

Let the Water Teem with Living Creatures and Let Birds Fly Above the Earth

1: 20-23

DIG: what happened on the fifth day of creation? How long did it take to create the birds? What does the phrase, according to their kinds, mean? Where else is the phrase, be fruitful and increase in number, seen?

REFLECT: What myths do you see perpetrated on society today? By whom? For what purpose? How much do you think God cares for you? Look at His creation of the birds of the sky, do you think Elohim cares about them? **Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows (Matthew 10:29-31).** How should this affect the way you live your life? How can you help others?

And God said marks the beginning of a fifth day. By this time the creation of the earth and the heavens were complete; however, the earth was still **empty** of inhabitants (1:1). **But God formed it to be inhabited (Isaiah 45:18).** On the **second day God formed** the sky and the sea, and here **He fills** the sky with birds and the sea with **living creatures**. Once again, **Elohim** speaks these into existence all on the same day and all at the same moment. **He creates something out of nothing.**

Let the water teem with living creatures. During the fifth and sixth day the term **living creatures** will be used seven times. There is a deliberate word play in the Hebrew language; it literally reads: *Let the waters swarm with swarming things. And let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky (1:20).*

The action: In verse 1:21a, we read: **So God created (bara) the great creatures of the sea (tanninim).** With so many fish, the reference to one specific kind of creature seems significant. Why are the *tannin* singled out? Perhaps the answer is found in the fact that ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian mythology was filled with fantastic tales of **sea monsters**. These were supposed to be gods, and the ancient pagans feared these **sea-creature** deities, as if they were evil itself. Such myths were common at the time Moses wrote **Genesis**. So here the Bible simply states that **Elohim created** even the largest, most

monstrous creatures of the deep. They are not gods to be feared; they are created beings like every other form of life that the LORD created (Psalm 74:13-14; Isaiah 27:1, 51:9).³² **The rabbis teach that these sea monsters refer to Leviathan and his mate who lived in the deepest part of the ocean and supported the earth on his back. His mouth was always open, swallowing and eating fish. Every seventy years he lifted up his tail, causing great earthquakes. But he could not be allowed to live with his mate because they would have many children and destroy the world. So God killed and salted the female and set her aside for the great feast of the righteous in the world to come.**

And every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind (1:21b). The word living (*nephesh*) appears here for the first time and literally means *that which breathes*. The scope and complexity of the **living creatures** that God created is probably only exceeded by the stars. The creation of **the birds** is varied beyond comprehension and instantaneous. The term **winged bird** means *anything that flies, including insects (Deuteronomy 14:19-20)*.

Once again we see the phrase: **according to their kinds**. This allows for variations within *species*, but does not allow any change from one *species* to another. This is the inescapable message of this passage. It is used every time procreation is mentioned in the book of **Genesis**. It emphasizes the very fact that evolution cannot face: when **living creatures** reproduce, they can only reproduce their own **kind**. Monkeys do not reproduce humans. And yet scientist after scientist claims that we evolved from lower life forms and that this happened by chance so that we are the result of a cosmic accident. Random noise could never produce classical music. Random letters floating in an ocean of alphabet soup could never spell out the novel *Moby Dick*. When we hear the music, we know there was a composer. When we read a great novel, we know there was an author. Yet they reject the evidence of an intelligent **Creator**. Why? Because belief in evolution is a spiritual, not a rational, choice they have made. They are blindly devoted to chance because they do not want to be morally accountable to a personal and holy **Creator**.³³

The evaluation: **And God saw it was good (1:21c)**. It is a reflection of His nature.

The blessing: Elohim blessed them and said: **Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth (1:22)**. **The rabbis teach that they needed a special blessing because many of them are caught and destroyed.** Although not the object of ADONAI's love, as mankind would be, animals are nevertheless cared for by Him. Not even **a sparrow** falls to the ground without His notice and care (**Mat 10:29**), and He provides food continually for them (**Mat 6:26**). It is noteworthy, that **God**

completed **His** creation of the fish and the fowl *before He* gave the order to **be fruitful and increase in number**. And if **Genesis 1** were simply symbolic language describing how life evolved **on the earth**, this verse would be unnecessary.

God showed **His** gracious loving care to the animals by blessing them and making it possible for them to **be fruitful and increase in number**. They would soon spread out into the entire world. **He** would give a similar command to the animals after emerging from the ark after the Flood (**8:17**). It is interesting that a similar command was given to mankind both at creation (**1:28**) and also after the Flood (**9:1** and **7**). Fertility of life comes from the blessing of **the LORD**.

The numbering of each day: **And there was evening, and there was morning - a fifth day (1:23)**. One more day of creation was left before **Elohim** would rest. **The sixth day** would be the most remarkable of all.