

Understanding Genesis 1

Is there a Conflict between Science and the Christian Faith? (part 1)

Genesis 1

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Introduction

❖ What's really at stake here?

- Our personal faith
- The faith of our children
- The ability to engage intelligently with unchurched people

Popular view of Genesis 1

- Introduction (vv.1-2)
- 7 days of creation
 - 1st day: light
 - 2nd day: sky
 - 3rd day: earth, seas, vegetation
 - 4th day: sun, moon, & stars
 - 5th day: fish & birds
 - 6th day: animals, man & woman
 - 7th day: rest

❖ 2 Variations:

- Young earth
- Old earth

❖ Problems with both of these views:

❖ Key interpretative question: What was Moses' intent when he wrote Genesis 1?

Genesis 1:1

¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

❖ 2 Key Questions:

- Is v.1 a summary/title of what is to follow or is it God's initial creative act? i.e.- Was God's first creative act in v.1 or v.3?
- When does ex-nihilo creation take place? (Ex-nihilo = creating everything out of nothing)

❖ 2 Main Views:

- V. 1 is a summary/title of what is to follow
- V. 1 is God's first creative act: ex-nihilo creation

Genesis 1:2

²Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

❖ 2 Key Questions:

- What kind of Biblical literature (genre) is Genesis 1?

3 Options:

- A scientific account
- A historical account
- A "prophetic" vision

- What is the purpose of v. 2?

¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (land).

²Now the earth (land) was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

7 Days of Creation

❖ Day 1 (vv.3-5)

³ And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

❖ Day 2 (vv.6-8)

⁶ And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.” ⁷ So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸ God called the vault “sky (heaven).” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

❖ Day 3 (vv.9-13)

⁹ And God said, “Let the water under the sky (heavens) be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

¹¹ Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. ¹² The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

❖ Day 4 (vv.14-19)

¹⁴ And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky (heavens) to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the vault of the sky (heaven) to give light on the earth (land).” And it was so. ¹⁶ God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷ God set them in the vault of the sky (heavens)

to give light on the earth (land), ¹⁸ to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

❖ Day 5 & 6 (vv.20-31)

- creation of birds, sea creatures, animals
- creation of man

Recap

- 1) Ex-nihilo creation occurs in v. 1—God creates the heavens and earth/land
- 2) V.2 sets the stage for the vision God gives Moses; The vision is from the perspective of the surface of the earth/land
- 3) 7 days of creation are what Moses recorded about what he saw in this vision
- 4) Implication: Genesis 1 is not making a statement about how long it actually took for God to create the universe; it’s not making a statement either way about a young earth or an old earth

What are the main points of Genesis 1?

- ❖ God is the creator of all things. He created everything out of nothing.**
- ❖ The universe was designed with great intentionality and purpose, i.e., it did not just come about randomly**
- ❖ The culmination of creation is the creation of man and woman**