

# ***“Creation: Six Days or Six Billion Years?”***

**GENESIS 1:1-2:3**

**Baxter T. Exum (#1171)  
Four Lakes Church of Christ  
Madison, Wisconsin  
June 24, 2012**



I am so thankful that we have taken the time to explore (both yesterday and today) some of the vast evidence supporting what the Bible tells us concerning the creation account in Genesis 1. We look around us, and hopefully most of us are at least aware of some of the tremendous pressure that our children are under to surrender their belief in this book [the Bible] and to fully accept the latest versions of the various evolutionary theories. On one hand, we have many teachers, and professors, and society in general all pressing us to believe that the Universe is roughly 15 billion years old, that the earth came on the scene roughly 4.5 billion years ago, that life began roughly 1 billion years ago, and that we as humans finally evolved into our current state roughly 200,000 years ago. On the other side, of course, are those of us who believe that God created the Universe and everything in it in the fairly recent past, very roughly between 6,000 and 10,000 years ago. On one side, there is no God, and on the other side, God is responsible for everything we see around us.

For the purpose of our study this morning, however, we plan on looking at a kind of compromise of sorts, the idea that there is a God, but that God used the process of evolution to bring us where we are today. There are many people in the religious world who hold to what we sometimes refer to as “Theistic Evolution,” “theistic” referring to the idea that God has played some role in it. And as we step back, I think we see why such a theory might be so appealing. In the minds of many, it allows them to accept what the world is pushing, while at the same time still holding on to what they think they read in the Bible. For many, it is an acceptable compromise, a middle-of-the-road position where they do not really need to take a firm stand on either side. You might remember just a few years ago hearing about how even the Catholic Church has accepted the basic tenets of the theory of Evolution, right along with a number of other mainline denominations. Among our own number, a man by the name of John Clayton has come to a similar understanding of the issue and has been preaching his version for many years. As far as I can tell from what I have read, he believes in a very old earth and sees no reason to limit Genesis 1 to six literal days. Basically (like Mr. Clayton), a lot of people read the Bible, but then they look over their shoulder to see what the evolutionists are saying, and then if what they say contradicts the Bible, then they reinterpret the Bible to fit the theory of evolution. And so with these compromises out there, it is very important that we regularly go back and study what the Bible actually has to say on such an important topic. I would like for us to begin by reading the creation account Genesis 1 (p. 1). And then after we look at what the Bible actually says, I would like to do just a brief overview of some of the evidence that the entire Universe really was created in only 6 literal 24-hour days, not very long ago...

**1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 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. 3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.**

**6 Then God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." 7 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. 8 God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.**

**9 Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. 10 God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good. 11 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. 12 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. 13 There was evening and there was morning, a third day.**

**14 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; 15 and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. 16 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. 17 God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. 19 There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.**

**20 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." 21 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. 22 God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." 23 There was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.**

**24 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. 25 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. 26 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." 27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 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." 29 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; 30 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. 31 God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*

*1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. 2 By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.*

As we look back over what we have just read, I would remind you that many people around us believe that those words are simply a myth, a legend, and yet I hope we can come to the understanding that this is an incredibly relevant part of the Bible; in fact, not only is it relevant, but this passage is crucial when it comes to understanding who God is and what He has done. Let us, then, think about several reasons why this passage is to be taken literally.

I. **First of all, as we look at what the text actually says we find that there is NO INDICATION OF BILLIONS OF YEARS IN THE TEXT ITSELF.**

Of course, those who believe in evolution have to have billions of years for that process to take place, and for those who want to try to believe the Bible as well, they have to cram billions of years somewhere. There are several ways people try to do this, starting with the idea that there is a huge gap of billions of years between verses 1-2. And the idea is that there was perhaps another creation, but God destroyed it due to Satan’s rebellion (and perhaps even an entirely unknown race of people before us), and so verse 2, then, refers to more of a re-creation than a creation. And so when we see fossils today, we are actually looking at the creatures and some of the “people” from God’s earlier attempt at creation. But let us please look again at the gap between verses 1-2. Do you see a gap there? We can even squint if we need to. But as for me, I do not see it. In fact, if we could show this passage to someone who had never heard of evolution, if this person had no need to cram billions of years somewhere, I don’t think that anybody reading this passage for the first time would ever even consider the possibility of adding billions of years between verses 1-2.

We have another problem down in verse 31, where **“God saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good.”** As God looked back over the creation, did He or did He not see **“all that He had made”**? And if He did see everything (including the remnants of His previous creation), would it be accurate for God to say that it was all **“very good”**? Would it be **“very good”** to have the remnants of an entire evil society buried under the new one?

The second way that some people try to find billions of years in Genesis 1 is to turn it into a kind of story where the **“days”** are not really days, but are actually vast periods of time – the idea is that each day represents millions (if not billions) of years. The first problem for this theory, though, is that Moses uses the word **“day.”** And when we look at any word in the Bible, the general rule is that we take it literally unless there is a really good reason to do otherwise. And as if to remove any possibility of doubt, it is amazing to me that Moses goes even further and defines the day each time he uses the word, **“there was evening and there was morning, one day,”** and so on. Each day, therefore consisted of an evening and a morning. Some will say, “Yes, but the stars were not created until Day #4!” And yet we get back to the fact that the days are described

as having an evening and a morning, and in the text itself there is no indication that the length of the days somehow changed during the week.

And here is something else: If each day was equally divided into day and night, and let's say a day was a billion years, wouldn't that mean we had 500 million years of light followed by 500 million years of darkness? I'm wondering how the plants handled that. Remember: The plants were created on Day #3. After they were created, how did those plants survive the 500 million years of darkness? We have the same problem with the plants being pollinated. As you know, many plants depend on certain insects to do the pollinating. How did they survive the millions of years between Day #3 and the animals and flying creatures being created on Days 5 and 6? I think you can see just a few of the problems here. We have no indication from the text itself that billions of years can be inserted at any point in this chapter.

In fact, as we look at this passage, and if we ask ourselves what more Moses could have done to convince us that the process took a total of six literal days, there is literally nothing more that Moses could have done to make it any more clear! We have six days, with each day having both an evening and a morning. I realize that this hasn't been much of a science discussion, but some scientists have looked at the Bible and have tried to force billions of years into this chapter – that is why we are studying this from a Biblical point of view.

**II. There is a second way to approach this question, and that is, we need to examine just a few of THE PROBLEMS WE RUN INTO IF WE TAKE THIS ACCOUNT FIGURATIVELY.**

For example, right away, we have the problem of Eve. In the opening chapters of Genesis, we are told that God put Adam into a deep sleep and took from his side material that He then used to create the first woman on Day #6. Did that really happen? If not, we have a problem that continues throughout the rest of the Bible. Eve, for example, is mentioned by name in 1 Timothy 2:13 as being a real, historical character. In fact, Paul uses Eve as a reason for the unique role of women in the church today. And yet if Eve was merely a legend, if men and women slowly evolved to the point of being human, we have a problem – we have Paul basing his argument on nothing more than a myth.

We also have the problem of the soul. If God used evolution to accomplish His purpose, exactly when did people become people, and exactly when did the first beings get a soul? I read something written several years ago by a scholar in the Catholic Church, and his conclusion on this question was that Adam was the first being in the evolutionary process who was able to say "Thou" to God, the first being to recognize God as God – that was Adam – the first caveman to consider the possibility of God! And yet that is a far cry from what we read in the opening chapters of Genesis. Theistic Evolution also fails to deal with the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. If the forbidden fruit is just a made-up story, how do we deal with all that the New Testament teaches about Jesus being the second Adam – the solution to the problem introduced by the first Adam? Remember: The promise of a Savior in Genesis 3 was made in response to the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The promise of the cross was made in response to the sin of Adam. How do we handle the possibility of Adam being nothing more than a story?

And then, how do we deal with sickness, and suffering, and death? Remember: The Bible teaches that suffering and death is the result of sin – and yet how do we deal with the idea that things had been suffering and dying for millions of years before evolving to the point of committing sin? Did God create suffering and death before people had a chance to turn away from Him with their own free will? The Bible teaches that mankind started with perfection and then sinned and fell away from God and died both physically and spiritually. Evolution teaches that mankind started with lower life forms and slowly got more and more

complex and better and better before finally developing the concept of God. Those are two very different ways of looking at life, and that problem is not solved by compromising the creation account.

And here is another question to consider in this area: If Genesis 1 is just a myth, just an allegory, just a cool story to help us understand evolution, then exactly at what point does the Bible start describing stuff that really happened? How about the worldwide flood over in Genesis 6-9? Is that literal or is that a part of the myth as well? What about the origin of language in Genesis 11? What about Abraham in Genesis 12? What about Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and so on? What about Jesus? Since Adam is listed in the genealogy of Christ in the New Testament, if Adam is not a real person, as the evolutionists would like for us to believe, then when did the real people start appearing in the genealogy of Christ? At what point in the Bible do we move from fiction to non-fiction?

So, if we try to insert billions of years into Genesis 1, if we try to say that this passage isn't really true in a literal sense, we run into several very serious problems – What about Eve? What about the soul? When did sin start? What about suffering and death – is death something that God made or is death the result of choice? And then, if Genesis 1 is a myth, when does the Bible stop being a myth?

**III. There is third major concept for us to consider along these lines, and it comes in the fact that MANY OTHER PASSAGES ELSEWHERE IN THE BIBLE ASSUME THAT THE CREATION TOOK PLACE WITHIN SIX LITERAL 24-HOUR DAYS.**

For example, we find in Exodus 20 that the “*days*” of the creation week were the same length as the “*days*” of the Hebrew work-week. In Exodus 20, God said, “*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.... For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*” Notice: The work-week was patterned after the creation week. Just as God worked for six days and rested on the seventh, so also the Jewish people were to work for six days and rest on the seventh. Those days were literal days; they were not billions of years. Yes, God could have made the Universe in 6 seconds, if He wanted to, He could have stretched it out over 6 billion years; but as it is, He decided to create everything in 6 days as a pattern for our benefit. And I realize that we are no longer under the Law of Moses, but as my dad likes to point out from time to time, “The human body was designed by God to get more done in six days than it can get done in seven.” In other words, if we consistently work for 7 days straight, we actually get less done (over time) than if we were to take a day of rest. That’s because that is the way we were designed.

Not only that, but think about this: Just the concept of a week serves as proof of the claims made in Genesis 1. We know what a year is: The earth travels around the sun one time. We know what a month is: It goes back to the time it takes for the moon to circle the earth. We know what a day is: A day is the time it takes for the earth to make one rotation on its axis. But why do we have weeks? As far as I can tell, there is no scientific reason for us to divide our time into weeks of seven days each. The fact is, the Hebrew word for week means, “that which is divided into seven.” When God established the Hebrew work-week, therefore, He based it on the creation week, which was six days of work followed by a day of rest. Exodus 20:8-11, then, is based directly on the creation account.

Not only did Moses believe that the days in Genesis were literal 24-hour days, but we also know from the Scriptures that Jesus Himself believed in a very young earth. You might remember the time when the Pharisees tried to argue with Christ concerning God’s original plan for marriage. Jesus pointed out that under the Law of Moses, the rule was relaxed for a little while, but “*from the beginning*” that was not God’s ideal.

Jesus then went on to say that God would go back to enforcing the ideal under the Christian age. But this is what the Lord actually said in Matthew 19:4, ***“Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female...?”*** In Mark’s account, the Lord said, ***“...from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female.”*** If marriage really did not go back to the ***“beginning of creation,”*** then the Lord’s statement here makes no sense. Jesus, though, understood that marriage truly went back to the beginning.

The apostle Paul made a similar argument in Romans 1:20 as he argued that the human race has always been without excuse concerning the existence of God. Paul said, ***“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”*** Since the creation of the world, people have been able to see evidence for God’s existence. If God got the process started, and then it went unseen until humans finally developed billions of years later, then Paul was mistaken here. Paul, though, understood that the evidence for God’s existence has truly been observed ***“since the creation of the world.”*** But think about this: If we as human beings have really only been a part of this universe let’s say over the past 200,000 years out of a Universe that is roughly 15 billion years old, then we have not been here ***“since the beginning.”*** In fact, if we could picture the age of the universe as a day consisting of 86,400 seconds, human beings would come on the scene in the last 1.2 seconds of the day. Paul and Jesus, though, say that we have been here ***“since the creation.”***

There are other examples we could give, but the main idea is simply that in a number of passages scattered throughout the Bible, some rather significant Bible characters (including Moses, Jesus, and Paul) all based various arguments on their view that Genesis 1 was literal history, that the events took place within a literal week, and that humans have been on this earth ***“since the creation”*** – definitely not separated by billions of years.

### **Conclusion:**

There is so much more information we could consider on this subject. We could have looked at some of the scientific evidence that we are living on a very young earth. But instead, I have included just a small part of that information in a handout that goes along with this morning’s lesson (in the cubbyholes – there are extras on top for those of you who are visiting with us). I would also recommend two very good resources on the Internet: [www.apologeticspress.org](http://www.apologeticspress.org) and [www.christiancourier.com](http://www.christiancourier.com).

Our goal this morning has been to consider the evidence from the Scriptures. Many people have tried to insert billions of years somewhere in Genesis 1. This morning, though, we have found that there is nothing in the text itself that indicates vast periods of time anywhere in or near the creation week – either before, during, or after. We also learned this morning that there are some serious issues that start coming up when we start labeling the creation week as anything but a series of seven literal 24-hour days. And then finally, we have also considered the fact that in various places scattered throughout the rest of the Bible, a number of very important Bible characters (including the Lord Himself) have made some crucial arguments based on the creation taking place exactly as is described in Genesis 1. And so, if we start messing with Genesis 1 we also start messing not only with the Law of Moses, but also with marriage, and the role of women in the church, and a number of other very important issues.

This morning, if you know that Genesis 1 is true, if you believe that God really did create everything we see around us, we would invite you to respond. Whether we are Christians or not, all of us can respond to the

word of God in some way. Maybe you want to respond by offering to teach a children's class – encouraging the kids of this congregation by teaching God's word – giving them courage to stand up against some of what they learn in school on this issue. On the other hand, if you have stumbled along the narrow path, you might be ready to respond by asking to be restored to this congregation and asking for God's forgiveness. Maybe your life is just chaotic right now – work is not going well, family struggles, illness, sin – all of these things can be taken to God in prayer, and we would be glad to go to God on your behalf as a congregation. Write it down and bring it to the front or talk to me later if you need to.

But if you are not yet a Christian, the Bible teaches that sin (on our part) broke off our relationship with God. And yet almost incredibly, God provided a way back. As we sometimes sing, the way back was provided, "When Christ the mighty Maker died for man, the creature's sin." We accept that sacrifice by turning away from sin and back to God and by allowing ourselves to be immersed in water as God has instructed, for the forgiveness of our sins. If you have any questions, we would be glad to study with you, but if you are ready to obey the gospel right away, you can let us know as we sing this next song. Let's stand and sing...

To comment on this lesson: [fourlakeschurch@gmail.com](mailto:fourlakeschurch@gmail.com)