ORIGINS
Genesis 1-11
Universe: Origin of the Universe (Part 2)

James River Community Church
David Curfman

February – May 2013
Universe: Genesis 1:1-5 (Day One)

- How should we interpret Genesis Chapter 1?
- Does it matter?
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4uqstc3_pc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4uqstc3_pc)
- Meaning hinges on meanings of several words
Outline

1. Genesis 1-11 (Introduction)
2. Genesis 1:1-31 (Universe Part 1) – Big Bang Model
3. Genesis 1:1-5 (Universe Part 2) – Old and Young Earth Models
4. Genesis 1:3-12 (Earth) – Dating methods
5. Genesis 1:13-25 (Plants and Animals) – Evolution
6. Genesis 1:26-31 (Man – male and female)
7. Genesis 1:32-2:4a (Rest, the week, Sabbath)
9. Genesis 3-5:1a (Sin & Curse)
10. Genesis 5:1b-6:9a (Decay)
Universe: Objectives

- Examine Genesis 1:1-5 from three interpretations
  - Young earth
  - Old earth – Progressive Creation
  - Old earth – Gap Theory

- Understand the Hebrew words used in Genesis

- Understand the interpretation of those words in order to arrive at the two perspectives

- Impacts on interpreting the rest of Scripture

- There will be no winner or loser today!
Universe: What do others say?

- ~150 AD – Referred to Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8 to support their views that the creation "days" in Genesis 1 were not 24 hours long, but a "thousand years" in duration.
  - Justin Martyr (c 100-166) and Irenaeus (c AD 130-200)

- ~200 AD – Believed that the creation "days" spoken of in Genesis were not literal 24 hour days as we know them. In his view, the purpose of using the six days was to communicate the order and priority of creation - not the time frames involved.
  - Clement of Alexandria (c AD 150-220)

- ~250 AD – Taught that in approaching certain sections of scripture we should seek a spiritual meaning at times, and not always a literal one. In the case of Genesis 1, he claims that "days" as we know them did not exist until the "fourth day" of Genesis 1. Thus the first three "days" of Genesis could not possibly have been 24 hour "days".
  - Origen (c AD 185-254)

- ~400 AD – In his work, "The City of God," he states, "What kind of days these were is extremely difficult, or perhaps impossible for us to conceive." In his work "The Literal Meaning of Genesis", he adds: "But at least we know that it [the Genesis creation "day"] is different from the ordinary day with which we are familiar.
  - St. Augustine, (c AD 354-430)
Universe: What do others say?

- ~1525 AD – “We know from Moses that the world was not in existence before 6,000 years ago….He [Moses] calls 'a spade a spade,' i.e., he employs the terms 'day' and 'evening' without allegory, just as we customarily do when we assert that Moses spoke in the literal sense, not allegorically or figuratively, i.e., that the world, with all its creatures, was created within six days, as the words read. If we do not comprehend the reason for this, let us remain pupils and leave the job of teacher to the Holy Spirit.”
  - Martin Luther (1483-1546)

- ~1550 AD – “They will not refrain from guffaws when they are informed that but little more than five thousand years have passed since the creation of the universe.’ God created in six consecutive normal days:‘Here the error of those is manifestly refuted, who maintain that the world was made in a moment. For it is too violent a cavil to contend that Moses distributes the work which God perfected at once into six days, for the mere purpose of conveying instruction. Let us rather conclude that God himself took the space of six days, for the purpose of accommodating his works to the capacity of men.I have said above that six days were employed in the formation of the world; not that God, to whom one moment is as a thousand years, had need of this succession of time, but that he might engage us in the contemplation of his works.’
  - John Calvin (1509-1564)
Universe: What do others say?

~1925 AD – “Anyone who is at all familiar with the Bible and the way the Bible uses words, knows that the use of the word ‘day’ is not limited to twenty-four hours. It is frequently used to denote a period of entirely undefined length.... There is no necessity whatsoever for interpreting the days of Genesis 1 as solar days of twenty-four hours length.”

  ◦ R.A Torrey (1856-1928)

~1990 AD – “[Young earth] creationists insist that the days cover a literal 24 hours, but this is not necessarily the case. Sometimes the word ‘day’ is used with a broader meaning... it can mean a period of indefinite duration. Any view that makes the earth 12 to 20 thousand years old flies in the face of too much varied and independent evidence to be tenable. In my judgment the earth and universe are indeed billions of years old.”

  ◦ James Montgomery Boice - Chairman of Int. Council of Biblical Inerrancy.

~2010 AD – “Look, I know that people will probably try to lynch me when I say this, but Bishop [James] Ussher wasn't inspired by the Lord when he said that it all took 6,000 years. It just didn't. You go back in time, you've got radiocarbon dating. You got all these things and you've got the carcasses of dinosaurs frozen in time out in the Dakotas. They're out there. So, there was a time when these giant reptiles were on the Earth and it was before the time of the Bible. So, don't try and cover it up and make like everything was 6,000 years. That's not the Bible.”

  ◦ Pat Robertson – Founder CBN
Universe: What do others say?

- ~1954 AD – A few years before the re-emergence of the Young Earth theory eclipsed Gap creationism, he wrote "The gap theory has become the standard interpretation throughout hyper-orthodoxy, appearing in an endless stream of books, booklets, Bible studies, and periodical articles. In fact, it has become so sacrosanct with some that to question it is equivalent to tampering with Sacred Scripture or to manifest modernistic leanings“  
  ◦ **Bernard Ramm (1954)** - influential evangelical theologian in *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*

- ~1975 AD – “What does “day” mean in the days of creation? The answer must be held with some openness. In Genesis 5:2 we read: "Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created." As it is clear that Adam and Eve were not created simultaneously, day in Genesis 5:2 does not mean a period of twenty-four hours. In other places in the Old Testament the Hebrew word day refers to an era, just as it often does in English. See, for example, Isaiah 2:11, 12 and 17 for such a usage. The simple fact is that day in Hebrew (just as in English) is used in three separate senses: to mean (1) twenty-four hours, (2) the period of light during the twenty-four hours, and (3) an indeterminate period of time. Therefore, we must leave open the exact length of time indicated by day in Genesis.  
  ◦ **Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984)**

Universe: What do others say?

- ~2000 AD – “Everything Scripture teaches about sin and redemption assumes the literal truth of the first three chapters of Genesis. If we wobble to any degree on the truth of this passage, we undermine the very foundations of our faith….The amazing excellence revealed in the creative work of God is forfeited to a very large degree if we abandon the days of creation in favor of an ages-long evolutionary process….If the Lord wanted to teach us that creation took place in six literal days, how could He have stated it more plainly than Genesis does? The length of the days is defined by periods of day and night that are governed after day four by the sun and moon. The week itself defines the pattern of human labor and rest. The days are marked by the passage of morning and evening. How could these not signify the chronological progression of God's creative work?”
  - John MacArthur

- ~2000 AD – “For most of my teaching career, I considered the framework hypothesis to be a possibility. But I have now changed my mind. I now hold to a literal six-day creation…Genesis says that God created the universe and everything in it in six twenty-four-hour periods. According to the Reformation hermeneutic, the first option is to follow the plain sense of the text. One must do a great deal of hermeneutical gymnastics to escape the plain meaning of Genesis 1–2.”
  - R.C. Sproul
Universe: What do denominations say?

- “It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create or make of nothing the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.”
  - Westminster Confession of Faith (1646)

- “Whereas, the dogma of "Creationism" and "Creation-science" ... has been discredited by scientific and theological studies and rejected in the statements of many church leaders; ... [T]he ... Convention affirms the glorious ability of God to create in any manner, whether men understand it or not, and in this affirmation reject the limited insight and rigid dogmatism of the "Creationist" movement...”
  - Episcopal church

- “Thus, with that concreteness which is characteristic of physical proofs, [science] has confirmed the contingency of the universe and also the well-founded deduction as to the epoch when the world came forth from the hands of the Creator. Hence, creation took place. We say: therefore, there is a Creator. Therefore, God exists!”
  - Pope John Paul II (1996)

- “But here’s what I really think about the theory of evolution: It’s not real. It is not the way we got here. In fact, the life you see on this planet is really just a list of creatures God has allowed to live. We are not creations of random chance. We are not accidents. There is a God, a Creator, who made you and me. We were made in His image, which separates us from all other creatures.”
  - Chuck Norris (2010)
Universe: Young Earth Interpretation

- Genesis 1 is a literal, historical record of the creation activities.
- Asserts these creative acts occurred in chronological fashion over the space of six, 24 hour "days", followed by a "Sabbath" (24 hours).
- Genesis 1 cannot be reconciled with the current secular sequence of creation events. Is skeptical of scientific claims regarding age and distance measurements.
- Adam and Eve and all other living things were created "mature" by God.
- Earth – 6000 to 10,000 years old.
- Death – All living creatures subjected to death as a result of sin.
- Flood – Global.
- Satan, angels, demons – Created after creation week, but before "the fall".
- Dinosaurs - Existed with Adam and Eve up to and potentially past the flood.
Universe: Young Earth Interpretation
Universe: Progressive Creation

- Genesis 1 is a literal, historical record.
- Interprets the Hebrew meaning of word for "day" as a space of time or age; therefore the 6 "days" of creation were 6 indeterminate periods of time (Ps 90:4). The 6 "days" are taken as sequential, but overlapping and perhaps merging into one another, perhaps aligning with the geologic ages. Hebrews 4 indicates God’s rest is on-going; i.e Day 7 has been at least 6000 years. (but notice no “evening and morning”)
- Interprets the creative activities of Genesis 1 from the vantage point of one standing on the earth viewing God's creative acts as they occur.
- Examines the claims of science, and asserts that Genesis 1 can in fact be reconciled with the current scientific dating and distance measurements.
- Earth and celestial bodies – Billions of years old; but evolution did not create life or species, God did it in “bursts” and by adaptation, i.e. microevolution vice macroevolution.
- Death – Man’s death (only) a result of sin, animals have died for centuries.
- Flood – Regional and not global.
- Satan, angels, demons – Created during first day or so of creation week.
- Dinosaurs – Existed 5th day but died off prior to 6th day.
Universe: Progressive Creation

The following creation timeline reflects an integrative approach to biblical interpretation known as "concordism", belief that the facts of nature, as discovered by scientific investigation, will be discernibly consistent with Scriptural statements about the natural realm. This interpretive approach, like any other, involves certain assumptions about both science and Scripture, and is (like any other human endeavor) subject to imperfection and imprecision. Typically the sequence of events is known with more precision than the timing of specific events in the creation scenario. As new evidence emerges, date estimates may be revised.

- **Day 1**: Stable water cycle established (~3.0-3.8 bya)
- **Day 2**: Earth forms (~4.5 bya)
- **Day 3**: Moon forms (~4.5 bya)
- **Day 4**: First fish and shelly invertebrates, Cambrian Explosion (Tommotian and Atdabanian periods) (~543 mya)
- **Day 5**: Vascular plant fossils (~425 mya), Oldest reptile fossil (~340 mya), Earliest terrestrial animal fossil (~346 mya)
- **Day 6**: Modern humans (~0.05 mya), Earliest mammal fossil (~125 mya), Oldest dinosaur fossil (~230 mya), Oldest reptile fossil (~340 mya)

In billions of years:
- **4.5** bya: Hadian
- **4.0** bya: Archaean
- **3.5** bya: Proterozoic
- **3.0** bya: Post-Precambrian
- **2.5** bya: Early Paleozoic
- **2.0** bya: Late Paleozoic
- **1.5** bya: Mesozoic
- **1.0** bya: Early Cenozoic
- **0.5** bya: Late Cenozoic

**~** = approximately
mya = millions of years ago
bya = billions of years ago

*** All dates are approximate, subject to change, and reflect the best established evidence.

©2008 Reasons To Believe. Author Cameron Slayden
Universe: Gap Theory Interpretation

- Genesis 1 is a literal, historical record,
- Asserts these creative acts occurred in chronological fashion over the space of six, 24 hour "days", followed by a 24 hour "Sabbath"
- Gap occurs in Genesis 1:1 between God's creation of the universe, Satan’s allowed to have residence on earth, and recreation as Spirit moves over waters.
- Asserts that Genesis 1 can be reconciled with the current scientific dating and distance measurements of earth and celestial bodies.
- Earth and celestial bodies – Billions of years old; but evolution did not create life or species. God did it literally as noted in Genesis.
- Death – Man’s death (only) a result of sin, animals have died for centuries. See 2 Pet 2:4: Angels sinned before Adam
- Flood – Regional and not global
- Satan, angels, and demons – Created and fell during Genesis 1:1. Lived on earth with Adam.
- Dinosaurs – Lived and died prior to Genesis 1:2
Gap Theory

**Genesis 1:1**
In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

**THE GAP?**
- Millions or billions of years
- Geologic ages
- Lucifer’s Flood

**Genesis 1:2**
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.
Introduction: Why is Genesis 1 important?

- The Bible claims to be truth.
- If the Bible does not represent truth, or if those opposed to the teachings of Christianity can show that the Bible includes errors, the claims of Christianity are impaired.
- If a group interprets the Bible in a manner different than that which the Hebrew text says, the truth claim of the Bible is impaired.
- For evangelism, the issue is clear. Non-believers who decide to explore the Bible and the claims of Christ will typically start with the first page of the Bible. If the opponents of Christianity can impugn the truthfulness of the Bible on the first page, the claims of Christ may never be seriously considered.
- Next week – the earth
References

- **Old earth**
  - Reasons to Believe – [http://www.reasons.org](http://www.reasons.org)
  - Old Earth Ministries – [http://www.oldearth.org](http://www.oldearth.org)
  - Sententias.org – [http://www.sententias.org](http://www.sententias.org)

- **Young earth**

- **Intelligent Design**
  - Discovery Institute – [http://www.discovery.org](http://www.discovery.org)