

**~Other Speakers A-F: St. Augustine:**

24. For they say: "Even if these things are true, still Moses did not refer to these two things when he said, by divine revelation, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' By the term 'heaven' he did not mean that spiritual or intelligible created order which always beholds the face of God. And by the term 'earth' he was not referring to unformed matter."

"What then do these terms mean?"

They reply, "That man [Moses] meant what we mean; this is what he was saying in those terms." "What is that?"

"By the terms of heaven and earth," they say, "he wished first to indicate universally and briefly this whole visible world; then after this, by an enumeration of the days, he could point out, one by one, all the things that it has pleased the Holy Spirit to reveal in this way. For the people to whom he spoke were rude and carnal, so that he judged it prudent that only those works of God which were visible should be mentioned to them."

But they do agree that the phrases, "The earth was invisible and unformed," and "The darkened abyss," may not inappropriately be understood to refer to this unformed matter--and that out of this, as it is subsequently related, all the visible things which are known to all were made and set in order during those specified "days."

25. But now, what if another one should say, "This same formlessness and chaos of matter was first mentioned by the name of heaven and earth because, out of it, this visible world--with all its entities which clearly appear in it and which we are accustomed to be called by the name of heaven and earth--was created and perfected"? And what if still another should say: "The invisible and visible nature is quite fittingly called heaven and earth. Thus, the whole creation which God has made in his wisdom--that is, in the beginning--was included under these two terms. Yet, since all things have been made, not from the essence of God, but from nothing; and because they are not the same reality that God is; and because there is in them all a certain mutability, whether they abide as the eternal house of God abides or whether they are changed as the soul and body of man are changed--then the common matter of all things invisible and visible (still formless but capable of receiving form) from which heaven and earth were to be created (that is, the creature already fashioned, invisible as well as visible)--all this was spoken of in the same terms by which the invisible and unformed earth and the darkness over the abyss would be called. There was this difference, however: that the invisible and unformed earth is to be understood as having corporeal matter before it had any manner of form; but the darkness over the abyss was spiritual matter, before its unlimited fluidity was harnessed, and before it was enlightened by Wisdom."

26. And if anyone wished, he might also say, "The entities already perfected and formed, invisible and visible, are not signified by the terms 'heaven and earth,' when it reads, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth'; instead, the unformed beginning of things, the matter capable of receiving form and being made was called by these terms--because the chaos was contained in it and was not yet distinguished by qualities and forms, which have now been arranged in their own orders and are called heaven and earth: the former a spiritual creation, the latter a physical creation."