

Genesis 1:3-25

When Life Began

Carl Sagan was a brilliant American astronomer and astrochemist. He was a Professor at Cornell as well as director of the Laboratory for Planetary Studies and an Associate Director of the Center for Radio Physics and Space Research.

Along with being an advisor to NASA, Sagan published more than 600 scientific papers and popular articles and was author, co-author, or editor of more than 20 books.

But to most people Carl Sagan was best known for presenting the award-winning PBS television series *Cosmos: A Personal Voyage*, which has been seen by more than 600 million people in over 60 countries, making it the most widely watched PBS program in history.

Unfortunately, in *Cosmos*, Sagan gave us his religious views and assumptions as well as his scientific knowledge, all blended together as if it were fact.

He says: "The Cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be. It's the universe that made us, and we are creatures of the cosmos. Our moral obligation to survive and flourish is owed not just to ourselves, but also to that cosmos, ancient and vast, from which we spring. Our ancestors worshiped the sun and they were far from foolish. It makes good sense to revere the sun and the stars because we are their children."

With great reverence and awe, Mr. Sagan payed homage to His god, the material universe, which exists apart from any supernatural being and has developed thru chance evolutionary processes.

Actually Carl Sagan just took the final logical step of Romans chapter one in the downward descent of man. Verse 25 says;

...who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creation rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Romans 1:25

Before the Easter season we began looking at the Genesis account of creation. It stands in stark contrast to the ideas and the concepts of many people, even some who have PhD's and teach at Universities.

The Bible, rather than ascribing worship and commitment to inanimate mater give us

a totally God-centered perspective. It's God who created the heavens and the earth. He's a personal God who thinks and acts and speaks. And He's a powerful God who is able to create matter out of nothing by the word of His power.

Out of curiosity of course we all want to know the details about how God carried out His creative acts. When the sciences of geology, biology and astronomy are all used to assault the Bible, we really want to know how the creation took place.

The Bible's a unique book. Its purpose is to give God's message to fallen humanity about God's way of salvation and forgiveness. The Old Testament gave people what they needed to know from the creation until 400 hundred years before Jesus was born. The Old and New Testaments together give all that we need to know from creation until Jesus comes again.

Now obviously, there are plenty of other details which are also given, but they never get in the way of the main point.

For example, angels are touched on many times, but the Bible isn't a book on "angelology" What's told us about angels is true, but always in relation to people. We are not told all facts about angels.

Heaven is the same. We are given factual knowledge concerning what we need to know about heaven but not a whole lot of detail.

Creation is included because we need to know our origin and our relationship to God as creator of all. What the Bible tells us is factual and true, but it only tells us what we need to know, not necessarily everything we want to know.

One thing we can be sure of though is that just as the Bible is angelically accurate and eternally accurate, it's also scientifically accurate.

And so people may assail the Bible with their supposedly scholarly theories and ideas but where the Bible speaks plainly we can accept its teachings as truth.

Today we've come to verse 3 in our study of Genesis one and as we do we see God beginning to give form to the earth. In the initial aspect of creation God created the heavens and the earth.

The earth originally was without form and void or literally the Hebrew says, “unformed and unfilled”. We saw that this was not as a result of some judgment of God on a prior creation, as some have suggested to try and account for the geologic ages, but it was actually the first step in the creation which ultimately took 6 days to complete.

Remember, God could have created all that is instantaneously. It’s not like a big deal for God to create. If He had chosen to God could’ve produced earth, the animals, man and all that exists in a millisecond.

But instead God chose to work step by step. And although Moses, as the author of Genesis, deals with the whole thing in a relatively limited amount of space, what we’re told is exactly what we need to know about the process.

But being that we live in an age in which science purports to date our earth at billions of years old and to describe everything as a slow process of development from simple forms of life to more complex, the idea of a 6 day creation seems foolish to a lot of people. Even Christians many times claim that the Genesis creation account can’t really be taken literally.

There are several theories of biblical interpretation that have developed over the years concerning Genesis 1.

I’d like us to look at this chapter with it’s creative “days” and try to see which theory fits the biblical evidence which we have.

Turn to Genesis 1

I. On The First Day

Beginning in verse 3 we read... **Read verses 3-5**

The words “God said” are absolutely significant. In the account of creation you read the phrase “God said” 10 times.

This was the omnipotent God speaking with unlimited authority. What was spoken were the words of power. Words of the almighty God. Every time a command went forth from God there was immediate action.

God's first creative act was His creation of time, space and matter. Time, referring to the beginning of time. Space, referring to the heavens and matter referring primarily to the earth.

After the initial creation of time, space and matter, God created light.

Now He didn't create the sun and the moon and the stars until the 4th day and so immediately the red flags go up and we wonder what the deal is.

Some would say that God made the Sun, moon and stars on the 1st day but just didn't make them visible until the 4th day.

That's a convenient explanation but it really seems clear from the text that God made the planets on the 4th day.

How was there light before there were any light givers? Well, remember we are dealing with things that being stated but not explained and there's a point where we have to take the Bible by faith.

But actually when you come right down to it why would it be any harder for God to create waves of light energy, that it was for him to create generators to produce those waves.

And so the very first thing God did was produce light to divide the darkness from the light and then later in anticipation of human beings He created the sun, moon and stars to mark off signs and seasons, days and years.

And God very carefully inspires Moses to write, "the evening and the morning were the first day."

The question that immediately comes to our mind is "was this a 24 hour day?" or is the word "day" here used some other way?

Is the word "day" being used to describe what we would refer to as a literal day, or is it some long geological time span?

The theory of evolution is so untenable that the only way it could even be promoted, as truth is to somehow supply it with millions of years to happen. And even then life

forms evolving from simpler to complex is something that goes against the known laws of physics.

All things tend toward randomness and decay not development and specialization. And even though fossils point to special creation, somehow when the magic idea of almost unlimited amount time is introduced, all of the difficulties seem fade for people.

And so evolution needs the gods of time and chance to be credible in people's minds. Darwin said that if you sat a million monkeys at a million typewriters and let them type long enough they would eventually type The Gettysburg Address. And so using that logic, given enough time everything would evolve.

Since evolution needs lots of time, geologists have told us that the earth is much older than thousands of years, It's in fact millions, even billions of years old.

Because of this supposed great age of the earth Genesis one has been interpreted to be a description of a time way longer than 6 days.

It's often pointed out that the word "day" in the Bible can mean several things, when Jesus was said to be in the wilderness 40 days it's clear that the word "day" is describing a 24 hour, solar day.

But right here in Genesis we find another use of the word. **Read Genesis 2:4**

Here the word "day" is being used for a definite period of time.

Then later, when we read about the "day of the Lord" we find reference to a still longer period of time.

Because of this figurative use of the word "day" and because Peter wrote *a day with the Lord is as a 1000 years and a thousand years is as a day*, some people want to take the creation account to be descriptive of long periods of time.

The 4 most prominent theories of the days in Genesis are:

1. The Literal Day Theory (Which one Christian writer says: "is immediately ruled out by geology").

2. The Day Age Theory - The days are long periods of time.

3. The Literal Day or Short Period, With GAPS Theory. God made new life forms at certain points in history and calls these days in Genesis 1,

4. The revelation Day Theory. Creation was revealed in 6 days, not performed in 6 days. The word “days” is used to communicate to us the fact that God is the creator of all.

Now, reading over Genesis one, even just the 3 verses that we’ve just read, seems to me to eliminate 3 of those theories.

It’s almost as if God, in anticipation of a lot of future misunderstanding, carefully defines His terms. The very first time He uses the word “day” He says this is light as opposed to darkness. It’s actually the light He called day rather than both light and darkness together.

Literally the end of verse 5 reads, and there was evening, then morning - day 1. That same phrase will be repeated at the end of the description of what went on each day.

Right at the beginning there was established a succession of days and nights; periods of light and periods of darkness. That would imply that the earth was rotating on it’s axis and the light was coming from one side of the earth.

Whether this darkness and light added up to 24 hours or some other period of time we are not told. But it certainly isn’t some great epoch and it seems likely that it was a 24 hour period.

Sure it’s true that the word “day” in the Bible can refer to a long period of time but that’s only true where there is no enumeration. Every other time you read about a certain number of days you’ll find that they are clearly 24 hours days.

Moses was trying to guard in every way possible against any of his readers arriving the notion of non-literal days from his record.

It’s also clear that these are consecutive days. To speculate that there were big gaps between the days is to totally violate the Hebrew text.

When you get to the book of Exodus and the giving of the Ten Commandments God reinforces this idea of literal 24 hour days of creation.

Turn to Exodus 20 Page 68

Read verses 9-11

John Davis, in his Genesis commentary "Paradise to Prison" says this: Analysis of the alternatives to the literal day theory makes it apparent that the major criticism of that theory is not linguistic or philological. These alternatives have been formed in response to the pressure of scientific opinion.

Dr. Henry Morris, who has a Ph.D. in hydraulic engineering, put it this way. The only proper way to interpret Genesis 1 is not to interpret it at all. That is, we accept the fact that it was meant to say exactly what it says. The "days" are literal days and the events described happened in just the way described. This incomparable first chapter of Scripture tells us what we could never learn any other way - the history of creation.

The problem with trying to harmonize the Bible with science is the same thing we saw a few weeks ago when we discussed the gap theory.

A Bible that bows to the whims of science is an emasculated Bible.

A Bible that has to be changed so it won't conflict with human suppositions isn't a Bible with authority. Believe me, you'll have more of an impact on the non-Christian people around you if you take the Bible at face value instead of trying to accommodate the latest ideas.

I think one of the most interesting quotes I've ever read came from *The Atheist Magazine* published by the American Atheist Association. This is what they had to say:

The subterfuge of the scripture twisting modernist that "days" means epochs is indefensible. The six days of Mosaic creation correspond in no manner with the evolutionary formation of earth. Modernism is intellectual mush. It lacks honesty.

I never thought I'd say this from the pulpit but the American Atheist Association is right. At least on that point.

The authority of the word of God lies in the fact that it means what it says. The Bible

calls itself the “sword of the Spirit.” Let me ask you, how much good is as a rubber sword in battle?

If we asked ourselves this question, “Suppose the writer of Genesis wanted to teach his readers that all things were created and made in six literal days, then what words would best convey this thought?” We’d have to answer that the writer would have used these very words.

If he wanted to get across the idea of some long geological ages, he could have done it a lot more clearly and effectively using other words than the ones he used.

It was clearly God’s intent to teach creation in 6 literal days.

I. On The First Day

II. On The Second Day

Back to Genesis 1 Read verses 6-8

At this point the earth is covered with water, the other materials presumably in suspension in that water and God separates some of the water from that great mass and places it high above the earth with a great space separating the two.

The lower waters would become seas and rivers and lakes, The upper waters in the atmosphere would provide a protective canopy for the earth.

The word firmament has caused a lot of confusion. The actual Hebrew word *raqia* means “an expanse.” It comes from the verb *raqa* which means “to hammer or to spread out.”

People have mistakenly said that the Bible teaches that the sky was a hammered brass dome that fit over the earth and rested on the mountains, with windows that opened to let in rain.

Nowhere does it say that the “firmament” means a thin stretched out space.

The picture I get is a vast blanket of water vapor above the troposphere. Not water vapor like clouds in the atmosphere but above the firmament. Genesis 2:5 explains that it didn’t rain on the earth at this time and so there weren’t clouds as we know them.

Water vapor, even in large amounts is invisible. But clouds are made up of droplets of liquid water and are opaque. So this was very different from a cloud cover. It allowed the sun and moon and stars to shine upon the earth.

If there was a water vapor canopy it would have made the earth like a big greenhouse. It would have maintained a warm temperature all over the world. It would have filtered out ultraviolet rays and cosmic radiation and would have promoted longer life and less genetic mutations.

Later on these upper waters would provide the water from the flood. If all the water in our present atmosphere would fall to earth it would only cover the earth to a depth of one inch so here was a tremendous amount of water in this vapor canopy,

I. On The First Day

II. On The Second Day

III. On The Third Day

Read verses 9-13

The waters under heaven, in other words the waters covering the earth, were brought together into seas and dry land was made to appear. And out of the dry land God caused plant life to grow.

A couple of things we need to note in these verses.

First, these plants weren't made as seeds, they were made as full-grown plants whose seed was in themselves. Genesis 1 answers the age old question, "Which came first the chicken or the egg?"

This means that things had "the appearance of age." Adam was created a full grown man, the trees were full grown trees and the whole universe was made a functioning entity, complete and fully developed right from the beginning. That means that the trees had the rings in them and so on so that some of our dating methods would obviously be affected.

Secondly, we find the first occurrence of the phrase "after it's kind". "After it's kind" appears 10 times in Genesis 1 and basically what that means is there are no transmutations from one species to another.

There are differences within the same species but no new kinds being formed. Each type of organism has its own unique structure of DNA and can only specify the reproduction of that same kind.

Thirdly, remember that animals aren't created until the 5th day.

That means that if these are great epochs of time that plants are existing for millions of years) before insects which are needed for pollination. As soon as you read this chapter as anything else but days you end up with a string of absurdities and contradictions.

I. On The First Day

II. On The Second Day

III. On The Third Day

IV. On The Fourth Day

Read verses 14-19

Remember, God created a functioning universe. It didn't take billions of years for the light from the stars to reach the earth after the stars were created.

He created them light and all. In fact, He created the light 3 days before He created the stars. The stars and the planets were all placed in the heavens for a purpose. They're there for us to mark off signs, seasons, days and years.

See everything that God was doing was being done with us in mind. It was human beings that were to be the crown of creation. It was humans who were to have dominion and lordship over the earth. Everything was being prepared for human inhabitants.

I. On The First Day

II. On The Second Day

III. On The Third Day

IV. On The Fourth Day

V. On The Fifth Day

All the necessities for living creatures was present on the earth by this time. There was light, air, water, soil, plants, fruit. The only problem was there wasn't anyone there to take advantage of it. But God had created it to be inhabited.

Read verses 20 - 23

The first animal life wasn't a fragile blob of protoplasm that came about by a chance mixing of chemicals and lightening striking the ooze of the Nile River.

The waters swarmed with life. The Hebrew literally says, "let the waters swarm with swarms." The word "life" is used for the 1st time here. Plants live but they don't have real consciousness like animals.

Plants sprang up out of the ground but animals didn't spring up from the earth or the waters. Consciousness didn't just happen by the chance organization the right chemicals and physical elements. There had to be a new creation.

God had created the physical element of the universe on the 1st day and now on the 5th day He actually performed his second act of true creation. He creates conscious life. Conscious life, even on the animal level, can only come from the hand of God. We can put all the right components together but we can't create life.

I think that It's significant that all through here, on each day God saw that what He had done was good. Not that He was working on a trial and error basis with the possibility of doing something bad, but this was a declaration of the goodness and completeness of God's creative acts.

But now when God creates animal life He not only says it's good but He blesses it. He pronounces a blessing on the animals he has created.

Verse 22 says "and God blessed them."

Obviously God doesn't have the same love for animals that He has for people, but were told that He has a special care and concern for them.

Jesus said *Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.* Luke 12:6-7
If God has that type and degree of interest in the animal creation, what concern He must have for people who are infinitely more valuable than an animal.

Notice the beauty and the symmetry in these verses. There was no evolutionary struggle for existence through these animals. God saw that it was good. There was no

evolving from one animal to another, because God made each category “after its kind.”

I. On The First Day

II. On The Second Day

III. On The Third Day

IV. On The Fourth Day

V. On The Fifth Day

VI. The Sixth Day

Even into the 6th day as God completes the animal creation we read these same concepts.

Read Verses 24 & 25

You know, were often told about a missing link between man and animals as if here was some kind of evolutionary chain leading from the simplest life forms to the more complex. Well, not only is there a missing link between humans and animals, the whole chain is nonexistent.

In 2005 in Dover, PA the school board tried to mandate the teaching on Intelligent Design. The case went to trial and finally US. District Judge John E. Jones issued a 139-page findings of fact and decision in which he ruled that the Dover mandate was unconstitutional.

Judge Jones's decision was surprisingly broad. He concluded that "ID is not science," but rather is a religious theory that had no place in the science classroom.

And yet when I read Genesis 1 I see such a harmony with the evidence at hand. If evolution took place over millions of years then the fossil record would show that change. Not only should we have fossils of each full functioning completed animal but we should have millions of fossils of the transition forms along the way. In fact we should have more fossils of the transitional forms than of the fully developed animal because it took so long for the changes to come about. But not only don't we have more, we don't have any in between forms

The fossil record shows life at its beginning being abundant and developed in intricate complexity.

The first and second laws of thermodynamics say that while the amount of energy in a closed system remains constant, it's usefulness always decreases. The less useful energy you have the more randomness and disorder you have. Clocks run down, fires burn out, flowerbeds turn to weeds, hybrids go back to being wild.

In other words we have less and less useful energy. Things tend toward disorder not complexity. Our earth is slowing on its axis, our solar system is running down. Eventually the sun will burn out. Things aren't evolving, just the opposite is happening.

God created all that is. He set it in motion.

Eyes and ears and lungs didn't develop because creatures need to see, hear and breathe. That's like saying water will run up the side of a mountain because it needs to get to the top. There's no mechanism to make evolution take place.

The facts point to a special creation. But even if we didn't have the fossil records we still have the Bible and the Bible is as firm and trustworthy in Genesis chapter 1 as It's in John chapter 3.

You are not the sons and daughters of the material universe with no purpose and meaning in your life. You're a creation of Almighty God. That alone gives you meaning, that alone gives you purpose, and that alone give you dignity and value.

Here's what we need to do in response to all of this. We need to the marvels of creation bring us to our knees in wonder and adoration, and most of all in faith, before Almighty God!