

Urgently Needed: Observant and Honest Bible Readers

The First Story in Genesis

By Jim Myers

Primary Guideline

My belief system will be large enough to include all facts, open enough to be questioned and examined, flexible enough to change if errors or new facts are discovered.

Linguistic Model

A word consists of symbols or sounds with an attached bundle of associations that provides meanings. The associations were acquired through the source's life experiences, beginning with culture.

First Goal

Discover the Source's (writer or speaker) meanings of words first.

The words of the Bible, especially in English translations, are among the most important, valuable, and powerful assets in the world today for many reasons, beginning with these:

1. Approximately **2.38 billion people** practice some form of Christianity globally. This means that about **one-third of the world's total population** is Christian.
2. English is spoken by some **1.75 billion people worldwide** as their first or second language – that's about twenty percent of the world's population.
3. English is sometimes called **the "operating system" of the global economic conversation** being conducted by thought leaders and decision-makers.
4. English translations of the Bible contain words, ideas, and stories that are in the neural networks of one-third of the world's total population right now.
5. 1.75 billion of those people are capable of directly engaging with each other in conversations instantaneously by using smartphones.
6. According to Statista, the current number of smartphone users in the world today is **6.648 billion**, and this means **83.72% of the world's population** owns a smartphone.

However, at this moment, most of those conversations would simply repeat the ideas and beliefs that have polarized and divided Christian institutions for the last five-hundred years. *Exploring Biblical Heritages* provides a way to transform these conversations into opportunities to build strong values-based relationships between people who may have been on opposite sides of belief conflicts when the conversations began. How do they do this? They simply agree to be **observant** as they read the Bible and be **honest** in discussions about what they observed. Agreeing to follow this guideline in these conversations is the key to fulfilling their agreement.

*My belief system will be large enough for all facts,
open enough to be examined and questioned,
and flexible enough to change if errors or new facts are discovered.*

Now let me give you an example of how we do this. If you have been reading my emails for a month or more, you will be very familiar with the first story in Genesis. If you haven't read them, [click on this link](#). We observed the following things in the first story, which begins with the words of Genesis 1:1.

In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth.

Observations

1. *in the **beginning***
2. **God created**
3. *“**heaven**” is the name of a solid dome-like structure that is located below the surface of deep waters. It is barrier that separated water outside of it from water inside it.*
4. *The water inside the dome gathered itself into one place, thereby revealing dry ground in the place that had been under water before. The dry ground is named “**earth**.” Without the solid dome-like barrier being in place first, dry ground could not exist.*

Keeping these observations in mind, carefully observe what the beginning of the second story in Genesis reveals (Genesis 2:4b *New King James Version*):

“In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heaven”

Observations

1. *in the **day***
2. *the **Lord God made***
3. **earth**
4. **heaven**

There are **very important differences** between the two stories, beginning with the impossibility of the earth being made before the heaven existed. **Being aware of these differences is essential for discovering the wisdom** that the ancient source (author) taught those hearing the stories.

*The ancient instructors of this wisdom,
expected their students to ask questions
as soon as they saw the differences.*

The wisdom embedded in the stories in Genesis is still there and can be discovered in English translations today. Conversations between Bible readers who are **observant** and **honest** with each other can lead to conversations about many other things!