

Creationism

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The book of Genesis describes the creation of the heavens and the earth. God is described as the Creator and the process of His creation is shown in the first two chapters of Genesis. This paper will address what the Bible says about creation, including who created, how creation occurred and when creation occurred.

We believe that God communicated truthfully about the creation account in Genesis 1-2. We also believe that God's Word is the final source of authority on all matters that it touches, including how all things were made. In other words, we believe what God says is more important than what anyone else says about the creation of the universe.

If this view of the Bible is not accepted, then the following presentation will carry no weight. Before we address the teaching of the Bible on the subject of creation, we must agree on the significance of what it teaches. We have designed this paper with the understanding that the reader accepts the authority of the Word of God.

God created all things

That God is the Creator of all is taught throughout the Bible.

1. God created the heavens and the earth (Psalm 33:6; Jonah 1:9; Jeremiah 32:17; Revelation 14:7).
2. God created all that is in the heavens and the earth (Nehemiah 9:6; Revelation 10:6; Acts 14:15).
3. God created the heavens and the earth from the beginning (Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 1:10).
4. God created the heavens and the earth from nothing that was visible (Hebrews 11:3).
5. God created the world by Himself, without any help (Isaiah 44:24).

Therefore, the physical universe is not eternal. The universe had a beginning and God was present to make all things.

Also, the Bible teaches that the universe did not begin spontaneously. It did not just occur without being brought into being by God. God was the intentional cause of the beginning of the universe.

The question of who created is indisputable even if we do not believe the Bible is completely truthful. Yet while Christians agree on who created, there is disagreement about how God created.

God created Adam and Eve as the first people

Many consider the opening chapters of Genesis to be an allegory or myth. Yet the New Testament does not.

Luke's genealogy of Christ traces Him all the way to Adam (Luke 3:38). Jesus referred back to Adam and Eve to defend His position on marriage and divorce in Matthew 19:3-6. He likewise affirmed the story of Cain and Abel as historical in Matthew 23:29-36. In Luke 11:50-51 Jesus shows that Adam's son Abel was considered a real person. He also considered Noah to be a historical figure and the flood to be an actual event in Matthew 24:37-39.

Also, Paul understood the Genesis account to be literal when he taught that sin came into the world through the disobedience of Adam (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:22). He referred to Adam as the "first man, Adam, became a living soul." He obviously believed Adam to be a real person, the first man, and the story of Adam's sin to be a true account of man. This is conclusive if we believe the New Testament is God's Word.

This sudden creation of man, whom God uniquely fashioned after His own image, is not only taught in Genesis 1 but it actually an important part of a proper view of mankind. That man did not evolve from a lower form of being but was specifically created is necessary in order to understand the importance of Adam's sin and rebellion against God. A proper understanding of man's sin is essential in order to understand the importance of God's forgiveness in Christ. This is a critical part of the Christian faith.

God created the universe in six days

Genesis 1 describes the time period that God used to create all things. God created in six days. Since God is all-powerful, He could have created everything in a moment. He could have also created everything over billions of years. Yet He is described as creating everything in six days.

Many understand these six days as ages of time rather than actual twenty-four hour periods. It is certainly possible to understand the word "day" (*yom* in Hebrew) as being longer than twenty-four hours. In fact, Genesis 2:4 uses the word "day" to refer to the six-day creation, not a twenty-four hour period of time.

While it is possible to understand these six days as being ages rather than a twenty-four hour period, there are several significant problems with this as we look at the text.

The biggest problem is the phrase "and there was morning and there was evening." This occurs at the conclusion of each one of the six days of Genesis 1. This appears to eliminate the possibility of each day as a long period of time. Indeed, it defines what is meant by a "day" in Genesis 1:5 "and God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day." The reference to evening and morning clarifies that each day was a normal, literal

day and, importantly, would have been understood as such by the readers of Genesis.

Another problem comes from Genesis 1:14, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years.” If the “days” here are really “ages,” then what are the years? And what is the “night?” The passage becomes difficult to make sense out of if an attempt is made to define the word “day” to be a long period of time.

The word for “day” (*yom*) should also be understood as a normal literal day because of how it is used in the context of each day in Genesis 1. Whenever *yom* is used in the Old Testament and modified by a number, it always means a twenty-four hour period of time.

Furthermore, other passages refer back to the Genesis account to say that God created the world in six days (Exodus 20:11; Exodus 31:17). God’s six days of creation and one day of rest served as the basis for establishing the Sabbath day. Not only does the context of those passages show that the word day is used literally, but whenever the word “days” occurs in the plural (*yamim* in Hebrew) in the Old Testament narratives, such as Exodus, it always carries the meaning of a normal day.

Also, since Adam was created on the sixth day and lived past the seventh day, he would be a very old person if “day” meant a very long period of time. Yet the Bible records Adam’s age at his death to be 930 years (Genesis 5:5), which is consistent with the lifespan of others before the flood.

In light of these observations, it becomes increasingly difficult to consider the account of creation as anything more than a fictional story without taking the six days literally.

God created man from the beginning of the creation

Genesis 1:1 states that “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” The phrase “the beginning” is used by Jesus to teach that God made man in “the beginning.”

In Mark 10:6 Jesus says, “But from **the beginning of creation**, God made them male and female.” This statement strongly implies that the beginning of the human race, specifically Adam and Eve, was contemporary with the beginning of all things.

In Mark 13:19 Jesus says, “For those days will be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since **the beginning of creation** which God created, until now, and never shall.” The word for tribulation is used only in connection with human suffering in the New Testament. The assumption is that man existed since the beginning of creation.

The New Testament epistles give further support for a literal reading of the creation account in Genesis.

Romans 1:20 says “For since **the creation of the world** His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so they are without excuse.” God’s attributes have been clearly seen since the time He created the world. This can be understood if man was created two days after the sun, moon and stars. If there were billions of years before man, who is clearly seeing God’s invisible attributes in the creation? Paul must be referring to man, who is accountable for this revelation. Therefore, man must have existed since the creation of the world.

Hebrews 4:3 notes that “His works were finished **from the foundation of the world.**” Since the creation of man is certainly among God’s created works that were finished, man was created and God’s works were finished with the foundation of the world, not billions of years later. There cannot be a long period of time between God’s creation of man and the foundation of the world.

Hebrews 9:26 shows that sin must have been present from the foundation of the world, “Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often **since the foundation of the world.**” The writer of Hebrews is using a hypothetical argument to show that Christ’s death is sufficient for all sin. If Christ’s death was not sufficient, He would have needed to suffer often to atone for sin that has been committed “since the foundation of the world.” This hypothetical argument presupposes that man existed since the foundation of the world. Under a long time frame between the creation of the world and the creation of man, there would be no one with sin to be atoned for since the foundation of the world. Indeed, Christ could not have been present in human form from the foundation of the world except if man was created from its beginning.

Isaiah 40:21 uses both “the beginning” and “the foundations of the earth” as parallel expressions and suggests that man has known about God’s nature since that time. Other passages outside of the creation account in Genesis that imply man’s presence at or near the beginning include Proverbs 8:29-31; Matthew 13:35; Luke 11:50; John 8:44; John 9:32 and 2 Peter 3:4.

While the phrases like “the beginning of creation” are general and include the entire six days of God’s creation, it would be quite a stretch to say that there are millions or billions of years between the beginning of creation and the creation of man.

The gaps in the gap theory

The gap theory views Genesis 1:1 as the first creation and Genesis 1:2 as beginning a re-creation by God in six literal days. A great cataclysm supposedly left the earth in darkness and covered with water. The cataclysm is often explained as a divine judgment because of the sin of Satan in rebelling against God. There is nothing in the Bible that even implies this alleged judgment, it is sheer speculation.

Gap theorists base their case on a false distinction between the words “create” (*bara* in Hebrew) in Genesis 1:1 and “make” (*asah* in Hebrew) in Exodus 20:11. Thus God re-made what He originally created. However, these words are clearly used interchangeably, at least when God is the Maker, not only in Genesis (cf. 1:21, 25;

1:26-27; 2:4) but throughout the Old Testament (cf. Nehemiah 9:6 with Genesis 1:1 and Psalm 146:1-5).

Gap theorists also claim that “was” (*hayetah*) in Genesis 1:2 should be “became” giving the reading, “And the earth became (or had become) without form and void.” However, this verb is the regular Hebrew verb of “being” (*hayetha*), not the word normally used to denote a change of an existing state (*haphak*). While *hayetha* could mean became, it simply means “was” in 98 percent of its Old Testament occurrences. This fact, along with the context, has caused every standard translation of the Bible to translate Genesis 1:2 “was,” rather than “became.” There is nothing in the context of Genesis 1 to conclude this verb should be rendered “became.”

Grammatically, Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 use a Hebrew device which joins the two verses into a single unit. Genesis 1:1 ends with phrase “and the earth” (*erets*) and Genesis 1:2 begins with the identical phrase. In Hebrew, this is a means on linking the two together without the possibility of separation.

Since there is no biblical evidence supporting the gap theory, and since there is grammatical evidence to oppose inserting a gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, the gap theory should be rejected. The only cause for such a theory comes from an interpretation of evidence outside the Bible, not from any biblical data.

The age of the man

Many have investigated the question of the age of the earth. The early evolutionists of the 19th century considered the earth to be around 20 million years old. Today evolutionary theorists generally consider the earth to be 4.6 billion years old.

Some have attempted to use the Bible to prove the age of the earth. This has been done by using the biblical genealogies in order to determine when God created Adam. The biggest challenge that must be faced is the possibility of gaps in the genealogies. Examples of genealogies with gaps in them are found in Ezra 7:3-4 (cf. 1 Chronicles 6:6-10), Exodus 6:16-20 (cf. 1 Chronicles 7:20-27) and Matthew 1:8 (cf. 1 Chronicles 3:11-12).

Because biblical genealogies do not necessarily reflect a strict father-son relationship it is impossible to determine with certainty the exact year when God created Adam. However, because we know of some gaps in genealogies does not mean that they are useless to us in biblical chronology. After all, the reason we know that gaps exist in genealogies is because the missing names are supplied elsewhere in the Bible. Also, the gaps that exist are fairly minor, not many thousands of years.

Other biblical evidence beyond the genealogies assists us in determining exact dates back to Abraham. 1 Kings 6:1 states the Exodus took place 480 years before the fourth year of Solomon’s reign, which has been identified with considerable certainty as 965/966 B.C. This means the date of the Exodus was 1446 B.C. The Israelites were in Egypt for 430 years (Exodus 12:40), thus Jacob arrived there in

1876 B.C. Jacob came to Egypt at age 130 (Genesis 47:9) so we can conclude Jacob was born in 2006 B.C. Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob was born (Genesis 25:26), therefore Isaac was born in 2066 B.C. Since Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born (Genesis 21:5), so we can conclude that Abraham was born in 2166 B.C.

For the years prior to Abraham we have genealogies from Genesis 5 and 11. The possibility of gaps exists but it is important to notice that the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 are more specific than other biblical genealogies. They include not only who they fathered, but how long they lived.

Furthermore, Jude 14 describes Enoch as “the seventh generation from Adam.” Therefore, at least the first seven generations (of a total of 20 from Adam to Abraham according to Luke 3:34-38) are consecutive and without gaps. Also, Enoch’s son, Methuselah died in the year of the flood (Genesis 5:26, 28; 7:6) so we have a literal record of years from Adam to the flood. The genealogical record of Genesis 5 is complete and chronologically trustworthy.

Since we have an exact date for the birth of Abraham (2166 B.C.) and since we have exact years from Adam to the flood (a total of 1,656), we are left with only the genealogy between Noah and Abraham. If, like Genesis 5, there are no gaps in the genealogy of Genesis 11, then we could attempt to count the years and come to a conclusion regarding the year of Adam’s creation.

However, we cannot settle on the exact date of Adam’s creation due to the possible gaps in the genealogical record in Genesis 11. But we can establish a general idea of the timeframe of Adam’s creation because the gaps in Genesis 11 can only be a few at the very most before the genealogy becomes meaningless. We can then conclude that Adam was created before 4000 B.C. and perhaps even many hundreds of years earlier. To conclude man to be much older is to ignore the biblical record.

The age of the universe

Adam was the first man (Genesis 1-2; 1 Corinthians 15:45). God made man from the beginning of the creation (Mark 10:6; 13:19, etc.). We can determine that man was created at least 6,000 thousand years ago, sometime before 4000 B.C. Therefore, we can reasonably conclude that the universe was created only several thousands of years ago.

Objections to a young earth

Arguments against the universe being only a few thousand years come down to the empirical evidence from science. This paper is only designed to address creation from the lens of the scripture, not science. Nevertheless, one critical fact about God’s creation serves to explain many of the scientific objections to a young earth. God created Adam and Eve as adults, not infants. Likewise, God created plants, not only seeds (Genesis 1:11-12). Also, God created the stars so they could be seen (Genesis 1:14), so that man did not have to wait millions of years to see the light God created.

In other words, God's original creation was mature. Like Adam, God's creation had the appearance of age. Some believe this would force us to conclude God was deceptive in creating the universe to appear older than it really is. However, God has revealed the actual age of the universe to us in Genesis and therefore is not deceiving us. If the understanding that God's creation was mature is accepted and if the account of a worldwide flood as depicted in Genesis 7-8 is accepted, then objections to a young earth may be overcome.

Conclusion

The Bible teaches many things about creation. Of first importance is who created. God created everything. This is undeniable to all men (cf. Romans 1:20) and must be a basic belief for all Christians.

Next is how God created. God created everything suddenly and out of nothing (Hebrews 11:3). This sudden creation included man whom God uniquely fashioned after His own image. This is contested by many, but among those who take the biblical text seriously there is much agreement about the inadequacy of the theory that man evolved from other life forms. To correctly understand God's special creation of man is an important step toward maturing in the Christian faith, for it impacts our beliefs about who man is, the significance of man's rebellion against God and ultimately the significance of God's grace in salvation through Jesus Christ.

Finally is when God created. We believe that the biblical evidence shows that God created all things over six literal days and not over a long process. God created everything several thousands of years ago, not several billions of years ago. This belief is hotly contested among even conservative, Bible-believing Christians. Many who rightly hold to the inerrancy of the Bible and affirm proper principles of Bible interpretation disagree about this.

In spite of this disagreement, we believe the issue of the age of the creation is important for Christians in terms of the integrity of the scripture. The weight we give to partial information from science as interpreted by a set of assumptions over the weight we give to the biblical text reflects our attitude concerning God's Word. We must be careful not to consider what man says about creation to be more important than what God says about creation.

Will we believe men, who were not there and who may be wrong, or will we believe God, who was there and who cannot lie?

Completed: April 2001