

Creationism Defined Why is it important?

The Creation Account:

The Creation account is primarily given in Genesis and other authors in the Bible comment on the event – all claiming to be under the inspiration of God (II Timothy 3:16-17; I Peter 1:19-21).

“This remarkable chapter sets forth the work of creation in simplicity and beauty, but how is it to be understood? Should we interpret it literally or figuratively? Is it a literary gem or a scientific treatise – or both? Are the days named 24-hour days or periods of undetermined length? Does the language allow for evolutionary process or are these completely ruled out? Each of these issues has received lengthy attention and continues to challenge our generation to a great degree. Even the most devout Christians differ sharply in their approach to these questions.”¹

So if we take into account history/culture/language – what insight can we gain about the nature of this Genesis account?

- **Literary structure tells us it is intended to be a historical account**
“It is common among scholars to relegate Genesis 1-11 to the realm of mythology and to consider chapter 12 as the start of the historical section, but from a literary standpoint such a sharp distinction is difficult to make. In an article entitled 'The Literary Form of Genesis 1-11,' Walter Kaiser notes that these chapters contain '64 geographical terms, 88 personal names, 48 generic names and at least 21 identifiable cultural items' (such as wood, metals, buildings, musical instruments.).² He concludes that Genesis 1-11 is prose and not poetry and that historical narrative best describes the form of these chapters.³ Hence, when the *New English Bible* translates Genesis 11:1 'Once upon a time,' it is badly misleading the reader about the nature of the tower of Babel episode.”⁴
- The structure of 1:1-2:3 is not poetic, but does have poetic flavor (notice the repetition of several phrases, scholars also note other minor details. Therefore some have concluded that we may expect chapter 1 to be more theological than scientific.
- The word day (hebrew: yom) can be used for one literal day, or a long period of time (as in the Day of the Lord, Isaiah 13:6, 9).

Levels of Creationism:

Theistic Evolution Theory – Proponents accept the modern evolutionary views and conclude that whatever happened, God was there every step of the way, helping things evolve.

Intelligent Design Theory – An opposition to the theory of evolution. ID proponents claim that evolution is an inadequate theory of origins and that a world as complex as ours can only come into existence by some sort of intelligent designer. ID has no commitment to any particular religion (or religion at all).

Day-Age Theory – Claims that each day represents a large period of time – an element necessary to allow for evolution. A verse often quoted to push this view is II Peter 3:8.

Intermittent Day Theory – Each day in this theory is the first day in a creative era of God. God continues to build on things of previous eras as well – which eliminates some of the difficulties of the day-age theory (how did the plants of day 3 survive for so long without being pollinated by the insects of day 5?).

1 Herbert Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), p. 83

2 Walter Kaiser, *The Literary Form of Genesis 1-11*, in *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, J. Barton Payne, ed. (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1970), p. 59

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60

4 Herbert Wolf, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), p. 81-82

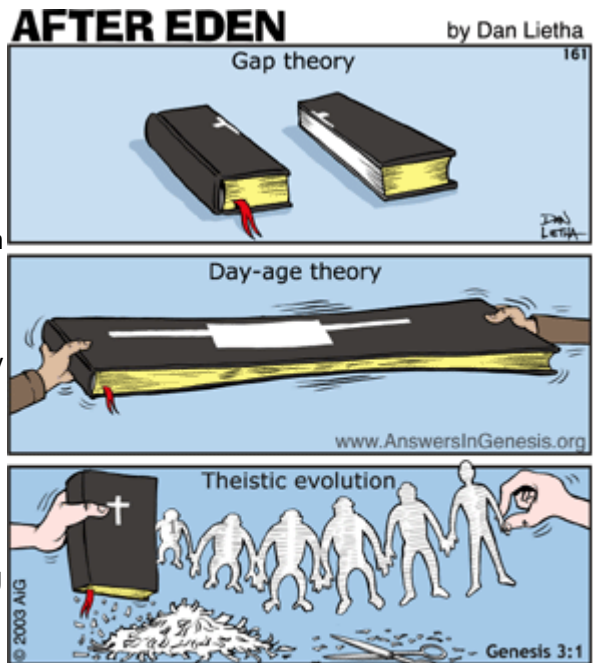
Framework Theory – Somewhat of a rearranging of the Day-Age theory. Noticing a similarity between days 1 and 4, 2 and 5, 3 and 6, the framework theory claims that the account was not necessarily in chronological order. This also eliminates chronological difficulties.

Gap Theory – This theory proposes a gap of millions/billions of years between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 allowing for an old earth

Ruin-Reconstruction Theory – A variation of the gap theory which includes another creation in the gap which explains today's fossils. This first creation was judged and destroyed by God. Some place the fall and rebellion of Satan and his demons during this first creation.

Revelatory Day Theory – Proponents of this view claim that the days mentioned were not the literal days of creation, but that God took 7 days to reveal what he had created to Moses (the author of Genesis). Moses then, in Genesis 1 is revealing things in the order God revealed it to him. The Genesis account then, may not necessarily be taken as historical, but a systematic/topical account of creation.

Twenty-Four Hour Day Theory – Often called “Young Earth Creationism.” This is the obvious view if one takes a literal interpretation of the bible. This view was always held by Christians until the 19th Century.



In the beginning, the serpent in Eden was 'crafty' with God's Word. Since then, we've been crafty too.

A Solution from Scripture

The very nature of Genesis 1 should allow us to eliminate many of these theories (especially revelatory day theory) as they did not arise from bible study, but from an apparent revelation from science. Nonetheless, Christians have been quite crafty in making up all sorts of theories of how Genesis and evolution can be harmonized, so let's consider how they stand up against the rest of the bible.

For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
- Exodus 20:11

Exodus 20:11 tells us that the entire creation from start to beginning was a 7 day process. Though from this verse we cannot conclude that these days were not ages, we know that there were no gaps. This eliminates the gap theory, ruin-reconstruction theory, as well as the intermittent day theory.

“Haven't you read,” he replies, “that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'... ?”
- Matthew 19:4

It seems quite obvious that Jesus believed in a literal 6 - 24 hour - day creation. If these were large gaps in time – millions and billions of years, compared to the 4000 between Adam and Jesus, then how could Jesus refer to this event as the beginning? If it could be reasoned that Jesus meant the beginning of mankind we have other problems because evolutionary theory requires ape ancestors for Adam and Eve which means God would not have created them – which also means it would not be the beginning of mankind. The fact that God made them male and female at this point also has serious problems. Was mankind a-sexual up until this point?

Jesus obviously did not believe in an evolutionary process (and He would know, because in Him all things were created – John 1:3; Colossians 1:16). Therefore we can rule out Theistic Evolution, Day-Age Theory, Framework Theory, and Revelatory Day Theory.

We might as well rule out Intelligent Design, as we are using the Bible as our only authority. At this point we have ruled out all theories. There is one other point worth mentioning though:

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned...

But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!

- Romans 5:12, 15

The theory of evolution is not simply a chronological issue. We're not fighting over dates and time lines. If man came into existence by evolutionary process, that means that living things have been going through a process of birth and death for 2 billion years before the appearance of man. Which means that man didn't bring death into the world by sin. That's just a fairy tale. But that fairy tale happens to be the whole conflict of the bible – that man sinned and will surely die. The bible is written to climax at a point in history yet future where that conflict is resolved – there will be no more sin and no more death.

If evolution is true then the Bible is worthless. It's nothing more than any other religion and barely worth holding on to. No promise that is given in the Bible is worth hoping for. You'd might as well live for yourself.

Christians that try to hold on to both Christianity and evolution are fooling themselves. Even atheists know about it. Look at what one atheist wrote:

(New Answers Book – p. 32).

recommended reading – Answers in Genesis website.