



## Confusion, Muddles, & Mixtures – Solving the Crisis of Chaos

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Before God started creation, the world was dark, chaotic, and empty, reflecting the character of evil, not the character of God. God was not about to leave the world in that state, so, one at a time, He changes what was unlike Him into something that represents Him well. He begins by speaking light into darkness, then changes chaos into order (the subject of this post), and finally fills the emptiness with abundance. Each act reveals what God values.

Moses shows how God solves the crisis of chaos by repeating the word "separated" five times (and implying it a sixth). Old Testament authors often used repetition to highlight a point. Moses does it a lot, especially when he's talking about creation. Moses keeps repeating the word "separated" to focus us on God's method of bringing order out of the primordial mess. In modern day language, we'd say that God solves the crisis of chaos by creating "boundaries." Same thing.

Take a look at the boundaries God created as He brought order out of chaos:

*Genesis* <sup>1:4</sup> and God **separated** the light from the darkness.... <sup>1:6</sup> Then God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it **separate** the waters from the waters." <sup>1:7</sup> And God made the expanse, and **separated** the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so... <sup>1:9</sup> Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear"[one more separation]; and it was so. <sup>1:14</sup> Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to **separate** the day from the night, and let be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years; ... <sup>1:18</sup> and to govern the day and the night, and to **separate** the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good.

When God demolishes the unformed chaos He does it by separating things that shouldn't co-exist. He eliminates unwelcome mixtures and turns what is blurred into recognizable elements. He separates light from darkness and day from night, the atmosphere in the heavens from the water on the earth, the oceans from the dry land. Again and again, God separates and order emerges. And – note this well – with His boundaries God brings the world into a state that pleases Him.

### Another Repetition: "After Their Kind"

God not only produces order, He perpetuates order – that's what "after their kind" implies. God repeats this idea eight times:

*Genesis* <sup>1:11</sup> Then God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit **after their kind**, with seed in them, on the earth"; and it was so... <sup>1:12</sup> And the earth

*brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed **after their kind**, and trees bearing fruit, with seed in them, **after their kind**; and God saw that it was good ... <sup>1:21</sup> And God created the great sea monsters, and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed **after their kind**, and every winged bird **after its kind**; and God saw that it was good ... <sup>1:25</sup> And God made the beasts of the earth **after their kind**, and the cattle **after their kind**, and everything that creeps on the ground **after its kind**; and God saw that it was good.*

At first glance “after their kind” doesn’t seem to have much to do with order, but think about it. “After their kind” means that pear trees won’t suddenly sprout lemons, nor will a giraffe give birth to a cheetah.

There’s variety but never randomness. God is reliable. His reliable (though at times unpredictable) actions match His reliable (but predictable) character.

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*God uses boundaries to bring order out of chaos.  
He did it in creation ... He does it still.*

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### **Order and Disorder in Our Lives**

Every one of us has a threshold below which disorder unsettles us, but our “disorder thresholds” rarely match the thresholds of those around us. If you’ve ever shared a living space with another person you know just what I mean. One files every sheet of paper; another’s desk is a mess. One hangs up every garment; the other’s clothes land where they left their body. But, and here’s my point, a need for an order characterizes every person, even the “messy.” Why? Because God has built His desire for order into each of us. We differ, sometimes wildly, from each other in the degree of order we like, but we all have some need for order – that’s one way we resemble God.

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### **Let’s Make This Personal**

- How would you describe your “disorder threshold”? How would someone close to you describe it?
- When you set boundaries, do you tend towards a more rigid or more fluid style? Is it easy or difficult for you to adapt your style to the situation?
- Do you trust that God, post-creation, continues to be able and willing to bring order out of chaos?
- Do you trust that God is able and willing to bring order out of *your* chaos? (Have you asked for His guidance in this process?)

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