

The Six Days of John Chapter 1

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The original article has been edited and amended for inclusion here.

The opening verses of John chapter 1 cause an instinctive association in the mind with the opening words of the Bible, Genesis 1:1, written so many hundreds of years before. Both chapters begin with the words "In the beginning...", and speak of the Creation, and of the light shining out of, or in, the darkness.

The Son of God's Work

In John chapter 1 is revealed the stupendous fact of the manifestation personally of the Creator among men as the Word become flesh; as the Sent One

of the Father, to do a work here on earth. This is a characteristic view of the Lord Jesus in John's Gospel, The Sent One, come to do a work. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (4:34). "I must work the works of him that sent me," (9:4). On the very night of Gethsemane, His prayer to the Father contains the words, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (17:4). On the cross itself, before bowing His head, He sounds forth the majestic words, "It is finished" (19:30).

Is it without significance that the last week of His earthly life is marked out in the same Gospel with the words: "Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany" (12:1)? The language of the God-inspired record, referring to the

approaching climax of His earthly ministry, reminds us of the command, "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work."

Six Days

Accordingly, in the first chapter of John's Gospel, there is an undercurrent of implication that clinches the clear link with Genesis 1 – that is, an implication of six days.

In today's world, in the fields of book-learning, research and science, whether true or false (1 Timothy 6:20), rapid advances are being made and gloried in, with a corresponding, satanically inspired speeding-up of the process of rejecting the Scriptures of God, in a bid to get rid of the God of the Scriptures. In such times, surely every demonstration of the underlying unity of those Scriptures strengthens the believer's confidence in their divine origin and authority; and comes, as it were, as food to the heart.

The six days of John chapter 1 are not openly enumerated as are those in Genesis 1, ("And the evening and the morning were the first day... the second day... the third day," etc.); nor are the six days directly summarized as such, as in the statement just quoted, ("six days before the passover," etc.). They are veiled, I suggest, in a manner worthy of the wisdom of Him to whom one of old said, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may

behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Psalm 119:18). Let us seek to draw back the veil and discover how the six days are outlined.

The First Day

After the introductory words the chapter records John the Baptist's witness to Christ, and verse 28 states: "These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing." Then verse 29 continues: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him...." "The next day" clearly implies a previous day.

The Second Day

As stated above, the second day is mentioned in verse 28 and on that day there came to John at Bethany, in Peraea, a deputation of Priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to whom John bore witness of Christ.

These, then, are the first and second days of the six-day period.

The Third Day

Verse 35 continues: "Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples." Here we have the third day, when (verse 37) two of John's disciples followed the Lord Jesus. Verse 39 says that they "abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour." The margin explains that

it was two hours before night; here, then, is our third day.

Two three-day Periods

At this point we pause to recall that the six days of Genesis 1 are two three-day periods, with a certain correspondence between them, and each third day a climax in itself. Something similar is found in John chapter 1. After the climax of this third day, when "they abode with him," there is, as it were, a new beginning, another sequence of three days.

The Fourth Day

The first in the new sequence, implied in verse 41, tells how Andrew "first findeth his own brother Simon," whom he brings to Christ Jesus.

The Fifth Day

The second day is found in verse 43: "The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee..." and so on, to the end of the chapter, which passage includes the finding that day of Philip and Nathanael.

The Sixth Day

Finally chapter 2, verse 1, states, "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee," etc. It is appropriate to mention here that the chapter-breaks of the Authorized Version are not in the

original; while useful for finding places in the Bible, they are not God-inspired, and we need not, in this case, separate chapter 2, verse 1, from the context of chapter 1.

And is there not also an implied link of comparison between Genesis 1 and John 1 with regard to the correspondence between the two groups of three days in each case? The following is an attempt to bring this out, taking each passage in turn.

The Two Three-day periods in Genesis chapter 1

On the first day, the light shines out of darkness, and on the corresponding fourth day the greater and lesser light bearers appear.

On the second day, the firmament of heaven and the waters above and below are introduced; and on the corresponding fifth day, creatures begin to occupy the waters below and to fly in the firmament above (The second day may also evoke a strong suggestion of an anticipatory reference to the "fountains of the great deep" and the "floodgates" of heaven that would later destroy by a flood the ungodly world, after which a dove would find rest "for the sole of her foot" and the Lord smell a "savour of rest").

On the third day there appears the solidity of the "dry land" and fruitfulness upon it; and the corresponding sixth day there is the appearance of life to occupy the land, headed by the dignity of man and wife in union and dominion.

The Two Three-day periods in John chapter 1

On the first day the light shines in the darkness, and on the corresponding fourth day there are the "light bearers" of witness. "We have found the Messiah (the Christ)," verse 41, and a reminder in verse 42, the words to Simon, with Matthew 16:18, of the "greater and the lesser", in Christ and His church: "I am the light of the world," and, "Ye are the light of the world").

On the second day the Lord Jesus comes up out of the waters of baptism (linked in 1 Peter 3:20, 21 with the Noachic flood) and the Spirit descends upon Him as a dove; an "above and below" scene where God's full satisfaction was expressed from heaven: "This is my beloved Son..." –

again, an anticipation, a type of what the Lord Jesus would do in going through the waters of judgment for His people. The corresponding fifth day, introducing Galilee and "Follow me" (verse 43), links with Matthew 4:18-22, and the calling of humble fishermen to make them "fishers of men," bringing them out from the watery deep of unsaved existence to the freedom of heaven; verse 51 also reminding of Jacob's ladder and the gracious joining of "above and below."

On the third day (an expression itself suggestive of resurrection) there is reference to an "abiding" with Him (verse 38, margin, and verse 39: "abiding" is a word emphatically associated in chapter 15 with fruit bearing) and "Come and see," verse 39 (compare "let the dry land appear"). The corresponding sixth day, with its climax of man and wife, as in Genesis 1, pictures the glorious completion of God's purpose in the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the abiding blessedness with Him, even on to a new heaven and earth (Revelation 21:1).