

CREATION

I. GOD CREATED THE UNIVERSE

- According to Genesis 1:1, what did God create?
- In Genesis 1:3-25 how did God create things?
- According to Nehemiah 9:6, what all did God do?
- How did God create the universe according to Psalm 33:6-9?
- What did God do according to Psalm 148:1-6?
- According to Isaiah 45:18, who created the universe?
- What did God create according to Acts 4:24?
- In Acts 14:15, what did Barnabas and Paul say that God had done?
- How did the universe come into being according to Hebrews 1:10?
- According to Hebrews 11:3, how was the universe created?
- What does Revelation 4:11 say about God?
- According to John 1:1-3, who created the universe?
- Who created the universe according to 1 Corinthians 8:6?
- What all did Jesus create according to Colossians 1:16?
- What else does Jesus do according to Colossians 1:17?
- What was the Son's role in creation according to Hebrews 1:2?
- According to Job 33:4, who created man?

II. GOD CREATED IT OUT OF NOTHING (*ex nihilo*)

Outside of God, there is nothing that He did not bring into existence. God alone is eternal and without a beginning.

- How does Genesis 1:1 imply this?
- How do you see this doctrine in John 1:3?

- How is it implied in Acts 14:15?
- According to Colossians 1:16, what all did Christ create?
- According to Hebrews 11:3 what did God create the universe out of?

Ex nihilo refers to God's initial acts of creation. The Bible also describes subsequent acts of creation in which God used materials He had already created in the initial act.

- What materials did God use in the subsequent acts of creation described in Genesis 2:7, 19, and 21-22?

III. THE GAP THEORY

Some believe that there is a gap of a million years between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. According to this theory, Genesis 1:1 records the **first** time God created the heavens and the earth. This occurred 4,500,000,000 years ago. Some sort of rebellion took place, and God judged the earth. Those who hold to this view interpret v. 2 as saying that the result was that "the earth **became** formless and empty." Genesis 1:3-2:3, therefore, describes the **second** time God created the heavens and the earth. The second earth is only 10,000 to 20,000 years old. The ancient fossils found on the earth are left over from the first creation.

Arguments against this interpretation:

1. There are no other verses that mention this earlier creation.
2. There is no linguistic or grammatical reason for changing the "was" in Genesis 1:2 to "because."
3. If some of the fossils now found on the earth survived God's judgment in which the earth "*became* formless and empty," this means that some of the original creation still existed at the time of the second creation. How do we, then, explain Exodus 20:11, that says, "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and **all that is in them...**?" This statement can't be true if the earth contained fossils that existed before the six days of the second creation.

IV. THE AGE OF THE EARTH AND THE DAYS OF CREATION

Christians who believe in an "old earth" agree with the conclusion of modern science that the earth is 4,500,000,000 years old. Those who believe in a "young earth" say that it is only 6,000 to 20,000 years old. The argument primarily centers on how you understand the word, "day" (*yom*), in Genesis 1:5-2:3.

Aside from those who hold to the "gap theory," most Christians who believe in an "old earth" understand the word "day" in the creation account as referring to more than a 24-hour period. The primary argument used to support this is that *yom* occurs 1,480 times in the OT and can be translated "daylight, day, time, moment, or age." For example, in Genesis 2:4 it literally says, "In the day [*yom*] that the LORD God made the heavens and the earth." Here *yom* refers to the whole six-day period of creation. They also appeal to 1 Peter 3:8 to prove that time means nothing to God.

This interpretation enables those who hold to this view to reconcile the biblical record with some of the claims of modern science. It is often used to support Theistic Evolution—that God used evolution to create the universe. However, this view still leaves many contradictions between the order of creation in the Bible and the proposals of standard geological history.

There are several arguments that can be made in defense of interpreting the use of *yom* in the creation account as referring to literal 24 hour periods: (1) *Yom* normally refers to a literal day unless the context demands another interpretation. (2) In the creation account the context points to an actual day—the phrase “there was evening and there was morning,” is repeated six times in connection with each *yom*. A Jewish day begins at sunset. (3) Whenever *yom* is used with a number it always refers to a literal day. (4) There are 700 occurrences of its plural form in the OT, and in every case it always refers to a literal day. (5) In Exodus 20:11, the Lord uses the fact that He created the earth in six days and rested on the seventh to show that men should also limit their work to six days a week and rest on the seventh day.

Archbishop Ussher (seventeenth century) took all the names listed along with their ages in the OT and added them together in order to identify the age of the earth. His conclusion was that the earth is 6,000 years old. Many evangelicals still hold to his findings to this day. The problem with this is that biblical genealogical lists have gaps in them. When you compare parallel lists you discover that some contain names that are left out of others. The authors only included the names that are relevant to the purpose of the list. This doesn’t mean that the lists are incorrect. It simply has to do with how Jewish genealogies were written in the days of the Bible. A Jewish reader, living at the time the lists were made, would not have expected to find every name listed there. Those lists contain everyone that God wanted the writers to include in them. This doesn’t necessarily mean that they included every generation. Here is one example:

1 Chronicles 3:10-12

Asa
Jehoshaphat
Jehoram
Ahaziah (Uzziah)
Joash
Amaziah
Jotham
Ahaz
Hezekiah

Matthew 1:8-9

Asa
Jehoshaphat
Jehoram
Uzziah

Jotham
Ahaz
Hezekiah

- How does Matthew 1:20 describe Joseph?
- How does this relate to our understanding of biblical genealogies?
- In I Chronicles 26:24 it literally says, “Shebuel the son of Gershom, son of Moses, was chief officer in charge of the treasuries.” Gershom was born around 1480 BC. Shebuel was appointed to this office about the time Solomon became king (around 970 BC). How does this relate to our understanding of biblical genealogies?

Abraham lived about 2000 BC. We can't be sure of exactly how much time was covered in the Biblical narrative that precedes him. It is reasonable to think that a few thousand years may have been covered in those chapters. I believe that it could have been anywhere from 2,000 to 6,000 years, depending on how many generations may have been skipped over in the accounts. On the other hand, I find it hard to believe that millions of years were covered in the first eleven chapters of Genesis.

Those who believe in an old earth point to scientific evidence that some fossils are millions of years old and many geological formations took millions of years to form. Concerning the fossils, young earth advocates answer that one of the methods used to date them is radiometric dating. This method of dating is based on the belief that certain radioactive elements have been decaying at a consistent rate since the beginning of the universe. Therefore, by measuring these elements scientists can determine how old something is. Creationists ask how they know that this rate of decay has never changed. They say that cataclysmic events like the fall and Noah's flood could have radically altered them.

The other main method of dating fossils is by identifying the date of the sedimentary layer in which they are found. Old earth advocates believe that it took billions of years for these layers to form. Creationists counter that the flood could have significantly altered the face of the earth, producing tremendous geological changes and depositing fossils in layers of incredibly thick sediment all over the earth.

In recent decades, scientists have witnessed major geological changes taking place in relatively short periods of time that they would have previously assumed to take millions of years. In Parícutin, Mexico, on February 20, 1943, an amazed farmer watched as one of his fields cracked open and its flat surface began to rise. Smoke, gas and ash poured out of the cracks. By evening, the cloud had grown larger, and red-hot rocks were shooting into the air. Within 24 hours, a 25-foot cone stood in what had been his field. It had grown to over 330 feet by the end of the week. Nine years later, it had become a 9,210-foot mountain.

Old earth scientists also believe that it took millions of years for the Hawaiian Islands to form. This view was challenged on November 15, 1963, when a similar island suddenly rose out of the sea near Iceland. Named Surtsey, it first appeared as a long ridge that poured out black clouds of ash and lava. One day later, it was already 200 feet high and 2000 feet long. Over the next four months, it grew to 500 feet high and more than a mile long. It had only taken the island three years to rise from 425 feet under the ocean.

In the same way, startled scientists were amazed when Mount Saint Helens erupted on May 18, 1980, and geographical transformations took place that they previously thought it took millenniums to form.

Another factor that needs to be considered, when it comes to determining the age of the earth, is that God probably created it with the appearance of age. For example, were Adam and Eve infants or adults when God first created them? Did God create plants and trees that were fully developed or seeds? Did He create adult animals or babies?

When all the information is in and everything (both the evidence and scripture) is correctly understood, the Bible and science will be in perfect agreement.