sup>20</sup> And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." <sup>21</sup> So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." <sup>23</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

For thus says the LORD,  
who created the heavens  
    (he is God!)  
who formed the earth and made it  
    (he established it;  
he did not create it empty,  
    he formed it to be inhabited!)

Up to this point in creation week we have three spheres prepared as a habitation for living creatures: the sky (vv. 6-8), the earth, and the sea (vv. 9-10). We even have vegetation as food for living creatures (vv. 11-12). But there is yet neither man nor animal. This begins to change on day five. Here we have the creation of fish and fowl, to inhabit the sea and sky. As we have noted before, the Lord's work on day five correspond to his work on day two.

<u>DAY</u>	<u>DAY</u>
1 – Light	4 – Sun, moon, and stars
2 – Sea and sky	5 – Fish and fowl
3 – Earth and plants	6 – Land animals and man

Cassuto comments about these two phases of creation:

In the first stage were created the three sections of the inanimate world, followed by vegetation, that is, all the created entities that cannot move by themselves. In the second there were made, in precisely parallel order to that of the first, the mobile beings, to wit, on the fourth day the luminaries, the moving bodies in which the light formed on the first day is crystallized; and on the fifth and sixth days, in like manner, the creatures that correspond to the works of the second and third days. (Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, vol. 1, p. 42)

The ability of voluntary motion is specifically mentioned in verse 21.

It should be observed that throughout the entire creation week there is a progression from the simple to the complex. This is especially evident in the creation of living things: plants, fish, fowl, land animals, and man.

We have noted before that God's activity on each day follows the same general pattern that can be summarized in the words: commandment, fulfillment, and assessment. On days five and six, however, with the creation of animals and man, we have an additional activity, that of *blessing*.

#### Commandment

<sup>20</sup> And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens."

#### Fulfillment

<sup>21</sup> So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind.

#### Assessment

And God saw that it was good.

#### Blessing

<sup>22</sup> And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."

(1:20) *Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures* — Both the King James Version and the Revised Version are misleading when they render the passage, "Let the waters bring forth...", as if the waters themselves produced marine life.

Here we have the first use of the Hebrew word *nephesh*, which is translated "living creature." The word is often translated by the King James Version as "soul". We should note, however, that the word is used here of animals, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of [*nephesh-es*] living creatures." Consequently, the word does not refer to something which is unique to man, as the English word soul does. *Nephesh* essentially means *life, living being, breath, individual*.

(1:21) *So God created the great sea creatures* – The large and threatening creatures of the sea, which are so frightening to man, are here presented as made by God and therefore subject to his control.

In Egypt, in Mesopotamia, in the land of Canaan and in the countries of the East generally, all sorts of legends used to be recounted about the battles of the great gods against the sea dragon and similar monsters. (Cassuto, *A Commentary on Genesis*, vol. 1, p. 49)

Often these sea monsters were thought to possess divine powers. But here they are presented as creatures of God and under his control. The Scriptures frequently refer to the Lord's power over the sea and the creatures of the sea (both real and mythical) (Job 26:12-13; Ps. 74:12-14; Isa. 27:1; 51:9-10).

*and every living creature that moves* – As opposed to those living creatures that do not move (i.e., plants)

It is not stated that only a single pair was created of each kind; on the contrary, the words, "let the waters swarm with living beings," seem rather to indicate that the animals were created, not only in a rich variety of genera and species, but in large numbers of individuals. The fact that but one human being was created at first, by no means warrants the conclusion that the animals were created singly also; for the unity of the human race has a very different signification from that of the so-called animal species. (Keil & Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1, p. 61).

(1:22) *"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."* – Here we have the first mention of God pronouncing a "blessing". "The word of blessing was the actual communication of the capacity to propagate and increase in numbers" (Keil and Delitzsch, p. 61). The same blessing will be given to man (1:28; cf. 9:1), and presumably to the animals as well (cf. 8:17). This blessing is also given at various other times (see 17:20; 28:3; 35:11; 48:4).

Throughout the Bible increase is deemed a blessing in crops, flocks, herds, and children. In creating the world God produced something out of nothing—the ultimate increase. He likewise expects living creatures to be producers too. Increase is a fundamental law of life and prosperity.