



THE GENESIS ACCOUNT, CHAPTERS 1-3

PART I

February 24, 2023

Perry Atkinson and John Mittendorf

INTRODUCTION

While there are numerous topics that can be discussed, debated and argued, a question that has been at the forefront of dialogues for hundreds of years is the matter of origins (where did the universe and man come from)? From a simplistic viewpoint, there are only two choices as echoed by evolutionist Dr. George Wald, a Harvard Nobel Laureate who has stated;

“When it comes to the origin of life on this earth, there are only two possibilities; creation or spontaneous generation (secular evolutionary naturalism). There is no third way. Spontaneous generation was disproved one hundred years ago, but that leads us to only one other conclusion, that of supernatural creation. We cannot accept that on philosophical grounds; therefore, we choose to believe the impossible; that life arose spontaneously by chance!”¹

From a common-sense and scientific perspective, it is hard to imagine anything more absurd than the naturalist’s theory for the origin of the universe – *Nobody times nothing equals everything*. This perspective emphasizes no Creator and no design and/or purpose for life. Everything we see simply emerged and evolved by pure chance from a total void

of nothingness. As a result, evolutionary naturalism is a formula for futility and meaninglessness for four basic conclusions;²

- **Evolution Is Degrading To Humanity**

If evolution is true, humans are just one of many species that evolved from common animal ancestors. Therefore, we are no better than animals and no better or different from any other living species

- **Evolution Is Hostile To Reason**

Evolution is as irrational as it is amoral. In place of God as Creator, the evolutionist has substituted chance, sheer fortune, accident, happenstance, coincidence, random events, and blind luck. Chance is the engine most evolutionists believe drives the evolutionary process. Given enough time and enough random events, the evolutionist says anything is possible

- **Evolution Is Antithetical To The Truth God Has Revealed**

The actual record of creation is found in Genesis 1:1 – *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* This narrative accounts for everything evolution cannot explain. If Genesis is not true, we have no reliable answer to anything and the authority to all of Scripture is fatally compromised. The starting point for Christianity is not Matthew 1:1, but Genesis 1:1. Tamper with the book of Genesis and you undermine the very foundation of Christianity. Believing in a supernatural, creative God who made everything is the only possible rational explanation for the universe and for life itself. It is also the only basis for believing we have any purpose or destiny

- **Evolution Defies Absolute Laws Of Science³**

- The Law of Biogenesis states that life only comes from pre-existing life. Spontaneous generation (abiogenesis) was disproved in 1859 by Louis Pasteur
- The First Law of Thermodynamics states that matter/energy cannot be created or destroyed. Where did the initial elements for the *“Big Bang”* come from
- The Second Law of Thermodynamics states that matter/energy gradually deteriorates over time. The universe is constantly losing usable energy and not evolving to a higher state as evolution proposes

Nevertheless, when reading current secular and/or scientific magazines, the new variety of science textbooks, watching the Discovery Channel, History Channel, PBS, or national/local news stations, it quickly becomes obvious that the secular scientific version of naturalism and origins is not only regularly emphasized, but commonly presented as a factual foundation of secular science while the biblical origins account that is found in Genesis is regularly ignored and/or discounted (*Note: For this discussion, secular science is defined as science without/apart from God*). Even though Charles Darwin and secular science has labeled evolution as a theory since its published introduction in 1859, a relevant question in the 21st century is – *“Why are current media outlets and academia aggressively*

marketing evolution, and often as a fact instead of its long tenure as a theory despite scientific data to the contrary?”⁴

A foundational answer to that question can be found on page 49 in the November 2016 issue of Scientific American magazine that asks and then answers a question based on the premise of why evolution is popular to a secular world and academia. The magazine boldly asks – *“If new species are created naturally–not supernaturally–what place then, for God?”* Clearly, this quote assertively submits the premise that naturalistic evolution and its essential companion of natural selection can not only be a Godless replacement for the biblical narrative of the beginning of the universe and life, but can also eliminate God as the Creator. Not surprisingly, this viewpoint is in direct contrast to a July, 2019, Gallup poll that stated *“40% of U.S. adults ascribe to a strictly creationist view of human origins, believing that God created them in their present form within roughly the past 10,000 years.”⁵*

Unfortunately, due to the aggressive marketing of secular evolutionary science along with modern science, some Christians (and a majority of Christian colleges) accept evolution as fact and the first two chapters of Genesis are discounted in favor of the *“latest scientific discoveries.”* The choice between evolution and biblical Scripture presents a thought-provoking quandary. Either the Bible is the inspired word of God and is true from the first verse in Genesis to the last verse in Revelation, or secular evolution is true as theorized by science. Obviously, God would not give us a book that is partially true (if this were the case, then what parts are true and false, and ultimately, is the resurrection true?) as this would question the deity and omnipotence of God. So, it is clear there is a decision that mandates each person must choose one of two options:

- Believe the entire Bible as inspired truth
- Accept the theory of evolution as proposed by science

Because the alleged scientific account of evolution that is presented in the media is not as interesting (or as factual) as the facts that are **not** presented by the media, let’s briefly define evolution and creation. First, the biblical account of creation as found in the first chapter of Genesis is simple and straightforward, and clearly states that *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”* Genesis then goes on to say that God created the universe and man in six days, and then rested on the seventh day. Period! End of sentence! You must either accept or reject the biblical account. If this sounds rather straightforward, that’s because the Bible is straightforward and has not changed since it was written! When reading the Bible, and particularly Genesis, remember three basic concepts:

1. The first concept is the inerrancy of the entire Bible as outlined in 2 Timothy 3:16 – *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for*

every good work." This verse tells us that **ALL** Scripture is inspired by God and is suitable for instruction and equipping us in our daily lives

2. The second concept is the principle of simplicity and goes like this – *"We ought to take what God says and understand that if God said it, that's probably what He meant, or else He would have said it a different way."* This principle comes from a simplistic perspective that means *"God said it so we can understand it"*
3. The third concept also comes from a simplistic approach but is taken directly from Scripture and is known as the principle of straightforwardness – *"All the utterances of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing crooked or perverted in them. They are all straightforward to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge," Proverbs 8:8-9.* This principle is similar to the previous first and second principles as it focuses on the straightforward truth of Scripture

Next, and significantly different than the biblical creation account, secular evolution can be defined from two perspectives – micro and macro evolution. Micro evolution is defined as change within a species (as an example, there are numerous varieties of dogs, cats, birds, etc.). Is micro evolution true? Absolutely! However, Macro evolution is defined as change between species (ape to man, etc.) and is the foundation that secular evolution is based on – *"that the progression of modern man slowly evolved from an unknown ape-like creature that lived in the distant past."*⁶ So, is macro evolution true? Absolutely not! In fact, macro evolution violates **all** of the observed processes of the universe and nature (and the Bible). Why therefore, is evolution presented as fact and creation as a religion that is not scientifically acceptable? According to noted Theologian Dr. Clark Pinnock – *"The reason evolution is believed and taught as fact is not due to the evidence for it, but rather due to the need for it!"*⁷ This statement means that evolution does not hold anyone accountable for anything as you are nothing more than an evolving animal! Opposed to this viewpoint is a Creator who created man and holds him/her accountable to God. Most people are unwilling to submit their lives to God, and there you have the whole debate in a nutshell!

Although there are numerous reasons why secular macro evolution is scientifically impossible, the evidence against it constantly increases as science continually makes new discoveries that further validate the accuracy of the Bible (both in creation and archaeology). As previously mentioned, a prime example is the Law of Biogenesis that clearly states that life can only come from pre-existing life, yet evolution asks that we believe that somehow, someday, chemicals bonded together in a pre-biotic ocean and created life by accident. If the Law of Biogenesis is correct, then evolution is a false assumption. Additionally, a Christian can know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Bible is accurate from a scientific perspective if the evidence is examined without the input of the current secular scientific bias. A potential difficulty with this perspective is that 1 Peter 3:19 says – *"And always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason*

for the hope that is within you, with meekness and fear, having a good conscience.” A potential problem with the application of this verse is that Christians do not hold a PhD in the sciences, so it is necessary to have a basic understanding of the why and how God created the universe in 6 days, and that the biblical account is accurate and scientifically defensible.

With these thoughts in mind, let’s take a close look at the creation account as outlined in the first three chapters in first book of the Bible – Genesis – with the goal of having a better understanding of what God said He did during His creative account. Remember, God was the only one present during the creation. Therefore, He is the most qualified to give an account of how creation events actually happened. *Note: All following biblical quotes are taken from the New King James Translation unless otherwise noted.*

GENESIS CHAPTER 1

The English title, Genesis, comes from the Greek translation meaning “*origins*”, whereas the Hebrew title is derived from the Bible’s very first word, translated “*in the beginning.*” The book of Genesis, as with all the other books of the canonical Scriptures, was written by holy men of God (II Peter 1:21) under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (II Timothy 3:16). Genesis ends almost 3 centuries before Moses was born, yet both the Old and New Testament both ascribe the authorship of Genesis to Moses (Exodus 17:14, 24:4-7, 34:27, Numbers 33:2, Deuteronomy 31:9, 22, 24, Matthew 8:4, 19:7-8, and Mark 7:10) who was the fitting author in light of his educational background (Acts 7:22). Although Moses was an eye-witness to the events of the Exodus and on to the time of Deuteronomy, the *initial events* of Genesis occurred long before the time of Moses so the most accurate explanation for the author of Genesis is that Moses was the *editor* as he collected the necessary information from three perspectives:

- He received all of the necessary information by direct revelation from God which guided him subconsciously as he put it into a written text
- It was received and collected by oral traditions that were passed down over the centuries from father to son and guided by the Holy Spirit
- Actual written records of the past were collected. Again, guided by the Holy Spirit

Any of the previous perspectives and/or any combination would be consistent with both the doctrine of complete verbal inspiration (every word of Scripture is God given) and that of Mosaic authorship. This concept does not minimize the work of the Holy Spirit who not only infallibly guided Moses in the compilation, editing and final writing, just as the Holy Spirit guided all authors of biblical Scripture. This explanation gives additional testimony to the authenticity of the events that Moses recorded in Genesis as they are all first-hand testimony and a history book of “*the beginning.*” The New Testament has at least 60 references to Genesis 1-11, with over 100 references to the entire

book. As a matter of fact, every New Testament author refers to Genesis, and nearly every New Testament book does as well.⁸

LITERAL HISTORY^{9,10}

Jesus and the other Bible authors treated Genesis as a literal history book. They appealed to the events and people as real, not mythical, and sometimes appealed even to the order of events. Genesis presents itself as a book about history – recounting events in the past in a manner clearly meant to convey that they really happened! Unfortunately, Genesis has also become a launching point for opponents that try to undermine the historical inerrancy and biblical authority of the Bible which also undermines the rest of Scripture, particularly sin, judgment, the cross, repentance, redemption, salvation, and eternity with Christ.

Not surprisingly, there are those who disagree with the literary style of Genesis, particularly Genesis 1-11 as the stated creation of the universe, earth and mankind along with the related timeframe of six days stands in direct contrast with secular science and evolutionary theory. Currently, the most popular areas of dissent can be summarized by three primary viewpoints:

DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS (JEDP THEORY)

The documentary hypothesis alleges that the first five books of the Old Testament were originally independent accounts that were later edited after Moses by another editor or editors. Those who support the documentary hypothesis theory generally suggest four specific sources represented by the letters JEDP and is why the documentary hypothesis is often referred to as the JEDP theory. The JEDP acronyms are proposed to be:¹¹

- The **J** source refers to an alleged Yahwist source that was written in the kingdom of Judah by about 950 BC
- The **E** source refers to an alleged Elohist source that was written in the northern kingdom of Israel by about 850 BC
- The **D** source refers to an alleged Deuteronomist source that was written in Jerusalem by about 600 BC
- The **P** source refers to an alleged Priestly source that was completed in Babylon by Jewish priests by about 500 BC

These allegations completely contrast the biblical claim that the first five books (Pentateuch) were authored by Moses by approximately 1400 BC. For the documentary hypothesis to be true, Moses could not have authored the Pentateuch nor could they have been completed anywhere near the time period spoken of in the books themselves. Not only did Jewish tradition refer to Moses as the author of the Pentateuch, but Jesus referred to Moses authorship in Mark 12:26 as well as the apostle Paul who referred to the authorship of Moses of Leviticus in Romans 10:5. The apostle Peter repeated Moses authorship in Acts 3:22.

POLEMIC

Liberal theologians have pointed to alleged parallels with pagan myths to claim that Genesis was not written by God, but borrowed from these myths and was written as a polemic (aggressive attack or refutation of the opinion/principles of another) against these pagan myths. One of the alleged common sources is the paleo-Babylonian myth *Enuma Elish*. Supposedly, the purpose of Genesis was to refute pagan beliefs involving worship of the sun, other luminaries, or pagan deities.¹²

POETRY

Until recently, Genesis was considered as real Hebrew history and/or a historical narrative. However, the nineteenth century witnessed a concerted effort to emphasize the unbiblical philosophy of uniformitarianism in geology (slow changes and variations and the present is a key to the past). This approach alleged the universe and earth are billions of years old and Noah's Global Flood – along with the Tower of Babel – was not legitimate history by specifically categorizing Genesis 1-11 as poetry or even a fable. Undeniably, the supposed classification of Genesis from history to poetry allows for a greater degree of *interpretative flexibility* to allow reconciling biblical Scripture with the theory of secular evolutionary science.^{13,14} Additionally, this change to an alleged relevance of scientific philosophy has also allowed uniformitarianism to place secular science in authority over the Bible (particularly Genesis 1-11) and elevating *Scriptura sub scientia* over *Sola Scriptura* (science over Scripture alone instead of Scripture alone over science).¹⁵

As poetry is defined as “*literary work in which special intensity is given to the expression of feelings and ideas by the use of distinctive style and rhythm,*”¹⁶ let's look at some of the literary policies that designates why Hebrew grammar affirms that Genesis is historical narrative (history) and *not* poetry:

- A key feature of Hebrew poetry is parallelism – the repetition of one thing in two or more different ways. As an example, parallelism is evident in passages like Psalm 119:105 – “*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*” An occurring feature of Hebrew parallelism is that it typically occurs within close proximities rather than broad contexts. Genesis lacks these parallelisms except in a few verses such as Genesis 1:27 and 2:23. If Genesis was poetic literature, the whole book of Genesis would look like these few verses, and it does not
- Hebrew uses special grammatical forms for recording history and Genesis 11 not only uses those but has the same structure as Genesis 12 onwards with most of Exodus, Joshua, Judges, etc., which no one claims is poetry or not meant to be taken as history. For an example of poetic Hebrew, look at Job, Psalms, Proverbs and Song of Solomon
- Genesis is interlaced with “*And...and...and*” which characterizes historical writing (this is technically called the “*vav*” often rendered as *waw-consecutive*)
- The Hebrew verb forms of Genesis 1 have a particular feature that fits exactly what the Hebrews used for recording history or a series of past events. That is, only the first

verb in a sequence of events is perfect (*qatal*), while the verbs that continue the narrative are imperfects (*vayyiqtol*s). As an example, in Genesis 1, the first verb *bara* (create), is perfect, while the subsequent verbs are imperfect

GENESIS 1:1

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”

Verse 1 is a general statement. Although the rest of Genesis unfolds the sequence of God’s creative work, this verse is the foundational verse of the Bible. Additionally, it is also the foundation of all foundations from four perspectives:

- It makes no attempt to prove that God exists as it simply takes this fact for granted as though it were obvious that only a fool could say *“there is no God”* as found in Psalm 14:1
- If a person really believes Genesis 1:1, they will not find it difficult to believe anything else that is recorded in the Bible
- This one verse refutes all of man’s false philosophies concerning the origin and meaning of the world:
 - It refutes atheism, because the universe was created by God
 - It refutes pantheism, for God is transcendent to that which He created
 - It refutes polytheism, for one God created all things
 - It refutes materialism, for matter had a beginning
 - It refutes dualism, because God was alone when He created
 - It refutes humanism, because God, not man, is the ultimate reality
 - It refutes evolutionism, because God created all things
- Although the first verse of Genesis 1 is only comprised of 10 words, they succinctly itemize everything that can be known or observed by science that fit into one of five scientific categories – (1) time, (2) force, (3) action, (4) space, and (5) matter as follows:¹⁷
 - *“In the beginning”* - - **time**
 - *“God”* - - **force**
 - *“Created”* - - **action**
 - *“The heavens”* - - **space**
 - *“The earth”* - - **matter**

Beginning from the opening of verse 1, let’s examine each word and/or phrase in this all-important beginning declaration:

“In the beginning”

This phrase marks the beginning of time itself that was created by God (John 1:3) and had a definite beginning (Genesis 1). Interestingly, since time is a part of the created order, God, therefore, is not subject to time. This means that unlike human history, God

perfectly knows the past, present and future which all refer to time.¹⁸ In concert with Genesis 1:1, John 1:1-2 states that – *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”* This indicates that Jesus (the Word) was both with God and was himself God as John 1:3 states that the Word created all things.

“God”

This is the first occurrence of the Hebrew name of *Elohim*. This specific title emphasizes His omnipotence, majesty and authority and is the first of over two thousand times where it is used in this context. *Elohim* is a plural name with a singular meaning (uni-plural noun), suggesting the uni-plurality of the God-head. God is one, yet more than one.¹⁹ The plural form also indicates majesty; the name stresses God’s sovereignty and incomparability – He is the God of gods.

“created”

The Hebrew word for created is *“bara”* and specifically means to create out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) showing that God created the heavens and earth without any preexisting material (also mentioned in Hebrews 11:3, Romans 4:17, and Psalm 33:6,9). As the Scriptures indicate, God spoke and things instantly appeared, including space and time (a medium) for all created things to occupy and in which to function. Mankind cannot *create* in the sense the term is used in Genesis 1:1, but can only fashion or form things out of existing materials. God is separate from his creation meaning that the universe could perish yet God would remain. Additionally, this Hebrew grammar affirms that Genesis is historical narrative and the verb *bara* is just the sort of verb form (*qal perfect*) that begins Hebrew narratives. This verse continues on to the next verse, which singles out the earth for further description.²⁰

“heavens and the earth”

This portion of Genesis 1:1 provides the foundational truth that declares God is the universal Creator and ruler of His creation. This phrase also means the totality of creation, not just the solar system alone or the earth and its atmosphere. It seems the Hebrew word for *“heavens”* corresponds to what we know as space or atmospheric space and the Hebrew word for *“earth”* corresponds to a component of matter in the universe. At this point, the universe – at least its energy and its mass – began to exist in some form, though the light-giving stars and planets had not yet taken shape. What specific shape everything at this point was in is not spelled out in explicit detail.

GENESIS 1:2

“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”

It is noteworthy that verse 2 continues on from the first verse and introduces the initial condition of one of the preliminary created items – earth.

“The earth was without form and void”

This Hebrew phrase is *tohu wawohu*, or *tohu waw bohu*. The proper translation of the term *tohu* depends on the specific context. Used in Genesis 1:2 it means “without form,” exactly as the King James scholars rendered it. From a simplistic yet relevant viewpoint, God had yet to form or fill the earth at this point, thus it was formless (yet to have a finished form) and empty. Similarly, the word *bohu* does not mean a desolation, but simply an “emptiness.” Therefore, when the earth was initially created, it had no inhabitants – it was void. As a result, the essential meaning is as follows – “*In the beginning God created the heaven and earth (or space and matter), and the matter so created was at first unformed and uninhabited.*”²¹

“and darkness was on the face of the deep”

The newly created material universe was yet to be formed and/or energized – no form, no motion, no light. Together with the absence of any light-form and complete darkness (Figure 1), the universe was in its elemental form – not yet completed. The Hebrew word

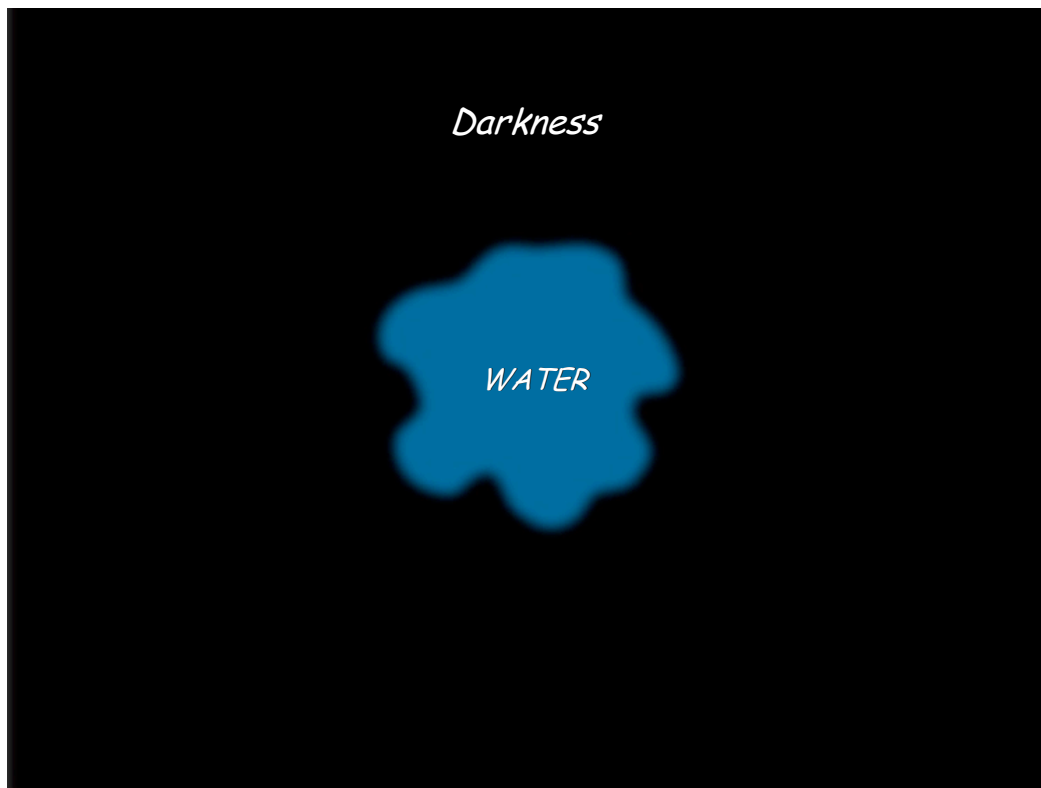


Figure 1. Unbounded Mass Of Water Surrounded By Darkness

for deep (*t hom*) is a common biblical word for the oceans. This word makes sense of 2 Peter 3:5 – “*the earth was formed out of water and through water*” – suggesting that God first

created an enormous amount of formless water – meaning it had yet to have an organized form as the specific form of its boundaries are not delineated in Scripture.

“spirit of God”

This is the first mention of the Holy Spirit that will be revealed in the New Testament as the Third Person of the Trinity. The fact that God was hovering over the waters indicates that He was intimately involved in His creative work.

GENESIS 1:3-5

(3) And God said, “Let there be light: and there was light.” (4) And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. (5) And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

“the light”

Verse 3 is the first Scriptural record of God speaking in the Bible. Although God is light (I John 1:5), this light was not God but something He created and may have well contained the elements of the electromagnetic spectrum and infrared with ultraviolet as well.

“God saw that the light was good”

This is the first declaration out of seven in Genesis 1 that the Creation was “Good” which was and is the perfect standard of God.

“and God divided the light from the darkness”

Interestingly, the light source was not the sun as it was not created until the fourth day of creation so this was a created light source that was used until the fourth day of the creation account (remember that Revelation 21:23 states that there will be no need for the sun or moon in the new heavens and earth). Also note that “darkness” in this portion of the account is not evil, it is an absence of light and a part of creation that God delineates as darkness (see Isaiah 45:7).

“and God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night”

Here, we see God giving names for the first time in Scripture and is a recurring theme in Genesis 1 and 2. A name was not only an important outcome of existence, it also defined an assertion of authority and sovereignty over the named item (2 Kings 23:24, 24:17). This biblical fact demonstrates that God is unrivalled as the ultimate authority over everything that exists.²²

“and there was evening and there was morning, the first day”

This verse contains the first use of the Hebrew word “day” which has experienced a significant number of multiple definitions from a 24-hour solar day to long periods of

time consisting of millions and billions of years and/or ages. For a starting point, let's look at an explanation by Dr. Henry M. Morris²³ with Figure 2 that best illustrates a division between light and darkness being imposed on a rotating spherical earth comprised of water, and then look at the Hebrew definition of "day."

"Having separated the day and night, God had completed His first day's work – 'The evening and the morning were the first day.' This same formula is used at the conclusion of each of the six days; so, it is obvious that the duration of each of the days, including the first, was the same. Furthermore, the 'day' was the 'light' time, when God did His work; the darkness was the 'night' time when God did no work – nothing new took place between the 'evening' and 'morning' of each day. The formula may be rendered literally – And there was evening, then morning – day one, and so on. It is clear that beginning with the first day and continuing thereafter, there was established a cyclical succession of days and nights – periods of light and periods of darkness.

Such a cyclical light-dark arrangement clearly means that the earth was now rotating on its axis and that there was a source of light on one side of the earth corresponding to the sun, even though the sun was not yet made (Genesis 1:16). It is equally clear that the length of such days could only have been that of a normal solar day."

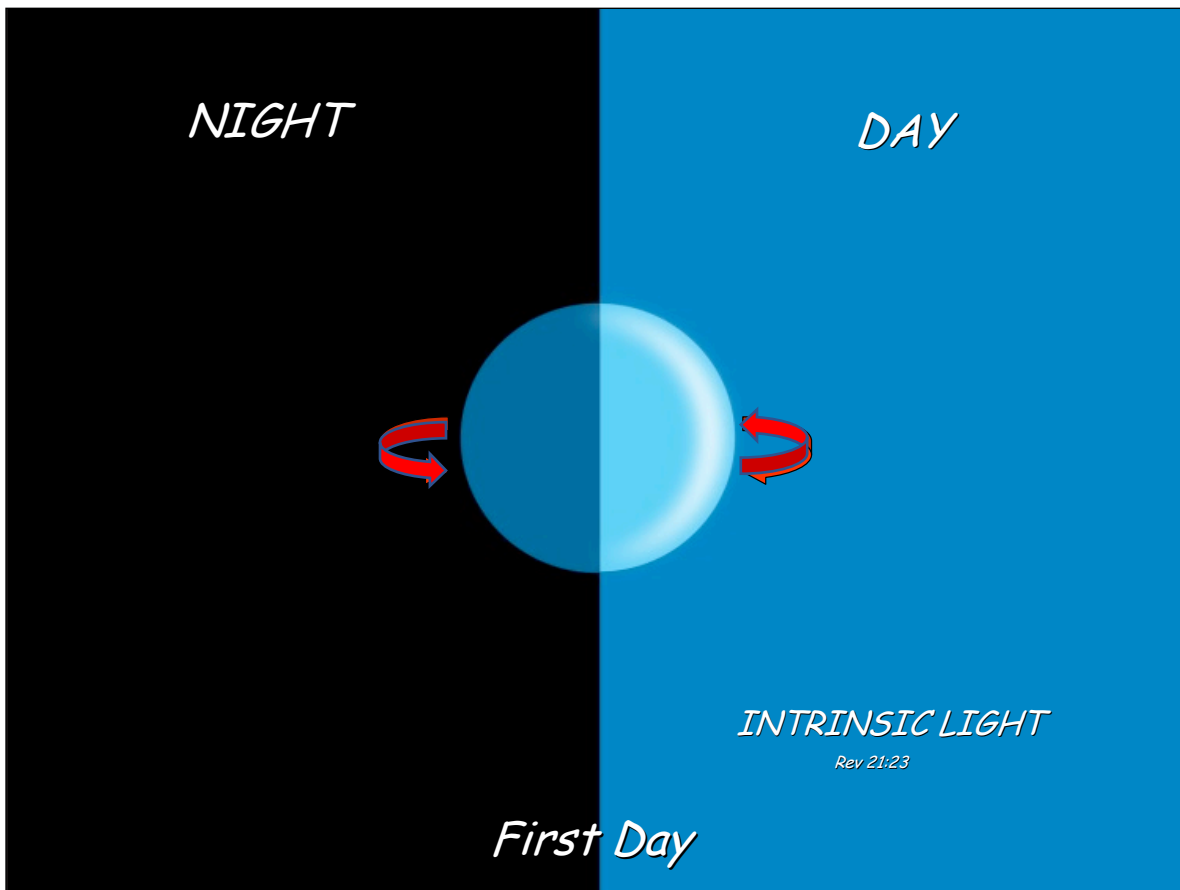


Figure 2. Light-Darkness-Rotating Spherical Earth

Following the events of the first day, the earth was likely now a rotating spherical mass of water, but was still void of any land, atmosphere, vegetation and any living inhabitants.

HEBREW DEFINITION OF “DAY”

As the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, it would be logical and a good starting point to look at for the definition of “day” in Hebrew in order to derive the correct interpretation of its meaning. To begin, let’s look at the text notes for Genesis 1:2 from the New English Translation Bible (NET Bible)²⁴ which is a direct literal translation from Hebrew to English for the Old Testament and Greek to English for the New Testament:

“The first day. The exegetical evidence suggests the word ‘day’ in this chapter refers to a literal twenty-four hour day. It is true that the word can refer to a longer period of time (see Isa 61:2, or the idiom in 2:4, ‘in the day,’ that is, ‘when’). But this chapter uses ‘day,’ ‘night,’ ‘morning,’ ‘evening,’ ‘years,’ and ‘seasons.’ Consistency would require sorting out how all these terms could be used to express ages. Also, when the Hebrew word ‘yom’ is used with a numerical adjective, it refers to a literal day. Furthermore, the commandment to keep the sabbath clearly favors this interpretation. One is to work for six days and then rest on the seventh, just as God did when He worked at creation (Exodus 20:11).”

A literal reading of Genesis 1:1 clearly indicates that Day 1 sets the precedent for all of the Creation days which can be summarized as – evening + morning + numeric – and can be literally rendered as “*And there was evening, then morning – day one,*” and so on. So, beginning with the first day and continuing thereafter, the Hebrew construct establishes a cyclical succession of days and nights that consist of periods of light and darkness bordered and/or framed by the words *evening and morning that are based on a rotating spherical earth*. This cyclical light-dark arrangement plainly shows that the length of such days could only have been a normal solar day.

Note: For a further look at the meaning of the Hebrew word day, go to creationtruth.info, and download the notes – Sufficiency of the Genesis Account of Creation, #61.

However, there is a noteworthy disagreement over the meaning of the biblical word “day” from the perspective of time. Does the word “day” really mean 24 solar hours or can it be translated as long periods of time and/or epochs. Modern secular science teaches Darwinian evolution is responsible for all life, and the universe and the earth are billions of years old which ultimately leads to the question of – “*Why is there such a large age difference between the Genesis account and secular science?*” The answer is easily answered from two viewpoints as follows:

1. The humanistic views of Darwinian science and the need for long ages is used as a replacement and/or adjunct for God and biblical Scripture

2. The most revealing answer was affirmed by evolutionist and Nobel Laureate, Dr. George Wald of Harvard University²⁵ – *“Time is in fact the hero of the plot (evolution). . . . Given so much time, the impossible becomes possible, the possible probable, and the probable virtually certain. One only has to wait: time will itself perform the miracle.”* This quote by Dr. Wald indicates that time can be used as a replacement for God

Up until the 18th century, scientists and the Christian church alike generally accepted the viewpoint of an age of thousands of years for the universe/earth but the introduction of new theories of universe/earth age history from various scientists from about 1770 to 1830 began to erode the accepted principles of the acceptance of thousands of years and also began to intimidate conservative biblical scholars. So, by the 19th century, there were three competing views of earth history as follows:

1. Catastrophic view. Although the adherents of this viewpoint believed in God, they also believed in numerous catastrophic floods over millions of years
2. Uniformitarian view. Although the adherents of this viewpoint may have believed in God, they believed there were slow gradual changes over millions of years
3. Biblical/Traditional view. Belief in a supernatural creation, a universe/earth that are about 6,000 years old and a single Global Flood

Although the 19th century witnessed the previous three competing views of earth history, the Christian church generally still believed in thousands of years and a Global Flood. However, the Christian church was beginning to incorporate millions of years into biblical Scripture as follows:²⁶

- 1810 – Introduction of the Gap Theory (insert long ages between verses 1 and 2 of Genesis 1. The Gap Theory is explained in a following section)
- 1820 – Introduction of the Day-Age Theory (creation days are interpreted as long ages)
- 1830 – The introduction of the Local Flood Theory (Mesopotamian Valley area) and the perception of Genesis as a myth – not literal history
- 1850 – The general acceptance of millions of years that was framed on the foundation of *“everything can be explained by time, plus chance, plus the laws of nature”*

Once the concept of millions of years had gained an alleged status of acceptable science, some influential and respected Christian authors and publications added to its credibility. Several examples are:

- 1909 C.I. Scofield, Scofield Reference Bible. The margin notes for Genesis 1:2 states – *“The first creative act refers to the dateless past, and gives scope for all the geologic ages”*
- 2000, Dr. Norman Geisler, Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics. Pages 270 and 272 state – *“The problem is deepened by the fact that there is prima facie evidence to indicate that the days of Genesis are indeed twenty-four-hour periods. . . . Most scientific evidence sets the age of the world at billions of years”*

As a result of incorporating secular science into Genesis, many Christians have accepted the idea that it is necessary to harmonize the early chapters of Genesis with secular science and insert long ages into Scripture. Remember that the laws of nature place no limit on what God can do (Genesis 18:14, Jeremiah 32:27). For that reason, our understanding of science should never govern whether we take God's Word literally or not. Although there have been various views designed to re-interpret the Genesis account, it is apparent each view is based on an arbitrary method of interpretation and forced contradictions with the biblical text. Let's briefly summarize these views:

The Gap Theory²⁷

A common method that is used to insert secular science with its long periods of time into Genesis is basically re-translating the word "*was*" in Genesis 1:2. This was popularized by The Scofield Bible and then almost universally accepted. Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 reads as follows – (1) *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (2) Now the earth was without shape and empty, and darkness was over the surface of the watery deep, but the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the water."* When this verse is read as written, it appears to flow from the beginning of verse one to the end of verse two. However, the Gap Theory modifies this verse as follows – *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* Then, in the next verse the word "*was*" is retranslated or changed to the word "*became!*" So, the next verse (v2) would then read as follows – *"Now the earth became without shape and empty; and darkness was over the surface of the watery deep, but the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the water."*

According to this theory, Genesis 1:1 is a summary of the initial creation of the universe over billions of years and proposes that God created a fully functional earth with all animals, including the dinosaurs and other creatures we only know from the fossil record. Then, the theory alleges that something catastrophic happened to completely destroy the earth – most likely the fall of Satan to earth – so that earth became without form and void. At this point, God started all over again, recreating the earth in its paradise form as further described in Genesis. The subtle word changes in Genesis 1:2 purportedly allows a gap of time to be inserted between the first and second verse so long periods of time can then be inserted between these two verses that allow for the billions and millions of years that evolution requires! Interestingly, Gap theorists believe in six-normal length creation days but also accept billions of years for the age of the universe and earth. This point of view is known by various names such as the Ruin Reconstruction Theory and Old-Earth Creationism.

Contrary to biblical Scripture, the Gap Theory is still being advocated by a number of evangelical theologians. As an example, the 1997 Nelson Study Bible states the following in its footnotes on Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 – *"Here it means that God renewed what was in a chaotic state. God changed chaos into cosmos, disorder into order, emptiness into fullness.....the two*

words, without form and void, express one concept – chaos. The earth had been reduced to this state – it was not the way God had first created it.”

Day-Age-Theory²⁸

In order to accommodate the belief that nature, including geology, fossils, and cosmology, point to a longer creation process, the “*days*” of Genesis 1 are interpreted as “*ages*.” One of the primary verses that is used to support the Day-Age theory is 2 Peter 3:8 which states in part – “*with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*” Scripturally, this passage has nothing to do with creation but has everything to do with God’s time (as He is timeless) and God’s time is not our time. The Day-Age theory is an attempt to interpret Genesis 1 with an old-earth creation worldview.

Framework Hypothesis²⁹

Developed in 1924, this theory is essentially an attempt to reclassify Genesis 1 as being something other than historical narrative. Proponents have attempted to identify the text as figurative language or semi-poetic in the text, particularly the first chapter which is desired to not be taken in its plain sense. It is claimed that Genesis 1 simply reveals that God created everything and that He made man in His own image but the Theory gives no information about how or when God created the universe and man. The leading promoter of the Framework Hypothesis, biblical scholar Meredith Kline has stated – “*To rebut the literalist interpretation of the Genesis creation week propounded by the young-earth theorists is a central concern of this article. The conclusion is that as far as the time frame is concerned, with respect to both the duration and sequence of events, the scientist is left free of biblical constraints in hypothesizing about cosmic origins.*”³⁰

Progressive Creationism³¹

Progressive creationism (also called “*process creation*”) is the belief that God created the heavens and earth over a period of billions of years, not the six 24-hour days that is the basis for the traditional creationism view. Progressive creationists can be liberal or conservative in their theological beliefs, generally oppose both atheistic evolutionism and young earth creationism, and have received favorable publicity through Christian radio, television, magazines, and books. Progressive creationism is a view that is held by a sizable proportion of the Christian community and is characterized by evidences that come mainly from the field of science, not directly from biblical Scripture. Some of the beliefs are summarized by the following viewpoints: (1) The days of creation were overlapping periods of millions and billions of years, (2) Death and bloodshed have existed from the very beginning of creation and were not the result of Adam’s sin, (3) Man was created after the vast majority of earth’s history of life and death had already taken place, (4) Noah’s Flood was local, not global, and had little effect on earth’s history.

Although the preceding four theories are contrary to Scripture, they have, nonetheless, become very popular so science (evolution) and the required long periods

of time can become an integral part of the biblical creation account. Nevertheless, they clearly disregard four basic biblical principles as follows:

- The Bible clearly states that Scripture shall not be modified by additions or deletions as found in Proverbs 30:6, Jeremiah 26:2, Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32, and Revelation 22:18-19
- *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”* – II Timothy 3:16
- Secular science has been elevated to authority over the Bible in Genesis 1-11 (*Scriptura sub scientia* over *Sola Scriptura* – science over Scripture alone instead of Scripture alone over science). This conundrum is noteworthy as secular scientific evolution (naturalistic humanism) was designed to replace God as the Creator and Savior of the universe and man
- Secular evolutionary science intends to communicate that biblical creation was a process that took billions of years, not just one week to complete. That means all past generations from Moses through the late twentieth century have been clueless as to the true meaning of Genesis

GENESIS 1:6-8

(6) Then God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” (7) 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. (8) And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

At the beginning of the second day, the newly formed earth was a rotating mass of spherical water. This seems to be substantiated in Proverbs 8:27-30 – (27) *“When He prepared the heavens, I was there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep, (28) When He established the clouds above, When He strengthened the fountains of the deep, (29) When He assigned to the sea its limit, So that the waters would not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth, (30) Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman; And I was daily His delight, Rejoicing always before him.”* These verses describe the existence of Christ with the Father in eternity past. But beginning in verse 27, He describes creation with an account that perfectly parallels the Genesis account – (27) *“When He prepared the heavens, I was there, when He drew a circle on the face of the deep.”* This indicates the earth was spherical at this point with Job 26.7 indicating the earth hung on nothing in space.

“Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.”

The second day begins with God commanding an expanse to divide the waters from the waters as the word “firmament” in Hebrew is *raqiya* which speaks of something that is spread out. This account centers on God stretching out an expanse between the waters to establish celestial waters above with the sea beneath (verse 7) and a breathable atmosphere separating the waters. The imagery of Genesis 1:6 is of a vast expanse, a protective layer that overlays the earth and divides the waters below (the sea of water that covered the earth) from the waters above (which could refer to atmospheric water, clouds, and water vapor; or it might describe some kind of ice-crystal or water-vapor canopy that encircled the early earth). So, the expanse in-between (the firmament) also includes the earth’s breathable atmosphere which primarily refers to the sky immediately above us, the atmospheric heavens. According to NASA, our breathable atmosphere

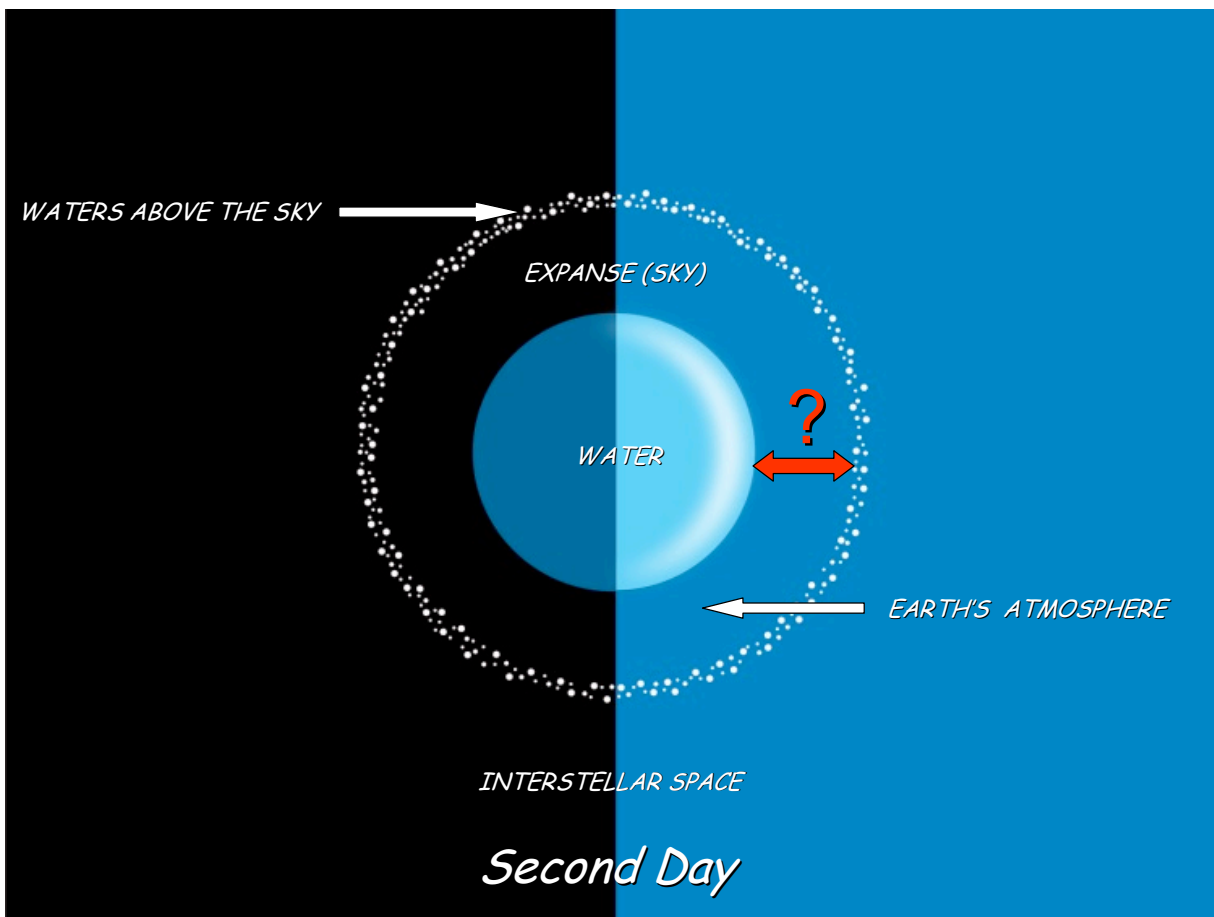


Figure 3. Waters Are Separated

extends from the surface of the earth to the edge of space, a distance of 60 miles,³² and is illustrated in Figure 3.

“God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament”

As previously discussed, it is clear from the biblical account that the waters under the firmament was the sea which is still present today. However, it is much more difficult to understand the phrase *“the waters which were above the firmament”* as the distance and amount of water above the firmament is not detailed. This had led to numerous views such as the *“vapor canopy theory”* (a protective water canopy above the earth that remained in place until Noah’s Flood), waters above the luminaries at the boundary of the visible universe, or it is also possible that this section of Genesis 1:6-7 may be referring to a water vapor that continually floats above the earth’s surface. As a matter of interest, let’s briefly overview a popular explanation, the Vapor Canopy Theory:

- The vapor canopy theory was popularized by the landmark books, the Genesis Record by Morris (1976), and the Genesis Flood (1961) by Whitcomb and Morris, that claimed a canopy of water vapor floated above the earth’s atmosphere and collapsed during Noah’s Flood adding to the rain that fell for 40 days and nights, and also increased the longevity of life due to filtering out the ultraviolet rays from the sun. However, today this theory is not popular due to the fact that water vapor would not protect against ultraviolet rays, a thick water vapor above the earth would dramatically raise earth’s temperature, and Psalm 148:1-4 indicates the waters above the heavens are still there!³³

In any case, it is likely there was a unique atmospheric condition that existed prior to Noah’s Flood as Genesis 2:5 states that there was no rain before Noah’s Flood and the earth was *“watered by a mist that went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the earth.”*

“And God called the firmament Heaven”

This seems to refer to the sky that is immediately above us, the atmospheric heaven in verse 8. But the word firmament is also sometimes used to refer to the stellar heavens beyond earth’s atmosphere, as in Genesis 1:14. In 2 Corinthians 12:1-4, Paul speaks *“of being caught up to the third heaven,”* so he is referring to the earth’s atmosphere as the first heaven, the space beyond earth’s atmosphere as the second heaven, and the heaven where God dwells as the third heaven (Figure 4). According to Genesis 1:1, the heavens of outer space had already been created. So, the firmament described in verses 7-8 is the earth’s breathable atmosphere (Figure 5).³⁴

“evening and the morning were the second day”

Day two is the only day in which God does not summarize His work as *“It was good”* as in Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, and 25, which suggests that His second day’s work was incomplete and had yet to be finished by the end of the third day. Beginning in the next verse (v9), God completes His part of preparing earth to be a habitable planet by creating dry land from the waters (sea) which ends the third day with God declaring *“It was good.”*

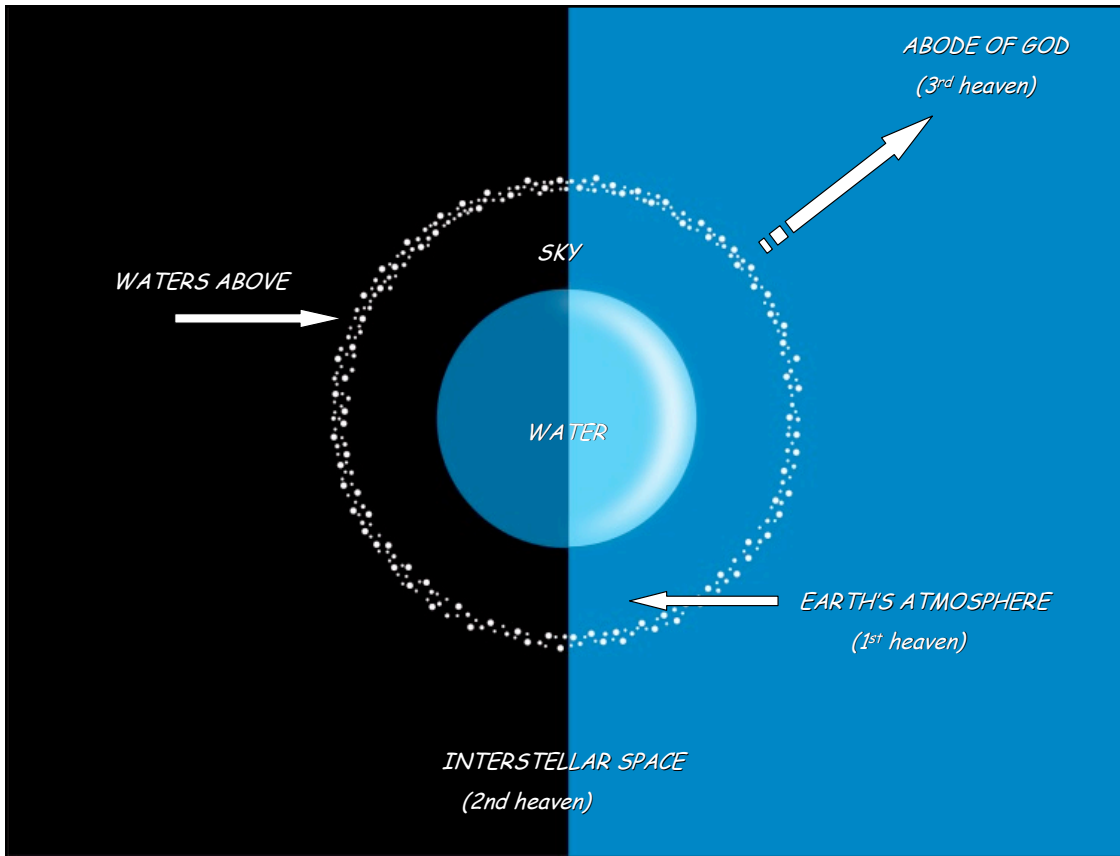


Figure 4. Three Heavens



Figure 5. Earth's Breathable Atmosphere

CONCLUSION

This series has summarized the importance of trust and faith when applied to the Bible, and particularly the Genesis account of creation. Unfortunately, many people either reject Genesis or find Genesis hard to believe even though they claim to believe in the authority and inerrancy of the Bible. This dilemma is best explained as outlined in Romans 1:18-23:

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who suppress the truth by their unrighteousness, because what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world his invisible attributes—his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, because they are understood through what has been made. So, people are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give him thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts and their senseless hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools.”

However, the real question is – “What is the best explanation for your purpose in life?” If creation is true (and the evidence from science and Scripture indicate that it is), then each person should be concerned with their future destiny and specifically, where you will spend eternity. The Bible clearly says – “All have sinned and come short of the Glory of God” – Romans 3:23, and those without a personal acceptance of God will spend eternity in a lake of fire (Revelation 20:15). Nevertheless, God has provided an alternate choice, and that choice is a free gift that only needs to be accepted by you – “For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” – John 3:16, and “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be saved” – Romans 10:13. This is God’s message to you, so have you accepted his free gift of eternal life?

Part II of this series will be on the Dove, March 24, 2023, from 8-9 am and will begin with verse 9, the third day of the creation account.

RESOURCES

1. The Origin of Life
Scientific American, 1954
2. The Battle For The Beginning
Dr. John MacArthur
Nelson Books, 2001
3. www.allaboutsience.org
4. Ibid.
5. news.gallup.com/poll/261680/americans-believe-creationism
6. www.humanorigins.si.edu/educational/introduction-human-origins

7. Set Forth Your Case
Clark H. Pinnock, Ph.D.
Craig Press, 1967
8. www.creation.com/genesis-new-testament
9. Ibid.
10. The Genesis Account
Jonathan D. Sarfati, PhD, FM
Creation Book Publishers, 2015
11. www.compellingtruth.org/documentary-hypothesis
12. The Battle For The Beginning
Dr. John MacArthur
Nelson Books, 2001
13. Ibid.
14. www.christiancourier.com/articles/is-the-genesis-creation-account-poetry
15. The Genesis Account
Jonathan D. Sarfati, PhD, FM
Creation Book Publishers, 2015
16. Oxford Languages
17. The Battle For The Beginning
Dr. John MacArthur
Nelson Books, 2001
18. The Genesis Account
Jonathan D. Sarfati, PhD, FM
Creation Book Publishers, 2015
19. The Genesis Record
Henry M. Morris
Baker Book House, 1992
20. The Genesis Account
Jonathan D. Sarfati, PhD, FM
Creation Book Publishers, 2015
21. The Genesis Record
Henry M. Morris
Baker Book House, 1992
22. The Genesis Account
Jonathan D. Sarfati, PhD, FM
Creation Book Publishers, 2015
23. The Genesis Record
Henry M. Morris
Baker Book House, 1992
24. www.netbible.com

25. Scientific American, The Origin of Life
Dr. George Wald
August 1954
26. Millions of Years – Where Did the Idea Come From?
Dr. Terry Mortenson
aig.org
27. www.gotquestions.org
28. www.compellingtruth.org/day-age-theory-Genesis-days
29. www.answersingenesis.org/creationism/old-earth/whats-wrong-with
30. Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony
Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith
Meredith G. Kline, 1996
31. www.gotquestions.org/progressive-creationism
32. www.grc.nasa.gov/atmosphere
33. The Genesis Account
Jonathan D. Sarfati, PhD, FM
Creation Book Publishers, 2015
34. The Battle For The Beginning
Dr. John MacArthur
Nelson Books, 2001