

# **THE BIBLE AND THE GENESIS ACCOUNT OF CREATION**

by

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## **NATURALISTIC VIEWS OF THE MATERIAL CREATION**

There are two basic naturalistic views concerning the nature and/or origin of the Universe. The Steady-State theory, assuming the eternal existence of matter, contends that the Universe is constantly evolving (in the probable form of hydrogen gas) from nothingness in the distant regions of non-observable space. Significantly, Sir Fred Hoyle, the leading proponent of the Steady-State view, has in recent years all but abandoned it.

The Big Bang theory, the currently popular view, suggests that the Universe is expanding as the result of a primeval explosion. Such an explosion, it is assumed, was caused by a gravitational collapse of a primitive high-density state, which was itself initially part of an eternally expanding/ contracting Universe.

## **OBJECTIONS TO THESE THEORIES**

(1) These views, which seek to dismiss all evidence of a personal First Cause for the Universe, are non-scientific (i.e., they are not observable or subject to testing) and are, in fact, highly suspect even from the viewpoint of many of their own adherents. One writer asked: "Is it not possible, indeed probable, that our present cosmological ideas on the structure and evolution of the Universe as a whole (whatever that may mean) will appear hopelessly premature and primitive to astronomers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?" (deValeurs, 1970, 167:1203).

(2) Not only are such theories beyond the pale of scientific investigation, but they actually conflict with known scientific law. The assumed evolutionary origin of hydrogen out of nothing in the Steady-State theory makes nonsense out of the fundamental scientific Law of Cause and Effect, not to mention the Second Law of Thermodynamics. As far as the pre-expansion collapse of the Universe in the Big Bang theory is concerned, such a concept is based on no scientific observation whatever and therefore is

strictly a philosophic escape mechanism from the unwelcome creation connotations of the Second Law (Morris, et al., 1971, p. 25).

The idea that the present Universe has developed out of prior materials is not only a feature of current “scientific” theories, but forms a part of pagan cosmogony as well. For example, the Babylonian-Sumerian epic, *Enuma Elish*, tells of the origin of the gods from the primeval chaos in which two strange entities, Apsu and Tiamat, were commingled in a single body. From these came the gods. One of the younger gods, Marduk, finally overthrew Tiamat, cut her in two, and formed heaven and earth for her body. He then created man, as well as the rest of the Universe. In comparison with this strange story recorded today on seven clay tablets, the majestic narrative of Genesis 1 and 2 stands out above the weird polytheism of the Babylonian legend as a masterpiece. The one true God created all things in a series of divine utterances (Thompson, 1975, p. 25).

### THE GENESIS ACCOUNT

(1) **God created.** The Universe is not eternal and did not create itself from nothingness; rather, as the opening statement of Genesis declares, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth” (Genesis 1:1). This is a breathtaking affirmation. First, it denies the eternity of the creation. The expression, “In the beginning” (Hebrew *beresit*), pinpoints the commencement of the material Universe. Though the Universe **began**, God **always was** (cf. Psalm 90:2)! The New Testament records: “In the beginning was [*en*, the Greek imperfect form of the verb meaning “to exist,” thus, “always was existing”] the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was “God” (John 1:1). Second, the Cause is identified—“God.” The name “God” here is *Elohim*. Watson wrote: “*Elohim* seems to be the general appellation by which the Triune Godhead is collectively distinguished in Scripture” (1881, p. 1024). Thus, the plural *Elohim* suggests that multiple personalities within the Godhead created (*bara*—a singular verb stressing the unity of their action) the Universe. The Godhead is further alluded to by the use of plural pronouns in the narrative (cf. Genesis 1:26). Attempts to explain such references as a divine accommodation to human terminology, like when kings say “we” to indicate the fullness of their power, are weak, for as Watson correctly observed, the words in Genesis 1 “were spoken before the creation of any of these mortals whose false no-

tions of greatness and sublimity of the Almighty is thus impiously supposed to adopt” (1881, p. 1025). In addition to God the Father, the Bible clearly teaches that both Christ (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:10) and the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30; Job 33:4) operated in the creative process.

(2) **The creation was out of nothing.** Moses declares that the Universe was “created” (*bara*). Though *bara* does not necessarily demand *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing) in some contexts (e.g., Genesis 1:27 where God created (*bara*) male and female [a definite reference to physical mankind]), in many passages such a concept is demanded contextually. Thus is the case of Genesis 1:1. Gesenius, the father of modern Hebrew lexicography, wrote: “That the first v[erse] of Genesis teaches that the original creation of the world in its rude, chaotic state was from nothing, while in the remainder of the chapter, the elaboration and distribution of matter thus created is taught, the connection of the whole section shows sufficiently clearly.” C.F. Keil declared that when *bara* is in the *Qal* (*Kal*) stem in Hebrew, as in Genesis 1:1:

it always means **to create**, and is only applied to a divine creation, the production of that which had no existence before. It is never joined with an accusative of material, although it does not exclude a pre-existent material unconditionally, but is used for the creation of man (ver. 27, ch. v. 1-2), and of everything new God creates, whether in the kingdom of nature (Numbers 16:30) or of that of grace (Exodus 34:10; Psalm 51:10, etc.). In this verse, however, the existence of any primeval material is precluded by the object created: “the heavens and the earth” (1971, p. 47).

Moses also employed the term *asa* (“made”) in Genesis 1:7,16,25, etc. This word is a synonym for *bara*, and its usage affords not a shred of evidence for an alleged “gap of billions of years,” along with a subsequent “remaking” of the Earth (Genesis 1:1-1:2), as advanced by some to accommodate an evolutionary view of Earth history. Weston W. Fields noted that “*asa* and *bara* must be regarded as interchangeable, particularly when describing the general creative action of God” (1976, p. 74) [cf. Genesis 2:4, Exodus 20:11, and Nehemiah 9:6].

There are further affirmations of a creation *ex nihilo*. The writer of Hebrews announces: “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which appear” (Hebrews 11:3). The term “worlds” is *aionas* and it denotes the time-space universe. “The point of this key verse on creationism is that visible material substances did not exist in any form whatsoever, other than in the mind of an omniscient God, until He spoke the creative Word” (Whitcomb, 1972, p. 41).

(3) **God's immediate and mature creation.** Those who bow to the god of evolutionary pseudo-science, and yet who want to believe the Bible record as well, feel that God's creative works possibly were accomplished over a span of 4.5 to 5 billion years. Clearly, however, the Bible does not allow such a view. The Genesis account gives the distinct impression that the acts of creation were both miraculous and immediate. Raymond Surburg noted:

The wording of the Genesis account seems to indicate a short time for the creative acts described. To illustrate, in Genesis 1:1 God literally commands, "Earth, sprout sprouts!" Immediately v. 12 records the prompt response to the command—"The earth caused the plants to go out." The Genesis record nowhere even hints that eons or periods of time are involved. Instantaneous action seems to be what the writer stresses (1959, p. 60).

Such is the sure testimony of the Psalmist: "By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.... For he spake, and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:6,9). Moses, who penned the Genesis narrative, later recorded that the Israelites were to observe the seventh day (a literal day) as a sabbath, the reason being, "for in six days Jehovah made heaven and Earth, the sea, and all that in them is" (Exodus 20:11). It is plain, to those not blinded by evolutionary geology, that God's creation was accomplished in six literal days. It has been suggested, however, that the Earth gives the appearance of great age (measured in billions of years). In reply, it may be observed: (a) That largely depends on who is doing the interpretation. Evolutionists, who require a vast amount of time for their theory, interpret the geo-phenomena with evolutionary presuppositions. Others see the evidence quite differently. Prominent scientist Walter E. Lammerts declared that "were it not for my belief in the truth and literal interpretation of the Genesis account, I would have great difficulty in believing that the Earth was even 6,000 years old... Actually from the strictly scientific point of view, most of the surface features of the Earth give the appearance of being far younger" (as quoted in Williams, 1970, p. 34). (b) The objection also ignores the fact that even a fresh creation would have some "appearance of age." Henry Morris has spoken to this point: "Necessarily, these created entities must, at the instant of their creation, have had an 'appearance of age.' This is most obvious in the case of Adam and Eve, who were created as mature individuals, but it must also have been true in the case of all other objects, both animate and inanimate" (1975, p. 394). (c) Too, the effects of a global flood (e.g., that of

Noah's time) would greatly affect attempts to date the Earth. Even evolutionist Immanuel Velikovsky admitted that if "great catastrophes occurred on the surface of the Earth and in the depths of the seas, of more than local character," then the time allotment involved in the so-called geologic time scale is without validity (1955, pp. 209-210).

(4) **The integrity of the Genesis account.** The Mosaic record of the creation of the world is inexhaustively sublime. Therein we learn of the origin of the heavens and the Earth by an act of Almighty God. By divine power, light was formed and atmosphere was wrapped around the Earth. Great seas were gathered together and dry land appeared. The beautiful world of botany miraculously bloomed and lights burst forth to shine in the heavens. The waters swarmed with living creatures and birds soared above that pristine splendor. Domestic animals and beasts of the forests were brought forth and finally man, pinnacle of Jehovah's creation, stood proudly upon Earth's bosom (Genesis 1-2).

Infidelity, both ancient and modern, has suggested that Genesis 1 and 2 should be considered as a mythical or poetical version of ancient man's beliefs regarding the origin of the world. Such a concept strikes at the very heart of the Bible and should be rejected for the following reasons. First, the style of these Genesis chapters does not evince a mythical or poetical approach. Noted scholar Edward J. Young commented:

Genesis one is not poetry or saga or myth, but straightforward, trustworthy history.... That Genesis one is historical may be seen from these considerations. (1) It sustains an intimate relationship with the remainder of the book. The remainder of the book (i.e., The Generations) presupposes the Creation Account, and the Creation Account prepares for what follows. The two portions of Genesis are integral parts of the book and complement one another. (2) The characteristics of Hebrew poetry are lacking. There are poetic accounts of the creation and these form a striking contrast to Genesis one (1964, p. 105).

Second, Genesis must be considered literal history because this was the view held by Jesus Christ. Citing Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 in a discussion on marriage and divorce, Christ declared: "But from the beginning of the creation, male and female made he them" (Mark 10:6). Here the Lord plainly affirmed: (a) There was a "creation" (*ktisis*—denoting "the sum-total of what God has created" [Cremer, 1962, p. 381]); (b) The first humans existed from the "beginning of the creation" (this cannot be harmonized with the evolutionary notion that the Earth is nearly 5 billion years old, while man is only some 3-4 million

years old); (c) The first couple was “made” (*epoiesen*—an aorist tense, stressing the fact that this original couple came into existence by **single acts** of creation. Had the Lord subscribed to the idea that the first humans evolved over vast ages of time, He would have employed the Greek imperfect tense, which is designed to express **progressive** action at some point in the past); and (d) They were “male and female” from the beginning (not a bisexual blob that eventually evolved into male and female). Thus, Christ heartily endorsed the Genesis account.

Some writers, influenced by German rationalism, contend that Jesus did not really accept the historicity of Genesis; rather, He merely accommodated Himself to the ignorances of that age. If Jesus of Nazareth was thus deceptive, He was not the Son of God and, therefore, was a religious quack. On the other hand, if He sincerely believed in the credibility of the Genesis document, yet was mistaken, then surely He was not the Son of God as He claimed to be (with knowledge anterior to the world’s creation—John 17:5), and hence, again, a fraud. Not even the rankest infidels of history have been willing to so assess the first-century Christ!

Additionally, inspired writers of the New Testament endorsed the historicity of Genesis. Paul contended that woman is of (*ek*—a Greek preposition meaning “out of”) man (1 Corinthians 11:8,12). He called Adam and Eve by name in 1 Timothy 2:13. The apostle considered Adam as historical as Moses (Romans 5:14), and he clearly stated that “the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness” (2 Corinthians 11:3).

Third, some archaeological evidences uncovered within recent decades tend to corroborate the historical reliability of the Genesis record. In 1932, E.A. Speiser of the University Museum of Pennsylvania discovered a stone seal near the bottom of a mound about 12 miles north of ancient Nineveh. He dated the seal about 3,500 B.C. It contains the figure of “a naked man and a naked woman, walking as if utterly down-cast and broken-hearted, followed by a serpent.” Speiser declared it was “strongly suggestive of the Adam and Eve story” (as quoted in Halley, 1956, p. 68). Another seal (known as the “Temptation Seal”) that was found among the ruins of ancient Babylon seems definitely to refer to the Garden of Eden narra-

tive. “In the center is a Tree; on the right, a Man; on the left, a Woman, plucking fruit; behind the Woman, a Serpent, standing erect, as if whispering to her” (Halley, 1956, p. 68). Stigers has observed:

Some writers have doubted that there is any real significance to these seals as evidence for the fall. However, the specific personages and elements cannot easily be dismissed in such fashion. For what reason should an artist select such a motif by which testimony is made as to the cause of man’s degradation? Rather, one should select a theme that would enhance man’s image (1976, p. 75).

Fourth, the Genesis account of the creation is believable because it is in harmony with the laws of science as they currently are known. Note the following.

(a) Genesis declares that there was “a beginning” (1:1). In physics, the Second Law of Thermodynamics reveals that all transfers of energy evince an increase in randomness and disorder. This means that the material creation is running down or wearing out (cf. Hebrews 1:11). This growing-old, wearing-out process indicates the Universe is not eternal, hence, did have a beginning.

(b) According to the Mosaic document, at the end of the creative week “the heavens and the Earth were finished, and all the host of them” (Genesis 2:1). This is in perfect accord with the First Law of Thermodynamics which states that, according to presently operating processes, neither matter nor energy may be created or destroyed. Scientific laws and Genesis thus are in agreement. And it should be noted, as Bridgman has observed, that the two laws of thermodynamics are “accepted by physicists as perhaps the most secure generalizations from experience that we have” (1953, p. 549). Yet significantly, the atheistic concept—which views the Universe as a continuously creative, progressively up-building phenomenon—is squarely opposed to both of these established laws.

(c) Genesis teaches that organisms reproduce “after their kind” (1:12ff.). The laws of heredity demonstrate that, although there may be variability within certain limits, basically things do reproduce after their kind. Naturalistic (evolutionary) views are dependent upon the notion that like can produce **non-like**. Incidentally, the fact that organisms were created according to certain “kinds” is borne out quite clearly by the fossil record. George Gaylord Simpson, the world’s foremost evolutionary paleontologist during his lifetime, admitted that a “**regular absence** of transitional forms...is an almost **universal phenome-**



**non**” of the fossil record. “It is true of almost all orders of all classes of animals, both vertebrate and invertebrate” (1944, p. 107, emp. added). And the same is true in the botanical world.

### **MAN’S RELATION TO THE CREATION**

(1) **Man’s dominion over creation.** When the Earth was created, it was not the Almighty’s design that it remain empty; rather, that it was created to “be inhabited” (Isaiah 45:18). So, after the creation of Adam and Eve, God charged them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish [i.e., fill—WJ] the Earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the Earth” (Genesis 1:28). When the psalmist surveyed Jehovah’s wondrous creation, he stood awed by the human responsibility of exercising “dominion over the works” the Lord’s hands (Psalm 8:3-8). The fact that man was granted such a sovereign charge is powerful evidence that the Earth, with multiplied millions of living creatures, had not existed for eons prior to the advent of the human family.

(2) **Man occupies a unique place in the Universe.** Of all Earth’s living creatures, only man is said to be in the image and likeness of God. Of all living organisms, only man was granted the privilege of reciprocal communication with his Creator—certainly a proof of his unique personality-oriented intelligence. [Jehovah’s sovereignty over His entire creation (e.g. Jonah 2:10) does not fall into the category of reciprocal communication.] Of the entire living creation, only mankind possesses moral consciousness, and hence, a responsibility for conduct. Man’s obligation, therefore, is to use the created Universe (within the framework of his limitations) to the glory of God; for this reason he exists (Isaiah 43:7). This is his ultimate duty (Ecclesiastes 12:13) and the source of his genuine happiness.

### **THE MYTH OF EVOLUTION**

(1) **It is unscientific.** At least brief consideration needs to be given to the popular belief that all forms of life on Earth have resulted from a purely naturalistic source, i.e., the amoeba-to-man myth. Though widely taught, the theory of evolution is not based on scientific fact (the question of origins does not even lie within the domain of science), but rather, as Clark and Bales have documented, it has resulted

from a determination, at least on the part of many, to be rid of the idea that God created the world (1967). Numerous others simply have conformed so as to be in step with the times.

The evolutionary concept not only is antagonistic to the special creation position affirmed in Scripture, but is at variance with clearly established scientific principles. First, evolution cannot explain the origin of life. Though “[m]ost biologists think it probable that life did originally arise from non-living matter by natural process,” the Law of Biogenesis, demonstrated by Pasteur and others, reveals that life arises only from pre-existing life. Swiss mathematician Charles Eugene Guye has calculated that the chances of a single molecule of a protein-like substance being formed by accident are approximately  $10^{320}$  to 1 (that is 1 followed by 320 zeroes) [Guye, n.d.]. Compare this figure, for example, with the fact that, according to evolutionary astronomers, the Universe is less than 30 billion years old, which would be approximately  $10^{18}$  seconds!

(2) **It prevents a correct world view.** Even if one were granted a simple living organism (there is no simple life form; all are tremendously complex) with which to commence his hypothetical evolutionary case, there is no adequate explanation for the alleged development of the vast world of living creatures. The general explanation for such supposed progressive development has been: (a) random genetic mutations; (b) natural selection; or (c) gene recombination. But all of these processes are either negative or neutral (see Jackson, 1974) and cannot possibly explain the theoretical changes required to have occurred in the amoeba-to-man belief. The evolutionary worldview is false. Man is the product of divine creation.

The importance of having a world view in which God is both center and circumference cannot be overstated. Not only is the atheistic worldview untenable scientifically, but it has wrought devastating sociological consequences. Witness the rise of evolution-permeated Naziism and Communism, and the terrors connected therewith. Man’s conduct is determined by his view of himself and his world; only an ideology that has God as its basis can lift man to the heights he was designed to attain.

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