

**In the beginning – GOD!**  
**(Genesis 1:1      February 25, 2007)**



In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

David got it right in Psalm 19:1:

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Creation does indeed declare the glory of God.



Genesis 1:1 is one of the most majestic statements in all of history.

It tells us about God – the Creator of all things. It tells us that He is separate from and over all of His creation. It tells us that every single thing in this universe exists because of God.

We are meant to look up in the night sky and feel our hearts rise in wonder at the power of God.

We are meant to look at a newborn baby and see the glory of God.

This opening verse of the Bible stands as a testimony to the wonder, awe and majesty of God.

In the Hebrew Bible – the very first word is *Bereshith* – in the beginning. The Greek title for this book was *Genesis* – beginnings.

This is a book about *beginnings* – the beginnings of the universe, man, God’s dealings with man. And it all starts with some of the most famous words ever written:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

But as I am sure you are aware – the glory of God in this majestic opening has been overshadowed by two words – *God* and *created*.

I wish I could simply move on to look at the glory of God in Genesis 1 – but this opening verse has become so controversial I need to deal with it.

I am sure that you are aware that the Christian and non-Christian world has split over the word *God*.

And the Christian world has split amongst itself over the word *created*.

The much easier difficulty to deal with is this first one – **God**.

The question of where we came from is rooted deep in each of us. It has profound ramifications for who we are and where we are going.

Concerning the origins of the heavens and earth and mankind – there are **four** and only **four** possibilities.



In the beginning **God**

In the beginning – when God – the transcendent, all-powerful Judeo-Christian God who is outside of time – spoke – and the heavens and earth came into being – man came into being.

All that is and was and ever will be is the direct result of the creative work of God. Time, matter, design – it is all due to God.

There was nothing – God spoke – and the heavens and earth came into being.

Another possibility.



### In the beginning **gods**

There *is* a supernatural author of creation – but he is not the God of the Bible – but some other god or gods. From the creation epics of the pagan religions through to the faith in Allah as Creator – there are no end of myths which attribute creation to another god or gods.

Another possibility.



### In the beginning **nothing**

The universe came into being at specific point in time – but nothing caused it. Somehow a big bang of unknown causes exploded – probably around 14 billion years ago – and the universe as we know it came into being. All matter came into being and the working of chance resulted in the formation of man through the process of evolution.

The fourth possibility.



There is **no beginning**

The heavens and the earth have always existed. They have no beginning and no end.

There are variations on this. Our universe expands till it reaches a critical mass, then collapses on itself only to explode again – and this continues in an endless cycle.

Or there are endless numbers of parallel universes – and matter moves from one to another.

And in our iteration of the universe, the working of chance resulted in the formation of man through the process of evolution.

Carl Sagan's famous TV show – *Cosmos* – supported this view. It began with these words:

The cosmos is all there is, or has been or will be.

But this is just as much a creed of faith as – in the beginning God. It is a religion of natural causation.

So take your pick:

In the beginning **God**  
In the beginning **gods**  
In the beginning **nothing**  
There is **no beginning**

I put it to you that which of these you pick is ultimately a matter of faith.

Some might seem more probable to you – but ultimately – through human reason alone – no man can be certain.

We weren't there. Our minds are fallen and not objective. Science cannot tell us about the past with certainty.

But we – we Christians – we are a people of faith. We live by faith and walk by faith.

We believe that God has revealed that He created the heavens and the earth – and so – by faith we accept this.



But there is more to it than that. When I stand and look at the night sky. When I stand on the edge of the Grand Canyon. When I watch the sun rise.

I **know** that this universe is not the product of random chance and unplanned events. I see the hand of God.

God created me in such a way that I look at the heavens and earth and cry – *My God How Great Thou Art!*

The world may call this wishful optimism – but every year millions of tourists come to the Great Barrier Reef and Niagara Falls and the Grand Canyon – precisely to stand in awe of something greater than them. They may think it is the creation – but in reality it is the Creator.

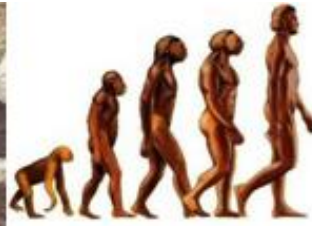
We recognise the hand of God in creation. We realise our place as a created being in the vastness of God's universe.

God created the heavens and the earth to teach us about Him. To show us His glory. And to show us His love for us. He created this vast incredible universe for us.

The galaxies that men have only recently discovered. The ones we have yet to discover. They were created for us to enjoy and marvel at.

This cosmos is not unplanned randomness – it is lovingly and majestically formed for us – so that we will stand in awe of God.

To me it takes far more faith to say that this incredibly beautiful, designed, efficient universe came about by chance.



God	Transcendence	No transcendence
Man	Importance	No importance
Creation	Purpose	No Purpose
Future	Hope	No Hope

And what you believe about creation leads to two very different worldviews.

If God created the world – then there is a God who is transcendent – separate from and greater than the creation. A God who created the heavens and earth for a reason and sustains them for a reason.

This view gives importance to man – we are created in God's image. We are not a random collection of atoms. We are not one of many animals.

And because God created this world and knows the beginning from the end – we have a purpose. There is a reason we exist.

And of course there is hope – we are not atoms that came together for a time and will drift apart again without purpose. We have a hope of heaven and eternal life.

But take God out of the picture – if there is no transcendent God – then we have no importance – we are just a collection of chemicals – we are no different to the bear or dolphin.

Our lives have no purpose – we just are. There is no good and evil, right and wrong.

And there is no hope – death is the end.

This is a dismal, nihilistic, fatalistic worldview. It spawns hopelessness.

But, I **know** I was created by God to worship Him and enjoy Him forever.

So, for you and me – the difficult word in verse 1 is *not* God – it is *created*.

Don't mistake me here. The difficulty is *not* that God *created*. Every Christian affirms the truth of God as Creator. So every Christian is by definition a creationist.

The difficulty comes in that our inquiring minds want to know **how** God created. And much of the difficulty comes because a non-Christian world has come up with a view

of how we came into being that has become so dominant – that many Christians feel compelled to try and mesh some components of that view with Scripture.

There is a large part of me that would dearly love to stand up here and say – it doesn't matter **how** God created the heavens and the earth – it is enough to believe that He did.

You only have to read Job 38-42 to realise that our minds are totally incapable of understanding the *details* of **how** God created the universe.

But, God in His wisdom did not go from Genesis 1:1 to 1:26 or to Genesis 2:4. He gave us Genesis 1 for a reason. He gave us *some* details about **how** He created and God does not do anything without purpose.

If God only wanted to tell us that He is the Creator – He would have gone from Genesis 1:1 to the creation of man. All the rest would have been superfluous.

But, God didn't do that. He built some important truths into the very fabric of **how** He created. He created in such a way to teach us some crucial truths about how we are to relate to our Creator.

What do I mean by this?

God could have created the world in any way He chose. He could have created it instantaneously. He could have created it over billions of years. He could have ongoing creative acts.

But, He chose to create in six days – to convey some very important truths. Everything God does has purpose.

We will look at this in more detail next week. God's method of creation – creation in six days – has important truths embedded in it.

I want to suggest that the details of **how** God created, has great significance for how we view God and man and our task in this world and our future. It is not unimportant.

**But**, I do not want to *overstate* the importance of getting every detail of creation right. There are legitimate areas where Christians can disagree here.

Last year in October – *the Briefing* – the monthly magazine put out by the Sydney Anglicans – did a series on the *Design of Genesis*.

They had several scholars give a variety of views on Genesis. Personally, I think that it was not one of their better efforts.

But that is not my point. My point is the response that followed. They were inundated with letters and emails – from Christians holding a wide variety of positions. It is clear that this is a divisive and controversial area.

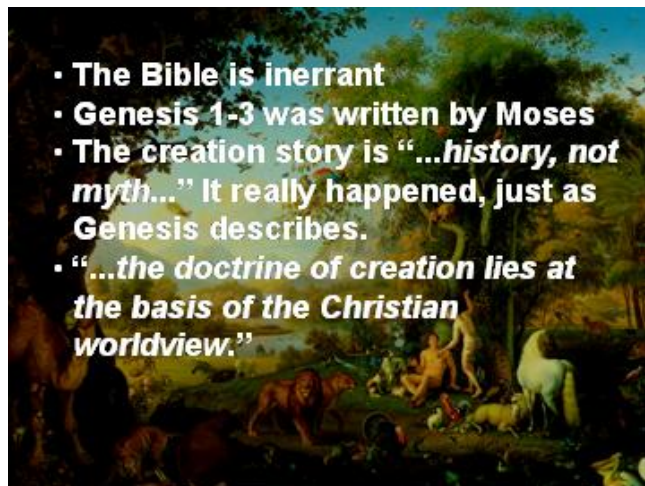


While I believe that some of the views of creation are closer to the biblical text – there are a number of views that **do** have exegetical rigour and are held by godly men who have wrestled with the text.

In the 1990's, the *Presbyterian Church in America* set up a *Creation Study Committee* to look into the first three chapters of the book of Genesis and charged them with deciding the meaning of the term “day” in Genesis 1-3.

On June 6, 2000 they presented their report. It is a 92 page document that is very enlightening reading.

The committee reached consensus on these issues:



- The Bible is inerrant
- Genesis 1-3 was written by Moses
- The creation story is “...history, not myth...” It really happened, just as Genesis describes.
- “...the doctrine of creation lies at the basis of the Christian worldview.”

But, they were unable to determine which -- **if any** -- of the views of “day” in Genesis was the correct view.

They felt that *four* views of *day* in Genesis were most likely to reflect God's intended meaning:





- Day-Age
- Framework
- Analogical Days
- Calendar-Day

The Day-Age Interpretation  
The Framework Interpretation  
The Analogical Days Interpretation  
The Calendar-Day Interpretation

But they also realised the potential for division over creation. They wrote this:

We are aware that this is a divisive issue. It is the hope and purpose of the Committee to give advice that could avoid any division of the church. While affirming the above statement of what is involved in an orthodox view of creation, we recognize that good men will differ on some other matters of interpretation of the creation account. We urge the church to recognize honest differences, and join in continued study of the issues, with energy and patience, and with a respect for the views and integrity of each other.

Brothers and sisters – I want to make this as clear as I can.

The issue of **how** God created is *not* unimportant – it *does* have ramifications for certain theological positions – some very important ones. **But** it is *not* a doctrine that divides the church into heretics and true believers.

There is no doubt – *none whatsoever* – that there are a variety of positions on the days of creation you can hold and be a solid, God-fearing, faithful Christian. There is no one view that marks out who the true Christians are.

While creation *is* an important issue with ramifications for our faith, it is **not** a salvation issue – **nor** an issue that should divide the fellowship of Christians.

In a sense this issue is somewhat analogous to the millennial issue. We should study Scripture as carefully as we can to determine what we believe God is telling us. We need to take a position we believe to be biblical.

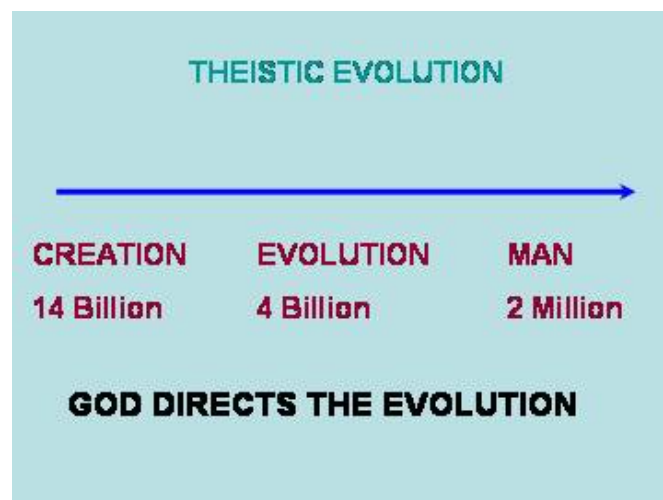
But in areas where there are legitimate differences of opinion – we should have a degree of humility.

I truly wish I could just deal with what the text says here and not spend time on the various interpretations – but since this is such a controversial issue – I will spend a few minutes on this issue.

You need to know the breadth of ways men have tried to reconcile the text with the world around them.

There are probably twenty or so views of creation. Let me just deal briefly with the *eight* most common views.

### Theistic Evolution



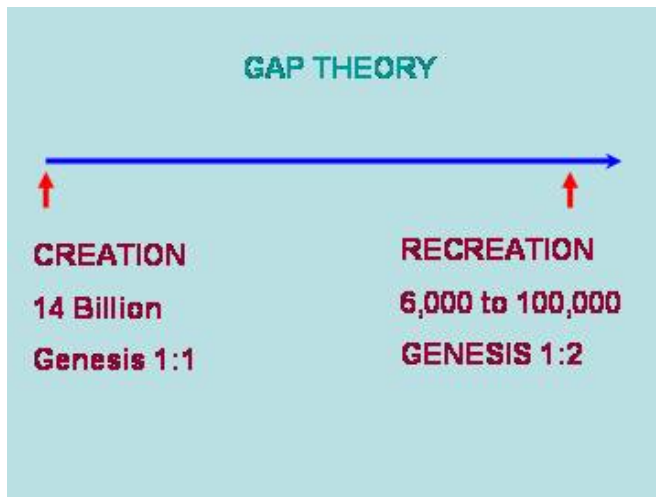
This view accepts the theory of Darwinian evolution – but sees God as directing the evolutionary steps – not natural selection.

They see Genesis 1 as an allegory that basically says – God created – without any attempt to say how God created.

In this view – somewhere apes reached a point in evolution that they became human – and God began dealing with them in a special way.

There was no literal Adam and Eve – these are allegories.

### Gap theory



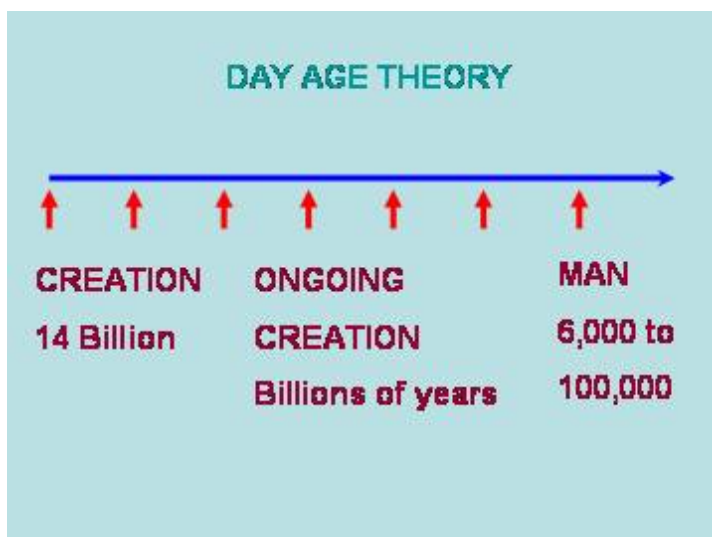
They believe that after God created “*the heaven and the earth*” as described in Genesis 1:1, there was a very long time interval – billions of years before the events of Genesis 1:2 began.

The fossil record comes from this first creation. Evolution occurred during this time.

Then, came a catastrophe. They translate Genesis 1:2 as “*the earth **became** formless and empty*”, probably because of the fall of Satan. Verse 3 and following then describes how God reclaimed his creation – He *recreated* the world – 6,000 to 100,000 years ago.

They accept Adam and Eve as special creations of God.

### Day-age theory

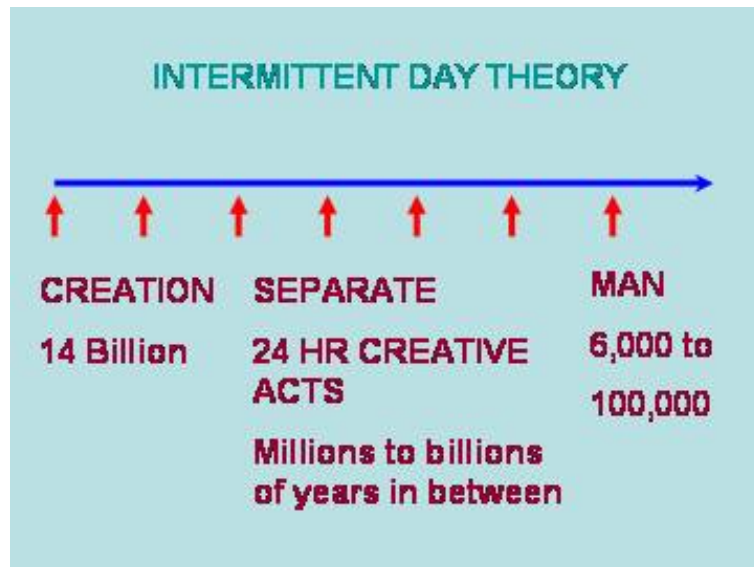


The six days in Genesis were *not* 24 hours long. Rather, they were extremely long intervals of time millions or hundreds of millions of years long. A “day” in Genesis is based upon the statement in 2 Peter 3:8 “.... *one day is with the Lord as a thousand years*”. One day for God may be billions of years on earth.

They believe that God created the earth and its life forms in the sequence specified in Genesis, but over an interval of time lasting billions of years. They reject evolution but teach that over these many millions of years, God created new species as others went extinct. Among those species were ape men like Neanderthal and Cro-Magnum man who were soulless beings. They were not human or human ancestors.

Then 6,000 to 100,000 years ago – God worked another special creative act to form Adam and Eve.

### Intermittent Day Theory



Each of the days refers to 24 hour solar days. *But* each day is separated by intervals of unknown length. Usually they think of this as billions of years.

So, God would create in a 24 hour solar day – then rest for billions of years and then God would create again in a solar day and then billions more years pass.

They usually put the sixth day of creation 6,000 to 100,000 years ago.

**Then** there are several views that claim that the Genesis account does not aim to give *any* reference to earthly time frames. They say that Genesis says nothing about *when* God created.

### Revelatory Day Theory

The six days refers to how long it took God to *show* Moses the events of creation. Each day refers to what God showed Moses.

In this view God does not say **how** He created. It could be by evolution or special creation. It could be over billions of years or very recent.

### Framework Hypothesis

This view asserts that Genesis 1 is not to be taken as a literal, chronological account of creation, but rather a topical account which asserts God created all things. The creation week is a metaphor, it was never meant to refer to an interval of time.

The purpose of the creation story is mainly to teach man that God created us and that we should design our lives around a six-day work week, followed by one day reserved for the Sabbath.

They say that the Bible says nothing about the age of the earth or when God created. Most see the world as billions of years old.

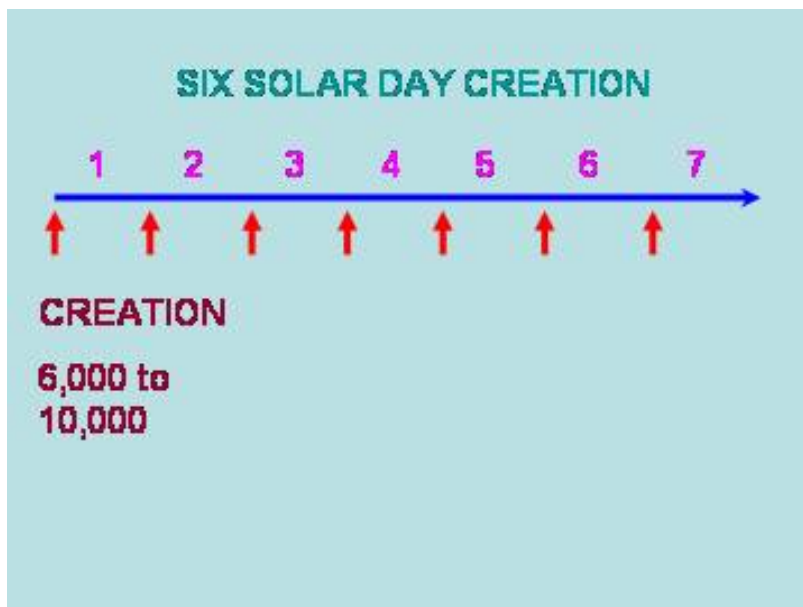
### **Analogical Days Interpretation**

Each of the “days” in the creation stories are God’s workdays. God created in six- God days. They are “analogous” to human workdays.” The days are “successive periods of unspecified length.

Again, they see the Bible as saying nothing about the age of the earth or when God created. Most see the world as billions of years old.

Finally, we come to the view that has been the one accepted through most of church history.

### **Six Solar Day Creation**



God created in six solar days just as the text seems to indicate. A day here is a day as we know it – 24 earth hours.

This would put the age of the universe at somewhere around 6,000 to 12,000 years.

These are the main views. There are many variations and other totally different views.

Most of those views probably blended into a blur as I rushed through them.

But, there are differences – and as we will see next week – significant differences in these views.

So how do we narrow things down?

Let me say this.

God has given us two testimonies about His creation.

**Special Revelation** – His Bible – His Scriptures.

And **General Revelation** – nature – what we can observe with our five senses.

The great question in terms of Genesis is how do these two testimonies relate to each other?

In particular, what about when they appear to contradict – what do you do?

Both general and special revelation are God given – so they shouldn't contradict. If they appear to, it means we have either misunderstood Scripture – or we have misinterpreted the evidence of the world around us.

For example – it is true that in the Middle Ages some Christians thought the Bible taught that the world was flat. Sail far enough and you will fall off the edge.

They based this on verses like Job 38:4:

Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?

As if the earth rests on a foundation.

Revelation 7:1:

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth.

There are corners to the world.

Then along came Copernicus to demonstrate that the world is spherical.

What do we do? Say – it does not matter how much science we have that shows the world is spherical – we believe by faith in a flat earth – don't question us on this again?

No – what we do is this. We look again at our text. Have we misunderstood it? If we have – if our interpretation is wrong then we find out what it really means.

If we have not misunderstood it – if our interpretation still seems to be what God intended – then don't change.



The reality is that the Bible never taught the earth was flat – that was a faulty way of reading those verses.

Many scholars understood these verses differently even in antiquity. They understood the Bible to be using phenomenological language – picturesque – not scientific.

The Bible describes the sun rising. We know the world rotates – but it *looks* like the sun rises.

When science seemed to show the world was spherical – true Bible scholars – looked and agreed that the Bible did not teach a flat earth. They understood that it was the *interpretation* of Scripture that some had held that was wrong – **not** the Bible itself.

So is that what is going on in Genesis?

Is it true that today we know that the world is 4 billion years old and man came about by evolution – so we have to alter our view of Genesis 1 to fit science?

**Not at all!** First, I believe very strongly that the traditional interpretations of Genesis 1 are those that are true. There is nothing wrong with our understanding of these verses.

What I believe is the problem is that the role and place of science has been misunderstood – because the ability of man to interpret general revelation has been grossly overstated.

Science has developed to the point where it can tell us something with a degree of accuracy about the world as it is today.

But what science cannot do is tell us with *any* degree of accuracy about the world of yesterday or tomorrow. It can only give hints.

We can take what we observe today and apply assumptions to try and extrapolate about the past.

But, we are all biased interpreters.

Someone digs up a fragment of a skull. I see an extinct ape. Someone else sees a distant relative. Often it turns out to be neither.

Someone examines a rock and applies uranium dating to come up with an age of billions of years. I ask – is the rate radioactive decay constant, did the rock start out with no radioactive isotopes, did any event in the past effect decay, are your instruments accurate enough to extrapolate back?

Depending on our instruments and assumptions and biases – we get very different answers.

In extrapolating scientific theory of today to tell us about the past we need someone with perfect instruments and assumptions and deductions to get any form of accuracy – and such a man or woman does not exist.

The *Oxford Dictionary* defines science to be “a branch of study which is concerned either with a connected body of *demonstrated truths* or with *observed facts* (emphasis added).

Neither evolution nor creation is *demonstrable* **nor** *observable* and thus is **not** provable through science.

We can make some assumptions – but we need to hold them lightly.

In fact, I think *both* sides of the debate often *overestimate* the place of science.

Let us not forget that as we learn more, science continues to challenge the theory of evolution.



As far as I know – no one holds to Darwin’s theory of evolution as he stated it.

Most evolutionists today hold to one of dozens of views of modified Darwinian evolution.

And, because of the gaps in the fossil record – some hold to punctuated evolution.

Others say that 4 billion years isn’t enough time for evolution – so they hold that life began in other worlds or other universes and then came to earth.

Science forces them to modify their theories.

My point is this. Two scientists will look at the same evidence and come to two different views of evolution.

I am not a prophet – but here is a prediction. In fifty years – if the Lord has not returned – non-Christians will still hold to evolution – but as science progresses it will cause them to re-evaluate their view of evolution. The view of evolution held in fifty years will be different from that commonly held today.

But in trying to bolster our case for creation some in the Creation Science movement and the Intelligent Design movement have made a similar error – relying *too much* on science. Thinking it proves with a degree of certainty that it cannot.

They are right that as we correctly understand more about our world through science it will conform to the Bible. True science will not contradict a true interpretation of the Bible.

Where I think many go wrong is thinking that through science we can show non-Christians the error of their ways and lead them to biblical truth.

The problem is we are biased. Without God's Spirit enlightening us, we can't view any evidence truly objectively.

Unless God has mercy on us and opens our mind – all it does is force the world to find another non-Christian way to view the universe.

Paul made that clear in Romans 1:19-22:

What may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

Creation speaks eloquently of God. But man suppresses the truth that is evident in God's creation.

But even some Christians forget how much men suppress the truth.

Hugh Ross is a leading proponent of the Day-Age theory. He says this:

Today the big bang is as well established as the shape of the Earth. Residual resistance to the big bang arises not from the data but from its profound theological implications.<sup>1</sup>

How certain is he of the evidence for a transcendent universe – his term for a universe formed by a big bang? He says this:

Scientific evidence for the transcendent creation of the cosmos now exceeds 99.999999999999 percent certainty.<sup>2</sup>

I have looked at the evidence for the age of the earth and universe and at best I find it very equivocal. Some forms of evidence point to a young earth – others seem to indicate an older earth. Nothing is in any way definitive.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.reasons.org/resources/connections/2003v5n2/index.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> Cited in David Hagopian (editor) *The Genesis Debate* (Mission Vejo, Crux Press, 2001) p. 271.

But even if the evidence pointed strongly in one direction or another, I am not certain that there is anything in this world I am 99.999999999999 percent certain of – let alone being able to say with this degree of certainty what happened 14 billion years ago.

Personally, I see this as scientific hubris and a gross overestimate of the abilities of man.

And even worse – it neglects God.

I suspect that most scientists would say that they are 99.999999999999 percent certain or even 100 percent certain that there are no exceptions to the law of gravity or that no one can raise the dead.

But, Jesus walked on water. Jesus raised Lazarus.

Creation is a miracle. I believe in the God of miracles.

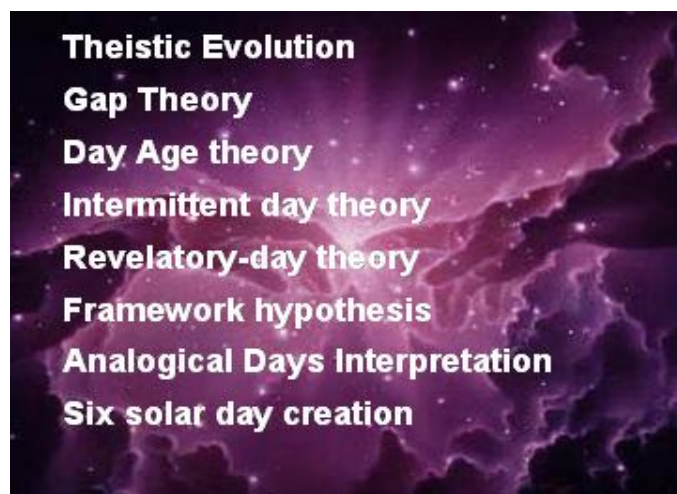
But this overestimation of science also effects other Christians.

William Dembski – a leading proponent of Intelligent Design – states that the creation story Darwin gave us is on the way out. He then postulates that the day will come when the National Endowment of the Sciences will fund Intelligent Design.

I don't think so. Man's darkened heart will not let him think that there is a Designer or Creator.

If science shows that the current theory of evolution is wrong – men will simply change their theory of evolution or come up with some new theory of where we came from – as long as it doesn't involve God.

So all of this to say – I am very sceptical of taking what I believe to be a clear understanding of Scripture and finding a way to change it and shape it and make it mesh with a current understanding of science that seeks to explain our existence apart from God.



As a Bible Scholar – I find *Theistic Evolution* to be without merit. It accommodates evolution and relegates the biblical text to myth. I find that unacceptable.

In my mind the *Gap Theory* also lacks any exegetical rigour. To find a whole other world in the space between Genesis 1:1 and 2 smacks of trying to find a way to fit an old earth into Genesis rather than letting the text speak.

Similarly, the *Day Age theory* to my way of reading fails to understand the use of day in the context. It imports a meaning foreign to the context simply to find a way to fit an old earth into Genesis.

And again the *Intermittent Day Theory* has to be forced on the text – the idea of the days separated by billions of years is *not* a natural reading of the texts.

The *Revelatory Day Theory* also is artificial. The plain reading is that these are the days in which God created not days in which God spoke to Moses.

It may just be me – but I struggle with the idea of God creating the universe 14 billion years ago – and then through evolution or creative events – plodding on until only very recently – 10,000 years ago or so – getting to the point – creating man.

What is the point? That doesn't mesh with how I understand God. God does not involve Himself in pointless exercises.

Also – 14 billion years of creation – dinosaurs and death – till man – seems to devalue man as the pinnacle of God's creation. It almost makes us an afterthought – not the main event in creation.

The *Framework Hypothesis* is a view that does have merit. Read some of the better books – these authors are great at helping us see some of the detail in the text. But, again – it fails at the point of missing the very clear inbuilt time sequence – first day, second day – morning and evening. There **is** a progression of time here – this is not an entirely atemporal account.

The *Analogical Days Interpretation* also has much merit. But for me it breaks down at the point of asking – would any reader understand these as God-days not human-days? And what is a God-day? Does God have days outside of human time in which He works?

Again, this seems too smart a way to get around the plain meaning of the text.

So I understand the days of Genesis to refer to *Six Solar Day Creation*.

That is the view almost every major scholar held until Darwin. With very few exceptions – this natural reading of the text was the view that the church held to.

Next week I will look at the text to show you *why* I hold to this and *why* God created in this way. There are important meanings in why God created in six days. That is why He did it that way – not instantly or over billions of years.

I have absolutely breezed through these alternative views of the creation days. I think some have more merit than others – but all are held by Christians.

If you are interested – I can recommend some excellent books that will give a much fuller explanation of these views. But honestly, unless this is an area that causes you struggles in your faith – just take the text as written – six days.

While I don't hold to these other views – I respect the men who hold them. In particular – the *Framework* and *Analogical Days* views. They have weaknesses, but also some real merit and they do a good job in several areas of the text.

At this point, I want to wrap this up. I would imagine most in this church hold to a six solar day view of creation – and for that I am thankful – I won't get too much flack for my view.

But I also suspect not too many have really grappled with other views – in particular how they understand the text of Genesis.

So I encourage you to accept these men and women are true God-fearing Christians who love the Lord and His Word. Don't let this be a cause of division.

It is unfortunate that arguments over creation have tended to blunt the message of Genesis.

I trust that from next week on – we will just be able to deal with the text.

And I trust that we will see that embedded in the creation event are important themes about man – our past, present and very much – our future.

Satan knows how to distract the church. He has pushed us to divide over the two ends of time – creation and the end-times – two areas we cannot be entirely dogmatic about. The church has fought over these issues and divided and the battle tends to pull us away from the crucial issue – Christ.

I want to end by reminding you that embedded in creation – is Christ.

The glory of the heavens is meant to lead you to the greater glory of Christ. If you get nothing else out of the account of creation – then you are doing OK.

It is one of my great concerns that the fight over creation – tends to obscure the beacon of Christ in Genesis.

The beacon of Christ starts in the very opening verse.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

The word for God *Elohim* is plural – and created is singular.

I believe that the most likely reason for this is that embedded here at the outset – is the mystery of the trinity.



*Elohim* occurs thirty-five times in this opening chapter – God and Jesus *permeate* this book.

Let me finish by wetting your appetite a little for this book.

I am sure that many of you are aware that Moses structured this book by an introductory formula – the Hebrew word – *toledoth* – these are the generations of.

The first one is in chapter 2:4 These are the generations of the heavens and earth.

But, God is not content to leave us in our sin. So what we find in this section is a pattern that is repeated in many of the later *toledoths*:

**Sin**

**Punishment**

**Grace**



**Sin**

**Punishment**

**Grace**

The *Sin of the Fall* led to the *Punishment* of expulsion from God and death but there was also *Grace*. God would bring blessing to the world through His grace. Grace in that God did not destroy this world. Grace in the promise of Christ – the One who would crush the serpent's head.

Grace – Blessing – Is embodied in the One to come – Christ.

**Sin**

**Punishment**

**Grace**

**Christ**



The next four *toledoths* – have to do with the four great narratives.

*Cain's sin, Flood, Ham's sin and Babel.* And in each case we see the refrain of:

**Sin**

**Punishment**

**Grace**

This becomes a recurring theme. Man is fallen – he sins. God has to punish. But because God is gracious – He shows mercy to His children.

At the end of the first *toledoth* comes the account of Cain and Able.

**Sin** – Cain killed Abel. (4:1-8)

**Punishment** – Cain would wander the earth. (4:9-24)

**Grace** – Cain was given a sign to protect him and in 4:25 and 26 we see that there was grace. Adam was given another son – Seth – the seed line.

Then comes the *toledoth* of chapter 5:1 and another round of:

**Sin**

**Punishment**

**Grace**

**Sin** – Man's wickedness of the earth was great. (6:1-6)

**Punishment** – The flood (6:7)

**Grace** – In 6:8 comes Noah – who found favour with the Lord.

Seth's descendants sinned. But there was grace.

Then comes the *toledoth* of chapter 6:9 and another round of:

**Sin**

**Punishment**

**Grace**

**Sin** – Ham sinned by viewing his father’s nakedness. (9:18-23)

**Punishment** – The curse on Canaan. (9:24-25)

**Grace** – In chapter 9 verses 26 and 27 comes the grace there would be blessing through the other sons of Noah – in particular Shem the seed line that leads to Christ.

Then comes the *toledoth* of chapter 10:1 and another round of:

**Sin**

**Punishment**

**Grace**

**Sin** – The Tower of Babel. (10:32-11:4)

**Punishment** – The confusion of tongues and scattering. (11:5-9)

**Grace** – In 11:10 comes the grace – These are the generations of Shem.

Noah’s descendants sinned. But there was grace. They were spared and Shem was blessed. And through Him the Messiah would come.

This grace led to Abraham – the seed line of Christ.

So this very first *toledoth* – the account of the heavens and the earth – sets a pattern:

**Sin**

**Punishment**

**Grace – that leads to Christ.**

Genesis is a book of man’s intractable sin – and God’s grace in the face of sin. And woven throughout is the One who will come – the deliverer – Jesus Christ. This is the real point of this book – and one we must not miss.

When we look into the night sky we see the greatness of God. When we look at the cross we see the greatest witness to the glory of God.

And Genesis sets the scene for **both**.

I began this sermon with a slide show. But, that slide show only gave you half of the hymn. I want to give you the other half.

God has revealed His glory in creation – **but** even more in Christ. Genesis starts with creation – but moves to Christ and stays there. And both point to the glory of God.

And if we keep this as our focus in Genesis – **then** we will understand the book.