

BIBLICAL THEORIES OF CREATION:

1. Literal Days of Recent Creation:

This is the recent creationists position that the Universe was created in 6 24 hour days only some 6,000 years ago.

It appears that the main reason for holding onto to the idea of a recent creation some 6,000 years ago is because of the work of Archbishop Ussher, many years ago. He used the genealogies in the Bible in determining this age. Unfortunately these were never intended to provide a complete record.

For example, Matthew 1:8 lists King Joram as the father of King Uzziah, but the Old testament tells as that Joram was the great-great-grandfather of Uzziah. Also Ezra 7:1-5 traces Ezra's line back about a thousand years to Aaron but only lists 16 generations.

Luke 3:35-36 tells us that Arphaxad was the grandfather of Shelah but in Genesis 11 Arphaxad is listed as the father of Shelah. Clearly the Hebrews did not attempt to keep a complete list of ancestors and thus there is no way we can use this information to date Adam and Noah.

Another Problem: Genesis 1:4,5 Day used for 12 hours and 24 then in Gen 2:4 used for all of creation.

And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.

This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens

Young Earth Creationists use Ex 20:9-11 to suggest a parallel yet in 1 John 3:16

Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

1st laying down and 2nd are not the same – the greater forms a pattern for the lessor – similarly with creation and Israel's weekly calendar.

Also look at how much more happened on the 6th day. – after a long procession of animals, no helper for Adam, he was put to sleep and Eve created, ...Gen 2:23 ...at last ... - meaning now, at length – Adam had been waiting a long time.

2. Literal Days of Recreation or Gap theory:

Possible to translate Gen 1 with "... **and the earth became** (usual translation was) without form and void."

Suggests virtually all fossils from the previous creation which may have been destroyed because of the sin of Satan.

Problem: - seems to hang a lot of one ambiguous expression – not much evidence for recent global catastrophe followed by creation of new world.

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. (Genesis 1:2 KJV)

The literal wording of Genesis 1:2 states that a ruined Earth and cosmos already existed **BEFORE** the creative work of the seven days began. The literal wording of the KJV verse below (when compared to the wording of Genesis 9:1) suggests that Adam and Eve were created to replace the previous inhabitants of the Earth.

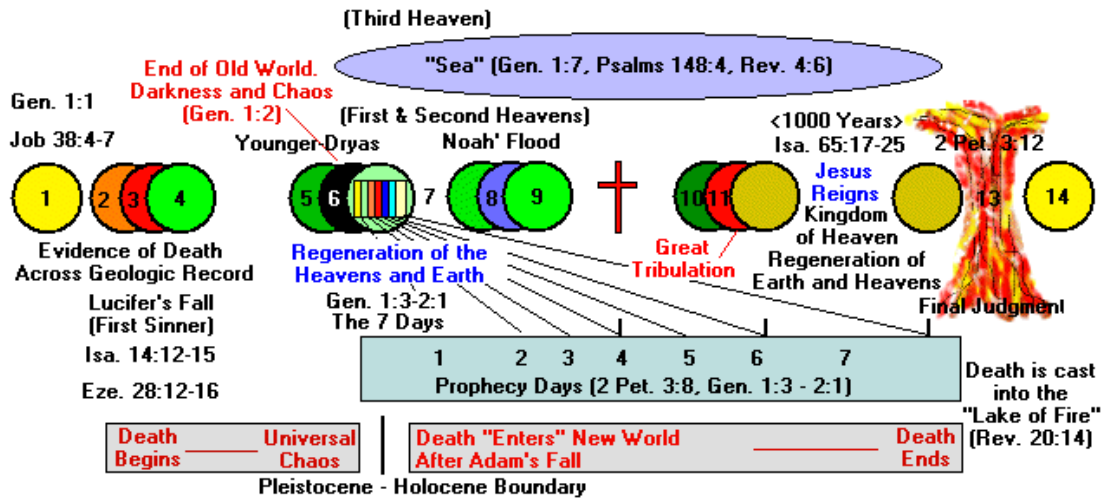
And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. (Genesis 1:28 KJV)

Although many contend the word "replenish" in the above verse should be interpreted as "fill" some believe, from the Scriptures and the Earth's Geology, that the KJV Bible rendering is most accurate in interpretive intent and context.

These are the generations^s of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, (Genesis 2:4 KJV)

Our present world, the present heavens and earth, are a regeneration of the original creation of God. There was a previous world on the earth before Adam and Eve.

BIBLICAL TIMELINE OF THE EARTH'S PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE WORLDS



3. Days = Geological Ages

This is the position of Dr Hugh Ross & Reasons to Believe, - actually has a lot going for it.

Sounds like a simple solution, but perhaps the least believable biblically. Also fruit trees were created on 3^d day, birds of 5th and creeping things on 6th, yet fossils of reptiles found further down in the geographical layers than birds or fruit trees.

4. Intermittent Days of Creation

Might not be consecutive days. Each day separated by vast periods of geological time. The days in Genesis were days when God initiated new phases of his creative work.

Problem: Biblically seems inconsistent with a 'creative week' and the parallel with the Jewish calendar.

5. Days of Revelation

Days when God revealed his work to Moses

Problem –seems to be no scripture anywhere in the Bible the suggests this idea or supports it. Nevertheless it merits careful consideration as it overcomes many problems with other positions.

6. Days of Divine Fiat:

1902 F H Capron – The 6 days are days when God issued his creative commands or fiats.

The Physical Reality of God's Fiats:

If we are not careful we can easily overlook the importance God's fiats. Scripture warns us not to do this. In at least four different places, Bible writers remind us that creation took place because God commanded it.

1. By *the word of the LORD* the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth.
For *he spoke*, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood forth. (Psalm 33.6, 9.)
2. *He commanded* and they were created. (Psalm 148.5.)
3. By faith we understand that the world was created by *the word of God*. (Hebrews 11.3.)
4. By *the word of God* heavens existed long ago, and an earth formed out of water. (2 Peter 3.5.)

We must not confuse these fiats of God with fiats uttered by a human ruler. The latter may be accomplished but God's pronouncements always come to pass. When he promises something, the deed is as good as done.

Consequently, God can (and sometimes does) speak of his future plans as if they were already accomplished.

In accordance with this principle, Paul was able to say that God 'chose us in him before the foundation of the world' (Eph 1.4), even though, in literal fact, we did not then exist.

In similar vein, Revelation 13.8 speaks of our names being 'written the foundation of the world'. Again, God told the prophet Jeremiah, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.' (Jeremiah 1.5.)

Thus we must not think of the great fiats of Genesis I as if they were mere statements. The future is as real to God as is the past to us. To him, those fiats were as actual as the creative actions which followed.

The fiats are the most vital part of Genesis I, for the creative acts and processes themselves were only the outcome of those fiats: they were absolutely bound to follow.

It appears that from God's point of view -which is very different from ours - creation was virtually completed as soon as he had uttered his infallible fiats.

The importance of this profound fact cannot be overemphasized.

Parenthesis in Scripture:

Another fact that impinges on our understanding of Genesis I is this: the writers of the Bible were much given to the use of parentheses. That is to say, they would often insert a secondary thought into the middle of their primary message. Here is an example from the New Testament:

In those days Peter stood up among the brethren (the company of persons was in all about a hundred and twenty), and said, 'Brethren ...' (Acts 1.15.)

Observe how the main sentence makes perfect sense if we read it on its own, ignoring the bit in brackets. Afterwards we can usefully go back and read the words in the brackets, as a separate but related thought.

There is no mistaking a parenthesis in modern English writing, because we usually enclose it in a pair of brackets, or dashes, etc.

But punctuation marks were not invented in Bible times, and so there are no brackets, dashes or commas in the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts to guide our translators. They have to rely upon the sense of the words to show them where parentheses occur.

And it is evident that they do occur very frequently in the Bible. The translators of our King James Version were well aware of this.

As Bullinger said of the first edition of the KJV:

The Edition of 1611 abounded in parentheses. In the subsequent editions there has been an increasing tendency to discard them; and to supply their place by commas; or to ignore them altogether.

The fact remains that in the original text of the Bible there are a great many parentheses. Some of them are marked as such in Modern translations, others are not. And they go right back to the creation narrative. The earliest one marked in the RSV is in Genesis , where a pair of dashes encloses a lengthy parenthesis:

In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up -for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground -then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (Genesis 2.4-7)

The NIV also has a parenthesis in Genesis 2:

A river watering the garden flowed from Eden, and from there it divided; it had four headstreams. The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. (Genesis 2.10-13.)

Genesis 1 Repunctuated:

We have now noted two important facts about the Bible: the absolute reality of God's fiats; and the fondness of the Biblical writers for inserting parentheses. With these two points in mind, we can now consider the nature of Genesis 1.

The very first verse evidently summarizes the early stages of creation. If it were not for the majesty of its contents, it might be likened to the little note headed, 'The Story So Far', which a magazine editor uses to introduce the latest instalment of a serial. It tells us:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1.1.)

The next verse tells us to imagine the curtain rising on an already created planet, but a shapeless and empty one. God's spirit is about to start fashioning it and then populating it:

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. (Genesis 1.2)

At this point God begins to speak. According to the Fiat theory, the rest of the chapter is basically an account of the great creative fiats, which were uttered upon six (presumably literal and consecutive) days. Inserted into the primary narrative is a whole series of parentheses, which describe the subsequent fulfilment of the fiats. The out-workings of the fiats could have taken any amount of time to occur. The fiats of God are uttered swiftly, but his mills grind slowly.

To make the point clearly here is a repunctuated version of the whole passage up to Genesis 2.3, with the parentheses printed in italics.

And God said, 'Let there be light.' *(And there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.)* **And there was evening and there was morning, one day.**

And God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' *(And God made the*

firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven.) **And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.**

And God said, 'Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' *(And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.)* **And God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, upon the earth.'** *(And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.)* **And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.**

And God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth.' *(And it was so. And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.)* **And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.**

And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens.' *(So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.)* *And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.")* **So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.**

Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind"; *(and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.)*

Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth,' *(So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he*

*created them, And God blessed them, and God said to them, ' Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' And God said, ' Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit,' you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food,' And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.) **An there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.***

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation. (Genesis 1.3 -1.3.)

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED AT CREATION?

We are now ready to gather together the threads from all that has gone before.

In the last session we saw some of the evidence that our planet has been maturing for several billion years. But not maturing haphazardly, under the influence of natural laws alone; we saw also that no theory of natural evolution can explain the origin and development of life.

If modern cosmological dating is anything close to correct, it appears that the greater part of the universe's history is passed over in those few words, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'

This raises some profound questions. Why did God omit so much of the story? Why did he not give us a truly cosmic description of creation? Why did he, instead, portray creation as it would have appeared to an observer stationed on our planet?

Since the Lord has not seen fit to tell us, we must first admit that no one really knows. All we can do is to seek for possible reasons, of which there are several.

To begin with, God evidently wished to provide information that would make sense in all ages. If he had given an account of the Big Bang, nobody would have understood a word of it until the twentieth century. As it is, he has given us an account of creation that enlightened the ancient Israelites and is still of immense value today. That this should be so is little short of a miracle, and is evidence of the inspired nature of Genesis.

There may perhaps be a deeper reason why the detailed creation narrative starts where it does. It rather looks as if the Spirit of God began 'moving over the face of the waters' (Genesis 1.2.) at the moment when direct intervention in the affairs of Planet Earth became necessary.

Who were the Fiats uttered to:

Perhaps the angels – Job 38: 4-7

“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Tell Me, if you have understanding.
Who determined its measurements?
Surely you know!
Or who stretched the line upon it?
To what were its foundations fastened?
Or who laid its cornerstone,
When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Some Advantages of this Theory:

- Consistent with the two Biblical principles of foreordaining and parenthesis
- Can be viewed as consecutive literal days – establishes the 'divine ' week' pattern for Israel
- Poetic format –Hebrew poetry intended to be spoken out loud – consistent with God speaking his fiats out loud and in poetic form:
 - Day 1 Light appears
 - Day 2 Waters are divided
 - Day 3 Land appears, with vegetation
 - Day 4 Lights appear
 - Day 5 Waters bring forth living creatures,
 - Day 6 Land is populated

[Utilises Hebrew method of parallelism – repetition at measured intervals]

- Explains why fossil record not in same order – started in same order but took different lengths of time to complete
- Overcomes objections by some that Genesis 2 is a contradictory account
- God took a Sabbath rest after the six day but no morning and evening attributed to this day. – suggests doesn't possess boundaries of a normal day – 'real' Sabbath is still in the future:

For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works” ...

There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. (Hebrews 4:4, 9,10)

- Genesis 1 a prophecy of Christ:

'Let there be Light' – fulfilled in Christ entering a sin darkened world

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, [first fiat] who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor 4:6)

Christ called 'the last Adam ... the second man'

And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. (1 Cor 15:45,47)

All faithful believers will one day carry the image of God in themselves.

And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. (1 Cor 15:49)

Thus it is possible to view all of the rest of the Bible as one great parenthesis which describes the outworking of God's last and greatest creative fiat in making man in his image. God's eternal kingdom is the Sabbath rest which will follow!

Conclusion:

We have looked at how the 'world' defines the terms and conditions of the debate about evolution and how it evolution is Anti-God. We have also discussed the importance of this debate in relation to the Church's place and stature in the world.

We have looked at the lack of scientific evidence for evolution and the increasing support for a designer of the Universe.

In this last session I have presented some possible ways to understand Genesis. Clearly there are still a lot of questions and we won't know the complete answer until we are united with Christ in heaven. However I trust that I have given you some information and insights to strengthen your faith in the Lord and his Word with regard to this important issue.

Note: Much of the material for Sessions 2 & 3 comes from the book 'Creation and Evolution – The facts and the Fallacies' by Alan Hayward.