

## Study 5:

# Genesis 1, 2 & 7

## Biblical Creation: Part 2



Image Source:

• <http://www.netpagz.com/bryce/sistinechapel/CreationofAdam.jpg>

• [http://www.wga.hu/art/m/michelan/3sistina/2ceil\\_ve.jpg](http://www.wga.hu/art/m/michelan/3sistina/2ceil_ve.jpg)

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# An Old Earth Look at Genesis

- Genesis 1: The Creation Week
- Genesis 2: Adam and Eve
- Death and the Fall
- Noah's Flood
- Dinosaurs
- Much of this is from [www.answersincreation.org](http://www.answersincreation.org), a site that presents arguments for old earth creationism.

# Genesis 1:1

- “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
- References the creation of time, space and matter.
- Sounds a lot like the modern scientific view of the universe exploding from a space-time singularity.
- This verse may encompass the formation of the universe over billions of years.

# Genesis 1:2

- “The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.”
- Though vague, this verse implies that the earth was once covered with water.
- Interestingly, this coincides with modern theories about the early earth.
  - Early atmosphere was dominated by water vapor.
  - As the earth cooled later in its formation, this vapor fell to earth as rain forming huge oceans.
  - How formless the earth was at this point we don't really know, but since far less tectonic activity had occurred at this point, it is likely to have been much flatter and “less formed” than in Adam's day.

**Source:**

• [http://www.globalchange.umich.edu/globalchange1/current/lectures/first\\_billion\\_years/first\\_billion\\_years.html](http://www.globalchange.umich.edu/globalchange1/current/lectures/first_billion_years/first_billion_years.html)

# Genesis 1:3-5 - Day 1

- “Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 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.”
- Although an old-earth model of creation would clearly have the sun and light existing long before this point, this may refer to the time when the early atmosphere cleared enough to let light be visible on the surface of the earth.
- As discussed earlier, old-earth creationists understand the “days” of creation to refer to periods of time, or epochs, which may detail a sequence of events whose beginnings and ends may overlap somewhat.
- The context here, however, does seem to favor a translation of *yom* as the 24-hour period of time between each rotation of the earth.

# Genesis 1:6-8 - Day 2

- “Then God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.”
- Here we see continuing changes in the atmosphere, which coincides with scientific theories.
- The separation of the waters may refer to the formation of clouds in the atmosphere.
- Again, the old earth understanding of “evening and morning, a second day” is that this refers to the beginning and end of a period of time, or phase, in the earth’s construction.

# Genesis 1:9-10 – Day 3a

- “Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good.”
- This probably refers to the tectonic activities that produced earth’s continents and mountains.
- This gradual process continues today, but this probably refers to the period in the earth’s history where most of this occurred.

# Genesis 1:11-13 – Day 3b

- “Then God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them"; and it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good. There was evening and there was morning, a third day.”
- Obviously, we see here the emergence of plant life. However, vegetation such as trees and flowers do not appear in the fossil record until after certain animals had existed for some time. Does this present a contradiction?
- Not if we view the days of creation as overlapping. Simple plant life such as algae is in fact among the first forms of life that appears in the fossil record, appearing before animals. Thus, the Bible is correct that plants appeared before animals.
- Since more advanced plants appeared during later periods of creation, we'd have to conclude that this day of creation ends sometime during a later period.

# Genesis 1:14-19 – Day 4

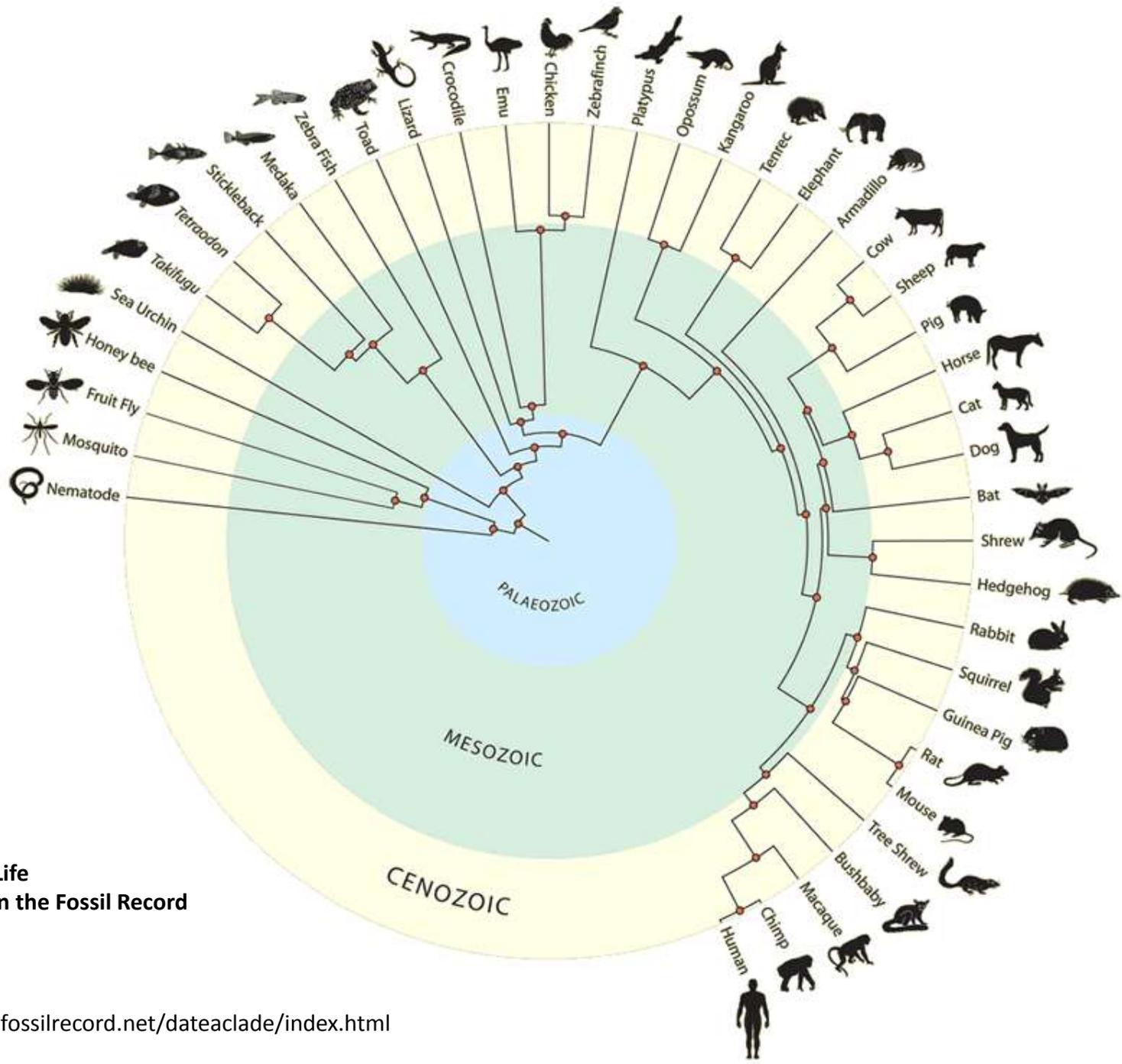
- “Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also. God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.”
- Initially, this day seems very out of place amid the others. However, when you really think about what physical event it may be referring to, it actually fits perfectly with scientific theories.
- As in day 1 when light appears, this probably doesn't refer to the actual creation of the sun, moon and stars. Instead, it likely refers to when these heavenly bodies were discernable as specific objects from the viewpoint of earth's surface.

# Genesis 1:14-19 – Day 4 Continued

- In a 2006 Reuters article, Dr. Margaret Tolbert of the University of Colorado explains an interesting theory regarding what happened to the earth's atmosphere after the first appearance of life (day 3).
- The theory suggests that a haze of organic aerosol particles “may have been a dominant feature of Earth's early atmospheric landscape from about the time of the first evidence of life 3.6 billion years ago until the rise of the oxygen content about 2.3 billion years ago.”
- Additionally, “the thick haze not only may have nourished organisms, but may have protected them from harmful ultraviolet rays.”
- Scientists generally agree that photosynthesis by the algae that first appeared on earth was responsible for transforming the atmosphere from being inhospitable and hazy to clear and rich in life-supporting oxygen.
- Thus, day 4 may very well refer to the time when the atmosphere became transparent enough to actually see stars at night and to discern the sun as a actual object as opposed to an indistinct glow in the sky.

Source:

•<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15594659/>



**Tree of Life  
Based on the Fossil Record**

Source:  
 •<http://www.fossilrecord.net/date/clade/index.html>

# Genesis 1:20-23 – Day 5

- “Then God said, "Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens." God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." There was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.”
- The appearance of fish at this point in the sequence agrees with the fossil record. But the fossil record shows birds appearing at roughly the same time as mammals. And reptiles appear much earlier than birds, and they don't seem to be mentioned here.
- However, this verse doesn't say there weren't land creatures yet, it just focuses on birds and fish. It's possible that the creation of reptiles and insects are not explicitly mentioned in the creation account. Or, even if they are included in day 6, there's no problem if we see the days as overlapping. Fish do generally precede land creatures, so this day should begin before day 6. It just doesn't end until partway into the next.

# Genesis 1:24-31 – Day 6

“Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind"; and it was so. God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food"; and it was so. God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.”

# Genesis 1:24-31 – Day 6 Continued

- Finally, God creates land animals. As we said before, this probably began somewhere in the middle of day 5, but either way, it correctly places mammals at the end of the creation account. Additionally, we see mankind as the very last creation, which agrees with the fossil record.
- The mention of plants being given as food for all animals is interesting in that it implies that everything was initially a vegetarian. However, this would contradict the design of carnivores teeth and the obvious role that the food chain plays in our ecosystem. Additionally, this verse doesn't say that animals didn't eat meat, just that plants were available to all for food.
- Perhaps there were no carnivores in the garden of Eden where Adam first lived. Either way, this verse does imply that Adam was commanded to eat only plants.

# Genesis 2

- Unlike Genesis 1, the focus of Genesis 2 is not on creation but on mankind's beginning. Thus, while Genesis 1 is a sequential play-by-play of creation, Genesis 2 appears to be focused not on when each creation event occurred, but on why.
- Thus, the specific ordering of Genesis 2 may have been determined by the significance of each event, not on the actual chronology.
- Also interesting is that the word “created” is used when referring to the heavens and earth, but man and animals were “formed.” This seems to imply that the universe was made out of nothing while animals were formed from already existing material (amino acids, for example).

# Death and the Fall

- Some Christians believe that there was no death before Adam sinned, which would clearly contradict an old earth understanding of creation.
- But the Bible doesn't say that animals didn't die prior to the fall, just that death was foreign to Adam and Eve and that Adam's sin condemned humanity to eventual death.
- Romans 5:12: "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to *all men*."
- Additionally, most Christians would agree that sin is a concept that applies uniquely to humans, not to animals. Thus, this idea of death coming as a consequence of sin would not necessarily apply to animals.

# Genesis 7: 11-23 - Noah's Flood

“In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened. The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. On the very same day Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark, they and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, all sorts of birds. So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life. Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the LORD closed it behind him. Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days, and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth. The water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered. The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered. All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind; of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died. Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark.”

# Noah's Flood: Answer for Old-Earth Evidence?

- Although this is not a strictly young-earth vs. old-earth issue, it has been used by young-earth creationists to explain natural features such as the Grand Canyon, mountain building and the arrangement of fossils in the earth's crust.
- A look at the facts, however, shows these to be rather weak arguments.
  - A sudden upheaval in the form of a flood could certainly leave a wide distribution of fossils, but does not explain the sequential ordering in the crust or the clearly gradual layering of sediment deposited according to its age.
  - Also, features such as the Grand Canyon show evidence of gradual erosion taking place in small amounts over a great period of time, interspersed by deposition of sediment. It is hard to imagine how this evidence could come from a massive gouge in a span of weeks which would have done this in two big steps, rather than countless small ones.
- For these reasons, the old-earth perspective is not threatened by the concept of a worldwide flood.

# Noah's Flood: Really Global?

- There are a number of difficulties with the idea that Noah's flood really was a worldwide event.
  - There isn't enough water on earth or in the atmosphere to cover the entire earth and its highest mountains. Perhaps there were repositories deep underground that God caused to spring up, then drain away. Plausible, perhaps, if it was the only difficulty.
  - Migration of animals such as penguins and kangaroos is another unanswered question about the flood. How would these creatures, which are clearly not suited for the Mediterranean climate, have traveled to Noah and then disperse back to their appropriate climates? Did the Koalas swim from Australia and back? And after the flood, how would the surviving carnivores find food without driving their fellow survivors to extinction in a matter of weeks?
- These make a pretty strong practical argument against a worldwide flood. Could God have transported the animals to the ark and back by supernatural means? Of course. But is this explanation necessary, or might the Bible actually be describing a local flood?

# Noah's Flood: *Erets*

- The question of whether Genesis describes a worldwide or more limited deluge again comes down to the translation of a Hebrew word.
- *Erets*, like *yowm*, has a very general meaning that according to the Theological Word Book of the Old Testament has a number of possible meanings:
  - World
  - Earth
  - Land
  - Territory
  - Region
- If *erets* doesn't have to mean the entire earth, where do we get the idea that the flood was global?

# Noah's Flood: Perspective

- The flood account is based on the witness of Noah and his family and thus is from their perspective.
- Noah describes it as covering all the dry land in sight, which certainly describes a huge event that was supernatural in its timing and magnitude.
- But did they actually sail to Everest to see that the water was above it?
- Additionally, early mankind had a very limited understanding of the size and scope of the earth. So even if *erets* was intended to mean the whole world, to Noah that meant much less than the globe.

# Noah's Flood: Was a Local Flood Enough?

- Genesis 6 tells us that God's motivation for sending the flood was the wickedness of mankind. The purpose of the flood was to restart the human race with Noah's family. Thus, it needed to kill all men.
- For an old-earth perspective where animals had existed long before man, a local flood would not wipe out all animal life on earth. It could, however, wipe out all of man since the human race was young and had not had time or reason to disperse very widely.
- This does cause some difficulty with certain passages that imply all life not in the ark was to be destroyed. But what about sea creatures, especially whales? Do we understand these to be included in Genesis 7:4: "I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made?"
- A local flood solves the practical difficulties with a global one.
  - Noah would have still needed to bring animals with him on the ark to repopulate the devastated region.
  - Eventually animals from surrounding areas would have made their way back, but depending on the size of the flood, this could have taken years.

# Noah's Flood: God's Promise Broken?

- One final question: does a local flood imply that God has broken his promise every time another flood occurs?
- Genesis 9:11: “And I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.”
- Subsequent local floods have not come close to the severity of the Biblical deluge: no other flood has restarted the human race.
- Interestingly, the prior verse (Genesis 9:10) says:
  - “And with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth.”

# Dinosaurs

- Old-earth explanation: they, along with many other long-extinct life forms, died a long time ago. They served God's purpose and were allowed to die out.
- How this happened is a topic for another discussion, although changes in the atmosphere may have made life very difficult for such large reptiles with seemingly disproportionate lung capacity. Or God just wiped them out in order to give mammals a fighting chance at survival.
- As for apparent references to dinosaurs from ancient history and the book of Job, these may be legends based upon fossils that early man had found which no living thing resembled, so their imagination was allowed to run wild (i.e. dragons).

# Conclusion

- Does the Bible support the old-earth explanation?
  - An old-earth understanding of the context and text of Genesis, as well as the sequence of the days of creation, does seem very much in accord with the fossil record.
  - Still, this view may be difficult for some to accept due to its divergence from tradition.
- Was the flood really local?
  - This may be a reasonable conclusion based on the evidence and context of Genesis 6-8, although it does require a somewhat liberal interpretation of certain verses.
- Ultimately, we will never know any of this for sure until we get to ask God in heaven. That's why faith is so important.
  - But hopefully these arguments have at least shown that our faith is not so obviously incompatible with natural evidence as critics claim.
  - There are at least plausible answers to the challenges that naturalists pose regarding the Biblical accounts of creation and the flood.