The Genesis Creation Story - Four Main Theological Views

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The Bible creation story is comprised primarily of Genesis Chapters 1 and 2. Although there are other minor references to the creation narrative in scripture, Genesis Chapters 1 and 2 form the theological and historical basis of the biblical creation account. Within the past two hundred years, the Genesis creation narrative has increasingly become a major source of controversy within Judeo-Christian belief primarily due to scientific evidence that supports an old Earth and universe.

Some articles, commentaries, and books about the Genesis creation story treat it as just another creation myth. The Bible creation account is equated with other false or fanciful stories found in present-day African, Asian, Native American Indian, South American, and European cultures. From a historical perspective, some equate the Genesis creation narrative to ancient pagan mythology found in Sumerian, Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Canaanite creation stories.

The Genesis creation narrative, when correctly translated and explained, is truthful and trustworthy. It is a rational, believable story that supports God as creator of the heavens, Earth, and all therein. It supports the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible. The basis of this viewpoint is a new, conservative, word-for-word translation of Genesis Chapters 1 and 2 from the original Hebrew text as given in The Real Genesis Creation Story: A Credible Translation and Explanation at Last, Third Edition by J. Gene White. A corrected translation of Genesis forms the basis for a radically different explanation, internally consistent with scripture and externally consistent with firm scientific evidence.

The current English translation of Genesis Chapters 1 and 2 contains serious errors, with the primary problem being Chapter 1. Key words have been added, poorly translated, or mistranslated in all present-day orthodox English Bible translations. Current translations are tradition bound and theologically driven, rather than by sound translation practices. Linguistic evidence clearly indicates the creation story has been deliberately mistranslated to support traditional young-Earth creation theology, resulting in the current conflict with science regarding extensive time.

Internal Conflicts – Scriptural Issues

Theologians and biblical scholars have debated for years about the differences between Genesis Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. Critics and skeptics say they are two contradictory creation stories that irreconcilably conflict. Genesis Chapter 1 is considered the “creation story” while Chapter 2 is considered the “Adam and Eve story.” Critics, skeptics, and Bible believers all agree that the two chapters are radically different.
A number of criticisms have been raised about the traditional translation and interpretation of the Genesis creation account in regard to conflicts between Genesis Chapters 1 and 2.

1. **Plant life on early Earth.** In Genesis 1:11–12 God commands the Earth to bring forth grass, herbs, and fruit trees on the third day. In stark contrast, Genesis 2:5–6, describes the Earth as barren, dry, and without rain. Critics and skeptics say these are two contradictory creation stories.

2. **Creation of mankind.** In Genesis 1:27 God speaks and creates the first male and female (ostensibly from nothing). In contrast, Genesis 2:7 and 2:22 describe when God forms man (Adam) from the dust of the ground and builds woman (Eve) from Adam's rib. Critics and skeptics say these two creation stories contradict.

3. **Creation of animal life.** Genesis 1:21 and 25 describe events on the fifth and sixth days when God creates marine life and birds (ostensibly from nothing) and makes the land animals on the fifth and sixth days. In contrast, Genesis 2:19 describes when God forms animals and birds from the ground (from preexistent material). Critics and skeptics say these are two contradictory creation stories.

4. **Creative sequence for man and animals.** Genesis Chapter 1 describes the creation of marine life, birds, and land animals followed by man and woman on the sixth day. In contrast, Chapter 2 gives Adam as being created first, followed by birds and land animals and then Eve. Critics and skeptics say these two creation stories contradict.

### External Conflicts – Scientific Issues

Traditional Bible translations of the Genesis creation narrative irreconcilably conflict with firm scientific evidence regarding Earth’s history. Many Christian leaders claim the Bible and science do not conflict; however, they have failed to explain areas where they appear to conflict. There appear to be clear areas of disagreement between the two.

In regard to origins, the acceptance of firm scientific evidence does not require the acceptance of speculative “scientific” theories of naturalistic evolution. The Bible will always conflict with the belief that natural cause provides an all-encompassing explanation of origins. The Bible clearly teaches an eternal, ageless, timeless, powerful creator God. Some of the perceived areas of conflict between the Bible and science include:

1. **The Bible and science disagree about the age of the Earth.** In regard to the Genesis creation story, the biggest perceived conflict is over the age of the heavens and Earth. Proponents of traditional young-Earth creation theology say that a straightforward reading of Genesis Chapter 1 and the chronologies of the Old Testament show the heavens, Earth, and its biosphere were created in the very recent past.

   A number of physical indicators discovered by scientists since 1800 show the heavens and Earth are significantly older than James Ussher’s 4004 BC creation date. Evidence accumulated during the past two hundred years in support of an old heavens and Earth is overwhelming and will never be overturned. This evidence includes:

   - The measured distance to stars, the speed of light, and the time taken for that light to reach Earth prove those stars are millions of years old. For example, the distance to stars 2.5 million light years from Earth have been measured using the inverse square method. Correspondingly, the light from those stars takes 2.5 million years to reach Earth. God would not falsify the data found in starlight.\(^1\)

   - Scientists have counted 8,956 impact craters on the moon over one kilometer in diameter, yet only 174 craters have been confirmed on Earth. Craters on both the moon and Earth were formed in proportionate numbers during the same period of time, yet essentially all Earth impact craters have disappeared. This illustrates the implausibility of a 6,000 year old moon and Earth system. If the Earth was only 6,000 years old, many craters would still exist. Noah’s flood cannot explain away the absence of meteorite craters.\(^2\)
• Ice cores from Greenland and Antarctica contain more than 100,000 annual ice layers and confirm the Earth is more than 100,000 years old. Abundant coal in Antarctica, in addition to animal and plant fossils, prove it had a warm climate before the temperature plunged and ice began accumulating more than 100,000 years ago.3
• The 6,000,000 oil shale laminae in the Green River Formation represent approximately six million years of time. Each laminate represents about one year of sediment accumulation.4
• Igneous rocks (rocks that were once completely molten) at several locations on Earth have been radiometrically dated to around 3.8 billion years old.5
• Tree-ring chronologies calibrated against carbon-14 decay go back 12,410 calendar years.6

2. The Bible and science disagree about a six-day creation. Traditional young-Earth creationists are adamant that God created the heavens and Earth during six literal, 24-hour days. God spoke and the heavens and Earth instantly came into existence. Genesis Chapter 1 and Psalm 33:6 and Psalm 148:5 are typically used to support this belief.

Scientific evidence strongly discredits creation of the entire universe within a six-day period. Evidence indicates that many stars and galaxies are of significantly different ages. Some are millions of years older than others. Fossil evidence indicates the abrupt appearance of different plants and animals on Earth, separated by significant intervals of time. For example, the Cambrian Explosion marks the sudden appearance of complex life around 540 million years ago, dinosaurs appeared around 230 million years ago, while anatomically modern man appears very recently in the fossil record.

3. The Bible and science disagree about the sequence for the appearance of life on Earth. In traditional translations of the creation story, Genesis 1:9–12 records where plants and fruit trees are created on the third day, while Genesis 1:20–21 gives marine life as being created on the fifth day. This disagrees with scientific evidence for the appearance of life on Earth. According to scientific evidence, life appeared first in the oceans and then on land. Initially, the Earth was entirely water covered and remained so for many millions of years until the continents were raised.

The oldest confirmed evidence indicates life first appeared on Earth around 3.5 billion years ago. Nora Noffke, Associate Professor, Old Dominion University, Virginia found the remnants of microscopic life that formed microbial mats in a water environment. She discovered microbial mat chips in sandstone rock 3.48 billion years old. Under a microscope, a series of individual black filaments intertwined with sand grains were observed characteristic of microbial mat structures. The black filaments had a lower ratio of carbon-13 to carbon-12, an effect that occurs when organisms discriminate against the carbon-13 isotope.9

God first created life in the ocean which began converting Earth's carbon dioxide rich atmosphere to one with sufficient oxygen capable of supporting air breathing animals. God created single-celled life capable of photosynthesis essential for this process.

4. The Bible and science disagree about the sequence of star formation in relation to Earth. In the traditional translation and interpretation of the Genesis creation narrative, the Earth is created first and then the sun and stars are created on the fourth day. Scientific evidence indicates stars existed in the heavens millions of years before the Earth was formed. Logically, God would have created the sun first to provide light and a large mass around which our planet could orbit. Sunlight is essential to sustain Earth's biosphere and its diverse plant and animal life.

Four Main Theological Views of the Genesis Creation Story

The orthodox belief of the church for the past two thousand years has been traditional young-Earth creation theology. According to this belief, the heavens and Earth are relatively young. Using the genealogies given in the Old Testament, Anglican Archbishop James Ussher (1581–1656) calculated a
widely accepted creation date of 4004 BC. During six days, God created the heavens, Earth, and all therein.

In the eighteenth century, scientists began to seriously dispute Ussher’s creation date as they discovered evidence to the contrary. Geologists came to realize that multilayered rock formations, fossilized remains, uplifted mountains, and severe erosion required extensive time to occur by natural means. As science continued to mature, more objective data became available. Scientists discovered evidence in starlight, Antarctic ice layers, lake sediment layers, isotope decay in igneous rocks, tree-ring chronologies, and carbon-14 decay in organic matter that strongly support extensive age and directly conflict with young-Earth creation theology.

The controversy over Genesis involves several issues. Time is a major problem, and the Genesis creation story is perceived to contradict with science in that regard. Secondly, the sequence of creative events in Genesis Chapter 1 is perceived to contradict with scientific evidence. A third major topic is the perceived contradictory nature of Genesis Chapters 1 and 2.

Various theological explanations of the Genesis creation narrative have been developed in an effort to resolve these problems. At present, four leading ideas have emerged for explaining Genesis: (1) traditional young-Earth creation theology, (2) gap theology, (3) day-age theology, and (4) literary interpretations with each having their strengths and weaknesses.

### Traditional Young-Earth Creation Theology

Traditional young-Earth creation theology is the oldest and most well-known explanation of biblical origins. Young-Earth theology proposes that the heavens, Earth, and its biosphere were created in six 24-hour days in the recent past around 4,000 BC. Henry Morris in *The Genesis Record* allows extending the creation date back to around 10,000 BC. Refuting Compromise by Jonathan Sarfati, PhD, gives a recent defense of traditional young-Earth creation theology. As Sarfati points out, this was the primary teaching of the church until 1800 and was accepted theology back to the time of Christ. This is not to say that everyone believed exactly the same, but most accepted God as creator of the Earth in the very recent past according to the Genesis creation story.

Some critics have attempted to show that young-Earth creation theology is a recent belief developed primarily by Seventh-day Adventist George McCrady Price, biblical scholar John C. Whitcomb, and hydraulic engineer Henry M. Morris. Although these men have been influential in the resurgence of young-Earth creation theology, as Sarfati clearly documents, this belief can be traced back to the New Testament period.

Young-Earth creation theology has been the traditional belief of the church for more than two thousand years. This theology is supported by a host of Bible translations and commentaries. However, many scientists, educators, and theologians regard this theology as anti-intellectual because of its conflict with the firm evidence of science regarding extensive time. Rejection of the traditional Christian creation story in Christian academia is quite common.

In a more positive tone, promoters of young-Earth creation theology have shown that Genesis clearly teaches God as creator of the heavens, Earth, and all therein. The six days of Genesis 1:3-31, bounded by evening and morning, are literal 24-hour days. God rested from his work on the Sabbath day.

**Strengths:**

1. In orthodox English translations, the literal, straightforward, first impression reading of Genesis Chapter 1 is that the heavens, Earth, and its biosphere (all biological life and required environments) were created in six 24-hour days.

2. The Hebrew word translated “day” in Genesis is *yom* (Strong’s 03117). When *yom* is used in the context of six consecutive, numbered, numerically increasing days—bounded by evening and morning—they are literal 24-hour days.
3. The Sabbath is codified in the Ten Commandments and defined in Exodus 20:8–11, Exodus 31:12–17, and Deut. 5:12–15 as a day of rest after six days of work. The Genesis creation account is used as an example. The work days in both instances are six literal days followed by a day of rest.

4. In orthodox English translations, the Old Testament genealogies of Genesis Chapters 5 and 11 appear to support a recent creation date. Anglican Archbishop James Ussher (1581–1656) calculated a widely accepted creation date of 4004 BC.

5. God is creator of the heavens and Earth. Proponents do not view naturalistic evolution as a significant constructive mechanism.

6. Proponents of young-Earth creation theology steadfastly believe in the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible. The Bible is our only religious authority and the clear teaching of scripture must not be compromised.

7. Leading advocates of young-Earth creation theology recognize the importance of the Genesis creation account and its influence on accepting the remainder of the Bible as true. They understand the significance of biblical origins.

Objections:

1. Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 are not easily integrated into the rigid six-day time frame of Genesis 1:3–31. These two verses are problematic.

2. The term “heaven” is treated as metaphorical in Genesis 1:1. As explained by Henry Morris, heaven is equivalent to “space.” Initially space was empty until the fourth day.

3. The term “earth” is treated as metaphorical in Genesis 1:1–2. As Morris explains, earth does not refer to a physical planet but to the “component matter of the universe” or “basic matter.

4. The term “deep” is treated as metaphorical in Genesis 1:2 and refers to “the basic material elements sustained in a pervasive watery matrix throughout the darkness of space.” Morris says, “Elements of matter and molecules of water were present, but not yet energized.”

5. The phrase “face [surface] of the waters” is treated as metaphorical in Genesis 1:2 and explained as “The formless waters, like the formless earth, were essentially a ‘presence’ rather than a cohesive body.

6. Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 are treated as highly metaphorical and not a literal, straightforward reading of the text.

7. Genesis 1:1, 1:2, and 1:3 have little or no chronological significance.

8. Within the six days of Genesis 1:3–31, no specific mention is made of God creating the Earth as a planet.

9. When God speaks in the “command” verses of Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14–15, 20, and 24, no good explanation is given for the absent dynamic verbs “create, make, form, and build.”

10. No good explanation is given for repetitive “creation commands” on the second, fourth, fifth, and sixth days in Genesis 1:6–7, 14–17, 20–21, and 24–25.

11. Creation of the sun on the fourth day is completely out of sequence. Logically, God would have created the Sun on the first day to provide light and a large mass around which our planet could orbit. The creation of a temporary light for the first four days, and then its removal, is complete speculation.

12. The sequence of creating land plants in Genesis 1:9–12 followed by marine life in Genesis 1:20–21 disagrees with scientific evidence for the appearance of life on Earth. Life first appeared in the oceans and then on land.
13. Within the last two hundred years scientists have discovered significant evidence supporting an old age for the heavens, Earth, and its biosphere—much older than a 4004 BC creation date. Evidence of significant time has accumulated to the point it will never be overturned. Ignoring this evidence is not a viable option.

14. Apparent age (the idea that God created things with an appearance of old age, even though they are quite young) cannot legitimately be used to explain away evidence of significant time. This argument makes God a great deceiver and places Bible believers in an indefensible intellectual position.

15. Fossil evidence conclusively proves that animals lived and died before the appearance of mankind on Earth. This contradicts belief that no animal death occurred before the fall of man based on young-Earth interpretations of Genesis 3:14, 17 and Romans 8:19–21.

16. Supporters of this theology do not acknowledge the mistranslation or expansive translation of key words in Genesis Chapter 1, Exodus 20:11, Exodus 31:17, Jeremiah 3:17, and Jeremiah 4:23 found in orthodox English Bibles.

17. Advocates of this theology fully support the traditional, expansive interpretation of Genesis 1:3–2:3.

**Gap Theology**

Gap theology was among the first alternate explanations to traditional young-Earth creation theology and was developed to harmonize orthodox translations of the Bible with scientific evidence regarding significant time. Thomas Chalmers (1780–1847), founder of the Free Church of Scotland, brought gap theology into prominence through his preaching. 16 Earth’s Earliest Ages (1884) by George H. Pember defends gap theology. The Scofield Reference Bible (1917) promotes this theology in its explanatory notes of Genesis. Without Form and Void (1970) by Arthur C. Custance promotes gap theology through an in-depth analysis of the word “was” in Genesis 1:2.

Gap theology proposes that millions of years occurred between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. During this time, dinosaurs and other prehistoric animals lived, hydrocarbon reserves were formed, the fossil record was laid down, sediment layers accumulated, and geologic change occurred. According to Donald G. Barnhouse, the Earth was then ruined by God when Lucifer rebelled. Genesis 1:2 is translated to say, “And the earth became without form and empty.” Earth was subsequently reformed and repopulated during six days of creation.

Gap theology is a knee-jerk reaction by theologians who failed to consider the full implications of their idea. To begin with, the translation of Genesis 1:2 is flawed. Secondly, although allowing significant time to occur between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 may be reasonable, gap theology creates a new problem by proposing the complete destruction of Earth’s surface and biosphere within the recent geologic past. Scientific evidence does not support the complete destruction and reconstruction of Earth 6,000 years ago.

On a positive note, promoters of gap theology have shown that Genesis 1:1-2 lie outside the rigid six day time frame of Genesis 1:3-31. The first three verses of Genesis Chapter 1 occur in chronological order and the time between them is not defined in scripture. In general, advocates respect the Bible as truthful and trustworthy and believe in the inspiration and inerrancy of scripture.

**Strengths:**

2. Genesis 1:1, 1:2, and 1:3 occur in a chronological sequence.
3. Time is undefined between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 and millions of years are allowed to harmonize with scientific evidence in support of significant time.
4. The six days described in Genesis 1:3–31 are literal 24-hour days.
5. God is creator of the heavens and Earth. Proponents do not view naturalistic evolution as a significant constructive mechanism.

6. Advocates of gap theology recognize the importance of harmonizing the Bible with firm scientific evidence in support of significant time. Ignoring this evidence is not an option.

**Objections:**

1. Gap theology requires the mistranslation of “was” as “became” to indicate change in Genesis 1:2. The Hebrew verb הָיוָה, a stative state-of-being verb, is interpreted to indicate action.

2. This theology relies on mistranslation of the Hebrew words תֹּהוּ and בֹּהוּ in Genesis 1:2. These two rhyming words have essentially the same meaning and can be translated “vacant and empty” or “vacant and void” to indicate the complete absence of life on Earth. Proponents of gap theology translate this expression as “without form and empty” or “ruin and desolation.”

3. This theology requires the Hebrew verb מָלֵא in Genesis 1:22 and 1:28 to be translated “refill” rather than “fill” to indicate God's desire for the Earth to be repopulated.

4. Creation of the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day is completely out of sequence and not satisfactorily explained.

5. Destruction of the Earth to where it was “without form” in Genesis 1:2 followed by the creation of new continents and oceans on the third day in Genesis 1:9 conflicts with science. Scientific evidence does not support the recent formation (i.e., 6,000 years ago) of Earth’s continents and oceans.

6. Geology and paleontology do not support an event within the recent past (i.e., 6,000 years ago) that destroyed all life on Earth. Scientific evidence does not support the complete annihilation and then reappearance of animal and plant species within recent history.

7. Supporters of this theology do not acknowledge the mistranslation or expansive translation of key words in Genesis Chapter 1, Exodus 20:11, Exodus 31:17, Jeremiah 3:17, and Jeremiah 4:23 found in orthodox English Bibles.

8. Advocates of this theology support the traditional, expansive interpretation of Genesis 1:3–2:3.

**Day-age Theology**

Day-age theology is a second idea developed to force traditional Bible translations to agree with the evidence of science in regard to extensive time. Prior to 1800, Thomas Burnet, William Whiston, and Hermann Venema separately proposed that the six days of Genesis were long periods of time. In the 1800s, Professor Tayler Lewis of the Reformed Church of America advocated long ages in *The Six Days of Creation*. Donald MacDonald, a minister of the Free Church of Scotland, advocated the same in *Creation and the Fall: A Defence and Exposition of the First Three Chapters of Genesis*. Princeton theologians Charles Hodge, Archibald A. Hodge, and Benjamin Warfield supported a day-age approach.18

Day-age theology proposes that each day of the Genesis creation account was millions of years long and the days may have overlapped. *A Matter of Days* (2004) by Hugh Ross discusses day-age theology and its connection with time, natural cause, and evolution. Accepting each day as millions of years relegates significant portions of the Genesis creation story to a metaphorical explanation. This idea is a brute-force, frontal assault on the clear language of six days described in Genesis 1:3–31. Significant time is forced into the text. Rather than an interpretation, this theology is best viewed as a speculative idea.

In a positive vein, promoters of day-age theology point out that the genealogies in Genesis Chapters 5 and 11 do not require a direct father-to-son relationship and are best viewed as a male-to-descendant relationship. The Genesis genealogies are abbreviated and insignificant patriarchs were left out. This permits moving the appearance of anatomically modern man backward in time beyond 4004 BC. In general, advocates say they believe in the inspiration and inerrancy of scripture.
Strengths:

1. Heaven and Earth in Genesis 1:1–2 are treated as literal. Heaven is comprised of space, stars, galaxies, solar systems, comets, and other objects known to science. Earth refers to our planet with its current size, spherical shape, and mass.

2. The genealogies in Genesis Chapters 5 and 11 do not require a direct father–to–son relationship and are best viewed as a male–to–descendant relationship. Gaps in the Genesis genealogies permit extending the appearance of anatomically modern man backward in time beyond 4004 BC.

3. Proponents recognize that animals lived and died on Earth before mankind appeared based on scientific evidence. The Bible does not teach no–animal–death before Adam’s sin. According to Genesis 3:14–17, the serpent, Eve, and Adam are the only ones specifically mentioned as being punished (not all animals on Earth). Romans 5:12 and 8:19–22 do not specifically discuss animals and animal death.

4. Advocates of day–age theology recognize the importance of harmonizing the Bible with firm scientific evidence in support of significant time and the sequencing of past events. Ignoring this evidence is not an option.

Objections:

1. Day-age theology does not provide a satisfactory explanation for treating the six days described in Genesis 1:3–31 as long epochs of time. Significant time is forced into the text. Harmony with scientific evidence is at the expense of scripture.

2. The Hebrew word translated “day” in Genesis is yom. When yom is used in the context of six consecutive, numbered, numerically increasing days, bounded by evening and morning, they are literal 24-hour days. Context does not allow yom to be interpreted as millions of years.

3. Each of the six days in the creation narrative is bounded by evening and morning. The overlap of days is not supported by the biblical text.

4. Genesis 2:1–3 does not close with the phrase, “And the evening and the morning were the seventh day.” Some proponents believe God did not end the seventh day and is currently resting. If the seventh day can be thousands of years long, then the six work days can be millions of years long. This is not a rational conclusion.

5. Supporters say the Earth was covered by clouds for millions of years during the first three days. The Sun, Moon, and stars were hidden and became visible on the fourth day. This is not a credible explanation.

6. According to scientific evidence, life appeared first in the oceans and then on land. This disagrees with the creation of trees and plants on the third day (Gen. 1:9–12) followed by marine life on the fifth day (Gen. 1:20–21). The overlapping of days does not solve this sequence problem.

7. The Sabbath is defined as a day of rest after six days of work. Exodus 20:11 and 31:17 specifically mention the six days of Genesis as an example. No satisfactory explanation is given for these verses.

8. Advocates of this theology do not acknowledge the mistranslation or expansive translation of key words in Genesis Chapter 1, Exodus 20:11, Exodus 31:17, Jeremiah 3:17, and Jeremiah 4:23 found in orthodox English Bibles.

9. Proponents of this theology have replaced the traditional, expansive interpretation of Genesis 1:3–2:3 with a private interpretation not supported by the biblical text.
Literary Interpretations

The analogical day is a literary interpretation of Genesis developed to eliminate disagreement of the Bible with scientific evidence regarding significant time and the sequencing of past events. *Genesis 1 – 4: A Linguistic, Literary and Theological Commentary* by Dr. C. John Collins (2006) explains analogical days as “God’s workdays, their length is neither specified nor important, and not everything in the account needs to be taken as historically sequential.”

Analogical days are quite similar to day-age theology, which proposes the days are millions of years long. As an additional feature, analogical days allow the sequence of days to be rearranged. The highly structured, clear language of six, literal, sequential days is dismissed.

On the positive side, Collins’ discussion of the Genesis creation account contributes to a better understanding of scripture. Genesis 1:1–2 lie outside the rigid six-day time frame. Genesis 1:1 is a general statement attributing God as creator of the heavens and Earth, while Genesis 1:2 describes the Earth at some time in the distant past. Genesis 1:1–3 occur in chronological order and the time between each verse is not defined. Genesis 2:5 applies to a land that was dry and barren where the garden was to be planted, rather than the entire Earth.

Strengths:
2. Genesis 1:1, 1:2, and 1:3 occur in a chronological order.
3. Genesis 1:2 is a description of Earth at some point in the distant past.
4. Genesis 2:5 is interpreted as applying to a land that was dry and barren where the garden was to be planted, rather than the entire Earth.
5. Advocates of this theology recognize the importance of harmonizing the Bible with firm scientific evidence in support of significant time and the sequencing of past events. Ignoring this evidence is not an option.

Objections:
1. This theology does not provide a satisfactory explanation for treating the six days described in Genesis 1:3–31 as long epochs of time. Harmony with scientific evidence is at the expense of scripture.
2. When *yom* is used in the context of six consecutive, numbered, numerically increasing days—bounded by evening and morning—they are literal 24-hour days. Context does not suggest a metaphorical explanation.
3. The credibility of Genesis 1:3–31 as a plausible story of origins is destroyed by allowing the six days to be millions of years and the order of days to be rearranged.
4. Supporters of this theology do not acknowledge the mistranslation or expansive translation of key words in Genesis Chapter 1, Exodus 20:11, Exodus 31:17, Jeremiah 3:17, and Jeremiah 4:23 found in orthodox English Bibles.
5. Advocates of this theology have replaced the traditional, expansive interpretation of Genesis 1:3–2:3 with a private interpretation not supported by the biblical text.

The framework view is another well-known literary interpretation of the Genesis creation story. Professor Arie Noordzij of the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands is typically credited as the first person to teach the framework view. *Genesis: A Commentary* (2001) by Bruce Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks explains the framework view from an American perspective. *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (2006) by Meredith G. Kline is another explanation described as “a literary framework for us to understand the work of creation, without committing anyone to see the days as either sequential or normal.” The framework view treats the Genesis creation account as completely metaphorical. While this approach eliminates any conflict with evidence based science,
acceptance comes at the direct expense of scripture. Such an interpretation leads one to question God’s knowledge of origins and his ability to inspire the writing of a credible account.

**State of Current Theology**

In addition to the four theologies mentioned, belief that the Genesis creation story is a compilation of pagan mythology is quite fashionable in some religious circles. Some individuals believe the creation story represents a collection of Sumerian, Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Canaanite stories. Poetical and metaphorical expressions in Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and Isaiah are referenced to support the argument that the Bible is full of incorrect information. Common themes and words in scripture are tenuously connected to pagan mythology and used by critics to attack the Bible creation story as false.

The reasoning of critics and skeptics is similar to taking present-day factual events and then discounting their credibility by connecting common words and themes with those found in fictional works. For example, with this type of logic the account of man’s walk on the moon can be accused of being false because of its connection to hundreds of science fiction books, short stories, and movies. This type of fallacious reasoning can be rejected.

Traditional young-Earth creation theology, gap theology, day-age theology, and literary interpretations have major scriptural and scientific problems, and indicate the absolute chaotic condition of current biblical-based origins belief. Typically, supporters ignore scriptural and scientific objections inherent within their theology. All of the above explanations of Genesis Chapters 1 and 2 are analogous to driving a square peg into a round hole—the pieces do not fit. Harmonizing the Genesis creation account with itself and/or with firm scientific evidence appears impossible.

**A New Conservative Translation of Genesis**

Present interpretations of Genesis question the very nature of God and the inspiration and inerrancy of scripture. If the Bible is true, then why does the Genesis creation narrative appear to conflict with firm scientific evidence in regard to extensive time? Why does the sequence of creative events in Genesis appear out of order? As creator, God certainly knows the history of the universe, Earth, and all therein from the distant past to the present, so why the apparent conflict? Surely a wise, eternal, omnipotent God could have inspired Moses to write a creation account capable of harmonizing with the firm evidence of twenty-first century empirical science. Surely God knew that mankind's knowledge of the Earth would grow to its current state and that such knowledge would conflict a 4004 BC creation date.

An exhaustive study of the creation story found in Genesis Chapters 1 and 2 reveals that several key words have been poorly or illegitimately translated from the original Hebrew text (primarily in Genesis Chapter 1). The translation of some words is unique to Genesis and unsupported by usage elsewhere in the Old Testament—they are obvious fabrications. In addition, special rules of grammar have been applied to the Genesis creation account. In general, conservative biblical Hebrew scholars will deny these accusations; however, they also deny the Earth is millions of years old.

The Exemplar Genesis Translation of Genesis Chapters 1 and 2 is a new translation of the Hebrew text based on the Biblia Hebraica (Hebrew Bible). The word exemplar means “original” in Latin, and refers to the original Genesis creation story recorded by Moses in the Pentateuch. The primary focus of this effort was to create an accurate, credible translation of the creation account based on the Hebrew text.

Special revelation (God's word, the Bible) and general revelation (God’s physical creation) can be harmonized without contradiction. Based on an accurate translation, the resultant explanation eliminates all alleged internal contradictions between Genesis Chapters 1 and 2. Likewise, based on firm scientific evidence, external inconsistencies of the Genesis creation story in regard to time and the sequence of creative events are eliminated.
Words in the Exemplar Genesis Translation of Genesis Chapters 1 and 2 are about two percent different from traditional translations such as the English Standard Version (a conservative word-for-word translation). The changes are quite subtle, yet permit a radically different explanation of the Genesis creation story while respecting the clear language of the inspired text. The Exemplar Genesis Translation supports the creation account as a condensed, non-technical, historical account of origins that is truthful and trustworthy and revolutionizes one’s understanding of the subject.

Conclusion

The four main theological views of young-Earth creation theology, gap theology, day-age theology, and literary interpretations all have major scriptural and scientific problems. They indicate the absolute chaotic condition of current explanations about Genesis. Fundamentally, all of them are built upon a faulty translation of Genesis.

When the Genesis creation story is properly translated and explained, it agrees internally with itself and the remainder of the Bible. Genesis Chapters 1 and 2 fully complement each other and are not two contradictory creation stories. Rather, they form a logical, integrated, historically accurate, and theologically sound account of origins. Chapter 1 was written by Moses and structured in a seven day format to support the Sabbath. Chapter 2 is Adam’s historical account of events related to the Garden of Eden. God is clearly identified as creator of the heavens, Earth, its biosphere, and mankind.

When the Genesis creation narrative is correctly translated and explained, it harmonizes externally with firm scientific evidence regarding time. The six days are actual 24-hour days and need not be dismissed as metaphorical. On the other hand, scripture allows for an old heavens and Earth. The creation account and firm scientific evidence regarding extensive time do not contradict where they intersect. God is a timeless, ageless creator.

For a solution to the creation dilemma that fully respects the biblical text and scientific evidence in regard to time, read The Real Genesis Creation Story: A Credible Translation and Explanation at Last, Third Edition by J. Gene White. No words, phrases or verses are treated as metaphorical, mythological or untrue. To own your personal copy of this exciting new book search on the Internet under the above title and author, or visit the book website at http://www.sunnybrookepub.com/the_real_genesis_creation_story.html.

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