

The Henry Morris
SIGNATURE COLLECTION

THE
BEGINNING
OF THE
WORLD

A SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF GENESIS 1–11



The
Beginning
of the World

A Scientific Study
of Genesis 1–11

Henry M. Morris

First Printing: 1977

First printing revised edition: February 2024

Copyright © 1991 by Henry Morris. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, copied, broadcast, stored, or shared in any form whatsoever without written permission from the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations in articles and reviews. For information write: Master Books, P.O. Box 726, Green Forest, AR 72638

Master Books® is a division of the New Leaf Publishing Group, LLC.

ISBN: 978-1-68344-379-7

ISBN: 978-1-61458-897-9 (digital)

Library of Congress Catalog Number: 91-64066-60

All Scripture is from the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

Scripture taken from Modern King James Version (MKJV) of the Holy Bible, copyright 1962, 1990, 1993, 1998, 1999. Used by permission of the copyright holder, Jay P. Green, Sr. Printed in the United States of America.

For information regarding promotional opportunities, please contact the publicity department at pr@nlpg.com

Please visit our website for other great titles:
www.masterbooks.com.



Contents

Introduction.....	7
1. A CREATED BEGINNING	9
The Meaning of Creation	10
The God of Creation	16
2. THE SIX DAYS OF CREATION	20
Events of the Creation Period	20
God's Evaluation of Creation	26
3. HUMAN ORIGINS	30
The Facts of Creation	30
The Fallacies of Evolution	37
4. ORIGIN OF HOME AND FAMILY	42
The First Marriage	42
The Meaning of Marriage	47
5. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL	51
The Fall	52
The Curse	55
6. THE PROMISED REDEEMER	62
The Promise of Salvation	63
The Conflict of the Ages	67
7. THE LOST WORLD	72
The Antediluvian Civilization	73
The Patriarchal Testimony	78
8. THE DAYS OF NOAH	86
Giants in the Earth	87
Warned of God	91
9. THE FLOOD AND THE FOSSILS	97
The Universal Deluge	98
Geological Implications of the Flood	104

10. THE NEW WORLD	109
After the Flood	109
The Noahic Covenant	114
11. ORIGINS OF RACES AND NATIONS	119
The Threefold Division of Mankind	120
The Table of Nations	126
12. THE GREAT DISPERSION	130
Nimrod and the Tower of Babel	131
The Confusion of Tongues	136
13. THE WORLD TO COME	141
The World That Then Was	141
The World That Is Now	147
More on the Subject	153

Introduction

The modern creationist movement has not only enlisted thousands of scientists in its ranks, but has also been like a breath of fresh air to Bible-believing pastors and Christians generally. Creation-evolution debates have been held on hundreds of university campuses in recent years, and thousands of students have seen and heard firsthand that the entire evolutionary system is scientifically indefensible. “This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes” (Ps. 118:23).

The last three decades have seen a remarkable revival of confidence in the scientific integrity and accuracy of the Scriptures. The neo-orthodox and neo-evangelical movements of the past generation, promoting the idea that the Bible was only a book of “religion,” rather than one of science, have proved sterile and self-defeating. Most young people were too intelligent to have assurance for very long in the spiritual teachings of a book that was full of scientific and historical mis-information. If the biblical cosmogony was not acceptable to the modern mind, there was no reason to think that biblical commandments were applicable to modern morality or that the biblical eschatology was meaningful in planning for the future. An introspective emphasis on personal regeneration and “confident living” might satisfy some people for a little while, but such purely emotional religion will not stand the fires of intellectual attack and ridicule very long unless undergirded by solid and intelligent knowledge of the *complete* integrity of God’s Word.

While many Christians were compromising the Scriptures with what they thought was modern science, however, God was calling many scientists to the defense of the faith, and the

result has been a sudden surge of awareness that the Bible was true after all, even on such long-ridiculed doctrines as a literal six-day creation, a young earth, and a worldwide cataclysmic flood in the days of Noah.

This exciting development has stirred up great new interest in the study of the Book of Genesis. The “Back-to Genesis” seminars of the Institute for Creation Research, for example, in recent years normally attract well over a thousand registrants each. Especially the first 11 chapters of Genesis, so long explained away even by many evangelicals as allegorical rather than historical, are now being recognized as the very foundation of all history. These marvelous writings, recording the creation, the Fall, the Curse, the Flood, and the dispersion, are absolute prerequisites to any comprehension of God’s purposes for the world and for individual people in subsequent ages. That is why God placed them first in His Word; they are foundational for all that follows.

There has, however, been a need for a Sunday school quarterly or similar publication that could be used either in classes or for individual study, providing more systematic and detailed analysis of these key chapters of Scripture than can be covered in one seminar of Bible conference. Such a study should be on a layman’s level, yet sound and insightful, both biblically and scientifically. That is the goal of the present book.

Although it is published in quarterly format, it provides considerably more substantive content than a typical Sunday school quarterly. Questions for further class discussion, if desired, are appended to each chapter. Users are assumed to be of college age or older, but it should be easily understandable by almost any reader. It should be used by both student and teacher, but the latter also may wish to follow up with the books listed in the appendix as well.

There is a real need for a “back-to-Genesis” emphasis in today’s Christian world, and we trust this study book will help fulfill that need.

Chapter 1

A Created Beginning

Genesis 1:1–2

The Book of Genesis (meaning “beginnings”) is often regarded in these cynical days as nothing but a collection of old legends from earlier less sophisticated times. Some think of the Genesis stories as allegories with certain moral and spiritual values, though not true in a historical sense.

But no one who believes the Bible can accept such ideas. For such a person, Genesis is the foundation upon which the entire edifice of the Bible is built. The New Testament, for example, directly quotes or alludes to the Book of Genesis no less than 200 times, with half of these referring to the first 11 chapters of Genesis alone. Jesus Christ himself quoted or referred to each of the first 7 chapters of Genesis. All of these references are of such form as to show that both Christ and the Apostles accepted Genesis not only as fully historical but also as divinely inspired.

The Book of Genesis receives its name from the title employed by the translators of the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament). Genesis (Greek: genesis) refers to beginnings or origins. Genesis is the book of beginnings or the book of origins.

As we consider the first 11 chapters of Genesis, we shall see that all true scientific and historical data supports the truth of the Bible record. We shall also see that the purposes of God in His great plan of salvation are inseparably bound to these same

10 ~ The Beginning of the World

events. Furthermore, the origin of all basic human institutions (home, family, agriculture, technology, government, etc.) can be found in the Book of Genesis.

The Meaning of Creation

In this chapter, we want to consider the cosmic implications of the first two verses of the Bible. These are almost certainly the most widely read words in all literature (after all, the Bible has for centuries been the world's best seller, and most Bible owners at least *begin* to read the Bible!), and there is a strong probability that they were the *first* words ever written.

The first verse of the Bible is the most important and basic of all. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." When one *really* believes this verse, he will have little difficulty believing all the rest of God's Word. This single verse refutes all the various false theories about origins that men have invented.

The verse refutes atheism ("the doctrine of no God") because it starts with God. Pantheism ("all God") is refuted because it shows that God existed before the universe. Polytheism ("many gods") is false because the universe which was created was not a "poly-verse," and it was created by one God. Dualism, the doctrine of two eternal gods, one good and one evil, is merely a special form of polytheism. Evolutionism is rejected because it says that God *created*.

Actually, all these false philosophies are essentially the same. All theories of origins — other than the true account in the Bible — teach that the present "cosmos" came into existence by the operation of the "gods" or the forces of nature or some mystical principle acting upon the previously existing material "stuff" of the earlier "chaos." This idea is no less prevalent in ancient paganism than in modern scientism. The revelation of the special creation of all things by an eternal and almighty personal God is essentially unique to the Bible! Thus all other explanations of origins, whether religious or philosophical or scientific, are basically only different forms of the concept of evolution.

"Creation" is defined simply as *the work of God in bringing all things into existence*. Only God is eternal — everything else in

the universe had a beginning. True creation is creation *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), and is not merely a reworking of materials already in existence.

Oposed to the doctrine of creation is the concept of evolution. Evolution is defined, in its broadest sense, as the theory that all things have been derived by gradual modification through natural processes from previous materials. According to this concept, all forms of life have developed from earlier, simpler forms, and even life itself spontaneously came into existence through a complex organization of previously nonliving chemical molecules. Even the basic molecular and atomic structure of matter supposedly developed from still simpler and more basic forms of matter. The theory of evolution, in essentially the above form, is strongly championed by many modern scientists. In fact, the claim is often heard that *all* scientists accept evolution, but this claim is, of course, untrue. There are many scientists and other well-educated people today who reject evolution and who insist that only divine creation can account for the universe and its inhabitants.

The key question is whether all things were specially created by the God of the Bible or whether they have developed from prior materials into their present forms through the operation of innate principles. If the latter is true, it follows that this development, this “evolution,” is still going on, since presumably the same principles are still in operation.

There are some who suggest that evolution was God’s method of creation. However, this belief, which is called *theistic evolution*, is not generally accepted either by the real leaders of evolutionary thought or by those who firmly believe in the plenary verbal inspiration and infallibility of Scripture. As a matter of fact, the decision between creation and evolution is not really a scientific decision at all. *Science*, as such, can say nothing whatsoever about origins. Science (knowledge) is limited to the study of physical phenomena and processes as they exist at present. The scientific method involves reproducibility. That is, an experiment performed today which yields certain results will, if repeated next year, still yield the same results. It

12 ~ The Beginning of the World

must be seen, however, that prehistoric events are not subject to scientific experimentation and therefore no one can say *scientifically* what happened millions of years ago. In order to project our knowledge of *present* processes into the prehistoric past, we must necessarily make certain assumptions as to the basis of such projections. And this involves a philosophy or a faith, not science.

It is significant that *present* processes, which are the only kinds of processes which can be tested by the scientific method, are not in any way *creative* processes. That is, the basic laws of modern science, which describe these present processes, are laws of conservation and deterioration, not of creation and integration. These laws deal with the fundamental behavior of matter and energy, which actually include everything in the physical universe, and are known as the first and second laws of thermodynamics.

Thermodynamics (from two Greek words meaning “heat power”) is the science dealing with the conversion of heat and other forms of energy into work. It is now known that everything in the universe is energy in some form, and everything that “happens” is basically an energy conversion process. Thus, the first and second laws of thermodynamics could just as well be called the first and second laws of science. All processes in the universe, as far as known, have to obey these two laws.

The first law of thermodynamics is also called the law of energy conservation. This law states that, although energy can be changed in form, it is not now being either created or destroyed. Since all physical phenomena, including matter itself, are merely different forms of energy, this clearly implies that creation was an event of the past and is no longer going on.

The second law of thermodynamics, stated in nontechnical form, says that all physical systems, if left to themselves, tend to become disorganized. Thus, machines wear out, processes run down, organisms get old and die. Any temporary increase in organization requires an input of energy from outside the system itself.

These two universal laws are basic in all disciplines of modern science. Verified by thousands of experiments, from the nuclear

level to the astronomic level, with no known exceptions, they clearly indicate that nothing is *now* being created and that the original creation is “running down.”

This all proves, *as well as “science” is able to demonstrate anything*, that evolution, which requires a continuing universal process of development and integration, is simply not true at the present time. This is why no one has seen evolution occurring.

Since “science” can only deal legitimately with *present* processes, and since present processes are not creative or integrative in nature, science as such can tell us nothing about origins. Therefore, if we are to know anything about the creation — when it was, what methods were used, what order of events occurred, or anything else — we must depend *completely* on divine revelation. There is no other valid source of information on this subject.

God was there and we were not! He *has* told us quite plainly what took place then, in His revealed Word. The Bible clearly confirms the implications of the two laws of thermodynamics. Such passages as Genesis 2:1–3; Hebrews 4:3, 10; Exodus 20:11, and others indicate clearly that the creation was *complete* at the end of the six days of creation. Hebrews 1:10–12, Romans 8:20–22, and similar verses teach that the originally perfect creation is now in a process of decay.

The first two verses of Genesis speak of the initial act of creation of our present physical universe. “In the beginning” speaks of the point at which time, as we understand it, began. “The heavens” refer to the vast expanses of space in the universe and “the earth” to the matter which would occupy space and time.

Initially, there were no other stars or planets; these were all made only on the fourth day of the creation week, according to Genesis 1:14–19. The “heavens,” therefore, were not the stars, but the vast reaches of space in which the stars would later be placed. Even the earth was not initially in the spherical form it now possesses; it was “without form.” Nevertheless, the physical universe, which had no existence previously, had come into existence, and time had begun.

God “created” all these — time, space, and matter — by His own Word (note Ps. 33:6, 9; John 1:1–3; Heb. 11:3; 2 Pet.

14 ~ The Beginning of the World

3:5). The verb “create” translates a Hebrew word, *bara*, which is never used with any other subject but God. In other words, only God himself is able to “create” anything.

The first verse, incidentally, is not a dependent clause (i.e., “in the beginning, when God was creating . . . the earth was without form . . .”), as some have maintained. Neither is it a mere title or summary of the chapter. Instead, it is an independent statement describing the first event in the creative work of the first day. This interpretation is required because otherwise there would be no reference in the entire account to the actual creation of “the heavens” as required by Genesis 2: 1 and Exodus 20:11.

This fact is also emphasized by the use of the Hebrew conjunction (translated “and”) at the beginning of verse 2. This same connective appears at the beginning of each later verse in the chapter, indicating continuous, sequential action throughout the week, one verse after another.

Thus, both Scripture and science teach that creation is not now taking place. We are therefore completely unable to study experimentally any of the processes of creation. We must learn whatever we wish to know about it from the only one who can tell us — God himself. We must approach the biblical record of creation with an open mind and heart to see and believe what God has said, not with the idea of trying to make it harmonize with some human theory of origins.

It should be remembered that the various popular cosmogonies (a “cosmogony” is a model for explaining the origin of the cosmos), such as the so-called “big-bang” and “steady-state” theories, are strictly man-made evolutionary systems trying to explain the universe without God. It is obvious that such theories are completely outside the realm of science. The essence of science is observation and experimentation, but these are impossible in the study of origins. How can one study, *experimentally*, the origin of a universe or the development of a galaxy?

There is nothing whatsoever in science to prevent us from accepting the revealed fact that God *created* all things, calling them into existence *ex nihilo* (or, perhaps better, *ex deo*), in a fully developed and functioning state right from the beginning.

This fact is confirmed not only by Scripture but also by the two laws of thermodynamics. The second law states, in effect, that the universe must have had a beginning; otherwise, since it is now running down, it would already be dead. The first law, on the other hand, states in effect that the universe could not have created itself. It must have been created, therefore, by some adequate Cause beyond itself. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" is the most scientific statement that could possibly be made about the origin of the universe, based on the known laws of science.

The second verse describes the initial aspect of the created earth. The verse is correctly rendered "was," and does not need to be rendered "became" as some have contended. It is the regular Hebrew verb of being. Although in some contexts it is legitimately translated "became," this is valid in only about 25 of its more than 1,500 occurrences. Obviously, the earth at this stage was not "perfect" in the sense that it was complete, until it *was* complete, at the end of the six days, but it was perfect for God's immediate purpose.

The so-called "gap theory," which suggests a tremendous gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, is incorrect, being both unwarranted biblically and impossible scientifically. Exodus 20:11, in the Ten Commandments, states that "in six days, the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and *all that in them is.*" Thus, nothing in the earth or sea could have been made *before* the six days. The gap theory is supposed by its advocates to provide time for the geological ages, which were then terminated by a great cataclysm, leaving the earth "without form and void," as described in Genesis 1:2. However, the geological ages are based on the principle of "uniformitarianism," which precludes any such thing as a world-wide cataclysm. Any cataclysm which would leave the earth covered with water and the water shrouded in darkness would have literally destroyed any previous structures in the earth's crust, but the fossils in the sedimentary rocks of the earth's crust provide the only real evidence for the geological ages. The gap theory thus negates itself, trying to accommodate the geological ages by a cataclysm which would

16 ~ The Beginning of the World

destroy the evidence for the geological ages! Genesis 1:2 does not describe the earth after long ages and a great cataclysm, but rather at the very beginning of its history.

Initially, the earth's matter was "without form," referring to the fact that waters covered it and possibly contained most of its other substances in solution or suspension. It was also "void" or empty, with no living inhabitants. However, as Isaiah noted over 3,000 years afterward, God had not created the earth "in vain," to be forever "empty," but rather "formed it to be inhabited" (Isa. 45:18). Thus, He first proceeded to "form" that which was "without form," then to provide inhabitants for that which was "void."

This He did through His Spirit, who *moved* (lit. "was vibrating") in the primeval darkness which surrounded the waters. Through Him, by His Word, would soon flow the boundless power which would bring light out of darkness, lands from the formless waters, and living inhabitants from the silent earth.

The God of Creation

God's energizing presence testified of His approval of the work thus far. The "Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2). This speaks of the Holy Spirit, whose outflowing power, proceeding from the Father through the Son, is the source of all God's mighty work of creation. There is an interesting parallel between this verse and 2 Peter 1:20–21 where we are told that "holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (NKJV) in the writing of Scripture. The "moving" of the Holy Spirit is thus basic in God's revelation in both nature and the written Word.

It is of supreme importance that we believe in the true God of the Bible. Men have invented many "gods," and Satan is engaged in an age-long attempt to make himself the ruler or "god" of the universe, but there is only one *true* God, and He is the one who has created all things. It is *only* in the Bible that we learn of His nature and character and purposes.

The doctrine of God as taught in Scripture reveals Him to be the triune God. He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The

plurality of the godhead is intimated by the word “God” in the first verse of the Bible, which is the plural form *elohim*.

It is significant that each of the three persons of the godhead is associated with the work of creation. All good and perfect gifts, which certainly are included in God’s “very good” creation, come from the Father, according to James 1:17. The work of the Spirit is clearly stated in Genesis 1:2, but most emphatically the Son is said to be the Word of God by whom the creation was spoken into being. Note such Scriptures as John 1:1–3, Hebrews 1:3, Psalm 33:6, Revelation 3:14, and especially Colossians 1:16–17. Men need to realize fully that Jesus Christ is God and that it was by Him that all things were created.

The Bible does not try to prove that God exists before telling what He has done. It simply starts with God, taking for granted the fact of His existence and His omnipotence. In fact, Scripture says only a “fool” can say in his heart there is no God (Ps. 14:1). Surely with the evidence all around us of “creation,” any truly reasonable man should recognize that there is a “Creator.”

The very fact of “intelligible” phenomena of nature in the world should indicate an “intelligence” that caused them. The fact of individual personalities in the world capable of emotions and of the exercise of their wills should indicate a great person, who exercises love, anger, and His will, as their cause. The fact that all people have an inborn sense that “right” is better than “wrong” testifies that the cause of such instinctive conscience must be a *holy* Creator. The scientific law of cause and effect — that no effect can be greater than its cause — surely applies to these conclusions as well as to those in any other categories of science and logic.

Nevertheless, many men attempt to sidestep such reasoning and still refuse to accept God as He is according to Scripture. They do not “like to retain God in their knowledge,” and therefore, “professing themselves to be wise, they become fools” (Rom. 1:28, 22).

It is profoundly meaningful that Genesis 1:1 suggests that God is both One and yet more than one. The Hebrew word

18 ~ The Beginning of the World

“God” is *Elohim*, a plural form with the fundamental meaning of “gods” or “the mighty ones.” Yet the verb form “created” appears in the singular, requiring a singular subject.

The doctrine of the Trinity is not explicitly formulated in these first two verses, but it is clearly consistent with them. The New Testament speaks of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each distinct and yet each equally and eternally the One God of creation. The Father is the eternal source of all things; the Son, as the incarnate Word, reveals the Father; the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, to make applicable and effectual the will of God in His creation.

Thus, the Spirit was “moving” in creation. Motion implies energy, resulting in the various physical phenomena of the creation. This is the essence of what scientists mean by matter, the phenomena associated with which always involve motion, through space, in time. The universe created is thus a space/matter/time “continuum.” Space is the ever-present background within which everywhere occur material phenomena — matter — the manifestation and application of which everywhere involve time. Thus, the created physical universe is really a triuniverse, perhaps reflecting the nature of its triune Creator.

In remarkably analogous fashion, these three universal components of creation — space, matter, and time — each exhibit the characteristics of triunity. Thus, space is three-dimensional, with each dimension occupying the whole of space and yet all three are required for its full reality. Matter finds its unseen but omnipresent source in energy, manifesting itself in some form of motion, resulting in the various phenomena of light, heat, sound, inertia, etc. Energy, then motion, then phenomena — the source, the substance, the result. Likewise, time is future, present, and past — each the whole of time yet each clearly distinct in meaning.

The physical creation thus marvelously appears to be a trinity of trinities! Although this does not *prove* that God is a triune God, it is surely wonderfully consistent with that revealed fact, reflecting throughout all the universe the nature of its Creator. How supremely important it is to know God *as He is*, through Jesus Christ, “for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9).

Genesis 1:1 clearly states the fact of creation, but this immediately raises the question: Why? God is omniscient and omnipotent, and He therefore must have had a purpose and that purpose must be fulfilled.

As a matter of fact, all the rest of Scripture is occupied with that purpose and its accomplishment. It might be summarized by saying that He created the universe for man, and man for himself.

We trust that the reader is willing to believe fully in God as He is revealed in Scripture. This, of course, means believing in Jesus Christ as both Creator and Savior — the One who created all men and who also died to redeem men (John 1:11–13; 3:36; 5:24).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In what ways is the Genesis record of the creation of the universe of space, time, and matter different from all other cosmogonies?
2. What are the biblical and scientific arguments for and against the “gap theory”? Why do geologists reject this theory?
3. Define carefully the biblical doctrine of the Trinity, explaining the distinctive roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the godhead.
4. Why is theistic evolution incompatible with the nature of God?
5. Explain how the first and second laws of thermodynamics point to the existence of a transcendent Creator of the universe.
6. How does the law of cause-and-effect indicate the existence of a personal (rather than impersonal) God?
7. What significance is implied by the three acts of special “creation” in Genesis 1, as distinct from acts of “making” or “forming”?

Chapter 2

The Six Days of Creation

Genesis 1:3–2:3

In the first chapter, we examined at some length the first two verses of the Bible, learning that the eternal, transcendent, personal God at some finite time in the past called the universe into existence *ex nihilo*. In the beginning, it was merely the basic space/matter/time cosmos in elemental form, static and dark, until the Holy Spirit began to “move” (literally, “hover” or “vibrate”) in the presence of the watery matrix in which the elemental earth was originally suspended. Then the cosmos began to be formed and energized. Genesis 1:3–2:3, which we shall examine in this chapter, lists the detailed formative and energizing works of God during the six days of the great “creation week.”

Events of the Creation Period (Genesis 1:3–30)

The events of the six days took place before there were any human beings to observe and record them. They would have to be *revealed* by God, either to Moses or, more likely, originally to Adam himself.

After the initial creation “from nothing” of space, time, and matter, God proceeded to bring form to the shapeless earth, initially blanketed in water and darkness, and then inhabitants to its silent surface.

First, “God commanded the light to shine out of darkness,” even as now He is able to shine into our darkened hearts with the light of His Word, “to give the light of the knowledge of

the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). It says then that “God called the light Day” (Gen. 1:5), thus plainly defining what is meant by the word “day” when it is used in this chapter. This ended the work of the first day; “evening” came, then a period of darkness, and then “morning,” when another “day” began. Although the source of the light was evidently not yet the sun in its present form, the succession of evenings and mornings indicates that the earth’s axial rotation had begun. It should be emphasized that these days of creation were literal *days*. This is the Word of God, and God is surely able to say what He means.

It is significant that God’s first creative act, after His initial creation of time (“the beginning”), space (“the heaven”), and matter (“the earth”) was that of light, accomplished by His spoken Word. “And God *said*, Let there be light: and there was light” (Gen. 1:3).

Light is the most basic of all forms of energy, intimately related to all other forms of energy. It is well known also that energy is related to matter by the famous Einstein equation, $e=mc^2$. In this equation, c is the velocity of light, the tremendous speed to which all other types of motion in the physical universe must be referenced. Possibly the Scriptures hint at this when, just before the spoken Word produces light, we are told that God the Holy Spirit was “moving” in the darkness over the formless earth.

Many people, of course, have tried to interpret the word “day” in a non-literal sense, attempting in some way to correlate the days of creation with the “ages” of geology. The “day-age” theory, however, encounters insuperable difficulties, both scientific and biblical, and must be rejected.

In the Ten Commandments, there is a very important verse, originally written on stone by the finger of God himself (Exod. 31:18): “In six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is” (Exod. 20:11), establishing man’s six-day work week on the pattern of God’s six days of “creating and making” (Gen. 2:3) all His works. The obvious implication from this parallel reference to God’s work days and man’s

22 ~ The Beginning of the World

work days is that both are the same — that is, literal days. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that the Hebrew word for “days” (*yamim* — the plural of *yom*, “day”), which is used over 700 times in the Old Testament, *never* in any other place necessarily means anything but literal “days.”

Even when used in the singular, as it is several times in Genesis 1, it normally means a literal day — that is, as the period of *light* experienced diurnally as the earth rotates on its axis each 24 hours. It is so defined in verse 5, the first time it is used, where we are told that “God called the light Day.” Each creative day is marked off by an “evening,” ending the period of light, and the “morning,” ending the period of darkness. The words “evening” and “morning” are each used more than a hundred times in the Old Testament, always with the literal meaning. The word “day” (Hebrew *yom*) occasionally is used in the sense of “time” (for example, as we might say, “in the time of King Arthur,” or “in the day of King Arthur”), but such a usage is always evident from the context. The word is *never* used to mean a definite “period of time,” such as say, the “Elizabethan period” or the “Cambrian period.” Furthermore, it never means anything except a literal “day” when combined with a numeral or ordinal as it is at the end of each day’s work in Genesis 1 (“the evening and the morning were the *first* day,” etc.), although this construction occurs more than a hundred times in the books of Moses alone.

Therefore, we need to recognize plainly that the biblical “days” of creation were real days, such as we know them today, and cannot possibly be equated with the “ages” of the so-called historical geology. This should not trouble us scientifically, since we have already seen that *science*, as such, is utterly incapable of really telling us *anything* about creation. Science deals only with present processes, with reproducible experiments, and present processes are *not* processes of creation. We prefer, therefore, simply to let God’s Word speak for itself concerning what happened in the creation period.

Of the exact nature of this light, and its source, we are not told. Since God “divided” the light from the darkness, and

the cyclic succession of “evenings and mornings” began, it is reasonable to conclude that the diurnal rotation of the earth upon its axis began at this time.

A second act of “division” occurred on the second day, when God “divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament” (Gen. 1:7). The waters clearly are the same as the “waters” of verse 2, synonymous also with the “deep” of that verse.

Thus, an unknown but substantial part of the earth’s primeval waters were elevated far up into the sky, *above* the “firmament.” The Hebrew word for “firmament” could also mean “expanse,” or “stretched-out space.” In the context here, it must correspond to the atmosphere. This was given the name “heaven” (confirming the intimation that the creation of heaven in verse 1 was equivalent to the creation of space), and was the particular space in which, later, birds were to fly (verse 20).

The “waters above the firmament” must have been in the form of invisible water vapor, extending far into space. They provided a marvelous “canopy” for the earth, shielding it from the deadly radiations coming from outer space and producing a wonderful “greenhouse effect,” sustaining a uniformly warm, pleasant climate all around the earth. Being invisible, these water vapors were of course transparent to the light of the heavenly bodies which were to be established on the fourth day.

The “waters under the firmament” still constituted a shoreless ocean, but God’s next act was to cause the dry land to rise from the ocean and the ocean to retreat into lower basins, forming a network of seas. On the same day, God caused vegetation to cover the dry land, grasses and herbs and trees of all kinds. It is important to recognize that the herbs were already bearing seed and the trees already yielding fruit, as soon as they appeared. This further implies that the “dry land” which had just previously come forth from the waters was already prepared with suitable soils and nutrients for the plants. Everything was created in fully developed, completely functioning form. The whole world thus had an “appearance of age,” even though newly created. Creation of apparent age is inherent in the very concept of creation. No

24 ~ The Beginning of the World

deception is involved, as some charge, since God has plainly told us these events of creation. There *would* be deception on God's part, on the other hand, if the earth really were billions of years old, since God has plainly said He created everything in six literal days.

The creation of fruit trees on the third day obviously contradicts the evolutionary theory, which says that all kinds of marine animals, including the fish, evolved long before fruit trees. It also contradicts evolution by saying that the sun and other heavenly bodies were not placed in the sky until the day ("age"?) after the production of fruit trees on the dry land.

On the fourth day, God made the sun and moon and stars, "to give light upon the earth" (Gen. 1:14–19). The sun and moon were constituted as "light bearers," to serve as light sources for the earth during the day and night, respectively. The light source during the first three days, whatever it may have been, was thus replaced with this permanent arrangement.

In addition to their function as lights, the stars were to serve for "signs and seasons, for days and years." Evidently, the light from the stars was established in trails traversing space simultaneously with the stars themselves, fully functioning from the start.

Modern man, with his uniformitarian presuppositions, has developed many hypotheses about the evolution of galaxies and the solar system. All are speculative and no single theory is generally accepted even by astronomers. There is no real evidence, apart from evolutionary assumptions, that the sun or stars came into existence before the earth. The earth, with its highly diversified and organized chemical structure, not to mention its infinite variety of living things, is immeasurably more complex than are the stars which, for all their size, are relatively simple in form and substance. There is nothing unreasonable at all about the biblical perspective, which views the earth as the center of interest in the physical universe. The stars in the heavens, no less than the waters and land and plants on earth, were prepared by God with a view to the great history of life and redemption that would soon begin on the earth.

All the materials necessary for animal life — water, air, light, plants, and the chemical materials of the earth — were now available. On the fifth day, God made the fish and birds “after their kinds.” It is interesting to note that the first animals created (verse 21) were the “great whales” (or sea monsters), the largest animals that ever lived. It is difficult to harmonize this with the supposed evolution of all organic life from minute one-celled animals!

It is possible that these “sea monsters” actually were the great marine reptiles. The word in the Hebrew original is actually the same word translated “dragons” in later Scriptures.

During the first part of the sixth day, God made all the other animals, classified as “cattle, beasts of the earth, and creeping things.” The latter term evidently included insects, as well as land reptiles. All of the various types of living creatures were brought forth “after their kinds,” a phrase that is used ten times in this chapter. Each basic “kind” of living creature was thus ordained by God himself. There is not a “great chain of life,” in which all creatures are interrelated by descent, as per the theory of evolution. Undoubtedly, the genetic system of each “kind” was sufficiently complex to permit the later development of many variations within it, but the basic “kind” was fixed by God in the creation.

Note that the order here — land mammals, reptiles, insects — contradicts the evolutionary order, according to which insects evolved long before land mammals and reptiles.

The grand climax of God’s creative activity was the making of man, the one who was to have dominion over the earth and all its living creatures. He was also to “subdue” the earth, which warrants his seeking to understand its physical processes (science) and to control them for man’s use (technology).

It is significant that plant life was brought forth from the earth (verse 11), implying that its material substance would be of the same elements as in the inanimate earth itself. Similarly, the bodies of animals were formed from the earth and water (verses 20, 24), but they also possessed “souls.” The term “creature” of verse 21 is the Hebrew *nep̄hesh*, usually translated

26 ~ The Beginning of the World

“soul.” Thus, plants have a living body, but animals have both body and soul.

Man alone has body, soul, and spirit! This is revealed by the statement that God created man “in His own image.” Parenthetically, we might note also here the intimation of the plurality of the godhead. God said “Let *us* make man in *our* image,” but then God created man in *His* own image. It is by his spirit, in communion with God through His Spirit, that man may have fellowship with his Creator, and it is essentially this that sets him apart from all the animals. Man’s body is fundamentally no different chemically from either the animate or inanimate creation, though immensely superior in its degree of organization. Similarly, his “soul” — his consciousness, his intelligence, his feelings, his senses — is essentially the same as that of the animal, though again immensely superior in degree of organization.

But man’s spirit is unique among all creatures! This is the “image of God.”

This “image of God” in man has been marred by man’s fall into sin, but not obliterated (see Gen. 9:6; James 3:9). It can even now be restored through faith in Him who is both Son of God and Son of Man, who is perfectly the “image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3). Man’s spiritual nature, dead in trespasses and sins, can be renewed by the new birth (John 3:6; Eph. 4:23–24; Col. 3:10).

God’s Evaluation of Creation (Genesis 1:31–2:3)

The creation of man was the climax and conclusion of God’s creative acts. Man was to “fill” (not “replenish,” which is an incorrect translation of the Hebrew verb) the earth and “subdue” it and to exercise dominion over all other creatures. Because of the Fall and the Curse, this dominion is not now exercised (Heb. 2:8) except in an incomplete and imperfect fashion. It will one day be restored. The prophecy of Isaiah 11:6–9, anticipating the glories of the millennium, pictures the ideal relations between man and the animal kingdom which must have existed before man’s fall.

Chapter 1 of Genesis really should extend through chapter 2:3, and possibly through the first part of verse 4. In this epilogue to the creation narrative are revealed two extremely important truths.

In the first place, we are told that “God saw *everything* that He had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:31). This is the seventh time in the chapter that God pronounced His creative works “good.” Thus, any evidences of disorder, of antagonisms, of suffering, of decay, of struggle, and above all, of death, which we now see in the present world or in the records of the past, cannot possibly be attributed to anything occurring during the six days of creation. Something happened *after* creation to bring these into the world. “*By man came death*” (1 Cor. 15:21). Thus, fossils of former living creatures, preserved in the rocks of the earth’s crust, could not have been buried either before or during the creation period.

In the second place, these three verses emphasize over and over again that God’s creation was completed. “The heavens and the earth were *finished* . . . God *ended* his work . . . he *rested* . . . in it he *had rested* from *all* his work which God *created and made*.”

It should be noted also that there is no ground for sharply distinguishing between God’s acts of “creating” and of “making.” Thus, He “created” great whales and every living creature (verse 21), but He “made” the beasts and cattle and creeping things (verse 25). Similarly, He “made” man in His own image (verse 26), but He also “created” man in His own image (verse 27). Though the two terms are not precisely synonymous, the emphasis throughout is on the work of God in “creating and making” all things (Gen. 2:3).

The “creative” acts of God were those by which materials and entities which had no prior existence at all were called into being when God “created” them. When God is said to have “made” something, on the other hand, the idea stressed is that He was raising the created material into a higher state of order and organization than it had before. The two terms, when describing acts of God, are otherwise essentially synonymous.

28 ~ The Beginning of the World

In any case, it is plainly stated that everything which God “*created and made*” was completed in the six days. The six days were thus days of both “creating” and “organizing,” and the processes which God used then are no longer in operation. The present order of things, which is the only system which science can study experimentally, is one of “conserving” and “disorganizing,” as enunciated by the first and second laws of thermodynamics, respectively.

Recognition of the necessity for creation of “apparent age” and of a “finished creation” will go far toward resolving the apparent conflict between the Bible account of creation and the supposed great age of the earth and the universe. Geologic and astronomic dating methods are necessarily based on rates of change in *present* physical processes. The *assumption* is made that the rate and the process have always been the same and that the entity being measured started from a beginning of “zero.” This permits a calculation of “apparent age,” but ignores the possibility that the apparent age may have been, at least in part, *created!* It also ignores the fact that these rates must conform to the two laws of thermodynamics; in fact, most of the rates used for dating purposes are actually rates of decay. They can, therefore, tell nothing about the events of creation, which were *completed* by creative processes rather than decay processes. Such calculations also ignore the fact that the assumption of uniformity in process rates is completely invalid in the light of the world-destroying Flood in the days of Noah, which we shall study later.

God’s present work (John 5:17) is that of *providence*, “upholding all things by the word of His power” (Heb. 1:3). These are the processes which scientists can study and which engineers can utilize in their efforts to “subdue the earth.” But God’s processes of “creating and making” have been terminated, and are thus completely inaccessible to scientific investigation and evaluation. This is confirmed by the law of energy conservation — the most important and certain of all scientific laws — which affirms that nothing is now being either created or annihilated. All so-called scientific theories of origins, if based

on extrapolation of present processes, that is, the assumption that present processes are a continuance of creation processes, are bound to be wrong. Only God can tell us the truth about the origin of the universe and its inhabitants, and this is exactly what He has done in this first, incomparable chapter of His Word! Men and women may refuse to believe it, preferring to believe in a naturalistic, humanistic concept of origins. That is *their* problem, and they will have to explain to God someday why they refused to believe the simple, plausible, scientifically reasonable statements in His Word.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the probable nature of the Genesis “kind” in relation to the modern “species” concept?
2. List some of the contradictions between the order of events in the Genesis record and the order of evolution in the geological “ages.”
3. Why can “day” in Genesis 1 not be translated “geological age”?
4. Discuss the implications of the “waters above the firmament.”
5. What is the difference between God’s works of “creation” and “providence”?
6. In what sense is God now “resting,” yet also now “working”?
7. Discuss the astronomical basis of the day, month, and year, in contrast to the lack of such basis for the week. Why is this important?