

Genesis 1:1,2

### *Does It Really Matter?*

Does it really matter? Does it matter where we came from? Does it matter how all that we see around us came into being?

I believe unquestionably it does. My worldview, your worldview is going to be ultimately determined by what we believe about the question of origins.

The Bible claims to tell us the origin of all things. If the Bible is trustworthy and if the Bible is true then what it has to say in the book of Genesis is absolutely crucial to our understanding of the meaning and purpose of life.

We're in week 2 of a study of the book of Genesis, which I believe is the most important book in the Bible.

Of all the chapters in the book of Genesis the first has probably generated more debate, discussion, controversy, and criticism than any other.

Of course, that shouldn't be surprising considering its contents, I mean it tells us how the world came into being!

### **Let begin by looking at Genesis 1 Read verses 1 & 2**

What I'd like us to do today is to get oriented to Genesis 1 by asking some questions.

#### *I. What Is The Character Of Genesis Chapter 1?*

*Is it history?* In a real sense its pre-historic not actual history. Although it's fact, no one was there to observe the events and record them for us.

*Is it science?* Certainly the primary purpose of Genesis 1 wasn't to give us an in depth scientific explanation of creation.

Webster defines "science" as "knowledge obtained through the scientific method." Then He goes on to define the "scientific method" as determining a problem, collecting data through observation and experiment, and then forming and testing a hypothesis.

The creation of the world is something that just doesn't fall within the actual realm of science. It can't be tested or repeated. Of course either can any other theory of origins. The theory of evolution can't be either.

*Is this chapter myth?*

Critics of the Bible have been quick to point out that other ancient people such as the Babylonians had their own creation accounts and therefore, it is assumed that the Bible just picks up the ideas of these other creation myths written to explain how the world came to be.

There's actually a Babylonian account, known as Enuma Elish, which was written before Genesis. Since it contains many similarities, the Bible is said to be copied from it.

Actually that is just turning things around backwards. Obviously, if there really was a creation then we would expect to find creation accounts written by ancient people. But religion, like the creation itself doesn't evolve, it develops. It doesn't become more God centered. Left to itself it does the opposite. Just look how pagan, Christianity has become in the hands of human distortion.

And so the Babylonian creation account was handed down over time and the Babylonians over many years filled that creation account with their own perverted ideas. And so what you have is a bunch gods fighting each other and total paganism.

What a refreshing difference when you read the account in Genesis 1. And it makes sense that with these other distorted and perverted creation accounts floating around that the first thing God would inspire is a record of the truth of how the world came to be.

*Is this chapter revelation?* It's certainly much more than just one man's idea of how things came to be.

All the other creation accounts, Babylonian, Assyrian, Indian, Persian, Egyptian all obviously developed over time. They all are stories artificially made to represent a system of beliefs.

As the culture of these people developed and their religious beliefs, it affected their ideas of how things came to be.

But Genesis is totally different. It is not a composite from a lot of different sources, it obviously came from one mind.

It is Jewish and yet outside of a belief in one God there is nothing Jewish about it. There is nothing that would make it distinctive to any race of people or any culture.

This chapter is revelation from God and the things that God inspired Moses to write can be read by us today just as they were by the Jews for thousands of years.

Believe me, if I read you Enuma Elish, which you can read the full text online, or some of the other accounts you would know they are not believed by anyone today.

So the character of Genesis one is revelation from God.

## *II. What is its purpose?*

A chapter like this, and in fact every chapter of the Bible, must be judged from the stand point of those for whom it was originally intended. What did Moses intend for his initial readers to get from Genesis 1?

Obviously they had to understand it or there would have been no sense in writing it.

Now, imagine if God would have inspired Moses to write in the language of the 21st Century and talk about atoms and molecules, about nuclear fission and heat transfer, about thermodynamics and entropy.

The whole thing would have been useless until our day. I'd say that this chapter was intended to give a simple, popular, account of creation, free from religious myth, and intended to be understood by all people of all times.

A Jew living in Canaan in 1300 BC could read this narrative and understand it. You and I living in 21st century America can read this chapter and understand it.

The purpose of this chapter is to show us the true origin of all things. It's to point us back to God as creator. And the unique thing is a 3 year old can understand it's message while a Ph.D can never plumb its depths totally if he devotes a whole lifetime to its study.

This chapter has certainly served its purpose well. The character is revelation from God. Its purpose is to show us where things came from.

*III. What Is Its Approach?* How does it approach this vast subject of the creation of all things?

We saw last week that it begins with just a simple statement of the fact that in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. God caused matter to come into being.

Einstein came along quite a few years after Moses wrote Genesis, and told us  $E=mc^2$ . Matter and energy are really different forms of the same thing. The Bible tells us that God created all things by the word of His power. God who has all power and is the source of all power, brought matter into being through His power.

But then Genesis 1:2 tells us the earth was without form and void. Those Hebrew words actually mean “formless” and “empty” and they establish the key to how the rest of the chapter is set up.

First came “form” and then came “fulness.” In chapter 1 the record of the first 3 days refers to heaven and earth receiving their form. In the first 3 days we read of light, air, water, land, plants. Then the last 3 days deal with filling up the emptiness - lights plural, sun and moon, fowls, fish, animals and man.

Of course, above all, the keynote of the chapter is “in the beginning God.”

The word God actually occurs 32 times in 31 verses. God said, created, saw, called, set, divided, and made. God is at the center of Genesis chapter 1.

*IV. What Is The Relation Of This Chapter To Science?*

This is the big question of our day, isn't it? Obviously Biblical truth and scientific truth both came from the same source, God. Therefore there can't be any disagreement between them.

When Charles Darwin first published his “On the Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life.” in 1859 he received more abuse and ridicule than perhaps any other modern scientist.

Response from scientists and educators ranged from “rotten fabric of speculation and utterly false” to “deep in the mire of folly . . . I laughed till my sides were sore.”

The remarkable thing, however, is that the theory that became the laughing stock, and then the battleground of the second half of the 19th century has now become almost universally accepted in the 21st century.

The theory of evolution, taken at face value, flatly contradicts Genesis chapters 1 & 2.

Sir Arthur Keith, a Physical Anthropologist and an Anatomist and protégé of Charles Darwin, said, “Evolution is unproved and unproveable. We believe it because the only alternative is special creation, and that is unthinkable.”

Julian Huxley declared: “It is clear that the doctrine of evolution is directly antagonistic to that of creation . . . evolution if consistently applied makes it impossible to believe the Bible.”

If evolution is true, not only is the Bible mistaken in its teaching that God created all things, but all the other doctrines of the Bible end up on a foundation of sand and collapse.

H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History*: summed it up this way. “If all the animals and man had been evolved in this ascendant manner, then there had been no first parents, no Eden, and no Fall. And if there had been no fall, then the entire historical fabric of Christianity, the story of the first sin and the reason for an atonement, upon which the current teaching based Christian emotion and morality, collapsed like a house of cards.”

Julian Huxley, *Religion Without Revelation*: “The supernatural is being swept out of the universe in the flood of new knowledge of what is natural. It will soon be as impossible for an intelligent, educated man or woman to believe in a god as it is now to believe the earth is flat, that flies can be spontaneously generated... or that death is always due to witchcraft... The god hypothesis is no longer of any pragmatic value for the interpretation or comprehension of nature, and indeed often stands in the way of better and truer interpretation. Operationally, God is beginning to resemble not a ruler but the last fading smile of a cosmic Cheshire cat.”

Richard Dawkins in an interview with Salon.com said: “There is just no evidence for

the existence of God. Evolution by natural selection is a process that works up from simple beginnings, and simple beginnings are easy to explain. The relevance of evolutionary biology to atheism is that evolutionary biology gives us the only known mechanism whereby the illusion of design, or apparent design, could ever come into the universe anywhere.”

Where do we go with all this?

I think the first and foremost thing that we have to keep in mind is that the Bible doesn't contradict any known fact of science. The same God who created the natural laws of the universe in which we live is the God of the Bible.

Obviously his record of creation is going to be consistent with factual science. The Bible is pro-science, not anti-science.

But if the Bible would had been changed each time science supposedly contradicted it, you would have a Bible filled with errors.

In 1861 the French Academy of Science published a brochure of fifty-one "scientific facts" which supposedly contradicted the Bible.

No scientist would accept any of those "facts" today.

By the way, in 1900, the French Academy of Science offered a prize of 100,000 francs for the first person to make contact with an alien civilization—so long as the alien was not from Mars, because the Academy was convinced that Martian civilization was an established fact!

It's taken science over two thousand years to "discover" some of the facts indicated in the Scriptures such as:

*the spherical earth* (Isa 40:22)

*the earth is suspended in space* (Job 26:7)

*the stars are innumerable* (Jer 33:22)

*mountains and canyons in the ocean* (2 Sam 22:16, Jon 2:6)

*springs and fountains in the sea* (Gen 7:11; 8:2, Pr 8:28)

*ocean currents* (Maury started searching for them after reading Ps 8:8)

*the hydrologic cycle* (Job 36-38)

*animals reproduce after their kind* rather than spontaneous generation (Gen 1:21; 6:19)

principles of *contagious diseases and quarantine* (Leviticus) which the Church finally asserted in stopping the plagues of the Dark Ages

principles of *sanitation and public health* (Dt 23)

the "*best*" *time for circumcision* (vitamin K and maximum prothrombin -Gen 17:9)

*life is in the blood* cx bloodletting (Lev 19:11)

*First and Second laws of Thermodynamics* (conservation and deterioration of energy - Gen 2:1-3; Ps 33:6-9; 102:26; Rm 8:18-23; Heb 1:10-12)

What's happened is, the Bible's stood true, while man's scientific theories have changed a thousand times over. Actually, the more we study the Bible the more we see how compatible it is with scientific fact.

The Bible isn't a science book, but it sure isn't scientifically inaccurate because it is inspired by God.

But now listen to this: there is nothing scientifically factual about the theory of evolution!

Dr Colin Patterson, a senior paleontologist at the British Museum of Natural History, lectured at New York City's American Museum of Natural History. He said this,

"For over twenty years I had thought that I was working on evolution in some way. One morning I woke up, and something had happened in the night, and it struck me that I had been working on this stuff for twenty years, and there was not one thing I knew about it.

"That was quite a shock that one could be misled for so long...

"...I've tried putting a simple question to various people and groups of people: 'Can you tell me anything you know about evolution, any one thing, any one thing you think is true?'

"I tried that question on the geology staff in the Field Museum of Natural History, and the only answer I got was silence. I tried it on the members of the Evolutionary Morphology Seminar in the University of Chicago, a very prestigious body of evolutionists, and all I got there was silence for a long time."

There is not one proven fact in the theory of evolution.

Former atheist philosopher and apologist Anthony Flew wrote, Man in his desire to eliminate God from His life has latched onto a totally unsupportable theory.

Now unfortunately, Christians tend to be intimidated by the supposed wisdom and knowledge of man. And in their intimidation they try to adapt the Bible to the current thought of the day.

Remember, Israel tried to unite the worship of Jehovah with the worship of the Canaanite gods and goddesses. After a while the worship of Jehovah was so undermined that He really wasn't being worshipped at all. A little arsenic poisons the whole pie.

The same type of thing happened to Christianity under Constantine in the 4th century AD. When the Roman empire declared Christianity the state religion and all Romans Christian everything went down hill fast. Paganism of all kinds was brought into the church and mixed with Christianity until soon it wasn't Christ that was really being worshipped any more.

And the same undermining and weakening happens in our day when Christians try to adapt the Bible to current scientific fad and theories.

For instance we read in Genesis 1 *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.*

Up until the late 1700, the early 1800's these verses were held to be describing the same event, at the same point in time.

Now remember, this was at a time when geologists thought that the earth was thousands of years old.

Then in 1785 James Hutton published his *Theory of the Earth* in which he claimed to prove that the earth was millions, not thousands of years old.

It was at this time that geology began to take a new direction until finally today we are told that the earth is actually three billion years old.



All this really shook up a lot of Christians because using the biblical chronologically it appears that the Bible places creation somewhere around 6 or 7 thousand years ago.

In fact, Lightfoot, using Ushers chronology declared that creation took place “the week of October 18 - 24, 4004 BC, with Adam created on October 23, at 9:00 AM 45th Meridian time.” I don’t know how he got it down quite that exact but there sure is no room for millions of years.

After this shift in geological thought there was a shift in biblical interpretation too. People began to wonder, “How can we integrate the Bible and modern science?”

Some people said there is actually a gap of millions of years between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. Other people say the days of creation in the rest of the chapter aren’t literal days.

If we put the geological ages in between verses 1 & 2, or make the days into epochs then it means that we have millions of animals living and dieing during this time.

### **Turn to Romans 5 page 1002 Read verse 12**

See what happens when you start trying to reinterpret Genesis. What you end up with is a whole series of contradictions that bring confusion and undermine the Bible.

Those interpretations are based upon supposition just like the one that their supposed to oppose. It’s an attempt to get around the problem of evolution and yet they have as many suppositions as evolution has.

Now, I’m not bringing all this up so that we can put anybody down. There are godly believers who hold to these views. I believe they’re wrong and I have no problem saying so.

But what I want us to learn is that we don’t have to accommodate the Bible to the whims of man. What we have to do is come to an accurate understanding of what it says and then rest in it.

Weston Fields, who teaches at Grace Theological Seminary wrote a 200 page dissertation on the Gap Theory of Genesis 1 and speaking of the originator of it he says this.

“Little did he suspect that his harmonizations of science and scripture actually served

the purpose of the evil they were supposed to prevent, leading to a Christianity which is no longer unchanging and a Bible which must be constantly harmonized with fluid and ever- changing science.”

The power of the Bible is in the fact that it doesn't bend to accommodate morals, ethics, philosophy, or even science.

Is it possible that the earth really isn't billions, or even millions of years old?

I'm no scientist and don't claim to be one, but there is a lot of things done in the name of science that are highly questionable and yet accepted by people as fact. And the end result of people accepting those “facts” is a rejection of The Bible.

Henry Morris edited a book entitled “Scientific Creationism” which gives the following information:

When rocks are dated by geologists they're not dated by where they're found or any physical characteristics.

Rocks are dated by index fossils. Certain marine animals.

Now listen to this - how do geologists know which index fossils fit with which age? Evolution. How do we know evolution has taken place? By examining the fossils. See, fossils are found of simple life and more complex life forms. It is assumed that there was a progression.

This progression its said, must have taken place over millions of years. So the simpler forms are assumed to be the oldest and the more complex the youngest.

But there is a problem. These fossils are scattered throughout all different rock strata - it's not the simplest on the bottom and the more complex and more complex as you get to the top.

But geology has come up with a magic solution. It will use the assumed ages of the fossils, since they “must” have gone from simpler to complex, to date the rocks in which they are found, no matter what other indications there might be of the ages of that rock.

So the main evidence for evolution is the assumption for evolution.

There are many evidences for a young earth.

1. The rate of gasses leaving the earth's crust and leaking into the atmosphere. The helium content of our atmosphere points to a young earth.
2. The influx of meteor dust from space. Cosmic dust particles fall on the earth and contain minerals such as nickel. By measuring the nickel content of the earth and sea the earth can be dated. If it was 3 billion years old there'd be 152 feet of meteorite dust!

(By the way for years it was thought that when men landed on the moon they would be in danger of sinking into the meteorite dust that accumulated there undisturbed for all those billions of years. funny thing when they got there they found a relatively hard, dust free surface. No one's explained what happened to the dust yet.)

3. The earth can be dated by the influx of materials into the ocean.
4. It can be dated by the decay of the earth's magnetic field.

Test after test points to a much younger earth that fits in very well with the biblical chronology and yet people continue to use their circular reasoning of fossil dating to date the earth.

Why is evolution a sacred cow? Because as Keith said "the only alternative is special creation and that is unthinkable."

The Bible makes human beings the highest point in creation. But like Lucifer who said, "I will be like the most high" people aren't content to be the summation of creation. They want to be the god of creation.

Here's the question. Is man the master? If he is, then he can go his own way and devise any theory of origins he chooses. But if he isn't - if there is a God - then he is the creation of God and he owes God respect and worship.

Can we trust our Bibles? Do we have to change and reinterpret the Bible to fit in with every new scientific discovery?

Moses write Genesis chapter one to give a simple but accurate description of the origin of all things. We can rest in what he has said as God's inspired truth and long after man's theories and suppositions have faded into oblivion the Word of God will remain.

There is a Creator and we are responsible to Him. He's a holy God who hates our sinfulness and rebellion. But He's also a loving God who loves us as individuals and has provided for our forgiveness by sending His only begotten Son to die for us.

Don't be intimidated by the wisdom of humanity. Human wisdom bends and turns and changes like the shifting sand. What's true today may be proven false tomorrow.

The Bible declares *Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.* Psalm 119:89

Remember the words of our Jesus who said, *Heaven and earth will pass away but my Words will not pass away.* Luke 21:33

He also said, *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

*For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

*He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* John 3:16-18