

In The Beginning

There are few passages of Scripture that are attacked or doubted more than Genesis 1-3. A great many Christians today have rejected them altogether. I believe that this is a terrible tragedy, because the doctrine of salvation is built upon these first three chapters. If we abandon them to the cries of an unbelieving world then we are left with nothing.

One key fact that we must keep in mind is that the Scriptures are always correct. The Bible is not true because science validates it; the Bible is true because it was written by God and therefore cannot be wrong. If we want to know the truth we must always start with the Bible. Science can be wrong (and often is) but the Bible is never wrong. It is our foundation.

In Genesis 1 we find the account of the creation of the world – an act that took place over six days. The days of creation are:

Day 1: On the first day of creation God creates the light and divides it from the darkness:

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

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.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the **first day**.”

As we can see, God names the light “Day” and the darkness “Night”. A few points:

- God creates things and then names them, signifying His ownership of them. This will be a common, repeated theme.
- In verse 5 we are told that “the evening and the morning were the first day”. In the Jewish calendar a day consists of an evening and a morning; Genesis 1 is the reason behind this.
- The “evening and morning” theme is repeated for each of the six days of creation. God seems to be going out of His way to emphasize the fact that these are normal days, with one evening and one morning each – not incredibly long periods of time. God could have said “and all this happened over an incredibly long period of time”, but He did not.
- Note that God created Day and Night before creating the sun, moon, and stars (which were not created until day four).
- Also, note that God creates things simply by His Word – He said it, and it happened. If we want to make something we have to form it using whatever materials are available. God, however, needs no raw materials; He can simply speak and it is so. This is far beyond anything that man can do.

Day 2: On the second day of creation God creates the sky:

Genesis 1:6: “And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the **second day.**”

Here we see that God creates a “firmament in the midst of the waters”, which He names “Heaven”. Some of these waters are gathered under the firmament and become Seas in verse 10. The waters above the firmament are not mentioned again in this chapter. What this verse is saying is that God created the sky to separate the water under the sky from the water *above* the sky.

But just where is this ocean that is above the sky? This verse has puzzled a great many people over the years. I have a theory about what is going on, but since it is rather complicated I will not explain it here. You can find the theory in Appendix D – The Ocean in the Sky.

Day 3: On the third day of creation God separates the dry land from the water:

Genesis 1:9: “And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

13 And the evening and the morning were the **third day.**”

God names the dry land “Earth” and the gathering of water “Seas”. God then commands the dry land to bring forth plants.

It is interesting to note that God commands the plants to bring forth “after his kind”. There is no hint that the plants are supposed to evolve into other creatures, as evolution proposes. Each creature that God creates was commanded to reproduce after their own kind. That pretty much shuts the door on the idea that God used evolution to create the world.

Also, note that at this point God has still not created the sun, moon, or stars.

Day 4: On the fourth day of creation God creates the sun, the moon, and the stars:

Genesis 1:14: “And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for

days, and years:

15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

19 And the evening and the morning were the **fourth day**.

A few points:

- God gives His purpose for creating these celestial objects: they are to “divide the day from the night”, and they are to be for signs, seasons, days, and years. All of these functions are used to denote the concept of time – hours, days, seasons, and years. The Lord established the calendar – He instituted the day, the week, the year, and seasons. The idea of using celestial objects to chart the passage of time is established here. (It's worth noting that the Jews used a lunar calendar.)
- The Egyptians and Babylonians divided a day into 12 parts, since there were 12 lunar cycles in a year. This was later changed into 12 hours of the day and 12 hours of the night. Older cultures probably had their own way of dividing the day into smaller increments, but not much is known about them.
- The idea of dividing an hour into 60 parts and dividing those parts further into 60 parts came from the Sumerians, whose number system was sexagesimal (base 60 – or, as some have said, alternating base 10 and base 6). Some have speculated that they used a base 6 number system because they had 6 fingers on each hand.
- Verse 17 explicitly says that the Lord created the stars of the heavens, with all of their galaxies and heavenly bodies, for the express purpose of *giving light to the earth*. This planet is not one lonely sphere lost in a vast universe; the rest of the universe was created *for this planet*. It is the Earth that is special; the rest of the universe is actually there to act as a light source. This is an awesome example of the character of God: the Lord decided that Earth needed some light, and so created an *entire universe*, filled with a mind-boggling number of galaxies (*125 billion* according to recent estimates), to act as a *light source*. That is the power of God. When the Bible says that the Lord “is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20), it's not kidding. The creation of the stars in space (10^{21} , by a recent estimate) is a mind-boggling array of power, but in Genesis 1 it is tossed in almost as an aside - “he made the stars also” (1:16). So when you are praying to the Lord, never forget His awesome extravagance and power – He is the one that decided the best way to light the Earth was to create *125 billion stellar galaxies*. And all of that was created in *one day*. God is not a stingy God.
- How, exactly, did the light from all of those distant stars get to Earth? We can see galaxies that are billions of light-years away, but the Earth is only 6000 years old. How is that possible?

Some have theorized that God created light already en-route to Earth. The problem with this is that light contains information – it shows things that have happened. If starlight was “pre-created” then we would be seeing things that never actually took place. The light would

essentially be lying to us, bearing record of a nonexistent past. Given the character of God, it is unlikely that He would do such a thing.

Others have theorized that the speed of light was much, much faster in the past. The problem with this theory is that the speed of light impacts the physical nature of the universe – it changes other constants of nature. (This can most easily be seen in the famous equation $E=mc^2$, or energy = mass times the speed of light squared; if you change the speed of light you change the amount of energy in mass, which impacts all sorts of things.) A changing speed of light would create all kinds of problems.

Still others have theorized that the Earth is in a “gravity well” and that time flows at a very different rate here than it does in the rest of the universe. It may be that while only a small amount of time is passing in the Solar System, incredibly long amounts of time are passing in deep space. (If this is true, it would mean that while Creation occurred 6000 years ago, billions of years could have passed in space – because time is flowing much faster in space than it is here.) Here is one explanation of how this idea would work:

Suppose that our solar system is located near the center of a finite distribution of galaxies. Although this cannot be proven for certain at present, it is fully consistent with the evidence; so it is a reasonable possibility.

In that case, the earth would be in a gravitational well. This term means that it would require energy to pull something away from our position into deeper space. In this gravitational well, we would not “feel” any extra gravity, nonetheless time would flow more slowly on earth (or anywhere in our solar system) than in other places of the universe. This effect is thought to be very small today; however, it may have been much stronger in the past. (If the universe is expanding as most astronomers believe, then physics demands that such effects would have been stronger when the universe was smaller). This being the case, clocks on earth would have ticked much more slowly than clocks in deep space. Thus, light from the most distant galaxies would arrive on earth in only a few thousand years as measured by clocks on earth. This idea is certainly intriguing. And although there are still a number of mathematical details that need to be worked out, the premise certainly is reasonable. Some creation scientists are actively researching this idea.

Day 5: On the fifth day of creation God commands the waters to bring forth aquatic animals and birds:

Genesis 1:20: “And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

23 And the evening and the morning were the **fifth day.**”

Once again, notice that these creatures (and the land animals the next day) are commanded to reproduce after their own kind – the Lord did not command them to turn into entirely different creatures. There is no hint in Genesis 1 that the Lord created a simple creature and used it to evolve more complicated creatures. Instead, each animal was to reproduce “after its own kind”.

Day 6: On the sixth day of creation God commands the dry land to bring forth land animals:

Genesis 1:24: “And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding see; to you it shall be for meat.

30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behind, it was very good, And the evening and the morning were the **sixth day.**”

God then makes man.

- In verse 26 God says “Let us make man” – us being a plural word. This is a reference to the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- When the Lord creates man in his image, He was not referring to the physical form of the man but to the spiritual aspect – the immortal soul. We have a likeness to God that is not shared by any of the other creatures that God created on this planet.
- When mankind was created, God gave him dominion (authority) over every living thing on Earth. Mankind was instructed to fill the world, subdue it, and have dominion over it. In other words, God created this world and then gave it over to mankind to care for it. This command has never been revoked or changed. Mankind is not “just another animal”, as evolutionists would claim; we were created distinct from the animals, in the image of God, and were given authority over them. The race of men is not just another species of animals; we are something different altogether, created by God to serve Him by caring for the Earth.

- The word “replenish” in verse 28 does not mean to “repopulate”, as if the Earth had been populated at one time and then lost its inhabitants. When the King James Bible was translated that word meant simply to “populate”. It did not have the extra connotation that it has today.
- When men and animals were created they were only given plants as food. Men (and presumably animals) were not allowed to eat meat until after the Flood (Genesis 9:1-3). This means that originally all animals (including dinosaurs) were plant-eaters. In Isaiah the Lord tells us that one day the original order will be restored and animals will once again become vegetarians (Isaiah 11:7).

Now, there are additional things that happened on this day that are not recorded in chapter 1, but *are* recorded in chapter 2. Genesis chapter 2 does not take place after the creation week; it is simply a closer look at what happened on the sixth day of creation.

The way we know this is because Exodus clearly states that in *six* days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, and everything in them. That means that all of the creating that God did was done during those six days. He rested on the seventh day because *He was done*. God did not start creating more things on day eight. Everything was completed during those six days.

There's quite a bit going on in chapter 2. First of all, there is the **Garden of Eden**:

Genesis 2:8: “And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.”

When God created the garden He placed mankind inside it and changed him with dressing and keeping it:

Genesis 2:15: “And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”

The phrase “Garden of Eden” refers to a garden *within the land of Eden* – specifically, in the eastern part of that country. Once the Lord had planted this garden He placed Adam in it to take care of it. As you can see, the very first profession of mankind was actually gardening.

The garden was watered by a river that parted to become four other rivers: Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates. There is a modern river named Euphrates but it is not the same river that is mentioned here. The land of Eden, along with these rivers, was destroyed in the Flood. The people who lived after the Flood named some of the new rivers after the ones they remembered from the old world (just as in America, the city of “New York” was named after the old “York” in Great Britain). That is also why it is impossible to know where the garden of Eden was located – it could have been anywhere.

As a side-note, the word tenses in verses 10-14 are interesting. It is clear that when that passage was written those rivers were still in existence, since the writer is speaking in present tense, not past tense. Note that the writer comments that there *is* high-quality gold in Havilah, that a river “compasses the whole land of Ethiopia”, and so forth. It is very likely that the person who wrote those verses lived *before* the Flood and was an eyewitness to what the old world was like. In other words, what we have here is an eyewitness account of Eden.

One of the key centerpieces in the Garden was the **Tree of Life**:

Genesis 2:9: “And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is

pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.”

Within the garden the Lord created a great many trees - “every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food” (2:9). There were also two special trees: the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. As fantastic as it seems, these were real trees with real fruit. They seem like something out of a fairy tale but they really were real trees.

Adam was forbidden to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, but he was *not* forbidden to eat from the Tree of Life. The Lord later said that any man who ate of the Tree of Life would live forever (Genesis 3:22). When Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden the Lord did not destroy the Tree of Life; instead, cherubims and a flaming sword were sent to keep people away from the Tree.

The Tree of Life was not lost in the flood. Revelation tells us that this tree can be found in the New Jerusalem:

Revelation 22:2: “In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

The Lord has further promised that “him that overcometh” (which are all those who have put their trust in Christ – 1 John 5:5) will have the privilege of eating the fruit from this tree (and living forever):

Revelation 2:7: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

One day, we will not only see this legendary tree, but we will enjoy its fruit!

Of course, the Garden of Eden also contained another tree – the **Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil**. Mankind was strictly forbidden from eating of this tree:

Genesis 2:16: “And the Lord God commandeth the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

As we all know, this tree led to the Fall of mankind.

As a side-note, in Genesis 1 the Lord said that mankind could eat of any tree, but in Genesis 2 the Lord makes an exception to this rule. This exception was not mentioned in chapter 1 because that tree was not yet in existence.

Something else we find in Genesis 2 is the **naming of the animals**:

Genesis 2:19: “And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air: and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. 20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast

of the field; but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him.”

The first recorded act of Adam was to name the animals. In the Bible, naming something is an act of authority; if you name something then you are exercising dominion over it. God sometimes changed people's names – for example, He changed Abram's name to Abraham. In this case the Lord is having Adam exercise his dominion over the animal kingdom by naming the animals.

It is worth noting that from the very beginning Adam was a fully-formed adult with the full use of his senses. He was capable of language and analysis from day one. Language did not evolve over millions of years; mankind was created with the ability to communicate.

Last but not least, we also find the account of the creation of Eve:

Genesis 2:21: “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;
22 And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.
23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

In Genesis 2:18 the Lord says that “it is not good that the man should be alone”. To solve this problem the Lord took a rib from Adam and created the first Woman: Eve.

It should be noted that Eve was not a “helpmeet”, as people today like to say. What the Lord said is that He would make “a help meet for him”. The word “meet” here means “suitable”. The Lord is saying that He will make someone for Adam that is well-suited to being his companion.

Also, Adam did not permanently lose a rib as a result of this operation. Ribs are unique in that if they are removed they have the ability to grow back.

Day 7: After God finished creating the world, He rested:

Genesis 2:1: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.
2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.
3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”

Q. Could Genesis 1 be recounting the creation of creatures on a planet that already existed?

A. Some people have theorized that God created the Earth long before Genesis 1 and populated it with another race of beings. A number of terrible things then happen and the planet was all but destroyed. They claim that Genesis 1 is the account of God populating the Earth for the *second* time. As evidence, they point out that in Genesis 1:1 the Earth is already there; the account of its creation is never given in the chapter.

This theory sounds interesting but it is wrong. Exodus 20 disproves it:

Exodus 20:11: “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

Notice what God claims to have created in just *six days*:

1. Heaven and Earth
2. The sea
3. Everything in heaven and earth, and everything in the sea

In other words, in those six days God created *the Earth itself* along with all the creatures that it contains. God did not use a pre-existing planet; instead He actually created the planet itself during the creation week. If God was just populating an already-existing planet He could have said “For in six days the Lord made everything in the heaven and the earth” – but *that is not what God said*. God included “heaven and earth” in the list of things that He formed during the creation week.

It is also instructive to note that the Hebrew words for “heaven and earth” in Exodus 20:11 are the same words that are used for heaven and earth in Genesis 1:1. The entire universe was created during those six days.

Q. Do Genesis chapters 1 and 2 contradict each other?

A. There are some people who claim that the first two chapters of Genesis contradict each other. For example:

Problem #1: Were plants created before man, or was man created before plants?

First, notice what Genesis 2:4 states:

Genesis 2:4: “These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens,
5 And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. ...

7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

In Genesis 1 God creates plants on day three (1:11) and man on day 6 (1:26). However, Genesis 2:7 talks about God forming man out of the ground *before* “every herb of the field” had grown. How is this possible?

The answer is actually very simple. God did indeed created plants before man. However, notice the phrase “herb of the field”. The word “field” here refers to *cultivated fields*, as opposed to normal ground. When God created man there were no cultivated fields because there *were no men around to cultivate them*. It is as simple as that. Cultivated fields didn't exist until after Adam was created.

Problem #2: Were birds created from the water or from the ground?

In Genesis 1:20 we are told that birds came from the Seas. However, Genesis 2:19 says this:

Genesis 2:19: “And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.”

What is going on here? Why does Genesis 1 state that the birds came from the water while Genesis 2 states that birds came from the air?

This is because these two passages are talking about *different events*. In Genesis 1 God created the birds and the aquatic animals from the water on the fifth day, and God created the land animals from the ground on the sixth day.

When it came time to name the animals, however, God did not round up animals that already existed. Instead, God formed new copies of them *right out of the ground and brought them to Adam*. (That is, after all, exactly what the verse says!) That is what Genesis 2 is talking about.

Problem #3: Can mankind eat from all trees or just some trees?

In Genesis 1:29 God gives mankind the right to eat from “every tree”, yet Genesis 2:17 says this:

Genesis 2:17: “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

What is the difference? Well, as was said earlier, when God spoke in Genesis 1:29 the Garden of Eden had not yet been planed and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil did not yet exist. When God planted the Garden and created that tree He instituted a new rule to cover it.

Q. Why would God create the tree of knowledge of good and evil?

A. The Bible does not give us an answer to this question but there are several possibilities. One theory is that the tree was created to demonstrate God's authority over Adam. By creating a tree and then denying mankind access to it, God was exercising His authority and right to rule. The presence of a forbidden tree was an ever-present reminder that mankind was subject to God.

The creation of the tree also offered a choice to mankind: they could now choose to obey or disobey God. If there were no commandments to break then disobedience would have been impossible.