

Bible Devotions: Lock Stock & Barrel
Devotional Reading for Outdoorsmen
(Old Testament)

Genesis 1:1 – 2:3

A Shooter Looks At Creation

I begin this series of devotions with a shooter's look at the Biblical story of creation. After all, this is *Bible Devotions: Lock Stock & Barrel*. We know that there's a lot of fantastic things here, most of them unexplainable, although men try in scientific or philosophical ways. I cannot explain it. I just believe it. I also believe that nothing could have been created except through Jesus. At least that's what we read in John 1:1-4: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*

As you read this, remember that just as Jesus is essential for the creation of the world, so Jesus is essential for a new creation through faith in Him, a creation where *old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new* (II Corinthians 5:17). That means giving your life to Him, experiencing His forgiveness, and confessing Jesus is Lord.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light... And God divided the light from the darkness. (Genesis 1:1-4).

There can be no measure of accuracy in the shooting sports without a clear definition between light and dark areas. For the shooter using open sights, 'daylight' must be seen on each side of the front sight as it rests in the darker rear notch. Users of aperture rear sights depend on a gathering of light inside a dark ring which in turn highlights a dark front sight, which is somewhat automatically centered. In this case, the target is rather naturally acquired. For the marksman using a scope, several advantages are evident, one being the light-gathering ability of the optics which allows for more precise aiming under the dark conditions of overcast days, twilight, or thick forests.

Then God said, "Let there be a firmament..." And God called the firmament Heaven. (Genesis 1:6-8)

The firmament, our earth's atmosphere, is probably the one creative work most taken for granted. Here we have the delicate balance of life-giving elements, the filtering of deadly solar energies, the beauty of northern lights flickering in the sky, the pressures and temperatures necessary to sustain earthly life, and the clarity to view everything that God created.

Even though the atmosphere is fairly stable, shooters have to deal with variable conditions. A gun fired at sea level will shoot differently at higher elevations and even in different temperatures. Shots fired during a time of nice weather, that is, a high pressure system, hit just a little differently during bad weather, that is, a low pressure system. The differences are usually tiny but they are there.

Also, it is this day of creation that gave us air resistance. Because of this, precision shooters study external ballistics. Even casual shooters know something about bullet profiles and performance.

Then God called the dry land Earth... Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree..." And the earth brought forth grass... herbs... trees. (Genesis 1:10-12)

Just as the earth yields ores and minerals to be mastered by men's hands, so the earth yields plant life to be used for food, shelter, ornamentation, and conservation. We sow food plots to help sustain and improve wildlife habitat. We build our homes and hunting lodges from trees and tree by-products. We carve wood stocks and finish them with natural finishes. We eat the bounty of the land. From the least bean to the largest beam, we can't escape coming into contact with some form of plant life every day.

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens... and let them be for signs and seasons and days and years... and to rule over the day and over the night." (Genesis 1:14-18)

Shooters are bound by the natural laws involving time and distance. A firing pin falls in an interval of time usually measured in milliseconds. Bullet velocity is measured in feet per second. My truck's speedometer shows miles per hour. Day begins at sunrise; night begins at sunset. We hunt and fish

at various seasons of the year. All these measurements of time are under God's sovereign control (Joshua 10:12; II Kings 20:9-11; Matthew 27:45).

Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens." So God created... every winged bird according to its kind. (Genesis 1:20-21)

Hanging on a wall in my office are tail mounts and pictures representing the various species of birds I've hunted. These remind me that each bird was created after its own kind. It pleased God to create biological diversity within species and from specie to specie.

Numerous competitive shooting sports such as trap and skeet, sporting clays, and turkey shoots, have their roots in the traditions of upland bird and waterfowl hunting.

Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind... everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind... Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:24-28)

God's final act of creation resulted in the creation of every living thing that moves on the earth, both animals and humans. It is worth noting that on this day God gave His first command to mankind: subdue and dominate. This is our Biblical mandate for conservation and sound ecological practices.

Historically, we've not done a good job. Poor stewardship of our natural resources has resulted in a long list of endangered and extinct species. Thankfully, there are enough good people working to reverse this and success stories abound.

Practicing our shooting skills is necessary for the fair chase and humane killing of game animals included in this day of creation. Cheating, breaking the law, causing suffering, and stealing from others do not characterize God's command to subdue and have dominion. By the way, those who do these bad things are not hunters. They are poachers.

Real hunters obey the rules and regulations of the land. They are involved in the stewardship of natural resources. God is honored by the type of conservation that benefits game and non-game species, and protects all renewable resources.

And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested... (Genesis 2:2)

Our Heavenly Father's example of rest is often overlooked today. We need to refresh our spirits, calm our emotions, and restore strength to our bodies. Consider how you hold a firearm when you shoot. Whether it's standing, sitting, kneeling, or prone, none of these methods is as good as a solid, firm bench rest. Likewise, without rest in our lives, we will be unsteady and unbalanced. Rest and relaxation should be observed daily, weekly, and even annually.

Creation is not merely science. Creation is a matter of faith. L. D. Johnson wrote that the scientist who discusses ultimate meaning ceases to be a scientist and becomes a man of faith or of no faith (Johnson, 1969). Furthermore, the Bible cannot be viewed as a book of science, history, or literature. Indeed, it may be these things and much more. Herschel Hobbs explained that the Bible may not tell a man all he wants to know but it does tell him all he needs to know about his moral duty and spiritual destiny (Hobbs, 1971).

As I said in the beginning, we can't discuss creation without discussing Jesus. He was and is involved in every aspect of creation. Likewise, He wants to be involved in every aspect of your life. He can create a new life in you. I hope He has done so already. Enjoy His creation as a faithful follower of the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Savior of your soul, the Creator of heaven and earth and you.

Bible Devotions: Hook Line & Sinker (study guide)

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HOOK

1. What is your favorite science subject?

2. Name your favorite things to eat: vegetable, fruit, fish, reptile/amphibian, bird, mammal.

3. Describe how you can convert your backyard into a mini-conservation area.

LINE

Nothing could have been created except through Jesus.

Just as Jesus is essential for the creation of the world, so Jesus is essential for a new creation through faith in Him

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How do you practice stewardship outdoors? What do you do to remind others of our Biblical responsibility for stewardship of natural resources?

What is your view of evolution? How do you balance this with your view of Biblical creation? Does the work of Jesus in creation and salvation affect your thinking? How?

SINKER

Take a few minutes to write your thoughts on this devotional. Reflect on your own experiences.

Key words: creation new life stewardship
