

genesis

God's Book of Beginnings

Chapter 1

^{1,1} In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night". And there was evening, and there was morning – the first day.

⁶ And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." ⁷ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸ God called the expanse "sky". And there was evening, and there was morning – the second day.

⁹ And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry ground "land", and the gathered waters he called "seas". And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. ¹² The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening, and there was morning – the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶ God made two great lights – the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷ God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening, and there was morning – the fourth day.

²⁰ And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." ²¹ So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." ²³ And there was evening, and there was morning – the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. ²⁵ God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. ²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." ²⁹ Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground – everything that has the breath of life in it – I give every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning – the sixth day.

Creation of the Universe: *The First Six Days*

The first two verses in the Bible are not a description of part of the first day, as many people believe. This passage defines the initial conditions and frame of reference for the six days of Creation.

1:1 Two primary issues in this first chapter of the Bible are presented in the very first verse:

- (1) "In the beginning" is God's declaration that the universe had a distinct origin ~13.7 bya and
- (2) "God created the heavens and the earth" pronounced that Jesus ^{John 1:1,3, Colossians 1:15-17} (the Creator of all things) created (*bārā'*) the universe out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) ^{Hebrews 11:3}.

Every one of the 10 occurrences ^{Genesis 1:1, 2:1,4, Exodus 20:11, 31:17, Psalm 113:6, Jeremiah 10:11, 32:17, Haggai 2:6,21} of the phrase "the heavens and the earth" (*hašamayim we ha'ereš*) in the OT refers to the entire physical creation (old Hebrew way of saying: "the universe"): all matter, energy, space and time.

2 Early in the earth's history, water ("the deep", "the waters") covered the entire surface, followed by the Late Heavy Bombardment (Hadean Era ~4.5-4 bya) which left the Earth's surface essentially molten. So, Moses described the "initial conditions" as "formless" (*tōhû*: desolate) and "empty" (*bōhû*: void, lifeless). Furthermore, the phrase "the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" introduces two essential concepts (1) the Holy Spirit was preparing the Earth for life and (2) the "frame of reference" for the creation days was defined: *the Earth's surface*.

The same words found here, "formless" (*tōhû*) and "empty" (*bōhû*), were later used by the prophet Jeremiah in his description of his vision of the desolation of Jerusalem ^{Jeremiah 4:23-26} that would occur at the hands of the Babylonians at the conclusion of their three sieges (c.605-586 B.C.).

The Hebrew word for "hovering" (*rāḥap*) is seen in one other place in the Torah. Moses used it to describe a mother eagle's love as she "stirs its nest" to teach her young to fly ^{Deuteronomy 32:9-11}.

This passage illustrated God's great love for the nation of Israel during their desert wanderings. These images are also in the creation story ^{Genesis 1:2}: when the Holy Spirit was "hovering" over the water, He was preparing to "stir" the waters in anticipation of the creation of the "living creatures".

Many Christians today could gain an insight from Galileo into a vital aspect of Biblical interpretation. In his trial by the Roman Catholic Inquisition in 1633, Galileo stated: "If in reading the Bible, you make a mistake on the frame of reference, you make the greatest interpretive mistake of all."

The "darkness" at *the Earth's surface* (the frame of reference) was produced as a result of an opaque primordial atmosphere, due to thick clouds. This type of environment was confirmed by both the General Revelation by modeling of the Earth's early history and Venus as an example, and the Special Revelation: Job 38:9 *I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness...*

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Creation Day 1 Genesis 1:3-5

3-5 In Genesis 1:3, the phrase “let there be” is translated from the Hebrew word *hāyâ*, meaning “to exist” or “to be”. A better translation here would have been: “let the light be”, because the light was just being allowed to reach the Earth’s surface at this time (it was actually “created” earlier ^{v.1}). In Genesis 1:5 (also in 1:8,13,19,23,31), the word “evening” is translated from the Hebrew word *‘ereb*, which also means ‘sunset’, ‘night’ or ‘end of day’. The word “morning” is from *bōqer*, which can also mean ‘sunrise’, ‘daybreak’ or ‘start of day’. The Bible applies these words to each of the first 6 days, but does not apply them to Day 7.

Later, God (Jesus) spoke the same Hebrew word (*hāyâ*) used here when He declared His name to Moses at the burning bush on Mount Horeb: “I AM WHO I AM” (*AHAYAH ASHER AHAYAH*) Exodus 3:14.

The word translated “day” in Genesis 1 is the Hebrew word *yôm* which has 3 literal meanings: a 24-hour day; the daylight hours (12-hour day) ^{v.5a,14,16}; or a long, but finite time period ^{v.5b,8,13,19,23,31}.

Genesis 1:3 seems to indicate the Earth’s atmosphere changed from opaque to translucent during Day 1 (possibly when a Mars-size planet collided with Earth, ejecting some atmosphere and creating the Moon).

Creation Day 2 Genesis 1:6-8

6-8 God separated the water on the earth into oceans on the surface and a thick band of water vapor above the surface (clouds, etc). The “expanse” between the waters was named “sky”.

Genesis 1:6-8 defined changes in the Earth’s atmosphere that created the complete water cycle on Day 2.

Creation Day 3 Genesis 1:9-13

9-10 Jesus concentrated the surface waters, which He called “seas”, and formed “dry ground” (by plate tectonics?) on the Earth. He blessed the land and seas, because they were good.

Genesis 1:9-10 describes the partial withdrawal of the oceans and appearance of land masses on Day 3.

11-13 The creation continued with the introduction of “seed-bearing plants and trees” – with seeds being the basis of reproduction. God implicitly blessed His creation of the vegetation.

In Genesis 1:11 & 12 (also 21, 24, 25), the phrase “according to its kind” (or some slight variation) seems conceivably to be an ancient effort by the Creator to speak out against macro-evolution.

Curiously, there was no blessing on the 2nd day and 2 blessings on the 3rd day ^{v.10,12}. (An allusion to Jesus in the grave on the 2nd day and His resurrection on the 3rd?) In Jewish writings, the 3rd day is called the day of “Double Blessings”. Consequently, many Jewish weddings are held on Tuesdays.

As well as forming “dry ground” on Day 3 ^{v.9-10}, Genesis 1:11-13 details God’s creation of land vegetation.

Creation Day 4 Genesis 1:14-19

14-19 In Genesis 1:16, the word “made” is the Hebrew word *‘āsâ*, meaning “do” or “make” in a general sense. This word does not imply any indication as to when the sun, moon and stars were created. In context, here they just became clearly visible at *the Earth’s surface*, because they had to have produced the light noted on Day 1. God said they were “good”.

Genesis 1:14-19 explains that the sun, moon and stars were clearly seen at the surface of the Earth, which indicates the Earth’s atmosphere must have changed from translucent to transparent during Day 4.

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Creation Day 5 Genesis 1:20-23

20-21 In Genesis 1:20, the word “creatures” is the Hebrew word *nepeš*, meaning a “breathing being (man or animal)”. So, there is a sense that the particular animals Moses described on Day 5 are considered to be ‘soulish’. They do not have a soul, but they have special God-given traits (intellect, emotion, will) which He created for the pleasure/support of humans.

22-23 God (Jesus) blessed the sea creatures and birds by directing them to richly reproduce.

[Genesis 1:20-23 describes the creation of \(soulish\) sea animals and birds on Day 5.](#)

Creation Day 6 Genesis 1:24-31

24-25 Jesus created the *nepeš* land animals. The Hebrew text seems to indicate mammals. God pronounced an implicit blessing by His declaring this part of His creation to be “good”.

[Genesis 1:24-25 gives an account of the creation of short- & long-legged land \(soulish\) mammals on Day 6.](#)

26-28 Note that initially man was “made” (*‘āśâ*) ^{v.26}, alluding to God forming man’s body from the dust of the ground ^{Genesis 2:7a}, followed by God “creating” (*bārā’*) man ^{v.27}, referring to the creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) of man’s spirit ^{Genesis 2:7b}. The emphasis on man being made in God’s image indicated that Jesus created man with a spirit, as well as some special characteristics (e.g., intellect, emotion and will), giving him (and only humans) an ability to have a personal relationship with God. He also gave an explicit blessing on the man and woman to reproduce abundantly ^{v.22}, and to put the creation under their rule by managing earth’s resources: living & nonliving. Thus, mankind was/is God’s crown of creation ^{Psalms 8:3-8}, as well as His representative and His ruler over “every living creature” ^{v.28} on the Earth.

Notice both the plural forms (‘let us’ & ‘in our’ ^{v.26}) and the singular forms (‘in his’ & ‘he’ ^{v.27}) of God, indicating both His plural (*Elohim*, the Trinity) and singular (*EI*, God is One ^{Deuteronomy 6:4}) natures.

Other God-given unique human characteristics include awareness of a moral code (or conscience), concern about death and life after death, desire to worship and relate to a higher being, consciousness of self, drive to discover and capacity to recognize truth and absolutes.

There is one Hebrew word for man (*‘ādām*) in Genesis 1-2, with two exceptions (*‘iš* ^{Genesis 2:23b-24}).

Also during Day 6, God created man (“male and female”) ^{Genesis 1:26-28}, with physical and spiritual attributes. In addition, God assigned mankind the stewardship of His animals, including naming them all ^{Genesis 2:19-20}.

29-30 God gave “every seed-bearing plant” and “every tree [with] fruit” to the man & woman and “every green plant” to the animals for food. Consequently, up until God told Noah and his family to come out of the ark ^{Genesis 8:15-16,18}, all humans were vegetarians ^{Genesis 9:1-3}.

Early humans lived for hundreds of years, and a vegetarian diet was essential for long-term health, but when God shortened human life spans ^{Genesis 6:3}, He also permitted meat consumption ^{Genesis 9:3}.

31 Jesus admired His entire creation, and took the time to proclaim it all as “very good”.

In the conclusion of Day 6, God then gave “every seed-bearing” plant and tree to “the man and woman” and “every green plant” to the “beasts of the earth” for food ^{Genesis 1:29-31}, then He blessed His entire Creation.

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Addendum
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Four Important Issues in the Young Earth verses Old Earth Debate

With the above interpretation of Genesis 1, these perspectives are presented to consider:

Issue 1: Psalm 90:4 is the only one of the Psalms attributed to Moses. This text illustrates that Moses, also the author of Genesis, understood that God is not restricted by human time limits.

For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.

Issue 2: There are multiple translations of *yôwm* in Genesis 1,2. The following undeniable uses for *yôwm* indicates that each time the word appears in Genesis 1,2 (or anywhere in the Bible), the context needs to be carefully analyzed to determine which of the literal meanings is appropriate.

- † Genesis 1:5 "...God called the light 'day' ": This 'day' is obviously the 12 hour day (daylight) ^{1:14,16,18}.
- † Genesis 1:14 "...signs to mark seasons and days and years": This 'day' is 24 hours long.
- † Genesis 2:4 (NKJ) "...in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens":
This 'day' includes all of the six days of creation, so it has to be a longer period of time.

Issue 3: It is unrealistic to believe that all of the activities on Creation Day 6 happened in a 24 hour period:

- † God created the land mammals ^{Genesis 1:24-25}
- † God created Adam ^{1:26-27}
- † God planted and grew the Garden of Eden ^{2:8}
- † God put Adam in the garden to work ^{2:8}
- † Adam named all of the animals ^{2:19-20}
- † God put Adam asleep & created Eve ^{2:21-23}

Issue 4: In Genesis 2:1-3, there is no "evening" or "morning" for Day 7, which is God's day of rest. In addition, there are Biblical passages (e.g., Hebrews 4:1-11) indicating that the 7th Day is not over, and that it will not close until Revelation 21-22. Therefore, Day 7 is unquestionably not a 24-hour day.

Hebrews 4:9-11 *So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.*

The following is a quote from Sir Isaac Newton (1681), taken from a letter Newton wrote to Thomas Burnet, author of *The Ancient Doctrine Concerning the Originals of Things* (1729):

"Now for [the] number and length of [the] six day: by what is said above, you may make the first day as long as you please, and [the] second day, too."

Note: These indicate, but do not prove the length of the six creation days ^{Genesis 1} ∴ ⇒ General Revelation.

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