

CREATION and EVOLUTION - A BRIEF STUDY FROM GENESIS

Introduction

The debate between Creationists and scientific evolution has caused unnecessary controversy that has damaged the cause of Christianity. In the face of the vast amount of historical and scientific evidence, the assumption that the earth is less than 10,000 years old invites ridicule from all non-believers, and unfortunately a block to many aspiring and practicing Christians.

The aim of this study is to show that in reality there are no contradictions of substance between the account of creation in Genesis, and the discoveries of science. It will show that the Hebrew word 'yowm' for a 'day,' in the Genesis account of creation is not restricted to a single solar day, but can be interpreted as an indefinite period of time.

The biblical account of Adam's genealogy shows that he and the Garden of Eden were created less than 10,000 years ago, we will examine further biblical evidence suggesting the possibility of another much older civilization co-existing outside of the Garden of Eden.

According to scientists, the universe itself is approximately 13.7 billion years old, and the solar system 4.5 billion years. This study adopts the view that whether or not the solar system was created over a period of 4.5 billion years or six solar days, its Creator was the Lord God Almighty, "**who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them**" (Acts 14:15), and that the period of creation should never be the cause of division and disharmony.

SOLAR DAYS OR INDEFINITE PERIODS OF TIME

At the center of the science verses Creationist controversy is the interpretation of the word 'day' in the Genesis account of creation. Creationists are adamant that the days of creation were solar days of 24 hours duration, meaning that the earth was created in six days. Scientists have concluded that the universe is approximately 13.7 billion years old, involving a process of evolution.

The Language Used in Genesis

The language used in the creation narrative is not completely literal, having shades of poetic and figurative language. For example: "**The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.**"

Because of this, the interpretation should not be confined to the binds of literalism. Genesis was written by Moses somewhere about 1440 BC to be read to the unlearned tribal Israelites of his day, it was never meant to be a scientific treatise, but the fact is that the biblical account of creation broadly fits in with the evolutionary stages of creation proposed by scientists.

Because of the type of language used, the way is opened to a figurative interpretation of words, or even to having an overall sense or 'feel' for the creation process. In fact the last method of interpretation - that of gaining a sense or feel for the creation process, would have been the most appropriate for the Jews of Moses' day - and perhaps even for us.

THE “DAYS” OF CREATION

‘Strong’s definition’ of the Hebrew word ‘yowm’ for a ‘day’ is: *“from an unused root meaning to be hot; a day (as the warm hours), whether literal (from sunrise to sunset, or from one sunset to the next), **or figurative - ‘a space of time defined by an associated term’**, [often used adverb]”*

Looking at its figurative use, a day is a ‘space of time’ which is defined by its associated term. In the case of creation the associated term is **“the first,” “the second,” “the third,”** and so on. In other words, it could be interpreted as ‘the first space of time’ ‘the second space of time’ ‘the third space of time’ and so on.

In Genesis 2:4, we have another example of the figurative use of ‘day’ as a space of time rather than a solar day. **“This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, IN THE DAY that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.”** In this case ‘the day’ is the whole time taken by God to create the earth and the heavens.

Elsewhere in the bible, the Hebrew word for ‘yowm’ for ‘day’ (or ‘days’) is not interpreted as a solar day. It has been translated as *‘in the process of time,’ ‘a long time,’ ‘the space of,’ ‘this time,’ ‘a season,’ ‘forever,’ and ‘whole age.’*

Morning and Evening

In the Genesis narrative, each stage of creation ends similarly in this manner, **“So the evening and the morning were the first [second, third, fourth...] day.”**

A literal interpretation presents difficulties, as it limits the creation process to a part of each day - the evening and the morning.

The Brown-Driver-Briggs definition of the Hebrew word ‘boqer’ for **morning** is - *‘morning’ OR (figuratively) ‘the morrow, the next day.’* i.e. its use may extend throughout the day.

“Evening” speaks of the gradual finishing off of a day, or in this case, the gradual finishing off of a stage of creation.

Combining the two, we have a sense of each stage of creation gradually overtaking the next stage, and proceeding in a continuing process.

The evidence presented above opens the door to the idea that the universe was created in six indefinite spaces of time, or stages that flowed into each other, rather than six solar days. To be adamant that the earth is under 10,000 years old, is to disagree with vast amounts of scientific evidence to the contrary. This is sometimes an insurmountable block to many prospective Christians.

THE GENESIS ACCOUNT OF CREATION

GENESIS 1:1-31

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw the light, that

it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.

Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the third day.

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; "and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens." So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind"; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. "Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so. Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day."

COMPARING A SCIENTIFIC EVOLUTIONARY VIEW TO THE GENESIS ACCOUNT

Through scientific experiments and examination of the earth and space, scientists have accumulated a vast amount of information. Still much more is to be gathered before scientists can be

absolutely certain about the way the universe evolved. This study has attempted to set forth a very basic outline of the most recent commonly accepted scientific view of creation.

According to scientists, before our universe evolved, space was occupied by masses of unformed cosmic bodies, gases, water, ice, and dust. We can easily relate this description to the poetic one of Genesis: **“The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep.”**

THE FIRST DAY or STAGE OF CREATION - “Let there be light.”

“Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.”

The universe was in darkness until the “big bang” filled it with the building materials needed for the formation of celestial bodies and light came into the universe. Stars were formed from nebulae, vast rotating clouds of dust and gases. The nebula begins to compact into the centre by its own gravity, causing nuclear reactions producing light and heat as we now experience it from the sun. Planets are also formed from these nebulae.

The reading from Genesis speaks of the formation of the sun and the solar system. Matter in our solar nebula came together to form planetary bodies with the sun at the centre. The moon is thought to have been created due to a collision from a larger foreign body. In its infancy the sun was much dimmer than it is now, and the earth was still in darkness, shrouded by the thick mantle of dense gases and water and ice particles surrounding it.

THE SECOND STAGE OF CREATION - Creation of the atmosphere

“Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven...”

The word ‘firmament,’ in this reading called ‘heaven,’ is not the heaven where God dwells, which always was, and did not need to be created. The firmament is the atmosphere above the earth.

The atmosphere as we know it is the end result of several developmental processes that occurred over millions of years as the earth cooled. The first atmosphere consisted of hydrogen and helium that was present in the gassy disk. This atmosphere escaped from earth’s gravity, drifting off into space.

Earth’s second atmosphere came from outgassing through intense volcanic activity, emitting dense toxic gases. The atmosphere that formed was extremely hot and steamy holding in heat like a greenhouse, and obscuring any direct view of the sun. The outer extremity of the atmosphere was much colder, and water vapor condensed to water, and ice particles.

The atmosphere became stable as it was held to the earth by the force of gravity and the earth’s magnetic field that deflects solar winds. It contained water vapor and carbon dioxide, nitrogen and methane, but at this stage did not contain the oxygen needed to support animal life. Because of the lack of oxygen, there was no ozone layer to protect life from ultraviolet radiation from the sun.

The atmosphere slowly became oxygenated as a form of bacteria became photosynthesized by dim rays of the sun, giving off oxygen. Photosynthesis increased rapidly as grass and other vegetation covered the earth. Eventually the oxygen level could support animal life, and produce an ozone layer to protect the earth from harmful ultra-violet rays.

The Source of the Earth's Water

It was previously thought that the earth's water came from colliding asteroids and meteors. As a result of recent studies, it is now thought that nearly all of the water came from water laden rock and crystal formations below the earth's surface that was forced out by the constant volcanic eruptions occurring on the earth's outer crust. Additional water came from water laden asteroids and meteors. The surface of the earth became covered with a thin layer of water or ocean.

Above there was a thick layer of water vapor, water, and particles of ice blocking out the sunlight. On the earth's surface there was a thin layer of ocean - water below and above the atmosphere agrees with Geneses **“the waters which were under the firmament”** and **“the waters which were above the firmament.”**

THE THIRD STAGE OF CREATION - Establishing the oceans and continents

“Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear..."

Over millions of years the earth and its atmosphere slowly cooled, and water vapor condensed and water was drawn to the earth's surface by gravity. As it passed through the dense toxic gases they were gradually diffused into the water and carried to the surface where they leached into the earth's mantle.

Because of the cooling of the earth's outer crust, there was much upheaval and buckling of its surface, with earthquakes shaking and shifting of its plates. Continents with mountain ranges were formed, and seas filled the subsided areas. **“The waters under the heavens (were) gathered together... and... the dry land appear(ed).”**

The Growth of Vegetation

“Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind...”

This agrees with scientific opinion that vegetation preceded the creation of animal, birds, and fish.

THE FOURTH STAGE OF CREATION - The sun, moon, and stars become visible

“Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; "and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so...”

On the first day God said **“Let there be light,”** but the earth was shrouded in darkness because of the thick mantle of dense gases, water vapor, and water and ice particles surrounding it. When the earth cooled the water vapor condensed, and gravity drew the water that was above the atmosphere to

the surface of the earth. The atmosphere gradually took on its present composition, allowing visibility to the sun and other heavenly bodies. Heat from the sun now caused evaporation from the water on the surface of the earth, and the cycle of evaporation, condensation, and rain began to operate.

From a strict analysis of the Third and Fourth stages we have a problem in that one would suppose that the sunlight needed for photosynthesis would precede vegetation. One might suggest that vegetation commenced in Stage Three, but gathered momentum and diversity as the sunlight fully established itself.

THE FIFTH STAGE OF CREATION - Development of sea and air creatures

“Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens..."”

Scientists agree that life forms originated in the sea, and so broadly speaking, there is no great discrepancy between the Genesis and scientific accounts of this order of creation.

THE SIXTH STAGE OF CREATION - Land creatures and man

“Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind"; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind...Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth..."”

Again there is no great difference in the Genesis and scientific order of creation. The statement, **"Let Us make man in Our image,"** looks forward to his gradual evolvment, and perfection in Adam, with a spirit and soul capable of communicating with God and understanding His will for us. Associated with our spirits is our conscience, by which we can discern right and wrong, good or evil.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN GENESIS CHAPTER 2

The Second Chapter of Genesis commences with the statement that God’s creation of the earth and heavens had finished. **“Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished.”** Gen 2:1. This is followed by God resting, and establishing the Sabbath rest for His children.

In this study we propose that the creation of the earth and heavens, and all living things, described in Chapter1, occupied a time space of approximately four and a half billion years, and that the Garden of Eden was created less than 10 thousand years ago.

In Chapter 2 there is the account of the establishment of the Garden of Eden, and the miraculous creation of Adam and Eve. It is our contention that the creation of Adam and Eve took place less than ten thousand years ago, and heralds the beginning of a new civilization of mankind inbreathed by the

Spirit of God, and enabled to communicate with Him. At the right time of man's evolution, God chose to create a new type of man with whom He could commune and show His will.

In Genesis 2:4, after the announcement that the creation of the earth and its atmosphere was finished, and before the story of Adam and Eve, we have this insertion that reverts back to the Fourth Stage of creation and the formation of the earth's atmosphere. Although it is not specifically mentioned, it was at this time that the cycle of evaporation, condensation, and precipitation began to operate. What was implied in the Stage Four account is now set down as an established fact.

“This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.” (Gen 2:4-6)

The Creation of Adam and Eve

Adam was miraculously formed from the dust of the ground, and infilled with God's own Spirit, and Eve was formed from one of Adam's ribs, so that she became **“flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone.”**

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” (Gen 2:7)

After settling the man and woman He had created in the Garden of Eden, God allowed Satan to tempt them to test their obedience to Him. God gave them permission to eat of every tree in the garden except **“the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”** In the guise of a serpent, Satan tempted Eve - she ate, and Adam followed suit. The dire result was that Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden, and mankind fell under the sway of Satan.

BIBLICAL EVIDENCE OF ANOTHER CIVILIZATION OUTSIDE THE GARDEN OF EDEN

All branches of science agree that the first modern humans migrated from Africa to Australia and the Middle East from 70,000 to 50,000 years ago, and so from a scientific point of view the area in which the Garden of Eden was situated would most certainly have some form of human population.

The first Scripture that points to the, possibility of another civilization outside of the Garden of Eden is Genesis 4:4-17, which describes Cain's banishment from his family to **“the land of Nod.”** The exact location of Nod is not known, but it was probably a region further east from Eden.

“Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

So the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?"

He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth."

And Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me."

And the Lord said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him. Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son — Enoch." (Gen 4:4-17)

God's judgment on Cain was that he was separated from his family and local environment, to live in a land called Nod. His reaction was dismay that he would be a vagabond, a wanderer, and a fugitive, and that anyone who found him would kill him. God assured Cain that He would put a protective 'mark' on him, but the question to be answered is "who would kill him?" It seems logical to assume that Cain knew that there were other people in the land apart from his family.

The reading goes on to say that Cain begot himself a wife and an extensive genealogy, and built a city. Where did Cain's wife come from? Many argue that she was from his former family, but God's judgment was that he was to be displaced from his family as a disgraced and dishonored person. Again it is logical to assume that Caine's wife did not come from his former family, but from the inhabitants of the land of Nod.

WHO WERE THE PEOPLE DESCRIBED IN GENESIS 6:1-4?

"Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.... There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. (Genesis 6:1-2, & 4)

Two Forms of Mankind

This reading points out the existence of two types of mankind, one superior to the other. They are

1. **"the sons of God"** Although the term **"the sons of God"** refers to angels in Job 1:16, its meaning is decided by the circumstances in which it was used. In Job, it describes figures meeting in the presence of God. In this case it is used to describe two different types of humans that inhabited the earth at that time. The proposal that they were fallen angels who became married to humans

cannot be the case here, for Jesus clearly taught that angels do not **“marry nor are given in marriage.”** (Mat 2:30) In this reading the **“sons of God”** are the descendants of Adam, who were created in the image of God, having a spirit capable of communicating with Him.

2. **“the daughters of men.”** The **“men”** are also referred to as **“giants,” “the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.”**

The reading states, **“There were giants on the earth in those days.”** **“In those days”** refers to the period after Adam was banished from the Garden of Eden and his descendants multiplied on the face of the earth. The **“giants,”** may be ancestors of the Nephilim or Anakim, races of giants that inhabited the land, and so intimidated the spies Moses sent out that they considered themselves as mere grasshoppers.

The men of Genesis 4 were also referred to as **“men who were of old.”** The meaning of the Hebrew word *‘meolam’* translated here as **“old,”** is *“from time immemorial, from antiquity, from the most ancient times.”* (From *“The Complete Word Study of the Old Testament” Dr Spiros Zodhiates*) Compared with Adam’s generation, these **“men of old”** dated back to antiquity.

The word *‘enos’* for **“men”** has the connotation of incurable sickness and weakness. *“Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies”* describes this state as *“to be sick unto death; to be in very great distress, in a desperate, incurable condition, past all relief; mortal, fatal: man in this condition and according to nature...”*

Their incurable state suggests that because of their origin,

1. They did not have the same measure of the Spirit of God as did the descendants of Adam - the Spirit that is a Spirit of life to its recipients.
2. In their present state they had no part in the future redemption of mankind.

A POSSIBLE EXPLANATION

The inhabitants of the land are divided into two categories.

1. **“Sons of God”** - the descendants of Adam who were banished from the Garden of Eden, and now mingled with **“the men who were of old.”**
2. **“Men of Old”** - dating back to antiquity - from Stage 6 of creation, when man evolved to the state we recognize now. Compared with the **“sons of God,”** this was an inferior form of mankind.

Considering all of the facts presented in this study, a possible explanation is that at the right time in the evolution of man, God created the Garden of Eden, and then miraculously created Adam and Eve, who were the very first of mankind created with a spirit capable of communing with God. The genealogy of Adam detailed in the bible suggests this branch of civilization to be between 5000 and 7000 years old.

The reference to **“men of old”** opens the door to the possibility of there being another, much older civilization outside the Garden of Eden, dating back to antiquity, or millions of years. Of course

this would also explain Cain's statement "**anyone who finds me will kill me,**" (Genesis 4:14), and the origin of his own wife and those of his offspring

CONCLUSION

The above "possible explanation" may be accepted or not. However it is important to be clear about facts that should not be disputed.

- No matter what form or method was used to precipitate creation, GOD WAS ITS SOURCE.
- Whatever process was used to create, IT WAS INITIATED AND CONTROLLED BY GOD.
- The whole GODHEAD was involved in the process of creation.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Genesis 1:1)

"All things were made through Him (Jesus) and without Him nothing was made that was made." [John 1:3].

"And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." (Genesis 1:2)

- The Garden of Eden was a definite place in a definite geographical setting.
- Adam and Eve were not the product of evolution, but were separately created miraculously and placed in the Garden of Eden. They were created "**in the image of God,**" having been invested with a spirit with which to communicate with God, and given dominion over all created beings.

The story of creation should precipitate wonder and praise to the glory of God, but it should never be the source of a harsh dogma that further divides the church.