

“The Case for a Creator”
Session 1: How Genesis lines up
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INTRODUCTION

I. How other ancient culture’s creation stories compare:

Mesopotamian Creation

The Babylonian Enuma Elish tells an ancient Mesopotamian story of creation. Apsu and Tiamat, fresh and salt water, mixed together, created the great and too noisy gods. Apsu wished to kill them, but Tiamat, who wished them no harm, prevailed. Apsu was killed, so Tiamat sought revenge. Marduk killed Tiamat and divided her, using part for earth and part for the heavens. Mankind was made out of Tiamat's second husband.

Egyptian Creation

The Egyptians story had the creator god (identified either as Atum or Amon-Re) coming out of the primevial waters and then shaping the Egyptian gods and goddesses who represented various parts of nature. In one story, the god Shi separated his children, the sky goddess Nut and the earth god Geb. Shu’s job was to hold Nut above Geb so that the universe would not fall down in chaos.

Greek Creation

In the beginning was Chaos. Then came Earth which produced Sky. Covering Earth each night, Sky fathered children upon her. Earth was personified as Gaia/Terra and sky was Ouranos (Uranus). Their children included the Titan parents of most of the Olympian gods and goddesses, as well as many other creatures, including the Cyclopes, Giants, Hecatonchires, Erinyes, and more.

Norse Creation

There was only a chasm, Ginnungagap, in the beginning (somewhat like the Greeks' Chaos) bounded on either side by fire and ice. When fire and ice met, they combined to form a giant, named Ymir, and a cow, named Audhumbla, to nourish Ymir. She survived by licking the salty ice blocks. From her licking emerged Bur, the grandfather of the Aesir.

Chinese Creation

The Chinese creation story comes from the end of the [3 Kingdoms](#) period. Heaven and Earth were in a state of chaos or cosmic egg for 18,000 years. When it broke apart, the high and clear formed Heaven, the dark formed Earth, and P'an-ku ("coiled-up antiquity") stood in the middle supporting and stabilizing. P'an-ku kept growing for another 18,000 years during which time Heaven also grew. Another version of the P'an-ku (the first-born) story tells of his becoming earth, sky, stars, moon, mountains, rivers, soil, etc. Parasites feeding on his body, impregnated by wind, became human beings.

Similarities: watery chaos, separation of dark and light, creation of sun, moon and stars, origins of animals and humans.

Differences: The God of the Bible faces no rival for control of the universe. God is eternal and the sole creator. Humans are made in his image with a sense of dignity.

II. The context in which Genesis was written

Authorship is attributed to Moses about the year 1500 B.C.

III. Is the earth young or old?

2 Peter 3:8 (NIV)

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.

Creationists fall into two main camps. Those who argue for a young earth (less than 10 thousand years) and seek to find scientific evidence which backs this up, and those who argue for an earth that is 4.5 billion years old (with the assumption that Genesis does not describe six literal creation days). Both groups hold that the Genesis account is true, and do not support Darwin's theory of natural selection leading to evolution.

Q: Do you think it matters one way or the other if science conclusively proves that the earth is either young or old?

How could the earth be only 6,000 - 10,000 years old?

Theological reasons:

1. The Bible talks about six days of creation and what we know about ancient civilizations and Bible chronology seems to fit those dates.
2. Death came into the world with the fall of Adam and Eve, so if the earth was created in a matter of days, then people and animals began dying after that. If the earth was old, the cycle of life and death would have been going on long before the fall. (Note: see Psalm 104:19-28 for a different Scriptural perspective)

Scientific Basis:

1. Noah's worldwide flood is the centerpiece of the whole position.
 - a. The flood caused geological upheaval
 - b. The flood ushered in an ice age and caused mass extinction
 - c. The flood arranged the strata of the fossils in a short amount of time, not millions of years.
2. They look for inconsistencies or alternative interpretations of traditional methods of dating. For example:
 - a. The speed of light changed (for stars that are millions of light years away)
 - b. Carbon 14 presence must mean that fossils are not that old (It should have decayed)
 - c. Organic material and DNA discovered in dinosaur bones. (Shouldn't be there)

Key young earth group: Institute for Creation Research www.icr.org

Scientists from a number of disciplines (particularly geology and astronomy) have leveled harsh criticism at these conclusions. Staunch evolutionists have outright mocked it as pseudo-science, even comparing it to those who used to believe in a flat earth. As a result, there are creationists who, after looking at the many scientific measures of earth age, conclude that it is in fact much older than a few thousand years.

Among these

- a. Big Bang theory calculations (with expansion rate of stars and planets) put the age of the universe at 14 billion years.
- b. Astronomy deals with stars that are millions of light years away.
- c. The sun and earth have been estimated to be 4.5 billion years old.
- d. 40 different radiometric dating techniques used on fossils all basically agree.
- e. Glacier ice core measurements go back over 700,000 years.

Key old earth group: Reasons to Believe www.reasons.org

For an excellent article on dating techniques by Dr. Roger C. Wiens, (Caltech, Los Alamos physicist/geologist) see <http://www.asa3.org/aSA/resources/Wiens.html>

How does Genesis support the view of an old earth?

Proverbs 3:19, 20.

"By wisdom the Lord laid the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; by his knowledge the deeps were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew."

“Reasons to Believe” Creation model

Genesis 1:2 explicitly shifts the frame of reference, the narrator's vantage point, to the surface of Earth above the water but below the cloud layer. That verse describes the initial conditions of primordial Earth: its surface was dark, covered with water, empty of life, and unfit for life. With the frame of reference and the initial conditions for the six creation days thus established, a straightforward chronology for the creation days' events unfolds. That chronology is as follows:

1. Creation, by fiat miracle, of the entire physical universe (space-time dimensions, matter, energy, galaxies, stars, planets, etc.) Gen 1:1
2. Planet Earth singled out for a sequence of creation miracles. At its beginning, Earth is empty of life and unfit for life; interplanetary debris and Earth's primordial atmosphere prevent the light of the sun, moon, and stars from reaching the planet's surface. Gen 1:2 - approx 4.5 billion years ago.
3. Clearing of the interplanetary debris and partial transformation of the earth's atmosphere so that light from the heavenly bodies now penetrates to the surface of Earth's ocean Gen 1:3-5
4. Formation of water vapor in the troposphere under conditions that establish a stable water cycle Gen 1:6-8 - approx 3.0 – 3.8 billion years ago
5. Formation of continental land masses and ocean basins. Gen 1:9-10
6. Production of plants on the continental land masses Gen 1:11-13 - approx 650 million years ago.
7. Transformation of the atmosphere from translucent to occasionally transparent. Sun, Moon, planets, and stars now can be seen from the vantage point of Earth's surface. Gen 1:14-19
8. Production of swarms of small sea animals. Gen 1:20-23 approx 543 million years ago. Called the “Cambrian explosion” by geologists.
9. Creation of sea mammals and birds. Gen 1:20-23
10. Creation of three specialized kinds of land mammals: a) short-legged land mammals, b) long-legged land mammals that are easy to tame, and c) long-legged land mammals that are difficult to tame—all three specifically designed to cohabit with humans Gen 1:24-25 approx 346 – 125 million years ago
11. Creation of the human species. Gen 1:26-28 between 180,000 and 10,000 years ago.

