**INTERPRETATION WORKSHEET #2**

Text: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Genesis 1:1-2:3\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Answer Questions from the Text

**Answers Assumed in the Text**

* What are “the heavens” in verse 1? Answer: Israelites about to enter Canaan might know them as a place people aspired to reach (Genesis 11:4) but only God could possess (Deuteronomy 10:14).
* What does it mean to be “void”? Answer: Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance defines it as “emptiness.”
* What’s the difference between “livestock” and “beasts of the earth” in verse 24? Answer: Commentator Bruce Waltke sees it as a “contrast between domesticated and wild animals,”17 although you might have figured that out just from the vocabulary
* So, what about vegetarianism? Are we supposed to be vegetarians (v 29)? Answer: Investigation leads us to Genesis 9:3, which shows that God later allowed people to eat meat.

**Answers Addressed in the Text**

* What does it mean to be made in God’s image? Answer: To be “after his likeness” (v 26). In other words, God made humans to be like him.
* Then, according to this passage, what does it mean to be like God? Answer: To do what God just did. To follow his pattern of addressing incompleteness by illuminating, shaping, and filling.
* Then, what should human dominion of the earth look like? Answer: Illuminating, shaping, and filling the earth as God’s ambassadors.
* Why does God take six days to finish the earth? Answer: To set a pattern for humanity to follow when he delegates dominion to them on Day 6.
* So, what does God expect humanity to do as his image-bearers? Answer: To illuminate, shape, and fill the earth.
* What does it mean to fill the earth? Answer: To be fruitful and multiply (v 28).
* What does it mean to shape the earth? Answer: To subdue the earth and rule over the various categories of creatures: fish of the sea, birds of the heavens, every living thing that moves on the earth (v 28).
* What does it mean to illuminate the earth? Answer: This answer is unclear and may be assumed in the text. Perhaps it means to relay God’s instructions to all creation (vv 29-30).
* Why does God rest? Answer: With humanity in place to take dominion, his work of creating is finished.

**Questions Answered from Other Texts**

* What is the connection between this narrative and scientific theories of origins?
* When were Satan and the angels created?
* How did plants survive without the pollinating role of insects?
* Why does God delegate dominion to humanity? (David asked this same question in Psalm 8.)
* So, what might cause humanity to lose the image of God? Is that possible?

2. Context, Flow of Thought, & Main Point

**Context**

* **Literary** - Because Genesis 1 is the beginning, we have no prior literary context. Instead, this chapter will establish the context for everything that follows. Thus, we should read Genesis 2:4–25 (and following passages) in light of Genesis 1:1–2:3.
* **Inter-textual** - Though alluded to constantly, Genesis 1:1–2:3 is quoted explicitly only three times in the New Testament.
  + In Mark 10:1–12, Jesus uses the creation account to set a pattern for human existence, particularly for marriage and divorce.
  + In 2 Corinthians 4:1–6, Paul uses the creation account to justify his ministry of the gospel, which illuminates the darkness of people’s hearts.
  + In Hebrews 4:1–16, the author uses the creation account to motivate his audience to believe God’s Word and so rest from their works just as God rested from his.

**Author’s Flow of Thought**

* For Genesis 1, we began this process in the previous chapter when we observed the structure. We noted that:
  + the prelude introduces the creation and the three areas of incompleteness (formlessness, emptiness, and darkness);
  + Day 1 addresses the darkness;
  + Day 2 addresses the formlessness;
  + Day 3 addresses the formlessness and the emptiness;
  + Day 4 addresses the darkness;
  + Day 5 addresses the emptiness;
  + Day 6 addresses the emptiness.
* The passage climaxes on Day 6 when God not only addresses the emptiness, but he also delegates dominion to his human subjects. He creates them to be like him. This God, who labored to illuminate, shape, and fill, now calls men and women to do the same.
* They are to shine his light (possibly his word, truth, or glory), shape his world (subdue it and rule it), and fill it up with more people who will continue the work (be fruitful and multiply). As they labor, their heavenly Father will provide them with all the sustenance and instruction they need (vv 29–30).

**Main Point**

* **God’s creative work sets a pattern for human dominion of the earth, and therefore humanity realizes its potential when it illuminates, shapes, and fills the earth in God’s name.**

3. Connections to Jesus

- Death and resurrection, or

- Need for repentance and forgiveness, or

- Proclamation to all nations

* Moses called Israel to illuminate, shape, and fill the earth in God’s name. They would never perfectly fulfill this mandate; they desperately needed the Messiah’s calling to repentance and forgiveness. So also we should shine the truth of the gospel, shape our world for God’s glory, and fill the earth with more disciples. Again, while we can’t perfectly meet this goal, our call is to continue persevering in faith in pursuit of this goal. Jesus died and rose to make that pursuit possible (Matthew 28:18–20).