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INTRODUCTION

The modern creationist movement has not only enlisted thousands of scientists in its ranks, but has also been like a breath of fresh air to Bible-believing pastors and Christians generally. Creation-evolution debates have been held on hundreds of university campuses in recent years, and thousands of students have seen and heard firsthand that the entire evolutionary system is scientifically indefensible. “This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes” (Ps. 118:23).

The last three decades have seen a remarkable revival of confidence in the scientific integrity and accuracy of the Scriptures. The neo-orthodox and neo-evangelical movements of the past generation, promoting the idea that the Bible was only a book of “religion,” rather than one of science, have proved sterile and self-defeating. Most young people were too intelligent to have assurance for very long in the spiritual teachings of a book that was full of scientific and historical mis-information. If the biblical cosmogony was not acceptable to the modern mind, there was no reason to think that biblical commandments were applicable to modern morality or that the biblical eschatology was meaningful in planning for the future. An introspective emphasis on personal regeneration and “confident living” might satisfy some people for a little while, but such purely emotional religion will not stand the fires of intellectual attack and ridicule very long unless undergirded by solid and intelligent knowledge of the *complete* integrity of God’s Word.

While many Christians were compromising the Scriptures with what they thought was modern science, however, God was calling many scientists to the defense of the faith, and the result has been a sudden surge of awareness that the Bible was true after all, even on such long-ridiculed doctrines as a literal six-day creation, a young earth, and a worldwide cataclysmic flood in the days of Noah.

This exciting development has stirred up great new interest in the study of the Book of Genesis. The “Back-to Genesis” seminars of the Institute for Creation Research, for example, in recent years normally attract well over a thousand registrants each. Especially the first 11 chapters of Genesis, so long explained away even by many evangelicals as allegorical rather than historical, are now being recognized as the very foundation of all history. These marvelous writings, recording the creation, the Fall, the Curse, the Flood, and the dispersion, are absolute prerequisites to any comprehension of God’s purposes for the world and for individual people in subsequent ages. That is why God placed them first in His Word; they are foundational for all that follows.

There has, however, been a need for a Sunday school quarterly or similar publication that could be used either in classes or for individual study, providing more systematic and detailed analysis of these key chapters of Scripture than can be covered in one seminar or Bible conference. Such a study should be on a layman’s level, yet sound and insightful, both biblically and scientifically. That is the goal of the present book.

Although it is published in quarterly format, it provides considerably more substantive content than a typical Sunday school quarterly. Questions for further class discussion, if desired, are appended to each chapter. Users are assumed to be of college age or older, but it should be easily understandable by almost any reader. It should be used by both student and teacher, but the latter also may wish to follow up with the books listed in the appendix as well.

There is a real need for a “back-to-Genesis” emphasis in today’s Christian world, and we trust this study book will help fulfill that need.

CHAPTER I

A CREATED BEGINNING

GENESIS 1:1-2

The Book of Genesis (meaning “beginnings”) is often regarded in these cynical days as nothing but a collection of old legends from earlier less sophisticated times. Some think of the Genesis stories as allegories with certain moral and spiritual values, though not true in a historical sense.

But no one who believes the Bible can accept such ideas. For such a person, Genesis is the foundation upon which the entire edifice of the Bible is built. The New Testament, for example, directly quotes or alludes to the Book of Genesis no less than 200 times, with half of these referring to the first 11 chapters of Genesis alone. Jesus Christ himself quoted or referred to each of the first 7 chapters of Genesis. All of these references are of such form as to show that both Christ and the Apostles accepted Genesis not only as fully historical but also as divinely inspired.

The Book of Genesis receives its name from the title employed by the translators of the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Old

Testament). Genesis (Greek: genesis) refers to beginnings or origins. Genesis is the book of beginnings or the book of origins.

As we consider the first 11 chapters of Genesis, we shall see that all true scientific and historical data supports the truth of the Bible record. We shall also see that the purposes of God in His great plan of salvation are inseparably bound to these same events. Furthermore, the origin of all basic human institutions (home, family, agriculture, technology, government, etc.) can be found in the Book of Genesis.

THE MEANING OF CREATION

In this chapter, we want to consider the cosmic implications of the first two verses of the Bible. These are almost certainly the most widely read words in all literature (after all, the Bible has for centuries been the world's best seller, and most Bible owners at least *begin* to read the Bible!), and there is a strong probability that they were the *first* words ever written.

The first verse of the Bible is the most important and basic of all. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." When one *really* believes this verse, he will have little difficulty believing all the rest of God's Word. This single verse refutes all the various false theories about origins that men have invented.

The verse refutes atheism ("the doctrine of no God") because it starts with God. Pantheism ("all God") is refuted because it shows that God existed before the universe. Polytheism ("many gods") is false because the universe which was created was not a "poly-verse," and it was created by one God. Dualism, the doctrine of two eternal gods, one good and one evil, is merely a special form of polytheism. Evolutionism is rejected because it says that God *created*.

Actually, all these false philosophies are essentially the same. All theories of origins — other than the true account in the Bible — teach that the present "cosmos" came into existence by the operation of the "gods" or the forces of nature or some mystical principle acting upon the previously existing material "stuff" of the earlier "chaos." This idea is no less

prevalent in ancient paganism than in modern scientism. The revelation of the special creation of all things by an eternal and almighty personal God is essentially unique to the Bible! Thus all other explanations of origins, whether religious or philosophical or scientific, are basically only different forms of the concept of evolution.

“Creation” is defined simply as *the work of God in bringing all things into existence*. Only God is eternal — everything else in the universe had a beginning. True creation is creation *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), and is not merely a reworking of materials already in existence.

Opposed to the doctrine of creation is the concept of evolution. Evolution is defined, in its broadest sense, as the theory that all things have been derived by gradual modification through natural processes from previous materials. According to this concept, all forms of life have developed from earlier, simpler forms, and even life itself spontaneously came into existence through a complex organization of previously nonliving chemical molecules. Even the basic molecular and atomic structure of matter supposedly developed from still simpler and more basic forms of matter. The theory of evolution, in essentially the above form, is strongly championed by many modern scientists. In fact, the claim is often heard that *all* scientists accept evolution, but this claim is, of course, untrue. There are many scientists and other well-educated people today who reject evolution and who insist that only divine creation can account for the universe and its inhabitants.

The key question is whether all things were specially created by the God of the Bible or whether they have developed from prior materials into their present forms through the operation of innate principles. If the latter is true, it follows that this development, this “evolution,” is still going on, since presumably the same principles are still in operation.

There are some who suggest that evolution was God’s method of creation. However, this belief, which is called *theistic evolution*, is not generally accepted either by the real leaders of evolutionary thought or by those who firmly believe in the plenary verbal inspiration and infallibility of

Scripture. As a matter of fact, the decision between creation and evolution is not really a scientific decision at all. *Science*, as such, can say nothing whatsoever about origins. Science (knowledge) is limited to the study of physical phenomena and processes as they exist at present. The scientific method involves reproducibility. That is, an experiment performed today which yields certain results will, if repeated next year, still yield the same results. It must be seen, however, that prehistoric events are not subject to scientific experimentation and therefore no one can say *scientifically* what happened millions of years ago. In order to project our knowledge of *present* processes into the prehistoric past, we must necessarily make certain assumptions as to the basis of such projections. And this involves a philosophy or a faith, not science.

It is significant that *present* processes, which are the only kinds of processes which can be tested by the scientific method, are not in any way *creative* processes. That is, the basic laws of modern science, which describe these present processes, are laws of conservation and deterioration, not of creation and integration. These laws deal with the fundamental behavior of matter and energy, which actually include everything in the physical universe, and are known as the first and second laws of thermodynamics.

Thermodynamics (from two Greek words meaning “heat power”) is the science dealing with the conversion of heat and other forms of energy into work. It is now known that everything in the universe is energy in some form, and everything that “happens” is basically an energy conversion process. Thus, the first and second laws of thermodynamics could just as well be called the first and second laws of science. All processes in the universe, as far as known, have to obey these two laws.

The first law of thermodynamics is also called the law of energy conservation. This law states that, although energy can be changed in form, it is not now being either created or destroyed. Since all physical phenomena, including matter itself, are merely different forms of energy, this clearly implies that creation was an event of the past and is no longer going on.

The second law of thermodynamics, stated in nontechnical form, says that all physical systems, if left to themselves, tend to become disorganized. Thus, machines wear out, processes run down, organisms get old and die. Any temporary increase in organization requires an input of energy from outside the system itself.

These two universal laws are basic in all disciplines of modern science. Verified by thousands of experiments, from the nuclear level to the astronomical level, with no known exceptions, they clearly indicate that nothing is *now* being created and that the original creation is “running down.”

This all proves, *as well as “science” is able to demonstrate anything*, that evolution, which requires a continuing universal process of development and integration, is simply not true at the present time. This is why no one has seen evolution occurring.

Since “science” can only deal legitimately with *present* processes, and since present processes are not creative or integrative in nature, science as such can tell us nothing about origins. Therefore, if we are to know anything about the creation — when it was, what methods were used, what order of events occurred, or anything else — we must depend *completely* on divine revelation. There is no other valid source of information on this subject.

God was there and we were not! He *has* told us quite plainly what took place then, in His revealed Word. The Bible clearly confirms the implications of the two laws of thermodynamics. Such passages as Genesis 2:1–3; Hebrews 4:3, 10; Exodus 20:11, and others indicate clearly that the creation was *complete* at the end of the six days of creation. Hebrews 1:10–12, Romans 8:20–22, and similar verses teach that the originally perfect creation is now in a process of decay.

The first two verses of Genesis speak of the initial act of creation of our present physical universe. “In the beginning” speaks of the point at which time, as we understand it, began. “The heavens” refer to the vast expanses of space in the universe and “the earth” to the matter which would occupy space and time.

Initially, there were no other stars or planets; these were all made only on the fourth day of the creation week, according to Genesis 1:14–19. The “heavens,” therefore, were not the stars, but the vast reaches of space in which the stars would later be placed. Even the earth was not initially in the spherical form it now possesses; it was “without form.” Nevertheless, the physical universe, which had no existence previously, had come into existence, and time had begun.

God “created” all these — time, space, and matter — by His own Word (note Ps. 33:6, 9; John 1:1–3; Heb. 11:3; 2 Pet. 3:5). The verb “create” translates a Hebrew word, *bara*, which is never used with any other subject but God. In other words, only God himself is able to “create” anything.

The first verse, incidentally, is not a dependent clause (i.e., “in the beginning, when God was creating . . . the earth was without form . . .”), as some have maintained. Neither is it a mere title or summary of the chapter. Instead, it is an independent statement describing the first event in the creative work of the first day. This interpretation is required because otherwise there would be no reference in the entire account to the actual creation of “the heavens” as required by Genesis 2: 1 and Exodus 20:11.

This fact is also emphasized by the use of the Hebrew conjunction (translated “and”) at the beginning of verse 2. This same connective appears at the beginning of each later verse in the chapter, indicating continuous, sequential action throughout the week, one verse after another.

Thus, both Scripture and science teach that creation is not now taking place. We are therefore completely unable to study experimentally any of the processes of creation. We must learn whatever we wish to know about it from the only one who can tell us — God himself. We must approach the biblical record of creation with an open mind and heart to see and believe what God has said, not with the idea of trying to make it harmonize with some human theory of origins.

It should be remembered that the various popular cosmogonies (a “cosmogony” is a model for explaining the origin of the cosmos), such as the so-called “big-bang” and “steady-state” theories, are strictly man-made

evolutionary systems trying to explain the universe without God. It is obvious that such theories are completely outside the realm of science. The essence of science is observation and experimentation, but these are impossible in the study of origins. How can one study, *experimentally*, the origin of a universe or the development of a galaxy?

There is nothing whatsoever in science to prevent us from accepting the revealed fact that God *created* all things, calling them into existence *ex nihilo* (or, perhaps better, *ex deo*), in a fully developed and functioning state right from the beginning.

This fact is confirmed not only by Scripture but also by the two laws of thermodynamics. The second law states, in effect, that the universe must have had a beginning; otherwise, since it is now running down, it would already be dead. The first law, on the other hand, states in effect that the universe could not have created itself. It must have been created, therefore, by some adequate Cause beyond itself. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” is the most scientific statement that could possibly be made about the origin of the universe, based on the known laws of science.

The second verse describes the initial aspect of the created earth. The verse is correctly rendered “was,” and does not need to be rendered “became” as some have contended. It is the regular Hebrew verb of being. Although in some contexts it is legitimately translated “became,” this is valid in only about 25 of its more than 1,500 occurrences. Obviously, the earth at this stage was not “perfect” in the sense that it was complete, until it *was* complete, at the end of the six days, but it was perfect for God’s immediate purpose.

The so-called “gap theory,” which suggests a tremendous gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, is incorrect, being both unwarranted biblically and impossible scientifically. Exodus 20:11, in the Ten Commandments, states that “in six days, the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and *all that in them is*.” Thus, nothing in the earth or sea could have been made *before* the six days. The gap theory is supposed by its advocates to

provide time for the geological ages, which were then terminated by a great cataclysm, leaving the earth “without form and void,” as described in Genesis 1:2. However, the geological ages are based on the principle of “uniformitarianism,” which precludes any such thing as a world-wide cataclysm. Any cataclysm which would leave the earth covered with water and the water shrouded in darkness would have literally destroyed any previous structures in the earth’s crust, but the fossils in the sedimentary rocks of the earth’s crust provide the only real evidence for the geological ages. The gap theory thus negates itself, trying to accommodate the geological ages by a cataclysm which would destroy the evidence for the geological ages! Genesis 1:2 does not describe the earth after long ages and a great cataclysm, but rather at the very beginning of its history.

Initially, the earth’s matter was “without form,” referring to the fact that waters covered it and possibly contained most of its other substances in solution or suspension. It was also “void” or empty, with no living inhabitants. However, as Isaiah noted over 3,000 years afterward, God had not created the earth “in vain,” to be forever “empty,” but rather “formed it to be inhabited” (Isa. 45:18). Thus, He first proceeded to “form” that which was “without form,” then to provide inhabitants for that which was “void.”

This He did through His Spirit, who *moved* (lit. “was vibrating”) in the primeval darkness which surrounded the waters. Through Him, by His Word, would soon flow the boundless power which would bring light out of darkness, lands from the formless waters, and living inhabitants from the silent earth.

THE GOD OF CREATION

God’s energizing presence testified of His approval of the work thus far. The “Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2). This speaks of the Holy Spirit, whose outflowing power, proceeding from the Father through the Son, is the source of all God’s mighty work of creation. There is an interesting parallel between this verse and 2 Peter 1:20–21

where we are told that “holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (NKJV) in the writing of Scripture. The “moving” of the Holy Spirit is thus basic in God’s revelation in both nature and the written Word.

It is of supreme importance that we believe in the true God of the Bible. Men have invented many “gods,” and Satan is engaged in an age-long attempt to make himself the ruler or “god” of the universe, but there is only one *true* God, and He is the one who has created all things. It is *only* in the Bible that we learn of His nature and character and purposes.

The doctrine of God as taught in Scripture reveals Him to be the triune God. He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The plurality of the godhead is intimated by the word “God” in the first verse of the Bible, which is the plural form *elohim*.

It is significant that each of the three persons of the godhead is associated with the work of creation. All good and perfect gifts, which certainly are included in God’s “very good” creation, come from the Father, according to James 1:17. The work of the Spirit is clearly stated in Genesis 1:2, but most emphatically the Son is said to be the Word of God by whom the creation was spoken into being. Note such Scriptures as John 1:1–3, Hebrews 1:3, Psalm 33:6, Revelation 3:14, and especially Colossians 1:16–17. Men need to realize fully that Jesus Christ is God and that it was by Him that all things were created.

The Bible does not try to prove that God exists before telling what He has done. It simply starts with God, taking for granted the fact of His existence and His omnipotence. In fact, Scripture says only a “fool” can say in his heart there is no God (Ps. 14:1). Surely with the evidence all around us of “creation,” any truly reasonable man should recognize that there is a “Creator.”

The very fact of “intelligible” phenomena of nature in the world should indicate an “intelligence” that caused them. The fact of individual personalities in the world capable of emotions and of the exercise of their wills should indicate a great person, who exercises love, anger, and His will, as

their cause. The fact that all people have an inborn sense that “right” is better than “wrong” testifies that the cause of such instinctive conscience must be a *holy* Creator. The scientific law of cause and effect — that no effect can be greater than its cause — surely applies to these conclusions as well as to those in any other categories of science and logic.

Nevertheless, many men attempt to sidestep such reasoning and still refuse to accept God as He is according to Scripture. They do not “like to retain God in their knowledge,” and therefore, “professing themselves to be wise, they become fools” (Rom. 1:28, 22).

It is profoundly meaningful that Genesis 1:1 suggests that God is both One and yet more than one. The Hebrew word “God” is *Elohim*, a plural form with the fundamental meaning of “gods” or “the mighty ones.” Yet the verb form “created” appears in the singular, requiring a singular subject.

The doctrine of the Trinity is not explicitly formulated in these first two verses, but it is clearly consistent with them. The New Testament speaks of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each distinct and yet each equally and eternally the One God of creation. The Father is the eternal source of all things; the Son, as the incarnate Word, reveals the Father; the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, to make applicable and effectual the will of God in His creation.

Thus, the Spirit was “moving” in creation. Motion implies energy, resulting in the various physical phenomena of the creation. This is the essence of what scientists mean by matter, the phenomena associated with which always involve motion, through space, in time. The universe created is thus a space/matter/time “continuum.” Space is the ever-present background within which everywhere occur material phenomena — matter — the manifestation and application of which everywhere involve time. Thus, the created physical universe is really a triuniverse, perhaps reflecting the nature of its triune Creator.

In remarkably analogous fashion, these three universal components of creation — space, matter, and time — each exhibit the characteristics of

triunity. Thus, space is three-dimensional, with each dimension occupying the whole of space and yet all three are required for its full reality. Matter finds its unseen but omnipresent source in energy, manifesting itself in some form of motion, resulting in the various phenomena of light, heat, sound, inertia, etc. Energy, then motion, then phenomena — the source, the substance, the result. Likewise, time is future, present, and past — each the whole of time yet each clearly distinct in meaning.

The physical creation thus marvelously appears to be a trinity of trinities! Although this does not *prove* that God is a triune God, it is surely wonderfully consistent with that revealed fact, reflecting throughout all the universe the nature of its Creator. How supremely important it is to know God *as He is*, through Jesus Christ, “for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9).

Genesis 1:1 clearly states the fact of creation, but this immediately raises the question: *Why?* God is omniscient and omnipotent, and He therefore must have had a purpose and that purpose must be fulfilled.

As a matter of fact, all the rest of Scripture is occupied with that purpose and its accomplishment. It might be summarized by saying that He created the universe for man, and man for himself.

We trust that the reader is willing to believe fully in God as He is revealed in Scripture. This, of course, means believing in Jesus Christ as both Creator and Savior — the One who created all men and who also died to redeem men (John 1:11–13; 3:36; 5:24).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In what ways is the Genesis record of the creation of the universe of space, time, and matter different from all other cosmogonies?
2. What are the biblical and scientific arguments for and against the “gap theory”? Why do geologists reject this theory?
3. Define carefully the biblical doctrine of the Trinity, explaining the distinctive roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the godhead.

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4. Why is theistic evolution incompatible with the nature of God?
5. Explain how the first and second laws of thermodynamics point to the existence of a transcendent Creator of the universe.
6. How does the law of cause-and-effect indicate the existence of a personal (rather than impersonal) God?
7. What significance is implied by the three acts of special “creation” in Genesis 1, as distinct from acts of “making” or “forming”?