

# The Genesis Project: Creation & Science

## Week 2: The Genesis Enigma

Throughout the years there are two areas of life that have changed the course of history--faith and science. Even though the vast majority of significant scientific discoveries have come via people of faith, the Church has often declined (at best) to hear the new concepts due to theological understandings some of which have little to no Biblical basis. Other scientific explanations of the universe and the ways in which it works seem to challenge a Biblical understanding of the world to its very core. This study is an attempt to bring people of faith to the scientific table as we explore ways in which the scientific worldview and the faith perspective both collide and coincide.

There are significant differences between the scientific and faith worldviews--and yet, there are significant parallels as well. One of the most important similarities is the tendency of many to understand parts of the worldview as opposed to the whole viewpoint. An example of this is simply that most theologians are not doctoral level physicists nor are most physicists doctoral level theologians. As a result, the dialogue between science and faith is replete with misunderstandings, outdated data or beliefs, and just plain poor physics and bad theology. This issue is compounded with the reality that the vast majority of people, whether they be found in pulpit, pew, lab or lecture hall do not even understand their own perspective well enough to truly dialogue in a detailed manner.



For instance, for centuries the Church and the world as a whole believed that the earth was literally (not figuratively or theologically) the center of the universe. When scientists such as Galileo and Copernicus suggested otherwise, they were branded heretics even though there is no place in Scripture that suggests the earth being the literal center of the universe. The heresy stemmed from their suggestion that what is and can be observed was contrary to the Church's *theology*. Many today (while they may not hold to Ptolemy's earth-centric model) practice an understanding that may be traditional theology but does not necessarily have Biblical roots.

In science, the traditional viewpoint surrounding Darwin-specific evolutionary processes or Newtonian physics is often argued by persons even though their work is no longer considered the way in which things work in the universe. For instance, Quantum theory has drastically changed the understanding of simple concepts put forward by Newton and the fossil record, while essentially proving evolution as a process, does not support the minor genetic mutations as the source of species continuation but rather significant changes as the means of survival. In essence, we are often arguing against areas of science or faith that even those within their own discipline no longer hold to be of significant relevance to explaining the universe or the God who created it.

The hope of this study is to begin a dialogue with the newest understandings in science and theology so that we, as God's children, may see the wonder and power of God in things He has made. So let's begin...

# The First Chapter

## What We'll be Talking About



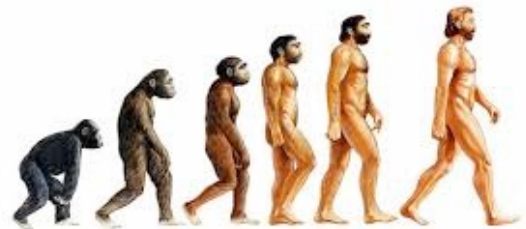
**Creation:** The concept that there is a divine Creator of the universe. There are many diverse beliefs regarding how God created that which we see and the means by which God created all that is. People of faith differ greatly in their perception of creation.



**Adam & Eve:** The belief that God created humanity and all life as we are today. For some, this involves two distinct persons while others hold to the belief that God created humanity as a whole, represented by the first two humans. Still others believe that God created life which has evolved since its creation.



**The Big Bang:** A theory of the origins of the universe that may or may not include the presence of the divine. Originally described by a Catholic Cardinal, the theory was intended to describe an expanding-universe and the source/beginning of the expansion of matter throughout the universe.



**Evolution:** The belief that life emerged from the elements found on earth and has continually changed through DNA mutations through a process of natural selection. Those beings whose traits allow them to thrive above others continue to survive and pass on positive traits to further generations.



**DNA:** Deoxyribonucleic acid (*DNA*) is a molecule that encodes the genetic instructions used in the development and functioning of all known living organisms. The Human Genome Project recently de-coded human DNA, allowing us to know which segments of the double-helix are responsible for different genetic traits.

# Looking Through Different Lenses: Finding Common Ground

## Different Pursuits:

The Goals of Science are:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

The Goals of Christians are:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

## Changing our Perspective:

**Romans 1:20** “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.” (NIV)

**Psalms 19:1-4** “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.” (NIV)

**Isaac Newton:** “This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent Being.” *Principia Book III*

a) God-in-the-Gaps

b) Non-dichotomous Dichotomies

**Stephen Hawking:** “Quarks, which we also cannot see, are a model to explain the properties of the protons and neutrons in the nucleus of an atom.” *The Grand Design*

**Hebrews 11:1** “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” (NIV)

# The Genesis Project: The Focal Point of Debate

The focal point of the science and creation debate is the first book of the Bible, Genesis. In fact, its the first and second chapters that contain the majority of data that people use as they debate the superiority or exclusivity of a scientific or faith-based worldview. Unfortunately, most Christians do not know enough about Genesis and its text, what it says in the original language, or the traditional understandings behind it to adequately discuss the text with any authority. Most often, people discuss their theology of creation as opposed to what the Scripture teaches about it.

As we discussed in the last chapter, the first two verses of Genesis can lead us into a variety of options for when, how, and with what (if any) resources God worked with as God, “began to create,” (a more precise translation of the first phrase). This chapter deals with the seven days of Creation, rather, the six days of Creation and God’s Sabbath.

## **The Framework for Genesis 1:**

Days 1-3: God Creates Form

1) Light/Heavens

2) Sky/Earth/Waters

3) Earth/Land

Days 4-6: God Fills the Void

1) Sun, Moon & Stars in the Heavens

2) Creatures of the Sea/Birds of the Air

3) Creatures of the Land/Man

## **Mankind: Adam in the Image of God, Male & Female**

1) adam--

2) neqebah--

## **Seventh Day, Sabbath Day:**

## **Genesis by Day:**

Day 1: God creates light.

Day 2: God separates the skies from the earth.

Day 3: God separates land and sea.

Day 4: God lets the earth bring forth grasses and plants. The creates the sun, moon, and stars.

Day 5: God lets the waters bring forth abundant life and birds. Note: all life is water-exclusive and then birds.

Day 6: God let the earth bring forth living creatures and then creates mankind.

## **Science by Epoch:**

Epoch 1: The Big Bang, the explosion of matter into being.

Epoch 2: The universe cools, coalesces, and planets, systems, etc. form. Atmospheres begin to emerge.

Epoch 3: Water forms on earth, coalescing in oceans and lakes.

Epoch 4: Emergence of life as earth cools and cloud-cover breaks. Pre-Cambrian image-forming eyes emerge.

Epoch 5: Cambrian explosion. All life is aquatic in nature. Eventually, life moves to land and dinosaurs emerge.

Epoch 6: Mammals and humans emerge.

## **Days and Nights:**

Theory 1: Eyes

Theory 2: Clouds

## **What about Dinosaurs?**

### **Who creates?**

1) God creates.

2) God partners.