

Answering Bible Difficulties

(Genesis And Science)

Series 5: Course 1
of the Net Bible Institute

By

Don Stewart

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AusAmerica Ministries

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ANSWERING BIBLE DIFFICULTIES: GENESIS AND SCIENCE
(Series 5: Course 1 of the Net Bible Institute www.nbible.org.)

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ANSWERING BIBLE DIFFICULTIES

Genesis And Science

Series 5, Course 1

INTRODUCTION

This is the first in a series of courses titled *Answering Bible Difficulties*. The idea behind the series is to answer all the major difficulties found in Scripture, beginning in the Book of Genesis and continuing right on through the Book of Revelation. We will attempt to be as thorough as possible in answering the major difficulties and so-called contradictions that have arisen in Scripture. There are certain questions in which no clear answer is obvious. In those cases, a number of possible solutions to the problem will be given.

Chapter By Chapter Through The Bible In Future Volumes

Future courses in this series will go through the Scriptures chapter by chapter. Each chapter in the Bible will be summarized and the major difficulties found in that chapter will be addressed. In this way someone can read through the Bible, have each chapter outlined for them, and then have the difficulties in that chapter answered. This introductory course deals with difficulties with the Book of Genesis and science.

Topic One GENESIS AND SCIENCE
How Does The Book Of Genesis Deal With Scientific Issues

We begin our look at Bible difficulties by considering some basic issues with respect to the Book of Genesis and the findings of science. How should we understand the statements of Genesis in light of modern science? Should one expect them to harmonize or are the statements in Genesis irrelevant to science as far as science is concerned?

Topic Two THE WORD DAY IN GENESIS 1 AND THE DATE OF CREATION
When Was The Earth And The Universe Created?

This topic considers the various possibilities of the meaning of the word “day” in the first chapter of Genesis. How does our understanding of this term help us date the earth and the universe?

Topic Three THE EXTENT OF THE FLOOD
Did The Flood Cover The Entire Earth Or Was It Localized?

We next look at the extent of the great Flood that is revealed in the Book of Genesis. Was it worldwide? Was it limited geographically? Was everything on earth killed or was it only a select group of humans and animals?

Topic Four THE DINOSAURS
What Does The Bible Have To Say About Them?

Our final topic looks at the popular question of dinosaurs. What are dinosaurs? Does the Book of Genesis teach that God created dinosaurs along with humans? If so, what happened to the dinosaurs? Could they still exist today?

Topic 1

GENESIS AND SCIENCE

How Does The Book Of Genesis Deal With Scientific Issues?

Our first topic is Genesis and science. We will look at some basic questions about the Book of Genesis and areas of science.

There are a number of accusations made against Genesis with respect to science. For one thing, Genesis is accused of being an unscientific work that contains a number of mythological elements in its view of the earth and the universe. Genesis is also accused of borrowing ideas from the creation accounts of other religions. Hence it cannot be believed.

However we will see that this is not the case. Genesis did not borrow its ideas from other religious writings of the time. Neither is it an unscientific work. Genesis is an accurate account of the creation of the earth and humanity. Hence it can be believed as what it claims to be - God's explanation of what happened, "In the beginning."

QUESTION 1

Does The Book Of Genesis Provide Any Scientific Information Regarding The Formation Of The Universe?

How old is our universe? Can it be reliably dated? Did God use evolution as a means to bring about our world? Does the Bible contain any reliable scientific information about the origination of our planet? It is important for us to understand if these questions, and others like them, can be answered from a study of the Book of Genesis. We can make the following observations.

Where To Find The Answers About Our Origins

The following illustration should help shed light on where we should look for answers in the concerning the origin of the universe.

One afternoon a young girl comes home from school and finds that her mother has made a bath for her. A thermometer in the bathtub records the temperature at ninety degrees Fahrenheit - exactly the temperature she likes. The happy young lady wonders aloud, "How long has the water been in the tub?" There are several possibilities.

- 1) The water came out of the tap boiling hot and has been cooling for a long period of time.
- 2) The water came out of the tap at 100 degrees and has been cooling for only a short time.
- 3) The water has been in the bath tub for only a couple of minutes because the girl's mother knew what time she would come home from school and made it at just the right temperature.

Which of the three possibilities is correct? None of them can be proven scientifically. How can the young girl know how long the water has been in the tub? Simple, she should ask her mother who put it there!

Scientists Have Different Ideas As To The Age Of The Earth

In like manner, scientists have generated theories as to the age of the earth and how it came about to be the right temperature for humanity, animals and plants. Some scientists believe the earth was originally boiling hot and has been cooling for millions of years. Other scientists believe that God made the earth similar to what it is today and that it has not been cooling for millions of years.

We Need To Ask God!

It is impossible to scientifically prove which theory is right because no one was there to observe what happened in the beginning. So how do we answer this and other questions as to the makeup of the universe. Simple, ask God because He made it!

Therefore to find the answer to the questions concerning the origin of the universe we need to go to the One who made it and find out what He has to tell us. Unless we have a clear Word from God on the matter, any theory regarding the origin of the universe, or the process by which it came about, is merely guesswork and cannot be known for certain.

We Need To Avoid Extremes About Genesis And Science

There are two extremes we must avoid when we consider questions concerning the Book of Genesis and science. First, we must be careful not to read into to the text more than is there. We do not want to overstate the purpose of Scripture by making it some scientific account - it was not written with that intent.

The Main Subject In Scripture Is God And Humanity

The Bible was written mainly to give us the record of God's dealings with humanity. It explains how the world has ended up in this sinful position. We must be careful not to read too much into the Scriptural account. Well-meaning people have made mistakes by making the Bible speak too specifically on some issues of science when the Bible did not intend to speak that specifically.

Genesis Is A Timeless Account

It must be appreciated that the first chapter of Genesis is not written as a twenty-first century science book. God has given us a timeless account of the creation of the universe and the earth. It is written in timeless, non-scientific language. When Moses wrote Genesis the existence of other planets was unknown as were the other continents on the earth. Therefore God gave a timeless, non-scientific description of His creation in language ordinary people, in all ages, could understand. It would have been impossible to give a description of the creation in scientific language, for the language would soon become outdated. The first few chapters of Genesis tells us, in non-scientific language, where we came from, how we relate to the rest of creation, and why humanity experiences so much pain and suffering. It also describes the only God who exists, the One who created all things very good in the beginning. He did this in language that would never become outdated.

There Have Been Past Mistakes In Relating Genesis To Science

Disastrous results have occurred when people have tried to read too much into the simple Genesis account of creation. For example, in the past, many in the church took the position that the earth was the physical center of the universe. Proof texts were quoted about the sun rising and setting. It was the sun, not the earth that moved, because the Bible said so. Thus the earth was the center of the universe.

The Bible Has An Earth-Centered Vantage Point

Of course, no one believes this today. The mistake was in assuming Scripture was giving a scientific explanation of the universe when it was only describing the sun, moon, and stars from the vantage point of an observer here on the earth.

The How Of Creation Is Left Unsaid

Scripture says that God spoke and then the universe came into existence. Beyond that there is no explanation or mention of the mechanism that He used. Therefore it is fruitless for us to speculate the "how" of creation. If God thought it were important that we know, He would have told us. Evidently the method which He used was not necessary for us to know. Hence we should avoid supporting, from the text of Scripture, some current scientific theory as to the origin or functioning of the universe. The Bible simply does not comment on these matters.

The Age Of Earth Is Not Stated In Scripture

Nowhere do we find in the Old or New Testament that one's view on the age of the earth was a test of a believers' spiritual maturity. As we have seen, the age of the earth is not an issue with the biblical writers.

Does Genesis Have Anything To Say?

While we should not look for detailed scientific answers in Genesis there is another extreme to avoid. This extreme is to say that the Bible has nothing to say with regard to scientific issues. This view avoids the problems of the Bible and science by saying the Bible does not intend to be understood as saying anything scientifically correct. The Bible, however, contains over one hundred references to the creation of the universe. It passes the bounds of credibility that we are to assume that God did not intend for us to take these references seriously. The Bible places no restrictions upon itself concerning the subjects it will speak upon. The Bible does make statements about our world - where it came from, its present purpose, and its ultimate destiny. Therefore we should attempt to understand how much scientific information the Bible is teaching us.

The Bible says that some scientific facts are understood "by faith."

By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible (Hebrews 11:3).

Therefore when we look at what Genesis has to say about matters of science we accept the biblical answer by faith – the God of the Bible does not lie.

There Are Legitimate Differences Among Believers

We must emphasize that there are areas in which Christians can have legitimate differences of opinion. These include the following topics.

1. The meaning of the word "day" in Genesis 1.
2. The extent of the Flood.
3. The possibility that God created the universe fully mature.
4. The age of the earth and universe.

There is no "Christian" answer to any one of these problem areas. There are good Bible-believers who hold different positions on each of these issues.

We Must Remember The Purpose Of Scripture

We should, however, always remember that the purpose of Scripture is to bring humanity into a relationship with God. According to Jesus, the central theme of the Old Testament is Himself.

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of me (John 5:39).

Likewise Paul's central theme was Christ. The Apostle Paul explains the primary purpose of the Scriptures to us.

And from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ (2 Timothy 3:15).

Again, we emphasize, the main purpose of the Bible is to make its readers wise for salvation. This thought must always be kept in mind when reading any statement in Scripture.

Summary

Several things must be kept in mind when we look at the issue of Genesis and science.

To find ultimate answers to any question we go first to the God who made the universe, who is the God of truth. We must avoid the extremes of making the Bible say too little or too much with regard to science. We should not overstep the purpose of the Bible by attempting to make it some treatise on science but neither should we ignore the clear statements that God is the creator.

When all the facts are finally in, there will be no final conflict between the truth of the Bible and the facts of science. All truth is God's truth.

There are areas, with respect to Genesis and science, where Christians can have legitimate differences. These include such things as: the understanding of the term day of Genesis, the age of the earth, the extent of the flood, and the idea that God created the universe fully mature.

We must always remember that the ultimate purpose of Scripture is to bring humanity into a relationship with Christ. This is what the message of the Bible is all about.

QUESTION 2

Does The Genesis Creation Account Allow For The Theory Of Evolution?

Does the Genesis creation account allow for the theory of evolution? There are many Christians, both scientists and non-scientists, which have alleged that believing in some type of God-guided evolution causes no problem for the believer. The idea that God used evolutionary methods to bring about the present earth and universe is known as Theistic Evolution.

Theistic Evolution – A Compromise Solution

Theistic evolutionists believe that God was behind the process of creation but they have no problem with the modern theory of evolution. They find it possible to accept limitless development, so long as it acknowledged God was guiding that development. Most of them believe God created matter/energy which constitute the universe, and that He established the natural laws behind which the universe is governed. They are willing to accept the development of life and of living things from an original life form but most of them deny the historicity of Adam. Theistic evolutionists willingly change their views on how evolution occurred. Whenever modern science redefines how evolution took place, the Theistic evolutionist changes with their definition.

PROBLEMS WITH UNITING GENESIS AND EVOLUTION

There are many problems in trying to unite Genesis with the theory of chance, mindless evolution. We will consider only a few of these discrepancies.

1. Are We Here By Chance Or Design?

The main problem of trying to equate creation and evolution is that each theory is opposed to the other by its very nature. Evolution means chance, randomness, and unplanned events. There is no guiding principle because evolution is mindless. Biblical creationism, on the other hand, is based upon the perfect plan of the Creator God where nothing is left to chance and everything has a definite purpose. The Genesis creation account has God doing everything with a purpose, this is the exact opposite of randomness.

2. Theistic Evolution Is Against The Clear Teaching Of Text

Another problem of finding some type of evolution in Scripture is that no one would ever discover it from a normal reading of the text. Direct creation by God is the normal way of interpreting the Bible. Nobody would interpret the Scripture as teaching evolution by a simple reading of the text. Statements such as the following are incompatible with randomness.

By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth . . .
For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm (Psalm 33:6,9).

3. There Are No Crossing Of Kinds

The Bible says God made the animals “after their own kind.” This does not allow the “crossing of kinds” as is necessary in the theory of evolution. Dogs don’t become horses, cats don’t become pigs, etc. There

is a limitation by where kinds can develop. This strikes at the very heart of evolution for it argues for a common source of all life forms on our planet.

4. Humanity Was Fully Human At Creation

According to Genesis 2:7 human beings were fully human when created. There is no hint of development from ape men or from any pre-human form. Eve, Adam's wife, was directly created from his body. Therefore the testimony of Scripture is at odds with an evolutionary development of humanity.

5. The Order Of Evolution Is Different Than Genesis 1

The order of events in Genesis 1 is different than the usual evolutionary scheme. Attempts to unite the two are doomed to failure.

These are just a few of the many conflicts between the biblical account of creation and the theory of evolution. There is no chance to harmonize the two.

Summary

It is not possible to unite God's method of intelligent creation with the modern theory of chance evolution. To do so does not take the statements of Scripture at face value. Though some well-meaning people have attempted to do this, it causes more problems than it solves. For example, the Bible says we are here as a result of design; evolution says we are here by chance. The idea that God somehow used chance is against the clear teaching of Scripture. In addition, Scripture speaks of a limit as to the variation of animals and plants – evolution does not. Furthermore, the Bible says that Adam was created fully human – he did not descend from some ape. Finally, the order between biblical creationism and atheistic evolution is different. (For a more thorough discussion of this matter see our course *The Bible and Science: Are They in Conflict?*).

QUESTION 3

What Was God Doing Before He Created The Universe?

The first verse of Scripture tells us that God created the heavens and the earth. The question arises as to what God was doing before He brought the universe into existence. This question has been a favorite of skeptics. Robert Ingersoll, the famous atheist of the 19th century, wrote.

If God created the universe, there was a time when he commenced to create. Back of that commencement there must have been an eternity. In that eternity what was this God doing? He certainly did not think. There was nothing to think about. He did not remember. Nothing had ever happened. What did he do? Can you imagine anything more absurd than an infinite intelligence in infinite nothing wasting an eternity? (Robert Ingersoll, *Some Mistakes of Moses*, n.d., p. 57).

There Was No Time Before Creation

Saint Augustine had two answers to those who asked what was God doing before creation. Jokingly he said, "God was preparing Hell for people who ask such questions." On a serious level, he noted there was no time before God created and hence the question is meaningless. When God created the heavens and the earth He also created space and time. Before time began there was only eternity. God is a timeless being and time only began with His creation of the universe.

God Was Not Inactive Before Creation

Yet, we should not assume that God was inactive prior to creation. The Bible speaks of God loving and planning before the earth was created. Jesus, in His prayer to the Father before His betrayal, said:

Father, I desire that they also whom you gave me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which you have given me; for you loved me before the foundation of the world (John 17:24).

The Apostle Paul spoke of God's eternal plan.

Just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love (Ephesians 1:4).

God Made The Promises Before The Earth Was Created

In another place, Paul said that God made promises before time began.

In hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began (Titus 1:2).

The Members Of The Trinity Made The Promise To Each Other

This brings up an interesting question. If the world had not yet been created, then to whom was the promise of eternal life made? The promise was made among the different members of the Trinity (the Father to the Son or to the Holy Spirit) because at this particular point, that is, before the world was created, there was no one else to whom to make the promise. The different members of the Trinity love

and communicate with each other. Hence, communication occurred within the Godhead before the creation of man and woman.

God Made Plans Both Before And After The Beginning

The Scripture, therefore, speaks of God making plans both before the beginning and after the beginning. Before creation there was communication, planning, and love within the members of the Trinity. After creation that communication and love was directed toward humanity.

Summary

With regard to the activities of God before the universe was created we can state the following:

The question of God's activity before creation assumes God dwells in time. The Bible says that God has eternally existed and that He created space and time.

God, the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, were not inactive before creating the world. God planned and purposed it before humanity came on the scene. Once we were created, God then directed His love and energies toward us.

All we need to know about God is what He has done and what He plans to do in the future. He has revealed this to us in the Bible - the Word of God. The Bible says:

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the works of this law (Deuteronomy 29:29).

QUESTION 4

Is The Genesis Creation Account Similar To Other Ancient Accounts? (The Babylonians Enuma Elish)

During the time of Moses, there were other traditions about the creation of the world that contained similar elements to the biblical account. Some see a parallel between the Genesis account of creation and these other accounts.

THE BABYLONIAN CREATION STORY (THE ENUMA ELISH)

One creation story that is often compared to Genesis is the Babylonian creation account called the Enuma Elish (meaning, “when on high”). The ridiculous story of the Enuma Elish is found upon seven clay tablets.

We will summarize the Enuma Elish to give an idea of how people at that time understood how the earth was formed and how humanity was created.

The Contents Of Tablet One

The first tablet describes an age when the only thing that existed was uncreated world matter. The matter was personified by a male and female being - Apsu and Tiamat. Apsu, the male, represented the fresh water ocean while the female Tiamat, represented the salt water ocean. Their union produced other gods.

The gods Fight

Tablets two and three explain how Apsu became upset with his offspring and decided to kill them. The great god Ea who killed Apsu discovered his plans. Ea then had a son, Marduk, who became the main hero of the story.

The Rise Of Marduk

The fourth tablet gives an account of Marduk’s rise to supremacy over the other gods of Babylon. At the same time Tiamat was planning to avenge her husband’s death by naming the god Kingu as her new commander. Marduk eventually killed Tiamat and divided her body in half; one half was used to create the sky while the other half was used to form the earth!

How Human Beings Were Created

The fifth tablet describes how Marduk appointed the days and months of the Babylonian calendar. The sixth tablet relates how Kingu was executed for Tiamat’s rebellion. It is from Kingu’s blood that the god Ea created humankind. The purpose of the creation of humanity was to serve the gods. The last tablet tells how Marduk became the chief god of Babylon.

THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GENESIS AND THE ENUMA ELISH

As is obvious, there are many differences between the Genesis account of creation and the Enuma Elish. First of all the Enuma Elish is a political document, it is not primarily an account of creation but rather a hymn of praise to Marduk, Babylon’s patron deity. It was written to advance the cause of Babylon by portraying Marduk as being preeminent among the gods. Creation is incidental to the account.

Furthermore no intelligent person can take this account seriously. This is in contrast to the Genesis record where the main emphasis is on the creation and the preparation of the earth. Intelligent men and women still have no problem believing the Genesis account of creation.

1. There Is No Parallel Between The Two Accounts

To show how far certain people will go, some biblical critics see a parallel between the seven tablets of the Enuma Elish and the seven days of creation in Genesis. But tablets two and three of the Enuma Elish have nothing to do with the original creation. There is no chronology of days in the Enuma Elish.

2. The Enuma Elish Account Is Polytheistic – It Believes In Many gods

Another obvious difference between the two accounts is that the Enuma Elish is polytheistic; it argues that many gods exist. Marduk, the chief deity, is brought into existence by means of another god. This is in direct contradiction to what the Bible has to say.

This is what the LORD says -Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God (Isaiah 44:6)

3. God Is The Source Of Power In Genesis

In the Genesis account of creation, God is the ultimate source of power. He merely spoke and things came into existence.

And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. (Genesis 1:20,21).

The Enuma Elish teaches that magical incantations are the ultimate source of power (Tablet III. line 101).

4. God Not Subject To His Creation

The Bible teaches that God is above His creation, He is not subject to anyone or anything.

Who has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor? (Isaiah 40:13)

The Enuma Elish teaches that the gods are subject to nature (Tablet IV. 1-26, 91).

5. Humans Have Been Made In The Image Of God

The Bible teaches that human beings were made in the image of God

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" (Genesis 1:26).

Adam, the first man, was created from the dust of the earth

The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being (Genesis 2:7).

The crude Enuma Elish had man created from the blood of Kingu, a murdered hero (Tablet VI. line 33).

6. Humans Are To Have Dominion Over The Earth

The biblical account of creation records that humankind was made to have dominion over the rest of creation

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground” (Genesis 1:28).

Human beings were created to know God and to have a relationship with Him. The Enuma Elish teaches that humanity was created to work for the gods in order that the gods did not have to work as hard (Tablet VI. line 8,34).

7. Matter Is Not Eternal According To Scripture

The Enuma Elish teaches the eternity of matter. Creation was accomplished through already existent material (Tablet IV. line 137-140; Tablet VI. 33).

The Bible teaches that only God is eternal and that He created the universe out of nothing

And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light (Genesis 1:3).

The New Testament says.

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible (Hebrews 11:3).

THERE IS A VAST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO ACCOUNTS

Hence, anyone who compares the biblical account of creation as recorded in the Book of Genesis and the Enuma Elish will see they are vastly different. There is no comparison between the magnificent Genesis creation account and the crude, polytheistic, unbelievable account found in the Enuma Elish.

There are a few things that should be noted about the Genesis creation account.

The Genesis Account Is Accurate

Genesis is an accurate account of what happened at the beginning. While speaking in non-scientific terms, Genesis correctly records the beginning of the earth and humanity. There are no errors, scientific or otherwise, in this creation account

The Genesis Account Is Sufficient

The Genesis creation account is not an exhaustive account of what happened at the beginning. Yet it is sufficient for us to understand how everything began. It tells us everything that we need to know about our origins.

The Genesis Account Is Majestic

The creation account in Genesis is written in a simple, but majestic, style. The style fits the grandeur of such a subject.

These factors make the Genesis creation account unique in the ancient world. While all other creation stories, such as the crude Enuma Elish, are not believable Genesis presents a simple, accurate believable account of what happened in the beginning.

Summary

The Book of Genesis records an account of creation that is unique in the ancient world. When compared to other creation stories that were circulating at that time Genesis stands far above all accounts. It speaks of one God who spoke and things came into existence. It is a majestic, believable record of our origins.

QUESTION 5

Did The Writer Of Genesis Borrow His Ideas From Other Ancient Creation Accounts?

Though the Babylonian account of creation has vast differences from the Genesis record, there are similarities between them. Both accounts have these events in the following order: the creation of the expanse, the creation of dry land, the creation of luminaries, and the creation of man. Both accounts end with the God or the gods at rest. How can that be explained?

The Biblical Account Was Not Borrowed From Any Other Account

The Babylonian Enuma Elish was written approximately 2000 B.C. while Moses wrote the Genesis account about 1400 B.C. Even though the Enuma Elish was written down earlier there are several reasons why it is not reasonable to infer that the Hebrew account borrowed from the Babylonian.

Genesis Is A Direct Explanation Of What Happened

The Genesis account of creation is a direct explanation of what occurred at the beginning. The Babylonian version, as we have seen, cannot be taken seriously. Furthermore, when one culture borrows a story from another there is the tendency to add fanciful details, not to simplify it. Kenneth Kitchen comments:

The common assumption that the Hebrew account is simply a purged and simplified version of the Babylonian legend . . . is fallacious on methodological grounds. In the Ancient Near East, the rule is that simple accounts or traditions may give rise (by accretion and embellishment) to elaborate legends, but not vice versa. In the Ancient Orient, legends were not simplified or turned into pseudo-history (historicized) as has been assumed for early Genesis (Kenneth Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and the Old Testament*, Chicago; InterVarsity Press, 1966, p. 89).

Therefore the evidence is that the simple stories become embellished, not that embellished stories tend to become more simple through time.

Why Are There Similarities Between The Accounts?

If the Hebrews did not borrow from the Babylonians how, then do we explain the similarities in the two accounts? Some have argued that Moses and the Babylonian account drew upon a common source. It is possible that the common elements in these accounts point to an earlier source. As time went by such people as the Babylonians changed certain elements in the account while the Hebrew account was handed down accurately.

Scripture Was The Original Source Of All Other Accounts

Thus, rather than the Hebrew account being derived from a previous mythical source, it is more likely that it was the original source. It is a simple, straightforward account without any excess details. The events recorded in Genesis 1 are believable. All other ancient creation accounts are not believable.

We Are To Worship The Creator Not The Creation

The Bible, in contrast to all the other ancient accounts of creation, stresses that we worship the Creator and not the creation. God is not part of the created universe nor is it an extension of His character. We are to worship the Creator, not the creation. The Bible says.

You shall not make for yourself any carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth (Exodus 20:4).

Paul spoke of the pagans who have corrupted God's truth.

Who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever (Romans 1:25).

Summary

As we compare Genesis to other creation accounts we see a vast difference. These crude accounts of are no match to the majestic record that Genesis provides us. Any attempt to find these pagan accounts as a source for Genesis is doomed to failure. The Genesis account stands on its own as an accurate record of what happened in the beginning.

QUESTION 6

Are There Mythological Elements In The Genesis Creation Account? (Three-storied Universe)

One of the major criticisms of the early chapters of Genesis concerns the so-called mythological elements that it contains. They include: seeing heaven as a solid dome; heaven having literal windows; the earth being the center of the solar system; and the moon being an actual light.

These unscientific teachings supposedly reveal the fallible human authorship of Scripture. A close examination, however, will show that the so-called mythological elements in Genesis do not really exist.

DOES THE BIBLE PORTRAY A THREE-STORIED UNIVERSE?

One of the accusations against the Scripture is that it portrays what is known as a three-storied universe. The idea that heaven is located above the earth and hell is located under the earth. Consequently the Bible writes saw the entire universe as three different stories – hell, or Sheol, earth, and then heaven. God lived in heaven with the righteous; the wicked lived in hell, or Sheol, while those who are alive lived upon the earth.

Does Genesis See Heaven As A Solid Dome?

In this three-storied universe the Bible supposedly portrays the heavens as something solid. The Hebrews, it is contended, believed the sky was a solid dome. This dome supposedly had windows. These windows opened up to pour out the rainwater upon the earth. We read in Genesis.

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month - on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened (Genesis 7:11).

The New English Bible Mistranslation Of Genesis 1

The *New English Bible* adds to this mistaken idea. In Genesis 1, it translates the Hebrew term *raqiach* as "firmament." This has contributed to the confusion over the meaning of the term and seems to give support that Genesis teaches that the heavens were solid. This, however, is an unfortunate translation of the Hebrew word. It simply means, "expanse."

The Expanse Is Not Something Solid

The Hebrew word for expanse denotes "air" or "atmosphere" not something solid. Birds are often called, "the fowls of heaven." They are said to fly in the heaven, not *through* the heaven.

The likeness of any beast that is on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air (Deuteronomy 4:17).

In Jeremiah we read.

Even the stork in the heavens knows her appointed times . . . (Jeremiah 8:7).

If the Hebrews thought that heaven was a solid plate, then obviously birds could not fly in it.

Heaven Is Not Described As A Solid Dome Elsewhere In Scripture

The Scripture teaches that the heavens were not a solid iron dome but something that was stretched out. The psalmist wrote the following about the heavens.

Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain (Psalm 104:2).

God Stretched Out Heavens

In a number of places in Isaiah, he records God as the one who stretched out the heavens.

Thus says God the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, who gives breath to people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it (Isaiah 42:5).

Isaiah also said.

Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, and he who formed you from the womb; "I am the Lord, who makes all things, who stretches out the heavens all alone, who spreads abroad the earth by myself (Isaiah 44:24).

Isaiah later wrote.

Indeed my hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand has stretched out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand together (Isaiah 48:13).

Finally we read.

And you forget the Lord your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundation of the earth (Isaiah 51:13).

The idea that the heavens were stretched out is inconsistent with some solid dome that is supposedly above us.

There Are Poetic Descriptions Of The Firmament

The Bible also describes the expanse, or firmament poetically. For example, it is described as brilliant sapphire.

There they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there seemed to be a pavement of brilliant sapphire, as clear as the heavens (Exodus 24:10).

In another place, it is poetically described as a mirror.

He makes the skies reflect the heat like a giant mirror. Can you do that? (Job 37:18).

Rain Came From The Clouds – Not From Windows

The Bible also teaches that rain comes from clouds. In the Book of Job we read:

He binds up the waters in his thick clouds (Job 26:8).

The waters in the sky are in the clouds, not in some window connected to a solid dome.

In addition, Job speaks of the normal way in which rain falls.

He draws up the drops of water, which distill as rain to the streams; the clouds pour down their moisture and abundant showers fall on humankind (Job 36:27,28).

The people knew that rain came from the sky – not from some window in heaven.

The Windows Of Heaven Is A Figure Of Speech

Furthermore, the phrase “windows of heaven” should not be taken literally. It is obviously a figure of speech. The phrase “windows of heaven” is used not only of rain, but also of God giving grain:

Then the officer had answered the man of God, and said, “Now look, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, could such a thing be?” (2 Kings 7:19).

The fact that the phrase is used in contexts other than giving rain shows that it is a figure of speech, not something to be understood literally. Therefore the accusation that the writers of Scripture saw the heavens as a solid dome with windows does not fit the facts.

DOES THE BIBLE TEACH AN EARTH-CENTERED UNIVERSE?

The Hebrews supposedly also had a mythological understanding of the place of the earth in the universe. It is alleged that they believed the earth was the center of the universe.

We must emphasize that Scripture was written in popular language from the viewpoint of an observer. There is no attempt by the biblical writers to give us a scientific explanation of how the universe functions. As far as humanity is concerned, we are the center of the universe from our perspective.

IS THE MOON A LIGHT?

Why does the Bible say that the moon is a light when we know that it is not a light but only reflects the light of the sun? Again, we are dealing with the language of observation. This is another example of the biblical writers describing things as they appear. From the point of view of the earth, the moon is a light. From a darkened earth the moon appears to be a bright light in the sky. Therefore, the Bible in speaking from the language of appearance, calls the moon a light.

Summary

Genesis is accused of teaching unscientific things such as a “three-storied universe.” Supposedly they saw the earth was the center of the entire solar system with the heavens above and hell below. It is also alleged that they viewed the heavens as a solid dome with windows. The moon is also said to be a “light.” These are supposedly scientific errors in Genesis.

However all of these accusations misinterpret or misunderstand what Genesis is saying. Genesis is explaining creation from the standpoint of an observer on the earth. From that vantage point the heavens were located above and the place of judgment, hell, was located below. There is no attempt in Genesis to give the precise location of these places. Having said that, it is likely that God’s unique presence is located somewhere above the earth.

The Genesis account of creation does not have the mythological elements found in other ancient accounts of the creation of the world. The so-called mythology in Genesis comes as a result of misinterpreting and mistranslating the text.

The account found in Genesis is a sober, realistic account of the heavens from vantage point of earth. It describes the heavens in the way an observer would see them. There is no attempt in Genesis to give a scientific description of the sun, moon, and stars. Once we understand this, many of the problems will go away.

QUESTION 7

Is The Biblical Flood Account Merely A Legend?

The Book of Genesis records a great Flood sent by God to destroy the wickedness on the earth.

The LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. So the LORD said, "I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created - people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." For my part, I am going to bring a Flood of waters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die (Genesis 6:5,7,17).

Some See The Account As Legendary

Is the Flood account as recorded in the Book of Genesis a legend? Many laugh at the idea that the Flood could have occurred as the Bible said. The following is an example of this type of attitude:

To accept the Flood account as history one must not only forsake a logical (and even literal) interpretation of the text of Genesis, one must abandon the principles of modern geology and prehistoric archaeology, both of which deny the existence of a universal Deluge during the span of man's history on earth . . . The Genesis Flood stories, then, are legends, not history (William A. Stiebling A Futile Quest: The Search For Noah's Ark, *The Biblical Archaeology Review*, June, 1976, Vol II, No. 2, p. 20).

However, the legendary idea does not fit the Genesis account at all. The Bible makes it clear that God did judge the earth by means of a great Flood.

THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE TO THE FLOOD

In both testaments, we find Scripture giving evidence of a great Flood that occurred in the days of Noah. This includes the following testimony.

1. Genesis 6-9 Details The Great Flood

In the Book of Genesis, chapters 6-9, we have a detailed account of the Flood occurring. We are specifically told that God sent the Flood because of the wickedness of the people. He ordered a man named Noah to build a large ship, an ark, to hold him and his family as well as two of each animal. We also know how long the Flood occurred and where the ark landed. This story is told in great detail without the slightest hint that it is merely a mythological story.

2. The Testimony To The Flood By Isaiah

Later we find reference to the Flood by Isaiah the prophet.

To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again (Isaiah 54:9).

3. Noah Was An Historical Character

We find the prophet Ezekiel referring to Noah as a historical person – not a mythical character.

Even if these three men - Noah, Daniel and Job - were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign LORD (Ezekiel 14:14).

4. Peter Spoke Of The Genesis Flood

In the New Testament we have confirmation of the Genesis Flood. Simon Peter wrote.

Who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water (1 Peter 3:20).

Peter also wrote.

For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being Flooded with water (2 Peter 3:5,6).

5. The Testimony Of Jesus To The Flood In Genesis

There is also the testimony of Jesus Christ, the eternal God. Jesus said concerning the Flood.

But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be, for as in the days before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the Flood came and took them all away, so also will be the coming of the Son of Man (Matthew 24:37-39).

Jesus believed that the Flood occurred in the days of Noah and used the circumstances around the Flood as an analogy to the way life would be before He returned. If Jesus was whom He claimed to be, the Son of God, then the Flood did occur because He said it did.

Thus the Bible, from beginning to end, testifies of a great Flood in Noah's day. Scripture is consistent in its portrayal of the Flood as an event that literally occurred.

THERE IS ALSO CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE OF A GREAT FLOOD

There are also many traditions from peoples around the world that speak of a great deluge occurring. These traditions also give circumstantial testimony to the biblical account. The scientist Arthur Custance comments upon the worldwide Flood traditions:

Widely different in detail as many of them are from the biblical record, the traditions are in accord both with it and among themselves on the following four basic issues:

1. The cause was a moral one.
2. They almost all speak of one man who is warned of the coming catastrophe and thus saves not only himself but also his family or his friends.
3. They all agree that the world was depopulated save for these few survivors from whom the present people of the world were derived.

4. In all of them animals play a part either in conveying the warning, or in providing the transportation to safety, or in giving information about the state of things after the Flood had subsided. The following features of interest are then dealt with as in one way or another bearing upon the overall value of their testimony to the Bible.
5. Some of these accounts agree with Scripture in stating that eight souls survived.
6. In extrabiblical accounts, the survivors always land on a local mountain. In the Hebrew account, the ark lands far from Palestine, a circumstance bearing witness to the objectivity of the biblical account.
7. A number of the traditions give extraordinary graphic details of just such incidental circumstances as must have accompanied the event.
8. A small number of them are almost certainly borrowed from Christian missionaries but not nearly the extent sometimes claimed
9. Almost without exception they differ radically from the biblical account by incorporating events that are clearly fantasy. They are, in short, often greatly embellished with details that are strictly mythical, in the popular sense of the word, contrasting very strongly with the dignity, simplicity, and matter-of-fact character of the Genesis record (Arthur Custance, *The Flood: Local or Global?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979, pp. 67, 68).

We have, therefore, circumstantial testimony to the Genesis Flood.

Summary

The biblical evidence says that God sent a Flood to judge the wickedness of humanity. We find three chapters in Genesis detailing how God sent a great flood. In addition, we have the testimony of the prophet Isaiah to the flood. The prophet Ezekiel testified that Noah was a historical character

We also have testimony from the New Testament. Peter, in both First and Second Peter, wrote of the Genesis flood.

We also have the words of the Lord Jesus Himself. He confirmed the fact of the great Flood. This does not, however, settle the matter as to the extent of the Flood whether it was a universal deluge or a local Flood. It does settle the issue, however, that a Flood did occur.

There is also circumstantial evidence of a flood. There are numerous traditions, found all around the world, that speak of a great flood.

Therefore the evidence leads us to conclude that a great flood did occur in the days of Noah.

QUESTION 8

Did The Biblical Flood Account Borrow From Other Ancient Accounts Such As The Babylonian Epic Of Gilgamesh?

There exists an ancient account of a great Flood recorded by the Babylonians known as the Epic of Gilgamesh. It has many similarities to the biblical narrative. This has caused some to accuse the Bible of borrowing from the Babylonian account. But when the two Flood accounts are compared the differences are striking. They are as follows.

1. The Bible Is Monotheistic Other Accounts Are Polytheistic

The biblical account is monotheistic, i.e. it teaches that there is only one God who exists. This one God planned and carried out the Flood. The Epic of Gilgamesh is polytheistic; it recognizes the existence of many gods. These gods purportedly planned the Flood at a council of the gods.

2. There Were Different Reasons For The Flood

According to the Bible, the reason God sent the Flood was because of the sin of humanity. The Epic of Gilgamesh says that the gods sent the Flood because their rest was disturbed by the noise of human beings.

3. The Hero Was Human In The Babylonian Story

The hero in the Epic of Gilgamesh was Utnapishtim. He was given divinity and immortality after the Flood. The Bible says it was Noah to whom God revealed the plan of the Flood. After the Flood Noah was not granted any special favor from God as Utnapishtim. Furthermore, the Bible does not teach that humans can become divine as it does in the Babylonian account.

4. There Were Different People Spared In Each Account

In the biblical record, Noah was spared along with his wife, his three sons and their wives, as well as representatives of each of the animals. In the Epic of Gilgamesh representatives of all living things as well as several families, including craftsman and technicians were spared.

5. There Was A Different Ark Described In Each Account

The Biblical account says that an ark was prepared to save the people from God's judgment. The ark was rectangular, 300 cubits by 50 cubits by 30 cubits (a cubit was approximately 18 inches). There were three levels in this ark. In the Babylonian account, the structure was cubical, 120 cubits by 120 cubits by 120 cubits. There were seven levels and nine sections to the structure. It would not have been seaworthy like Noah's ark.

6. The Time Of Flood Was Different

In the Bible, the Flood lasted 150 days. Heavy rains, upheaval of land, and the breaking caused it up of subterranean waters. In the Epic of Gilgamesh, the duration was only 6 days and nights and consisted of rain, wind and the breaking of dikes.

7. Noah Worshipped God After The Flood

After the Flood, Noah sacrificed to worship God.

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it (Genesis 8:20).

The Epic of Gilgamesh records a sacrifice to appease the anger of the gods.

There Is A Vast Difference Between The Two Accounts

Hence, we see that any surface similarities of the two accounts are outweighed by their differences. They are not the same story.

DID GENESIS BORROW FROM THE BABYLONIAN ACCOUNT?

There are some writers who still believe that the Genesis account was written after the Babylonian version or that both arose from a common source. William Stiebling writes:

Thus it can be safely assumed that the Biblical Flood stories and the Mesopotamian traditions are related to one another, but it is impossible to reconstruct the exact relationship. . . It is clear, though, that the Mesopotamian traditions have temporal priority and that they were the ultimate source of the Biblical versions (William A. Stiebling, *A Futile Quest: The Search For Noah's Ark*, *The Biblical Archaeology Review*, June 1976, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 20).

The charge that Genesis was written after these other accounts is clearly wrong. The Genesis Flood account is a simple, straightforward believable record of what occurred. All other accounts cannot be taken seriously on a scientific or historical level.

In addition, in the ancient world, the simple account always gives rise to the more detailed account –the reverse is never true. Genesis is the simple record of what happened. All others fill in the account with fanciful details.

Other Stories Were Borrowed From The Bible

As for the similarities between the two accounts the evidence testifies that the Epic of Gilgamesh borrowed from the biblical account, not the reverse. Arthur Custance comments:

One strong indication that the biblical account is older lies in the fact that in the Cuneiform accounts more sophisticated terms are used in reference to the vessel itself. It is called a ship, not an ark, and it is spoken of as sailing, whereas Genesis merely says that ‘the ark went.’ Furthermore, in the Babylonian and Sumerian traditions the vessel boasted a ‘steering-man,’ i.e. a helmsman. One would suppose that writers like Frazer, dedicated to the evolutionary views of things, would be reluctant to derive a story of a barge without sail or helm out of a story with sails and rudder, since this is to derive the less sophisticated out of the more sophisticated - evolution in reverse (Arthur Custance, *The Flood: Local or Global*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979, p. 82).

Therefore we have no evidence that Genesis borrowed from any other ancient flood account.

Summary

The biblical account of the Flood shows no evidence of being borrowed from any previously written source – whether it be the Babylonian or Sumerian account. Neither is there any evidence that Genesis was written after these accounts. If any borrowing were done it was *from* the Bible, or a common source, not by the Bible from some pagan source.

There are great differences between the Genesis account of the Flood and the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh. While the Genesis account can be taken seriously on a scientific level, the Babylonian, as well as all other ancient accounts, cannot.

QUESTION 9

Could The Ancients Have Constructed An Object As Large As The Ark?

Is it reasonable to believe that people living thousands of years before the time of Christ could have constructed such a vessel as Noah's ark? Was the building of the ark an impossible task?

The Biblical Dimensions Were Given In Cubits

The dimensions of the ark, as given in Scripture, are as follows: The ark was fifty cubits wide, thirty cubits high and three hundred cubits long. Though we do not know the exact size of a cubit it was somewhere in the neighborhood of eighteen inches. This being the case then the ark would have been approximately 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. The total capacity would have been about 1,518, 750 cubic feet.

Some Think The Ark Was Smaller Than Traditionally Believed

There are believers in the Flood who assume that the ark was much smaller than traditionally believed. Arthur Custance writes.

I think anyone who tries to visualize the construction of a vessel 450 feet long by four men will realize that the size of the timbers for a building 45 feet high (analogous to a four story apartment building) would seem by their sheer massiveness to be beyond the powers of four men to handle. With all means later at their disposal, subsequent builders for 4000 years constructed seaworthy vessels that seldom have exceeded 150 to 200 feet at the most. The queen Mary has a total length of 1018 feet which is not very much more than twice the length of the Ark. It was not until 1884 that a vessel, the *Euria*, a Cuniar liner, was built with a length exceeding that of the Ark (Arthur Custance, *The Flood: Local or Global*, Grand Rapids: MI, Zondervan, 1979, p. 37).

The Bible Does Not Say Only Four Men Built The Ark

However the Bible does not say *only* four men built the ark. Noah could have hired workers to help with the task. He did not have to do the task with only his three sons helping him.

In addition, it does not do justice to the text and to our understanding of the length of a cubit to assume that the ark was much smaller than the traditional understanding of the text.

The Size Of The Ark Is Not Unreasonable

It is not unreasonable to assume that the ancients could have built such a structure as Noah's ark. F.A. Filby wrote.

It seems reasonable, on the natural level, to suppose that Noah possessed that constructive genius which manifests itself from time to time throughout history in the construction of something far beyond the achievement of a man's contemporaries. It was surely the type of genius shown by Imenhotep in the design of the Step Pyramid, by the architect of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, by Ictinus and Callicrates in the building of the Parthenon, and by Charles of Lindus in the construction of Colossus of Rhodes. If we reject the story, and say that the task was too great, and that no man could have stood out so far ahead of his contemporaries, then, we must reject the other

seven wonders of the ancient world. Noah was only the first of that line of geniuses who designed and constructed something which far outshone the capacity of their contemporaries (Frederick A. Filby, *The Flood Reconsidered*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971, p. 80).

Consequently there is no need to appeal to the miraculous or the supernatural with respect to the building of the ark.

Summary

The dimensions of the ark, as given in Scripture, are of a vessel approximately 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. Some feel it would have been impossible for the ancients to construct such a ship. They contend that the ark had much smaller dimensions.

However this is not necessarily the case. Since there were many marvelous building wonders in the ancient world we do not have to assume supernatural construction of the ark. Neither should we assume that the ark was much smaller than the dimensions the Bible gives to it. The biblical account of Noah's ark is certainly reasonable.

Summary To Genesis And Science (Topic 1)

After looking at some introductory questions concerning Genesis and science we can make the following observations.

Question 1. Several things must be kept in mind when we look at the issue of Genesis and science.

To find ultimate answers to any question we go first to the God who made the universe, who is the God of truth. We must avoid the extremes of making the Bible say too little or too much with regard to science. We should not overstep the purpose of the Bible by attempting to make it some treatise on science but neither should we ignore the clear statements that God is the creator.

When all the facts are finally in, there will be no final conflict between the truth of the Bible and the facts of science. All truth is God's truth.

There are areas, with respect to Genesis and science, where Christians can have legitimate differences. These include such things as: the understanding of the term day of Genesis, the age of the earth, the extent of the flood, and the idea that God created the universe fully mature.

We must always remember that the ultimate purpose of Scripture is to bring humanity into a relationship with Christ. This is what the message of the Bible is all about.

Question 2. It is not possible to unite God's method of intelligent creation with the modern theory of chance evolution. To do so does not take the statements of Scripture at face value. Though some well-meaning people have attempted to do this, it causes more problems than it solves. For example, the Bible says we are here as a result of design; evolution says we are here by chance. The idea that God somehow used chance is against the clear teaching of Scripture. In addition, Scripture speaks of a limit as to the variation of animals and plants – evolution does not. Furthermore, the Bible says that Adam was created fully human – he did not descend from some ape. Finally, the order between biblical creationism and atheistic evolution is different.

Question 3. With regard to the activities of God before the universe was created we can state the following:

The question of God's activity before creation assumes God dwells in time. The Bible says that God has eternally existed and that He created space and time.

God, the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, were not inactive before creating the world. God planned and purposed it before humanity came on the scene. Once we were created, God then directed His love and energies toward us.

All we need to know about God is what He has done and what He plans to do in the future. He has revealed this to us in the Bible - the Word of God.

Question 4. The Book of Genesis records an account of creation that is unique in the ancient world. When compared to other creation stories that were circulating at that time Genesis stands far above all accounts. It speaks of one God who spoke and things came into existence. It is a majestic, believable record of our origins.

Question 5. As we compare Genesis to other creation accounts we see a vast difference. These crude accounts of are no match to the majestic record that Genesis provides us. Any attempt to find these pagan accounts as a source for Genesis is doomed to failure. The Genesis account stands on its own as an accurate record of what happened in the beginning.

Question 6. Genesis is accused of teaching unscientific things such as a “three-storied universe.” Supposedly they saw the earth was the center of the entire solar system with the heavens above and hell below. It is also alleged that they viewed the heavens as a solid dome with windows. The moon is also said to be a “light.” These are supposedly scientific errors in Genesis.

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The account found in Genesis is a sober, realistic account of the heavens from vantage point of earth. It describes the heavens in the way an observer would see them. There is no attempt in Genesis to give a scientific description of the sun, moon, and stars. Once we understand this, many of the problems will go away.

Question 7. The biblical evidence says that God sent a Flood to judge the wickedness of humanity. We find three chapters in Genesis detailing how God sent a great flood. In addition, we have the testimony of the prophet Isaiah to the flood. The prophet Ezekiel testified that Noah was a historical character

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We also have the words of the Lord Jesus Himself. He confirmed the fact of the great Flood. This does not, however, settle the matter as to the extent of the Flood whether it was a universal deluge or a local Flood. It does settle the issue, however, that a Flood did occur.

There is also circumstantial evidence of a flood. There are numerous traditions, found all around the world, that speak of a great flood.

Therefore the evidence leads us to conclude that a great flood did occur in the days of Noah.

Question 8. The biblical account of the Flood shows no evidence of being borrowed from any previously written source – whether it be the Babylonian or Sumerian account. Neither is there any evidence that Genesis was written after these accounts. If any borrowing were done it was *from* the Bible, or a common source, not by the Bible from some pagan source.

There are great differences between the Genesis account of the Flood and the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh. While the Genesis account can be taken seriously on a scientific level, the Babylonian, as well as all other ancient accounts, cannot.

Question 9. The dimensions of the ark, as given in Scripture, are of a vessel approximately 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. Some feel it would have been impossible for the ancients to construct such a ship. They contend that the ark had much smaller dimensions.

However this is not necessarily the case. Since there were many marvelous building wonders in the ancient world we do not have to assume supernatural construction of the ark. Neither should we assume that the ark was much smaller than the dimensions the Bible gives to it. The biblical account of Noah's ark is certainly reasonable.

We now move on to the next section – the days of Genesis and the date of creation. We will look at the following questions.

Were the days in Genesis chapter one literal days?

Could the days in Genesis chapter one represent long ages?

Is the Gap Theory the best understanding of Genesis 1?

Did God create the universe fully-grown?

Topic 2

THE DAYS OF GENESIS 1 AND THE DATE OF CREATION

When Was The Earth And The Universe Created?

In this section we will concentrate on one of the most controversial and often-discussed topics in the Book of Genesis – the meaning of the word day and the age of the earth.

As we shall see, there are a number of different views that Bible-believers hold on this fascinating subject.

For example, some see the earth as being relatively young while others believe it is millions of years old. Some see judgment in the first chapter of Genesis while others do not. All of these conclusions are claimed to have been made from a study of the Scripture. Obviously, all of these perspectives cannot be true.

As we examine this topic we will discover exactly what the Bible does say, and does not say, with respect to Genesis 1 and the date of creation.

QUESTION 10

How Are We To Understand The Word “Day” In The First Chapter Of Genesis?

One of the most basic questions about the biblical account of creation concerns our understanding of the word “day” in the first chapter of Genesis. Genesis speaks of God creating the heavens and the earth in “six days” and then resting upon the seventh. The question arises as to what the word “day” refers to and how it relates to the age of the earth and universe. In what sense does it help us determine the age of the earth and the universe?

Throughout history there have been a number of answers given to this question by Bible-believing scholars. Before evaluating the most popular responses to this question we will first make some preliminary observations.

This Question Is Not A Test Of One’s Faith

We must emphasize that one’s view on the meaning of the days in Genesis, or the time involved in creation, should not be made a test of fellowship among believers. Unfortunately, there are some churches and Christian organizations that have made a particular view regarding the days of creation, and the age of the universe, as a test of membership or leadership. Nowhere do we find in the Old or New Testament a person’s view of the age of the earth, or of the days in Genesis, used as a test of their spirituality or qualifications for leadership. We must not place our restrictions, restrictions which the Bible does *not* place, upon people who wish to become involved in Christian work.

The Central Issue - What Did God Do?

If creation took place longer than six days of twenty-four hours each then the character of God is not maligned. Time does not diminish the miracle of creation. God could have created the universe in six seconds if He wished. The issue is not what God *could* have done; the issue is what God did do.

On the other hand, if the evidence leads us to believe that the six days were twenty-four hours in length, and that God recently created the universe, we should not shy away from that because modern science opts for an old universe. The key is to find out, as best as we can, what the text says.

The Rise Of Modern Science Caused Changes In The Interpretation Of Genesis

The rise of modern science has seen a change in interpretations of the Book of Genesis. Theologian John Sailhamer writes.

For the past two hundred years the understanding of the biblical creation account has gradually shifted. As modern scientific views of the origin of the universe have radically changed, interpretations of the Genesis creation account have been shaped to fit them. Whether we like it or not, modern science has fundamentally altered how we read and understand the Genesis creation account (John Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, Sisters Oregon, Multnomah Books, 1996, p. 27).

Scripture Is The Final Authority On This Issue

Because of certain conclusions of modern science, some interpreters have sought to place nature on an equal footing with Scripture in determining Bible/science issues. They claim that God has given us

two infallible revelations, one in the Bible and one in nature, and these are of equal authority. This attitude is very dangerous. First, it fails to appreciate the difference between Scripture, which is an explanation of God's plan for humanity, and nature, which is a silent testimony to God's creative hand. Nature tells us about God's power and majesty, but it does not tell us any specifics about His plan.

The Fallen Condition Of Humanity Needs To Be Appreciated

The Bible also speaks of the world as presently being in a fallen condition resulting from the influence of sin. This should make us cautious about any final conclusions from science. Furthermore, what does one do when nature and Scripture are seemingly in conflict? The usual response is to reinterpret the Bible to fit the latest finds of science. This approach robs the Bible of its authority. Scientist E.H. Andrews writes of those who put the Bible and nature on an equal par:

You notice that the book of nature and the Word of God are both 'Divine Records'. They are put on a par, on an equal level, so that one is not to be preferred or advanced beyond the other. This surely is a denial of the evangelical doctrine of Scripture and the teaching of Romans 1 concerning the inability of fallen man to comprehend the 'book of nature' (E.H. Andrews, *Christ And The Cosmos*, Welwyn, Garden City, England, Evangelical Press, 1986).

Some People Want Make Genesis Fit The Latest Scientific Theory

Another error we should seek to avoid concerns the constant reinterpretation of Scripture by modern science. We should be careful when we attempt to equate Genesis with the latest discoveries of science. P.J. Wiseman makes an appropriate point.

Modern thought about the origin of things is still in its usual state of flux, and there is nothing that can become out-of-date so quickly as an up-to-date scientific explanation of the first chapter of Genesis. This narrative has often been 'harmonised' with modern scientific theories, only to find that scientists have necessarily changed their position, leaving the 'explanation' quite out-of-date. H.G. Wells, for instance, complained that 'we do not rewrite and retell Genesis in the light and language of modern knowledge' . . . had the Genesis account been subjected to constant amendment in accordance with modern thought, the various editions of it would make an interesting history of the changes in human thought on the subject, but it certainly would not impress us with the sum of human wisdom about origins (P.J. Wiseman, *Clues To Creation In Genesis*, London, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1977, p. 111,112).

A Fair Presentation Of The Facts Is Necessary

It is our intent to give a fair and objective presentation of each of the major views on this subject using the best arguments that are put forward. It should also be noted that within each major view there are those who differ in the various details. We will, therefore, attempt to offer only the main points of each view so that they are accurately represented.

Each Theory Has Its Strengths And Weaknesses

At the end of each theory, we will bring up difficulties that others have raised. Finally, the strengths and weaknesses of each view will be summarized and the reader can decide which is the best answer to this controversial question.

THE POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS OF THE DAYS IN GENESIS AND THE TIME OF CREATION

We will look at various theories of the days of Genesis and the time of creation. These different theories will be broken down into four categories.

- 1. Literal Twenty-Four Hour Days**
- 2. Long Ages**
- 3. Symbolic Days**
- 4. Other Factors For Dating The Earth**

LITERAL DAYS OF TWENTY-FOUR HOURS

The following theories all treat the days as being literal days of twenty-four hours in length.

1. The Solar Day/Recent Creation Theory

The first option we will explore is that the days in Genesis refer to solar days, twenty-four hours in length. According to this view, the earth was created very recently - a few thousand years ago. Therefore the earth and universe are both very young.

2. The Solar Day/Creation Undated Theory

The next theory holds that the days in Genesis were solar days, but that the creation of the universe is not dated. It argues that Genesis 1:1 states that God created the universe at some dateless time in the past. After He created the heavens and the earth, He then filled the earth in six literal days. The Bible makes no comment, one way or another, about the time that God spent creating the universe before He concentrated on the filling the earth in six literal days.

3. The Local Creation Theory

This view is similar to the preceding one. It has Genesis 1:1 referring to the creation of the original universe at some dateless time in the past. However this theory sees the rest of the creation account as only referring to the Promised Land - it does not refer to the entire globe. The six days that are listed in Genesis, beginning with 1:2, merely talk about preparing the Promised Land for humanity to dwell in it. This occurred in six literal days. The date of the original creation of the universe is purposely not given to us.

4. The Gap Theory

The Gap Theory believes that Genesis 1:1 is a statement of the original creation of the universe. Between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 some catastrophic event happened that destroyed the first world. Genesis 1:2, through the end of the first chapter, describes a re-creation of the earth, not the original creation. This recreation occurred in six literal days.

5. The Literal Days/With Gaps Between Them Theory (Progressive Creationism)

The next theory also holds to literal days in Genesis, but with gaps between the literal days. These gaps between the six days of creation could have lasted millions of years. It is argued that much of the creation activity took place between the six days, not necessarily during them.

6. The Revelational Day Theory

This particular theory argues that the days in Genesis were not days of creation, but literal days in which God revealed to Moses what He had done in the beginning. Thus in six literal days, God told Moses about His creative work. Because these are days of revelation and not creation, it is impossible to date the earth and the universe.

LONG AGES

There is one theory that sees the days of Genesis as age/days, not as days of twenty-four hours in length.

7. The Age/Day Theory

This option holds that the days in Genesis are not meant to be understood as solar days but rather as indefinite periods of time - possibly millions of years each. This allows Genesis to harmonize with the findings of modern science.

SYMBOLIC DAYS

The following theories see the days in Genesis as neither literal days nor long periods of time. They are merely symbolic of God's creative activity.

8. The Literary Framework View

The literary framework view understands the days in Genesis to be part logical and part chronological. There is a definite literary framework in which the entire Book of Genesis. This includes the creation account. The days, therefore, are not to be taken literally but rather symbolically of God's creative work.

9. The Religious Only View

This option believes we are asking the wrong question. The author of Genesis intended to give no scientific information whatsoever with respect to the creation of the heavens and the earth. His purpose was religious, not scientific. To try to find any information of a scientific nature misses the purpose of what the author is trying to tell his readers. Therefore, it is not necessary to attempt to harmonize Genesis and science since there was no intent to make them harmonize. The writer was not addressing that question.

OTHER FACTORS IN DATING THE EARTH

There are other factors that directly bear on calculating the age of the earth. Although they do not have anything to say about the meaning of the word "day" they need to be considered when this issue is addressed.

10. Time Needs To Be Taken Into Consideration

Time needs to be taken into consideration when one attempts to date the earth. Whether the earth is young or old, it has changed with time.

11. The Ideal Time Theory (Mature Creationism)

There is a distinction between ideal time and actual time. Mature creationism, or ideal time, emphasizes that God created the universe with a superficial appearance of age. When Adam and Eve were created, they were made fully mature. When they were thirty seconds old they probably looked thirty years old. The rest of the universe was created on the same order. The trees, stars, animals, and everything else was created fully mature. This fact has to be taken into consideration in the dating of the earth and universe.

12. The Fall Of Humanity And Uniformitarianism

God created everything perfect. However humanity rebelled against Him and sin entered the earth. The original perfection was now marred. Things began to break down after the Fall. This factor needs to be taken into consideration when one attempts to date the age of the earth.

Unbelievers assume that everything has been developing the same from the beginning. This is known as uniformitarianism. It has no room for the Fall.

13. Flood Geology

Flood geology argues for a universal Flood in the days of Noah that completely changed the surface of the earth. Most fossils that we find today are a result of this global Flood. As a result, there is no record of long geologic ages in the rocks. The rocks testify to a universal Flood. These facts must be taken into account when one tries to date the earth.

Summary

The word day in the first chapter of Genesis has been understood in a number of ways by Bible-believing Christians. Some see the days as literal solar days, others as long ages, while still others see them as symbolic days.

Other factors that need to be considered when attempting to date the age of the earth are time, the fall of humanity, and the Genesis Flood. There is also the view that everything was created recently but with the appearance of age.

All of these things add to the difficulty of attempting to date the age of the earth and the universe.

QUESTION 11

What Is The Recent Creation View?

The most popular view has been to consider the days in Genesis as literal or solar days - twenty-four hours in length. Most people who believe the days are literal twenty-four hour periods hold to what is known as the "Recent Creation View." They believe that the creation of the universe is a relatively recent matter, happening some ten to twenty thousand years ago. Thus the earth and the universe are very young. Individuals who hold this particular view are called "young earthers."

THE CASE FOR SOLAR DAYS AND A YOUNG EARTH

The following arguments are given for the solar day theory and the recent creation view.

1. It Is The Normal Reading Of The Text

Those that advocate the solar day/recent creation view maintain that this is the normal reading of the Genesis creation account as well as the rest of the Bible. If one takes Scripture at face value, then they will conclude that the earth was created in six literal days a few thousand years ago.

2. It Has Been The Historical View Of The Church

History is also appealed to. Historically, the Jews interpreted the days as literal, solar days. The church has, for the most part, held to a literal understanding of the days of Genesis. This furthers the argument that if the Scriptures are taken at face value, the days will be understood in their normal sense.

3. It Is The Obvious View

In addition, those interpreters who believe the biblical record can be understood to mean "ages" instead of "literal days" recognize that the literal day view is the "obvious view." Thus, all other views would be the non-obvious interpretations.

4. A Day In Scripture Defined

In Genesis 1:5 we find the term *yom* as being defined as one day/night cycle.

God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day (Genesis 1:5).

Consequently, the author of Genesis, from the beginning, gives us the definition of day.

5. The Literal Days Are Elsewhere Restated

Elsewhere, Moses, the same writer who wrote the first chapter of Genesis, restated that the creation occurred in six literal days. The children of Israel were told they were to work six days and then rest upon the seventh because:

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 (Exodus 20:11).

The analogy of six days of work and one day of rest would not make sense if the days were other than literal. Therefore, those who advocate another view as to the meaning of the word day, have the burden of proof to show why the word should not be understood in its normal meaning.

6. They Would Have Been Understood As Literal Days

Many Old Testament scholars contend that the ancient Hebrews would have only understood the days listed in Genesis 1 as literal days. Old Testament scholar James Barr of the University of Oxford wrote:

So far as I know there is no professor of Hebrew or Old Testament at any world-class university who does not believe that the writer(s) of Genesis 1-11 intended to convey to their readers the idea that creation took place in a series of six days which were the same as the days of 24 hours we now experience (James Barr, personal letter to David Watson, dated April 23, 1984).

7. The Hebrew Word For Day Usually Means Solar Day

Another argument for solar days can be found in the Hebrew word (*yom*) translated “day” in Genesis 1. In the Bible *yom* is used in the singular about 2,000 times in the Old Testament with the usual meaning being a solar day. We find the term is also used for the time of daylight (as opposed to night), and for a point in time, particularly in the future (such as the phrase “day of the Lord”). Only in rare cases, however, is it used for a period of longer than twenty-four hours and only if the context demands it.

8. They Are Always Solar Days When Used With Numerical Adjectives

Furthermore, there are about 200 references in the Old Testament where *yom* is used with a numerical adjective (e.g. day one, day two). This includes nine times within the creation account of Genesis (1:5, 1:8, 1:13, 1:19, 1:23, 1:31, 2:2 twice, and 2:3). In every other Old Testament instance, a solar day is *always* in view. If the days in Genesis are anything but solar days, then they would be the *only* exception to that usage.

9. The Words Are Always Used For Solar Days In A Numbered Series

In addition, when the word day is used in a numbered series in the Old Testament (for example Numbers 7:12-78), it is always used as a normal day.

10. The Plural Of Yom Always Speaks Of Solar Days

We also find the plural form of *yom* (*yamin*) is used over 700 times in the Old Testament and it always refers to literal days. The exceptions would have to be the two instances where it refers back to the original creation in Genesis if the days are not meant to be understood as literal.

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 (Exodus 20:11).

Later in Exodus it says.

It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested (Exodus 31:17).

11. Yom Is Used Of Daylight As Opposed To Night

The term *yom* is also used for the twelve hour period of daylight in four different places within the creation narrative of Genesis (1:5,14,16,18). There are, however, no numerical adjectives used in these references. Day and night are described here as periods of light and darkness (verse 5) which would give further testimony that a normal day is in view.

12. The Days Are Linked With Years

In Genesis 1:14 the term days are linked with years.

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years (Genesis 1:14).

We find the word "days" linked with the word years. It is clear that literal days are in view otherwise the term "years" would be meaningless. This is another indication that the days in Genesis are meant to be understood as literal days.

13. The Phrase Evening And Morning Speaks Of A Solar Day

As we examine the text we find other evidence that suggest the days were to be understood as literal. For example, the natural way of taking the phrase "evening and morning" would be in a twenty-four hour sense of light and darkness. This same phrase occurs one hundred times in other parts of the Old Testament and it *always* has a twenty-four hour day in view. Again, Genesis 1 would have to be the exception to the rule.

G.F. Hasel, writing in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, gives a fitting summary to the biblical evidence.

In the creation account of Gen. 1 appears the repeated phrase, "and there was evening and there was morning . . . day This formula indicates (1) that "evening and morning" should be understood alike in all six days, (2) that the day begins with evening, (3) that each day is a real twenty-four-hour day, and (4) that thus, the daily rhythm of time has its beginning. The creation day is understood as a normal twenty-four hour day in Ex. 20:8-11; 31:15,17 (G.F. Hasel, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Revised Edition, General Editor G.W. Bromiley, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1979, Volume 1 p. 877).

The biblical use of the word *yom* coupled with the repetition of evening and morning in Genesis 1, have led many to conclude that a solar day is clearly in view in the Genesis account of creation.

14. God Has Rested From Creation

There is other evidence for the solar day view. The Bible explicitly states that God has rested from His creation.

And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done (Genesis 2:2).

After the sixth day, God "rested" or "ceased creating" anything new. Though God is still resting from creation, the seventh day was a distinct period of time in the past when He rested. When the Bible says that God rested on the seventh day it is always in the past tense, not the present tense. Thus, the seventh

day of creation is over. Hence it should not be made to refer to an unknown period of time as some have attempted to do.

15. Sudden Creation Is Taught In Scripture

It is also contended that the Scripture teaches that creation occurred suddenly. The Bible says.

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth . . . Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the earth stand in awe of him. For he spoke and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast (Psalm 33:6,8,9).

The implication is that creation came about in a sudden manner. There does not seem to be any long period of time from the commandment to the fulfillment. We can point to the analogy that other miracles of God recorded in Scripture occurred instantaneously. For example, God caused the Red Sea to immediately part (Exodus 14:21) and Jesus changed water instantaneously into wine (John 2:9-11).

Sudden creation is consistent with the way God has worked throughout the entire Scripture. It also fits well with the interpretation that the days were twenty-four hours in length occurring only a few thousand years ago.

16. Symbiosis (Mutual Need) Necessitates A Solar Day

Symbiosis is a scientific term for the mutual need that certain types of living things have for one another. For example, many plants cannot reproduce without the help of certain insects or birds. This mutual need is strong evidence of the need for literal days in the Genesis creation account.

The Bible says that that plants were created on the third day (Genesis 1:9-13), birds on the fifth day (Genesis 1:20-23), and insects on the sixth day (Genesis 1:24-25, 31). Plants can only survive a short period of time without birds and insects. It is impossible for them to exist for millions of years waiting for birds and insects to come on the scene. In addition, many types of birds eat only insects. How could they have survived while waiting for millions or billions of years for the insects to arrive? Symbiosis between these living things speaks loudly for a twenty-four hour day in Genesis 1.

17. The Testimony Of The New Testament To Solar Days

The New Testament also provides evidence that the days were considered to be literal. There are a number of passages that say the human race was created about the same time as the universe. Mark records Jesus saying.

But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female (Mark 10:6).

If a considerable time elapsed between the creation of the material universe and of humanity then this verse would be misleading. Therefore, the creation must have taken place relatively recently.

Conclusion

This evidence has led many people to believe that God meant for us to understand the days of creation in the normal sense of the word - literal days. These literal days of creation took place recently in earth's history. Thus the world is only a few thousand years old. God created the world in six days to set a pattern for humanity.

DIFFICULTIES WITH LITERAL DAY/ RECENT CREATION VIEW

Though the twenty-four hour day/recent creation view has been popular, it has not gone without criticism. Many Bible-believing scholars do not think it was the intent of the author of Genesis to communicate that the days were normal solar days. They respond to the arguments in the following manner.

1. The Text Is Not That Clear

Those rejecting the literal day view contend that the text is not that clear as to the days being literal. On the contrary, they point out that the word “day” can and does mean more than just a solar day in the context of the creation account.

2. There Are Other Possibilities

Even if one grants the idea that the days in Genesis are meant to be understood as normal, solar days, this does not necessarily mean that the creation of the earth was something recent.

3. The Church Has Not Always Believed In Solar Days

Furthermore, the church has not always believed in literal twenty-four days of creation. There was *not* unanimous opinion among interpreters as to the length of the day. Many interpreters, before the age of modern science, advocated the days as indefinite periods of time.

4. The Age Of Earth Shows The Days Were Longer Than Twenty-Four Hours

The main objection to the literal day/recent creation view is the seeming ancient age of the earth and universe. If the earth was created in six literal days only a few thousand years ago, then we should be able to see evidence of this. The consensus of scientists, both Christian and non-Christian, agree that the earth and universe are billions of years old. Why, they ask is there no scientific evidence for a young earth?

5. The Arguments For A Young Earth Are Not Scientifically Credible

Furthermore, it is contended that the evidence that some believing scientists bring forth for a “young earth” does not stand the test of scientific credibility. Most scientists, Christian and non-Christian, accept the idea of an old earth and universe.

Those who hold to the “young earth” viewpoint disagree with that scientific assessment and claim their scientific findings validate their position. They say it is not necessary to appeal to billions of years to explain the various geological stratas. A universal Flood can answer many earth-age discrepancies, but other factors should be considered also.

6. God Accommodated The Language To The People At That Time

Many scholars, who believe that the Scriptures do speak of literal days, explain the so-called discrepancy between the Genesis and modern science by saying that God accommodated the information in Genesis to the limited scientific knowledge of that time. Thus the Scripture does speak of God creating the universe in six literal days, but this was only for the benefit of those living at the time. They could not understand any other concept.

It is, however, dangerous to assume that God told the people something that He knew was not true. If God accommodated Genesis to communicate to the non-scientific Hebrews living at the time, He may have done it elsewhere. How can we be certain that this has not happened with other biblical passages? How can we be certain where God has told the entire truth and where He has not?

7. How Can There Be Solar Days Without The Sun?

Another objection concerns the creation of the sun. It seems the sun was not created until day four. How can you have solar days without the sun? Since the sun was not created until the fourth day it is incorrect to speak of actual twenty-four-hour days until after that point in the program of the Creator.

Those holding the literal twenty-four hour day respond in various ways. For example, the first three creative days could have been short periods of time anticipating the creation of the sun upon day four. In addition, we assume that all six days were of the same length because the same descriptive phrases are used of each group of three days.

It is also argued that it is not necessary to assume that the sun was created on the fourth day. It is more likely that it was created on day one and then made to appear on the fourth.

8. The Events Of Day Six Cannot Fit Into Twenty-Four Hours

The events of day six are said to have been impossible to complete in one twenty-four hour period. The Bible says that after God created all the land animals on the sixth day, He created them male and female. God created Adam first and gave him the responsibility of tending the Garden of Eden. God then granted Adam the opportunity to name the animals that had been created earlier that day. Later, God fashioned a wife for him by means of a rib removed from Adam during a “deep sleep.”

It is hard for many to imagine how all these events could have occurred in one twenty-four hour period. This has led many to believe that the days represent stages of unspecified length, not literal twenty-four hour days.

Those holding to the literal day theory respond by saying the events of the sixth day can be made to fit into a solar day. One need not assume that Adam had to name all the animals before he felt the need for a helper. Seeing a few of the animals with female counterparts would have been sufficient to create the need in Adam for someone to help him.

Summary On Literal Day/Recent Creation Theory

The literal day/recent creation theory holds that the earth was created in six literal days a few thousand years ago. The strength of this theory is that it takes the creation account at face value and is consistent with the rest of Scripture that God created the world in six days. The obvious problem concerns the age of the earth and universe that seems to be much longer according to modern science.

QUESTION 12

What Is The Literal Solar Day/ Creation Not Dated View?

There are some who hold to literal days in the first chapter of Genesis who believe that the earth and universe still may be very old. They contend that Genesis 1:1 simply states that God created the universe, but that the creation is not dated. The time of the creation of the heavens and the earth is left purposely vague. It may have been recent, it may have been billions of years ago. The phrase, "In the beginning" simply has no date attached to it. Since there is no date we cannot say when the universe was created.

Genesis 1:1 Is Not Part Of First Day

Genesis 1:1 therefore, is not part of the first day of creation but a general statement that God made the universe some time in the dateless past. However the process with which God created the universe is not stated.

DIFFICULTIES WITH LITERAL DAY/ DATELESS CREATION VIEW

Though this view is attractive, it is not without its difficulties.

Creation Was In Six Days

First, it would seem to contradict the statement in Exodus as to how long it took God to create the heavens and the earth. Exodus 20:11 says.

For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all that is in them.

This seems to refer back to all the events in Genesis 1, including the first verse.

There Was Death Before Sin

If there was a vast unknown period of time before God formed the Garden of Eden for humanity to live, then death occurred in the animal world. This would seem to be in contradiction to the statements in Genesis 1:31 that God made things "very good."

Summary

The literal solar day/creation not dated theory holds the days in Genesis were literal but that there is no attempt made to determine the age of the earth. It is argued that Genesis 1:1 is not part of the first day and there may have been thousands or millions of years between the time God originally created the universe and the time He formed the earth. The time between the original creation and the forming of the earth is unknown.

Though this particular theory holds to a literal understanding of Scripture and of the days in Genesis it, like every other theory with respect to this tough question, still has its problems.

QUESTION 13

What Is The Local Creation View?

There is also the theory that the creation account in Genesis is geographically localized. The idea is that the record in Genesis is limited to the specific land promised to the Hebrews and not the entire earth.

The Promised Land Is What Is Emphasized In Scripture

In the first verse of Genesis the author's scope was the entire universe. When, however, we come to the second verse in Genesis, the author is now limiting his scope. His concern is not with the universe, or even the entire earth, but rather with the boundaries of the Garden of Eden which would later become the boundaries of the Promised Land. Genesis 1:2 begins explaining how God was preparing the land for the people to inhabit. Thus Genesis 1:2 concentrates not on the earth as a whole, but on the Promised Land and the preparation of it for humans to live. The emphasis of the writer of Genesis is on the land that God had prepared for His people to dwell. Therefore, Moses is emphasizing that God is the One who created the universe, and who gave the people the Promised Land.

This View Is True To Scripture And Science

This view has the strength of being true to the literal understanding of Scripture as well as incorporating Genesis into the overall theme of the first five books of the Bible. Genesis was written from the standpoint of the Exodus explaining to the people where they came from and why they are going to this particular land. Genesis 1 and 2, therefore, is an explanation of how God prepared that special land for His people and how He wanted to bless them in that Promised Land.

There Is No Conflict Between The Two

If the days in Genesis are not days of the creation of the entire universe, but rather six days in which God prepared the Promised Land for people in which to dwell, then we have no conflict between Genesis and modern science. This is simply because Genesis does not attempt to date the original creation. Elsewhere in Scripture the time of creation is not what is emphasized but rather the fact of creation. Theologian Ronald Youngblood writes.

No one knows for certain, of course, when the beginning was. But the Old Testament is far more interested in the fact of creation than the time of creation, and the simple truth that God's creative activity took place during an indeterminate time known as "the beginning" was joyfully celebrated by poet (Ps. 102:25) and prophet (Isa. 40:21) alike (Ronald Youngblood, *How It All Began*, Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1980, p. 22).

DIFFICULTIES WITH THE LOCAL CREATION VIEW

The main problem with this view is that it makes the majestic creation account in Genesis refer to only a small portion of the earth. This certainly does not seem to be the way the Genesis creation account is to be read. The subject seems to be the entire earth, not merely the Promised Land. Furthermore it contradicts Exodus 20:11 and Genesis 2:4 which says that God created the heavens and the earth in six days – not just the Promised Land.

Summary

The local creation view sees the Genesis account referring primarily to the Promised Land and not to the entire earth. Therefore the account is geographically localized and not meant to be an explanation of the creation of the entire earth. This means the account has nothing to say with respect to the forming of the present world.

The problem with this view is that the account reads as though it is referring to the entire earth. In addition, other portions of Scripture say that God created the heavens and earth in six days and not just the Promised Land.

QUESTION 14

What Is The Gap Theory? (The Ruin And Reconstruction Theory)

One of the most popular ways of understanding the creation account in Genesis is known as the “Gap Theory” or the “ruin and reconstruction theory.” Although there are some variations among those who hold to the Gap Theory, its basic teachings are as follows.

First Perfection, Then Chaos

Genesis 1:1 refers to God’s initial perfect creation. Everything that God made was beautiful; there was no sin anywhere. Verse two, on the other hand, assumes that a great catastrophe occurred that caused the earth to become in a chaotic state through the judgment of God. According to the Gap Theory, the formless and void state, as recorded in Genesis 1:2, is in direct contrast to the perfect initial creation. Something happened between the first two verses of Genesis to cause the earth to become desolate and uninhabitable after having been made perfect. Those holding the Gap Theory contend that this state of ruin could have possibly lasted millions of years.

The Reconstruction Has Been Done Recently

After this unknown amount of time between the first two verses, God began a re-creation or restitution which involved successive days. The remainder of the first chapter of Genesis deals with the reconstruction of the earth, *not* the original creation. This re-creation is usually assumed to have occurred only a few thousand years ago and was accomplished in six literal twenty-four hour days. Genesis 1:3-2:3, therefore, is a second creation. Consequently Genesis speaks of creation, judgment, ruin, and recreation.

They Have Literal Days And An Old Earth

The individuals who hold to the Gap Theory want to accept the Bible literally as well as the conclusions of modern science about the ancient age of the earth- they are not evolutionists. The Gap Theory provides a solution to two problems between the Bible and science - the time problem and the fossil problem. To reconcile the Bible and science, the geological ages are placed between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2.

What Was The Judgment?

The judgment is usually spoken of as a flood because of the statement of Genesis 1:2 - the earth was covered by water. This judgment is also known as the Luciferic flood named after the angel who became the Devil.

The Cause Is Usually Given As The Fall Of Satan

The cause for the judgment is usually given as the rebellion of Satan or some pre-Adamic race that sinned. God judged all of the inhabitants of the earth. Fossil remains of this civilization have been left behind. The present plants and animals living today have no genetic relationship with the fossil left behind by the judgment of God.

THE CASE FOR THE GAP THEORY

Those who advocate the Gap Theory do so for the following reasons:

1. The Hebrew Conjunction “Waw” In Genesis 1:2

Gap theorists make part of their argument out of the Hebrew conjunction “waw” that begins Genesis 1:2. They wish to translate it as “but.” The idea is that there is a contrast between what was stated in Genesis 1:1 and the statement of Genesis 1:2. The author is emphasizing that the earth was created perfect *but* something happened that caused to become formless and void.

2. The Earth “Became Void”

The word translated “was” in Genesis 1:2 is the Hebrew verb *hayah*. It is possible to translate it as “became” or “had become.” Thus, the earth was created perfectly and then “became” without form and void. The world, though created perfect, became desolate and uninhabitable. What had previously been a perfect world was now ruined. Those who argue for this translation point out that in other places in the creation account the verb *hayah* is translated “became” or “had become.” (Genesis 2:7,10; 3:22, etc.). Hence the translation of the verb in this manner is consistent within the context of the creation account in Genesis.

3. The Evident From The Septuagint Translation

Some advocates of the Gap Theory point to the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, for support of their translation of *hayah* as “became.” The verb *hayah* occurs 27 times in the first chapter of Genesis. The Greek translators of the Septuagint, rendered *hayah*, in 20 instances, by the Greek word *egeneto* which means “became.”

4. The Words Formless And Void Indicate Chaos

Genesis 1:2 describes the earth at the time of the creation as being “without form and void” or “desolate and uninhabitable” (Hebrew *tohu wa bohu*). Are we to assume that a perfect God created the world in a chaotic condition? The phrase “without form and void” seems to require some type of judgment.

5. There Are Other Passages That Support The Gap Theory

In addition, Isaiah 34:11 and Jeremiah 4:23-26, the only other instances the phrase “without form and void” is used, clearly refers to some type of divine judgment. Hence, Genesis 1:2 must also be a reference to judgment.

6. Darkness Speaks Of Judgment

Genesis 1:2 speaks of the world in a state of darkness. Darkness is almost always used in Scripture as a sign of sin and judgment (Jude 13, John 3:19). Furthermore, God did not say the darkness was good as He had said about the light (Genesis 1:3). If God originally created the world in light, then something caused the earth to become dark.

7. The Difference Between The Words Created And Made

According to the Gap Theory, the original creation was in Genesis 1:1. What happened on the six days of Genesis was not creating but rather making over. Gap theorists make a distinction between the verbs “create” *bara* and “made” *asah*. The verb *bara* is used with regard to God creating while *asah* means “refashioning” or “made to appear.” The New Scofield Reference Bible makes this distinction.

Only three creative acts of God are recorded in this chapter: (1) the heavens and the earth, v. 1; (2) animal life, vv. 20-21; and (3) human life, vv 26-27. The first creative act refers to the dateless past . . . neither here (Genesis 1:3) nor in vv. 14-18 is an original creative act implied. A different word is used. The sense is made to appear, made visible. The sun and the moon were created ‘in the beginning.’ The light came from the sun, of course, but the vapor diffused the light. Later the sun appeared in an unclouded sky (*The New Scofield Reference Bible*, 1967, p. 1 note #3, #6).

8. The Earth Was Not Created In Vain

Isaiah 45:18 clearly states that God did not create the world “in vain.” The Hebrew phrase translated “in vain” is *lo tohu*. *Tohu* is the word translated “without form” in Genesis 1:2. Thus, if God did not create the world “in vain,” then it seems logical to assume that at some time in the earth’s past it became desolate. Since it is unthinkable that anything chaotic and wasteful could come from a perfect God, we must assume that there was some type of judgment to put the earth in that condition.

9. Isaiah 24 Speaks Of A Ruined Earth

Isaiah 24:1 is often cited as a verse that speaks of the earth being formerly in ruin.

Behold, the LORD lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface, and scatters its inhabitants.

10. Jeremiah 4 Speaks Of A Past Judgment

Gap theorists also point to a passage in Jeremiah to bolster their point of view. The prophet wrote.

I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form and void; and the heavens had no light. . . . I beheld, and indeed there was no man, and all the birds of the heaven had fled. I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness, and all its cities are broken down at the presence of the Lord and his fierce anger (Jeremiah 4:23-26).

Scofield says of this passage:

[It] describes the condition of the earth as the result of judgment . . . which overthrew the primal order of Gen. I:I. (*The Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 776 note).

11. Ezekiel 28 Records The Original Creation

Many gap theorists point to Ezekiel 28:13-15 as describing the original creation before the desolation of Genesis 1:2. The passage speaks of Satan dwelling in Eden, the Garden of God, before sin had infected it.

You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardus, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed

cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked backed and forth in the midst of the fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created till iniquity was found in you (Ezekiel 28:13-15).

This is a description of the original perfection before God judged the world.

12. Time Is Not Needed For The Angelic Fall

Some Gap theorists say that the time needed for the angels to rebel against God and be judged requires a gap between the first two verses in Genesis 1. They believe there is not enough time after the completion of creation on day six, and the fall of humanity in Genesis three for the angels to rebel.

Since Adam and Eve did not conceive any children before the fall, there must have been a relatively short time between the completion of creation on day six and the events of Genesis three. This does not allow adequate time for the rebellion, judgment, and expulsion of evil angels.

13. The Bible Speaks Of The Downfall Of The World

Some advocate that Hebrews 4:3 should be translated “The works were finished from the downfall of the world.” The “downfall” it is argued, refers to the catastrophe of Genesis 1:2.

14. The Earth Needed To Be Replenished

Some Gap theorists cite Genesis 1:27 in the King James Version as a proof that the earth was formerly filled with people.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. (Genesis 1:28 KJV).

You only replenish something that was already filled.

15. There Were Pre-Adamic People

This bring us to our next point, Almost all Gap Theorists adopt the view that human-like creatures existed before Adam. Although not directly related to modern humans, they did have their own sinful history. The fossils that we find today testify to their existence.

16. There Are Gaps Found Elsewhere In Scripture

The principle of a gap between statements is found in other places in the Old Testament. For example, Isaiah 61:1-2: verse one finds its fulfillment in the First Coming of Christ while verse two refers to the Second Coming of Christ. Because the principle of a long period of time between two verses is found elsewhere in Scripture, it is possible that a gap existed between Genesis 1:1-1:2.

Summary

These arguments have led people to assume a gap between the first two verses of Genesis. They believe this is the best way to deal with the biblical and geological evidence. Science and Scripture are now in harmony when an indefinite gap is placed between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2.

DIFFICULTIES WITH THE GAP THEORY

Though there are many good Bible believing Christians who accept the Gap Theory, there are some serious problems with this point of view that make it difficult, if not impossible, to accept. They are as follows.

1. There Is No Mention Of The Original Creation

To begin with, it is hard to imagine that the entire creation of the universe is passed over in only one verse and the bulk of the record deals with re-creation. According to the Gap Theory, there is no clear word from God concerning the original creation. Nothing is known as to the order of events or its history.

2. It Is Not The Historical View Of Jews Or Christians

Furthermore, the historical view of Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Protestant interpreters is that Genesis is the account of God's original creation of the universe. The Gap Theory holds that only one verse, Genesis 1:1, describes the original creation. The Gap Theory dilutes the majestic account in Genesis of God's creation.

3. Genesis Is Not A Cryptic Account

Genesis 1 is written as a straightforward account of God's creation – not some cryptic record. If God had meant to inform us of a gap between the first two verses, He could have clearly done that. There is nothing in the Genesis creation account that requires or even hints at a gap. Something has to be read into the account that is not obviously there.

4. No Earlier Creation Is Taught Anywhere

There is no verse of Scripture that teaches there was an earlier creation. If there were a creation before Genesis 1:2, there should be at least one verse that explicitly says that. But there is none.

5. It Is Contrary To Scripture

Not only are there no explicit verses about a previous creation, the Scripture argues against this idea. Genesis 2:3,4, which sums up the previous chapter of God's work, says.

Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made. This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens (Genesis 2:3,4).

This is *creation*, not re-creation. Thus, the context itself speaks of creation rather than re-creation.

6. The Work Was Also In Heaven

Also mentioned in Genesis 2:3,4 is the creation of the heavens. What was completed in the six days was not just the work of God upon the earth but also heaven. They were created during the six days, not long before it.

In addition, Exodus 20:11 says.

For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all that is in them.

This passage does not say that God created the heavens and the earth *before* the first day as the Gap Theory teaches but rather *in* six days. All that is in heaven was created in six days. Everything.

7. There Is No Direct Statement Of Judgment

There is no direct statement anywhere in Scripture that a divine judgment occurred between the first two verses in Genesis. While Scripture, at various times, does speak of God's judgment on the angels and the earth, there are no passages that speak of it being *before* the creation narrative in Genesis 1:1-31. Those who hold the Gap Theory must read this into the passage.

8. God Made The World Very Good

At the end of creation we are told, 'God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good.' In this verse we have two superlatives: 'everything' and 'very good.' This could hardly be said if a part of the world had already been destroyed and if the angels had fallen into sin. The Gap Theory builds our present world on the ruins of a former one. How could it be "very good?"

In addition, the angels, as well as the rest of creation, were seemingly still in a state of perfection at the end of the sixth day. Everything was perfect everywhere.

The Gap Theory says that millions of animals lived and died not only before Adam, but also before the fall of Satan. But how could there be death in a sinless world? The Bible says that death was a result of sin.

9. Death Was A Result Of Adam's Sin

Humanity was created to have dominion over creation (Psalm 8, Hebrews 2:5-8). It was not until they deliberately rejected God's commandment that sin first appeared on earth. The judgment upon humanity and the animal kingdom was a result of Adam's sin – there was no death before this time of humans or animals. The Bible says.

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned - (Romans 5:12).

The Bible does not restrict death from sin to human death. Sin brought death to the animal world as well. The Bible is clear that creation was made subject to futility – it was not created that way.

For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope (Romans 8:20).

10. Darkness Is Not Necessarily Evil

The Bible does not teach that physical darkness is always equated with evil. The psalmist wrote.

You bring darkness, it becomes night, and all the beasts of the forest prowl (Psalm 104:20).

Genesis 1:2 records the darkened state of the earth before the creation of the sun or before the light from the sun came through. It should not be assumed to refer to something evil. Of necessity, there would have been darkness before light. It was only later in Scripture that darkness was used as a symbol of evil. There is nothing evil suggested in the context of Genesis.

The idea is that there was darkness before light merely shows that creation was in progress. The Bible says there was an evening, and hence darkness, at all six days of creation (Genesis 1:5,8,13, 18-19). There is no statement anywhere of God's disapproval of the darkness.

Darkness can symbolize evil, yet darkness itself is not evil. The Gap Theory confuses the symbol with the thing symbolized.

11. Plants And Animals Are Genetically Related

The Gap Theory teaches that the plants and animals of the previous world were destroyed and fossilized. This means that they could not be genetically related to the plants and animals of the present world. Yet the majority of the fossilized plants and animals are identical in form to their modern counterparts. How can this be without any direct line of descent?

12. There Is Too Much Made Out Of The Hebrews Conjunction Waw

The Hebrew word *waw*, usually translated "and" is a simple conjunction. Gap Theorists attempt to make it a word that indicates a strong contrast to that which was previously stated. Yet it is merely the simple term for "and." *Waw* is used thousands of times in the Old Testament without emphasizing anything important. To make it important in Genesis 1:2 is inconsistent with its overall usage. A crucial doctrine should not be based upon this one word.

Instead of "but" the verse should read something like "now" the earth was . . .

Consequently, there is no grammatical reason to have a break between the verses.

13. It Should Be Translated "Was" Not "Became?"

Those who attempt to translate the verb *hayah* "became" in Genesis 1:2 do so without much justification. The normal rendering of the word is "was." Most scholars testify that the translation of "became" in this passage is doubtful, if not impossible to uphold. Therefore, to base this theory on a suspect translation is wrong from the start.

Though in some instances the Septuagint translators rendered the verb *hayah* as "became" they did *not* render it such in Genesis 1:2. This demonstrates that they understood the word to mean "was" and not "became." There should be a compelling reason for translating it "became" here. However, nothing in the text suggests this translation. It comes from a desire to harmonize science and Scripture

Hence, the burden of proof is upon those who would make the word say anything different than how it is usually (or most often) understood.

Bernard Ramm comments on the Gap Theorist attempt to make crucial points about the Hebrew words for "and" and "was."

The entire interpretation of geology and Genesis is made to hinge on *secondary meanings of two Hebrew words*. To indicate that in some cases *waw* may mean but, and that *hayah* means became, does not give full warrant to insert these meanings in Genesis 1:2 and require all geology to conform (Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Science And Scripture*, Eerdmans, 1954, p. 139).

14. Unformed And Unfilled Do Not Mean Chaotic

The phrase *tohu wa bohu*, translated “without form and void” does not necessarily assume some type of judgment as the Gap Theory supposes. The phrase can mean “unformed and unfilled.” It is a neutral term describing God’s unfinished creation. The early earth was at a stage that was not ready for humanity and the rest of creation. That which was previously unformed was then formed and filled by the Creator. The words do not necessitate judgment as has been contended – it merely describes the earth in an undeveloped state. On the first day, the water was covering the land mass. There was no dry land and no people. The earth had been neither formed nor filled.

15. There Is No Context Of Judgment In Creation Account

Furthermore, the meaning of the expression *tohu wa bohu*, in Isaiah 34:11 and Jeremiah 4:23, often cited as proof for the Gap Theory, does not necessarily mean chaos as Gap Theorists argue. The details in the context of Isaiah 34 and Jeremiah 4, where the phrase *tohu wa bohu* is used, make judgment clear. The context of Genesis is not one of judgment. It is not proper to read the circumstances of judgment in Isaiah and Jeremiah back into Genesis where no judgment is required, or even hinted at.

16. Jesus Did Not See Any Gap In The Beginning

Jesus did not seem to believe there was any gap of time from the original creation to the creation of Adam.

But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female (Mark 10:6).

He made them male and female at “the beginning,” not after a gap of billions of years.

17. Isaiah 45 Does Not Give Evidence For Judgment

Isaiah 45:18 is more of an argument against the Gap Theory. It says that God did not create the universe in vain. This means He considered His creation to be good as Genesis 1:31 states.

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning - the sixth day (Genesis 1:31).

18. Jeremiah 4 Does Not Speak Of The Original Creation

The context of Jeremiah 4 has nothing to do with the original creation. In context, the passage is about the destruction of the Holy Land, not the entire earth. The one looking at this is Jeremiah the prophet. It is much more in context to have him looking forward to a destruction, not looking back. In addition, this passage speaks of survivors after the judgment. There would have been no survivors of the judgment that the Gap Theory proposes.

19. Isaiah 24:1 Does Not Speak Of The Original Creation

The statement in Isaiah 24:1 does not deal with the original creation in Genesis. The previous verses referred to the destruction of Babylon and Tyre while the following verses refer to the destruction of the Holy Land.

20. There Is No Parallel Principle For Gaps In Scripture

The gap principle that finds itself in other Old Testament passages is not parallel to Genesis. The other passages containing gaps are all prophetic. There are none that deal with what has happened in history.

Thus, there is no parallel between the first two verses of Genesis and other portions of Scripture where a gap is clearly taught.

21. The Distinction Between Created And Made Is Not Valid

The distinction made between the Hebrew words for “created” and “made” is not valid. Contrary to the Gap Theory, the words can be used interchangeably. John Whitcomb comments.

Genesis 1:21 states that ‘God created [*bara*] the great sea-monsters . . .’ while verse 25 states that God made [*asah*] the beasts of the earth . . . Surely we are not to think that the sea creatures were directly created on the fifth day, but land animals were merely ‘appointed’ or ‘made to appear’ on the sixth day! All those who hold that *bara* and ‘*asah*’ cannot be used on the same kind of divine activity are faced with a serious difficulty here. In fact, the difficulty is so severe that the *New Scofield Reference Bible*, in support of this distinction, suggests that the beasts which were *made* on the sixth day (vs. 25) were actually *created* on the fifth day (p. 2, note #2)! (John Whitcomb, *The Early Earth*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972, p. 128).

In addition, we have the two words, *bara* and *asah*, used side by side for the same act, the creation of man in Genesis 2:7. They are also used synonymously in Genesis 1:26 and 2:4 where both terms describe the same event.

22. Ezekiel 28 May Not Refer To The Fall Of Satan

Ezekiel 28, rather than referring to the earthly Garden of Eden, more likely speaks of a heavenly place. Satan was cast out of the Garden of Eden to “the ground” (Ezekiel 28:16). The Eden Ezekiel speaks of is not a garden of trees and flowers but composed of “precious stones” and “stones of fire” (Ezekiel 28:13,14,16). This is similar to the description of the Holy City in heaven (Revelation 21:10-21).

This text may have been a reference to the fall of Satan but it is ambiguous at best. We should not attempt to build doctrines on difficult passages - particularly ones that are highly poetic. Even if it did describe Satan’s original fall there is no reason to insert it between the first two verses of Genesis.

23. The Time Of The Judgment Of Angels Is Not Specified

The passages in Scripture that speak of God’s judgment of the rebellious angels (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6) do not place the judgment before the creation account in Genesis 1:2-31. No specific time is given for their rebellion.

24. There Is Enough Time For The Angelic Rebellion

There certainly was time for the angelic rebellion to take place after day six of creation and before the Fall of humanity in Genesis three. Even if only one day passed from the sixth day of creation and the fall, it is certainly enough time for the angels to rebel and be judged. God judgment would have been instantaneous.

In addition, angels live in a different dimension than us. Time for them is not necessarily the same as for us. Consequently there was sufficient time, from our perspective, for them to fall.

25. Hebrews 4:3 Does Not Refer To A Catastrophe

The idea that Hebrews 4:3 refers to the “downfall” of the world, the catastrophe of Genesis 1:2, is not supported by the evidence. The Greek word *katabola* means “foundation” or “beginning,” not downfall.

26. Was This God’s Failure?

The Gap Theory must also assume there was a prior creation, lasting millions of years, that closely resembled the present creation. This creation, however, ended in failure. The animals of the previous creation did not fulfill God’s original purpose - so He destroyed them. In addition, in the second creation, God made the plants and animals exactly like the first ones.

Furthermore, since Adam and Eve were the first man and woman, this prior creation lacked God’s crown of creation - humanity.

Therefore the Gap Theory would have God failing twice: first, His purpose was not accomplished in the animal and plant kingdom; second, He failed to crown His creation with man. This is inconsistent with God’s nature - one that does not fail to accomplish His purposes.

27. There Were No Pre-Adamic Human-like Creatures

Although Gap Theorists contend that pre-Adamic human-like creatures existed, there is no biblical warrant for this. The Bible knows nothing about such people.

28. Why Create Light Again?

If the sun, moon, and stars were part of the original creation in Genesis 1:1, then why did God have to create light (Genesis 1:3). There would have been light for the entire time of the alleged gap.

29. The Gap Theory Contradicts Modern Unbelieving Geology

Although Gap theorists attempt to harmonize Genesis with modern geology, the proposed harmonization will not work. Modern geology is based upon the idea of uniformitarianism - all processes that we observe today have continued at the same rate from the beginning. Since the present rates are the same as the past, there is no room for a worldwide catastrophe. The geological ages cannot be separated from the theory of evolution.

30. There Is No Connection Between Geology And Genesis

Because Genesis involves a re-creation, and the present-day fossils belong to a destroyed world, there can be no correlation between Scripture and geology. The Bible, therefore, has absolutely nothing to say about this subject. Therefore it is entirely in the hands of geologists, and we, of necessity, must believe what they tell us about the geological record.

31. The Gap Theory Discounts The Genesis Flood

If the present-day fossils are a result of a Luciferic flood that happened between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, then one must assume that Noah's Flood left no trace whatsoever. A Flood can better explain the fossil evidence that we know existed rather than a flood in which Scripture does not mention.

32. The Hebrew Word Does Not Mean Replenish

The word translated "replenish" in the *King James Version* is the Hebrew verb *maleh*. It means, "to fill." It is the same word used in Genesis 1:22 "fill the waters." It has no idea of replenish. All modern translations render this word as "fill." In 16th century Elizabethan English "replenish" meant to fill completely, not fill again.

33. There Is No Judgment On The Earth Because Of Lucifer's Sin

There is no passage in Scripture that teaches that God judged the earth because of the sin of the angel who became the devil. Furthermore, why would God kill the inhabitants of the earth for an angel who sinned? The Bible continually stresses that God is a righteous God.

Far be it from you to do such a thing - to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right? (Genesis 18:25).

Judging the earth for a sin of an angel who lived in the heavenly realm does not make sense.

34. The Gap Theory Is A Recent Idea

Finally, it must be pointed out that the Gap Theory is a relatively recent idea. Thomas Chalmers first popularized it in 1814 in an attempt to reconcile Genesis with long geological ages. The geological studies of the 19th century were at odds with a recent creation. The Gap Theory gave the Bible the needed time that the geologists said was necessary for the earth to come to its present state.

In the twentieth century, the footnotes of the *Scofield Reference Bible*, advocating the Gap Theory, caused it to become enormously popular among the laity. Yet before this time interpreters of Genesis hardly ever considered it a possibility. It is only when modern science taught that the age of the earth was, at least, millions of years old, did the Gap Theory become popular.

When the new discipline of geology was claiming long ages for the earth, many Bible students, with no way of scientifically refuting these claims, accepted the long ages of the earth.

Rather than admitting that the Bible taught something different, the Genesis creation account was then reinterpreted in light of the claims of geology. One of the ways that Genesis was reinterpreted was to find a gap between the first two verses of the Bible. However, until modern geology came on the scene, no one proposed a gap between these verses.

35. The Gap Theory Is Self-Defeating

There is a major dilemma for the Gap Theory. If the judgment of God with His Luciferic flood rapidly created the entire fossil record that we now find, then there is no evidence for geologic ages as Gap theorists believe. But if there were no geologic ages, there is no need to argue for large amounts of time

as the theory of evolution, and the Gap Theory, proposes. Thus the original need for the theory – to fit the long geological ages into the framework of the Bible – is done away with.

36. This Is The Wrong Way Of Looking At The Subject

The Gap Theory is an example of the wrong way to look at issues of the Bible and science. The Bible should be the source that we use to interpret the scientific data, not vice versa. The Gap theory arose when modern science began to argue for an ancient earth and universe. It was an attempt to harmonize the lengthy time periods, or ages, with Genesis. The Gap Theory did not arise merely from a study of Scripture; it arose to solve the problem of the Bible and time. This fact alone should make the entire theory suspect.

Summary On The Gap Theory

The Gap Theory teaches that Scripture is not giving an account of God's original creation in Genesis but rather the re-creation of the earth after some terrible judgment. The re-creation took place in six literal days a few thousand years ago while the initial creation, recorded in Genesis 1:1 is dateless.

Though the Gap Theory attempts to solve the time problem and the fossil problem, it is beset with problems. First, something has to be read into the text that is not obviously there. There is not one verse in the Bible that explicitly teaches an earlier creation.

Also, the Gap Theory breaks the connection between the first two verses of the Bible where the text has no break. It builds our world on the ruins of a former world with no connection between the two. It leaves the original creation to just one verse. All of these problems make the theory highly suspect. Although those who hold to the Gap theory are well-meaning Bible believers, the facts, both biblical and scientific, do not justify this view. A better answer needs to be found.

QUESTION 15

Could There Have Been Gaps Between The Days In Genesis 1? (Progressive Creationism)

Some Bible-believers understand the days in Genesis were twenty-four hour periods but between the literal days there were vast amounts of time, possibly billions of years. They view the days in Genesis as literal and sequential but not consecutive. God's creative activity took place in a series of steps separated by long ages. This is also known as progressive creationism.

The Gaps Occurred Between The Days

The creative acts occurred largely *between* the literal days. Each day introduced a new creative period. Evidence for this viewpoint is that the Book of Genesis is organized on a genealogical scheme that involves life spans that are sequential but overlapping.

The Earth Is Ancient, And The Days Are Solar

This theory attempts to wed the twenty-four hour literal day with the geologic ages. Both theories are true according to Progressive Creationism. This position allows the earth to be ancient while still keeping to the interpretation that the term day in Genesis 1 was a solar day. Therefore we have six literal days in Genesis that are sequential but not consecutive.

DIFFICULTIES WITH "GAPS BETWEEN THE DAYS"

While the Gap Theory argues for one gap, progressive creationism argues for number of gaps. Therefore the problems are also multiplied.

Also, there is no evidence that there were any gaps between the days in the first chapter of Genesis. This has to be read into the text to harmonize Genesis with modern science.

Furthermore there are no other examples in Scripture where we find gaps between literal days. This would be the only place we find them.

All of these factors makes the theory suspect.

Summary

Progressive creationism sees Genesis 1 as speaking of six literal days but with gaps between each day when God did much of His creating. Each of these gaps could have been millions of years long. This allows the days of Genesis to be solar days while the earth can be millions of years old.

The problem with this view is that there is no evidence in the text for gaps between the days. In addition there are no examples in Scripture where this sort of thing occurs.

QUESTION 16

What Is The Revelational Day Theory?

There is a theory that understands the days in Genesis as neither a literal twenty-four hour creative period nor long periods of time. This view teaches that God revealed His creative work in a series of visions over a six day period. This is known as the “Revelational Day” theory. The Genesis account is not a record of what God performed in six literal days but rather records the six days in which He revealed His creative acts to Moses. Bernard Ramm, who once held this view, comments.

We believe . . . that creation was *revealed* in six days, not performed in six days. We believe that the six days are *pictorial-revelatory* days, not literal days nor age-days. The days are means of communicating to man the great fact that *God is Creator*, and that *He is Creator of all* (italics his) (Bernard Ramm, *A Christian View Of Science And Scripture*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1954, p. 151).

Consequently, each creative day recorded in Genesis would not constitute that which God created, but that which God revealed to Moses. Therefore there is no chronology of creation in the Genesis account.

Another Possibility: Genesis Was Originally Written On Tablets

There is another view that is similar to the “vision hypothesis.” This says that God revealed the six days of creation not by means of a vision, but rather by means of a historical narrative written on six tablets. P.J. Wiseman details the theory.

- (1) The six days divided from each other by an evening and morning, do not refer to the time occupied by God in his acts and the duration of the process of Creation.
- (2) The six days refer to the time occupied in revealing to man the account of creation.
- (3) God rested (lit. ceased) on the seventh day not for his own sake but for man’s sake, and because this revelation about Creation was finished on the sixth day, not because of that day (or period) the creation of the world was finished.
- (4) The narrative of Creation was probably written on six tablets. Later, it also appears to have become the custom in Babylonia to write the story of Creation on six tablets.
- (5) There is good and sufficient evidence to show that the first page of the Bible is the oldest document which has come down to us (P.J. Wiseman, *Clues To Creation In Genesis*, London, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1977, p. 110).

If the days are only revelatory, then we have no indication of time in the Genesis creation account. Therefore the earth and the universe could be millions of years old or relatively young. The text simply does not comment on the matter.

DIFFICULTIES WITH THE REVELATIONAL DAY THEORY

Though this view nicely avoids all the problems of attempting to ascertain whether the days of Genesis were literal or symbolic, it does have weaknesses.

1. It Is Not The Natural Reading Of The Text

It is unlikely this view would have been set forth had there not been a problem with harmonizing the text of Genesis with the theories of modern science. A natural reading of the text would not make one think of

these days as being revelatory, but rather one of historical narrative. There is, therefore, nothing in the text that gives any hint that this theory is true.

2. Genesis Is The Language Of Narration

The language of Genesis is that of historical narration, not of dramatic vision. There is nothing in the context to suggest that the days were revelatory days rather than literal days, of whatever length, in which God actually created.

3. Exodus 20 Seems To Contradict This Theory

Exodus 20:11 seems to oppose the idea of revelatory days by stating that God made the heavens and the earth in six days.

For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in it, and rested on the seventh (Exodus 20:11).

Those holding the revelational day view translate the Hebrew verb *asah* in Exodus 20:11 as “showed” rather than “made.” However, nowhere does this verb have the idea of “reveal” or “show.”

4. This Is Not The Usual Way Of Recording The Past

The use of visions to record the past is not the usual way in which the Bible speaks. Daniel chapter seven would be the *only* other example of God using this method.

5. The Fourth Commandment Seems To Indicate Some Type Of Chronology

The fact that God told people to rest upon the seventh day because He rested after six days of work assumes some type of chronological sequence of creation. This better fits the idea of creation in six days rather than revealing the work in six days.

Summary On The Revelational Day Theory

The revelation day theory holds to six days of revelation, not six days of creation, in the first chapter of Genesis. All Genesis reveals is what Moses was told on six literal days. The account has nothing to do with the time it took the earth to be created.

If the revelatory day theory were true, then it would solve several problems facing us in the Genesis creation account. We could understand *yom* to mean literal days in Genesis 1, but still have an ancient earth and universe. This would nicely harmonize the Bible and science. Though this view is certainly possible, the evidence is scanty. There is nothing in the account that would lead us to believe we are talking about days of revelation rather than days of creation.

QUESTION 17

What Is The Age/Day Theory?

Though many Bible scholars believe that the days spoken of in the first chapter of Genesis were solar days, there are other qualified scholars that feel that the days are not to be taken as literal but are representative of long periods of time, perhaps millions of years. Many who hold this view are known as “progressive creationists” because they believe that creation was accomplished by God’s power through a series of creative acts separated by vast periods of time. Each period of creation was not necessary of the same length but they were longer than twenty-four hours. This is known as the age-day theory. The arguments for the age-day theory are as follows:

1. The Word Day In The Genesis Creation Account Is Not Always A Solar Day

The Hebrew word for “day” (*yom*), does not strictly translate into the literal twenty-four hour sense of “day.” Within the context of the first two chapters of Genesis we find the word day used in three different ways.

- (1) A solar day (1:14)
- (2) Daylight as opposed to night (1:5,14,16)
- (3) The entire creative period (2:4)

Hence, the context does not demand that we take the word day in a strict literal sense of twenty-four hours.

2. There Are Metaphorical Uses Of The Word Day In The Old Testament

The word day is used metaphorically a number of times in the Old Testament. In Job it speaks of the “day of God’s wrath.”

A flood will carry off his house, rushing waters on the day of God’s wrath (Job 20:28).

In Proverbs we read.

Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death (Proverbs 11:4).

Again in Proverbs we find the word day used metaphorically.

The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the LORD (Proverbs 21:31).

There is one further reference in Proverbs.

If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength being small (Proverbs 24:10).

In Ecclesiastes it says.

In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider; God has made the one as well as the other, so that mortals may not find out anything that will come after them (Ecclesiastes

All of these passages use the Hebrew word “yom” for day. Yet in none of these instances does it mean a literal day.

3. There Are Other Biblical Texts Where Yom Is Used For A Long Period Of Time

The word day (Hebrew *yom*) is used in other biblical texts for a long period of time. The psalmist said.

For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night (Psalm 90:4).

In addition, Simon Peter wrote.

With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (2 Peter 3:8).

Also, the future “day of the Lord” that the Bible talks about is not one day, but a long period of time.

The word day in Genesis must be understood by its context – not how it is usually or normally used. Since the term day has a secondary usage of a long period of time in Scripture, it is possible that it means this in Genesis 1. The context must be the determining factor.

4. Modern Science Shows The Need For A Long Period Of Time

If the context of Genesis allows the word day to be understood as an indefinite period of time, then evidence from science confirms this.

For many, modern science has ruled out the possibility of a recent creation of the earth. With the great majority of scientists accepting the idea that the earth is at least four billion years old, it seems that long periods of time are required to harmonize the Bible with modern geology.

Those who hold the age/day theory make other observations.

5. Animal Death Could Have Occurred Before The Fall Of Humanity

Before God created humanity, He certainly could have created an animal kingdom that was subject to death. There was death in the plant world since Adam and Eve ate plants. If there was no death in the animal kingdom, then we must believe they would reproduce and live forever. If this is the case, then the earth would soon be overcrowded.

The warning to Adam is that he would die, not that animals would begin to die.

But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die (Genesis 2:17).

Romans 5:12 refers to human beings, not plants and animals. Animal death before the Fall is biblically possible.

6. The Terms Morning And Evening Are Not Used For The Seventh Day

Proponents of the age/day theory point out that there is no use of the term evening and morning with regard to the seventh day. It merely says God rested.

And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation (Genesis 2:2-3).

They contend that the seventh day is something that has not been completed. The first six ages of creation have been finished while the seventh remains incomplete. God is still resting from His creation.

Therefore, the six days cannot be solar days because the seventh day is not. If the seventh day is ongoing, then God's rest from creation has gone on for thousands of years, up until the present. Thus, from the length of the seventh day we have a clue to the age of the earth.

7. The Events Of The Sixth Day Demand A Long Period Of Time

The events of the sixth day of creation do not seem to be able to be fit into a twenty-four hour period. The Bible says the following things happened upon the sixth day.

God created all the land animals and then created Adam. After He created Adam God put him into the Garden of Eden to keep it, and then him gave directions about the tree of good and evil. God then brought all of the animals to Adam to be named. After naming the animals, Adam realized that he was alone without a helper. God then put Adam into a deep sleep and then created Eve.

Even a human being in an unfallen state could not have named all the animals in a few short hours of one day. Would a normal reading of this passage cause the reader to assume that all this happened in one day? It seems logical to believe that a normal reading of this passage would cause the reader to assume that all these events took place in more than one day. If the sixth days was not limited to twenty-four hours in length, then neither were the other days.

8. The Evidence From Scripture Of The Antiquity Of The Earth

It is also pointed out that Scripture speaks of the earth being very old. The prophet Habakkuk wrote:

He stood and measured the earth; he looked and startled the nations. And the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills bowed. His ways are everlasting (Habakkuk 3:6).

Peter wrote

For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water (2 Peter 3:5).

These passages speak of the earth being very ancient, not merely a few thousand years of age.

9. Evening And Morning May Mean The End Of One Creative Period

Although the phrase "evening and morning" implies a solar day, it may simply mean the end of one creative period and the beginning of another. It could signify the end of a period of time – not necessarily a solar day.

In addition, this particular phrase is used nowhere else in the Old Testament. Therefore it was not a common way of speaking of a solar day.

10. There Was No Sun Before The Fourth Day

If the sun was not created until the fourth day, there could not have been evening and morning in the normal sense of the term. Therefore the days were not normal days.

11. The Passage In Exodus Does Not Solve The Issue

While it is true that Exodus 20:10 speaks of six literal days that people are to work based upon a six day plus one pattern in Genesis, it does not necessarily follow that God's days are the same as ours. Remember that there was no human observer present when God created the heavens and the earth in six days.

12. The Hebrews Understood Many Meanings Of The Word Yom

While it is true that there were other, more specific, Hebrew words available for the author to use if he wanted to indicate a long period of time, if his original readers knew that *yom* could also have this meaning, then it would be appropriate to use it in Genesis. This is particularly true because of the emphasis of the six successive periods of work and then a time of rest. This six plus one pattern was set for the people to work six days and then rest on the seventh.

We, therefore, see from the context of Genesis, and the common usage of *yom*, that the term could mean something other than a literal day.

Conclusion

The word Hebrew word translated "day" does mean period of time in parts of the Old Testament. This includes the context of Genesis. Since science has shown the earth and universe to be billions of years of age, this is the best way to understand the term in Genesis 1. Consequently there is no ultimate conflict between science and the Scripture.

These arguments have convinced many that the best way to look at the "days" in Genesis is to see them as long periods of time, not solar days. They believe creation took millions of years, not 144 hours of one week.

DIFFICULTIES WITH THE AGE/DAY THEORY

The arguments for the age/day theory have met with strong opposition among those who hold other views as to the meaning of the "days" of Genesis.

1. It Is Not The Natural Reading Of The Text

Proponents of the literal day theory are always quick to point out that the age/day view has to be read into the text. It is not the natural way to read Genesis 1 nor the statements in Exodus that God created the world in six days. If God wanted to inform us that the creation occurred long ages ago, there are a number of ways in which He might have clearly said it.

Furthermore those who hold that the days in Genesis represent ages admit that the traditional view has been that of solar days. Davis Young, an advocate of the old earth viewpoint, acknowledges:

Until the eighteenth century, Christians were virtually unanimous in the belief that the Earth was about six thousand years old according to the teaching of Scripture. However, increased scientific study . . . brought pressure to bear upon Christian thinkers to reevaluate the question of the age of the Earth (Davis Young, *Christianity And The Age Of The Earth*, Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1982, p. 13).

The age/day theory became popular in the 19th century when the science of geology argued for an old earth, it was not because of further study of the Bible.

Although the term “day” can indicate a long period of time, it should not be understood that way unless the context makes it clear. There is nothing in the context that would hint that the days are anything other than twenty-four hours.

2. There Is No Long Period Of Time In Genesis 2:4

There is also the issue of making the term (*yom*) “day” in Genesis 2:4 referring to the entire creative period in chapter one. The great Hebraic scholar C.D. Ginsburg comments on the use of the term in chapter one and two of Genesis.

There is nothing in the first chapter of Genesis to justify the spiritualisation of the expression “day.” On the contrary the definition in verse 5 of the word in question demands that *yom* . . . should be understood in the same sense as we understand the word day in common parlance, i.e. a natural day. . . The arguments generally produced by those who ascribe to the word “day” here an unlimited duration of time are untenable. They say that the word “day” is not to be taken here in its literal meaning is evident from chapter 2:4, for the portion of time spoken of in the first chapter of Genesis as six days is spoken of in the second chapter as one day. But the word used in the first six days is the simple noun, whereas in chapter 2:4 it is a compound of “the day of” with the preposition “in.” which, according to the genius of the Hebrew language, makes it an adverb, and must be translated, “when,” “at the time of,” “after” (C.D. Ginsburg, cited by P. J. Wiseman, *Clues To Creation In Genesis*, London, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1977, p. 123).

The New International Version brings this out in its translation.

This is the account of the heavens and earth when they were created. *When* the Lord God made the earth and the heavens (Genesis 2:4 *New International Version*).

We see the same Hebrew phrase used in 2:17.

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for *in the day* that you eat of it you shall surely die (Genesis 2:17).

The New International Version clears up the ambiguity by correctly translating the Hebrew “for *when* you eat of it, you will surely die.” There is no thought here of any indefinite lengthy period of time. On the contrary, it refers to a momentary point in time. Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden immediately after they sinned.

The same phrase “in the day that” is also repeated in Genesis 5:1.

This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created, he made him in the likeness of God (Genesis 5:1).

Scripture has already indicated that God made Adam on one specific day (day 6). This does not compass a number of days but refers to one specific day. Hence the same phrase here does not refer to the entire creation period.

Finally if we continue reading from Genesis 2:4 to the next verse, we find a simple solution to the use of this phrase translated “in the day that” or “when.” In Genesis 2:4,5 the author restates that God made the heavens and the earth before any plant of the field was in the earth or any herb of the field had grown. This refers back to day three of creation (Genesis 1:11). It seems the author is simply reminding us what was mentioned in chapter one. At the time God made the heavens and the earth He had not yet made the plants and herbs. This allows him to go back to the creation account and add further details not previously mentioned. It is not to be understood as referring to the entire six days of creation but rather a specific period of time between the creation of the heaven and the earth and before the plants and herbs were created.

Therefore, in the creation narrative, the word “day” is not clearly used for a period of time longer than a normal day.

3. The Admission Of Those Who Hold To An Old Earth

Furthermore, there are many who hold to an old earth who admit that the term *yom* cannot be stretched to mean a long period of time. Bernard Ramm writes.

The problem of the meaning of *yom* is not fully decided as to whether it can mean period or not. The word is one which has many uses, as we have already indicated. We are not at present persuaded that it can be stretched so as to mean a period or epoch or age, as such terms are used in geology. Though not closing the door on the age-day interpretation of the word *yom*, we do not feel that the lexicography of the Hebrew language will as yet permit it (Bernard Ramm, *A Christian View Of Science And Scripture*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1954, p. 151).

4. There Is A Problem With The Plant Kingdom

Another problem with the age/day theory concerns the plant kingdom. If the plant kingdom was created on the third day, it would have existed for a long time until the sun was created on the fourth day (if the sun was created on the fourth day). How could the plants have existed for thousands, or millions of years without light from the sun? In addition, what about the symbiotic relationships between plants, (created on the third day), birds (created on the fifth day), and insects (created on the sixth day)?

Those who hold the age/day interpretation respond in several different ways. Some believe that the days in Genesis are not in chronological order but are given topically. This will explain why the sun, moon and stars are not supposedly created until the fourth day as well as the problems with plants and animals.

However, once you change the chronology, and make the six days overlap, then the text tells us nothing about the age of the earth.

The sun may have been in existence before the fourth day. If not, the earth still could have been rotating on its axis at a fixed speed anticipating the creation of the sun. Another source, perhaps, God Himself, could have been the light source for the first three days.

5. The Scripture Does Not Say The Earth Is Millions Of Years Old

The testimony of Scripture that the earth is ancient does not mean it is millions of years old. “Old” to the Hebrew mind could well be hundreds or thousands of years, not necessarily millions. To appeal to Scripture as to the ancient age of the earth meaning millions of years is assuming what you should be proving.

6. The Bible Does Not Speak Of Thousand Year Days

Scripture does not say that the Lord’s days last a thousand years each. A day with the Lord is *as* a thousand years. It is a statement of the power of God, not the length of a day according to Scripture. The reference to Gods’ years only make sense if the days are used in their normal sense.

The statement in Second Peter 3:8 should not be considered as a mathematical formula. The context is the Second Coming of Christ. Although Jesus had promised to come quickly, He had not returned by the time Peter wrote his second letter. There were people ridiculing the idea of His return. Peter encouraged his readers that the coming of Christ was certain. He used the analogy of God’s perspective of time compared to ours – one day to the Lord is the same as one thousand years. He will come in His own time.

Once we understand the context of Peter’s statement we understand that this verse says nothing about the time of the days in the Book of Genesis – this is not the subject under discussion.

Even if we grant the days in Genesis 1 were one thousand years in length, it is still not enough time for the Genesis account to fit with the modern time scale. Six thousand years from creation to Adam is does not allow the Bible to harmonize with present-day estimates of the age of the earth.

7. Time References In The Old Testament Are In The Normal Sense Of Days

In the Old Testament, time references with respect to the Lord are always used in the normal sense. The psalmist said.

I said, “O my God, do not take me away in the midst of my days; your years are throughout every generation . . . But you are the same, and your years will have no end” (Psalm 102:24,27).

8. Evenings And Mornings Speak Of Solar Days

Another problem concerns the phrase “evenings and mornings.” Advocates of the age/day theory have not come up with any convincing explanation why these terms should not be used in anything but their normal sense. The same phrase appears in Daniel 8:26 where it simply cannot refer to long, indefinite periods of time.

9. Were Each Of The Nights Million Of Years In Length?

If the days in Genesis one are assumed to be millions of years in length, then what about the nights? Was each night as long as the geological day? Was each night without any light whatsoever? An evening and a morning are the natural way to separate one day from the next. It seems most unnatural to use the phrase to separate one geological age from the next.

10. Adam Could Have Named The Animals In A Short Period Of Time

The events of the sixth day could have occurred in twenty-four hours. We can make the following observations.

The creation of the animals could have happened instantaneously. We should not assume that God needed any time to accomplish this.

Adam's creation could have taken place directly after that of the animals.

Adam was created as a fully-functioning human being. He did not have to learn a language. When God gave Adam commandments he immediately understood.

Adam's mind was at a place where it was not affected by sin or any genetic defect - it was operating at its full capacity. His extreme intelligence would have allowed him to quickly name the animals.

The purpose of naming the animals was to show Adam of his need for a helper – it was not merely to give them particular names.

Adam would not have required much time to realize the need for a helper. Seeing just a few of the animals would show him his need.

All of this could have happened in a short period of time.

11. Adam Was Created At Extreme End Of The Sixth Day

Adam lived 930 years according to Genesis 5:5. If he were created in an age-day (thousands or millions of years in duration), he would have had to have been created at the extreme edge of the sixth day to still be living in that age. This appears to be out of harmony with the fact that man was the highlight of the creative acts of God.

12. The Length Of Seventh Day Is Not Millions Of Years

The length of the seventh day, if it is understood to be a period of time, argues against the days in Genesis of being long ages. If the first six days are interpreted to be millions of years the seventh day certainly has not lasted an equivalent amount of time. At most it is only a few thousand years old.

13. The Sabbath Day Was A Definite Period Of Time

Exodus 20:8-10 speaks of humans working six days and then resting on the seventh day or Sabbath. The reason for this is God worked six days and then rested. If the Sabbath day were an indefinite period of time this commandment would have been meaningless to the Hebrews as C.D. Ginsburg notes.

The institution of the sabbath on the seventh day, which if understood as an indefinite period would have no meaning for man, and the constant usage of this expression in Scripture to denote an ordinary day, with the few exceptions of poetical or oratorical diction, and the literal meaning which all commentators and Bible readers have assigned to it till within the last century, are additional proofs that the primitive record purports to intimate the expression *yom* as a natural day (C.D. Ginsburg, cited by P. J. Wiseman, *Clues To Creation In Genesis*, London, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1977, p. 122,123).

14. God Is Not Resting Now

Though God has ceased creating, He is not resting – He is still working. Jesus said.

My Father is still working, and I also am working (John 5:17).

15. It Is An Unfair Comparison To The Prophetical Days

The days in Genesis cannot be compared to the uses of the word “day” in prophetical passages of the Old Testament. The prophetical passages in which day is used for a long period of time are in an entirely different context; they speak of future events, not of past history. The account in Genesis is clearly a narrative of past history.

16. The Age/Day Theory Does Not Fit The Geologic Time Scale

The creation of the sun, moon, and stars follows creation of light by three ages. The fish and birds are created on day five, reptiles on day six. Current scientific theory has birds later than reptiles. Therefore the scientific evidence contradicts the age/day interpretation.

17. The Hebrews Had Words To Express Ages

The Hebrews had words they could use that would express periods longer than a day. Moses, the writer of Genesis through Deuteronomy, used these words on other occasions.

There is the Hebrew word *moed* translated “seasons” in Genesis 1:14.

And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years (Genesis 1:14).

The word *olam* is translated forever in Genesis 6:3.

Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years” (Genesis 6:3).

The phrase *olam dor* is translated as all generations in Genesis 9:12.

And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: (Genesis 9:12).

Tamid is rendered continually in Leviticus 24:2.

Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning continually (Leviticus 24:2).

The Hebrew word *ad* is translated forever in Numbers 24:20.

Then he looked on Amalek, and uttered his oracle, saying: “First among the nations was Amalek, but its end is to perish forever” (Numbers 24:20).

The phrase *yom orek* means the length of days in Deuteronomy 30:20.

Loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob (Deuteronomy 30:20).

Yom olam is translated “days of old” in Deuteronomy 32:7.

Remember the days of old, consider the years long past; ask your father, and he will inform you; your elders, and they will tell you (Deuteronomy 32:7).

If “ages” were meant in the Genesis creation account, why was the word *yom* used rather than the Hebrew words that could indicate long periods of time?

18. Why Did God Delay His Creation?

What purpose would it serve for God to delay His creation? We know that He has the power to speak and then things immediately appear. Why would He wait thousands or millions of years to create Adam and Eve?

We know that Jesus Christ, God the Son, has the ability to create things in an instant. When He fed the five thousand, He instantly created mature fish and well as bread ready to eat. This demonstrates that God has the ability to make things in an instant. If this is the case, then there is no reason why He could not have created the entire universe along the same lines. If He is able to create all things in an instant, then why would He have used a slow process that would have taken millions of years. Why would He have caused innumerable deaths to animals before getting around to instantly creating humans? Why we He create a number of creatures that would become extinct? This does not make any sense. Therefore it is more reasonable to assume that God did indeed create everything that there is in six literal days.

19. The Age/Day Theory Contradicts The Promise Of A Future Blessing

The main problem with the age/day theory is that it is hard to reconcile with the Biblical promise of a future, ideal age. The Bible promises a future restoration of all things.

Who must remain in heaven until the time of universal restoration that God announced long ago through his holy prophets. (Acts 3:21).

The Bible says that in the future the animals will all be vegetarians.

The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent - its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the LORD (Isaiah 65:25).

This is restoration to the original perfection. It is not to some world that contained animal death and other types of imperfection. Animals will again eat plants – not other animals. Isaiah also wrote.

In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together; the leopard and the goat will be at peace. Calves and yearlings will be safe among lions, and a little child will lead them all. The cattle will graze among bears. Cubs and calves will lie down together. And lions will eat grass as the livestock do. Babies will crawl safely among poisonous snakes. Yes, a little child will put its hand in a nest of deadly snakes and pull it out unharmed (Isaiah 11:6-8).

Therefore, the idea of a future restoration of the world that reverts back to the previous paradise, refutes the idea of any type of animal death before the Fall.

Summary On The Age/Day Theory

The age/day theory does not view the days in Genesis in a literal sense but rather sees them as indefinite periods of time. The strength of the age/day theory is that it harmonizes Genesis and modern science. The weakness is that it is a forced interpretation of the text, not something that is obviously there.

The words of Professor Dickey concerning the age/day theory are highly instructive.

The theory was widely held that the six days of creation meant six extended periods of time. It commended itself among others to Augustine . . . but neither Augustine nor modern harmonisers of Genesis and science get the theory, whether true or false, from Scripture. There is nothing in the Bible even to suggest it. On the contrary it has always been read into the Bible from without, on scientific or quasi-scientific grounds (Professor Dickey in *The Organism of Christian Truth*, cited by P.J. Wiseman, *Clues To Creation In Genesis*, London, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1977, p. 122).

Victor P. Hamilton concurs.

It is highly debatable whether the interpretation of Genesis' days as metaphorical for geological ages can be sustained. For one thing, it allows for the concerns of establishing concord with science (ever changing in its conclusions) to override an understanding of a Hebrew word based on its contextual usage. Furthermore, one would have to take extreme liberty with the phrase "there was evening and there was morning - the x day." Lastly, how would one possibly take in stride scientifically a major stage in the creation process that has an epoch which brings about vegetation precede an epoch which brings about the sun and the stars? (Victor P. Hamilton, *Genesis*, 1-17, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1990, p. 54).

Ronald Youngblood observed.

Many late-nineteenth - and early-twentieth century geologists within the church taught and popularized this theory. But geologic ages tend to overlap with each other and are not capable of the sort of rigid division implied by the words "And there was evening, and there was morning – the first day (Gen 1:5; see also 1:8, 13, 19, 23, 31). Also, while it is true that the Hebrew word for day is somewhat elastic, we should probably not press it to denote so lengthy a period of time (Ronald Youngblood, *The Book of Genesis*, Second Edition, Baker Book House, 1991, p. 46).

Professor James Barr, when he was Regius Professor of Hebrew at the University of Oxford, wrote the following.

Probably, so far as I know, there is no university professor in Hebrew or Old Testament at any world-class university who does not believe that the writer(s) of Gen. 1-11 intended to convey to their readers the idea that (a) creation took place in a series of six days which were the same as the days of 24 hours we now experience (b) the figures contained in the Genesis genealogies provided by simple addition a chronology from the beginning of the world up to later stages in the biblical story . . . Or, to put it negatively, the apologetic arguments which suppose the 'days' of creation to be long eras of time, the figures of years not to be chronological and the flood to be a merely local Mesopotamian flood, are not taken seriously by any such professors, as far as I know (James Barr in a personal letter to David Watson).

The age/day theory stems from the desire to harmonize Genesis and geology rather than from a close study of the text.

Does The Age/Day Theory Begin A Slippery Slope?

Many feel that a departure from a literal understanding of Genesis will ultimately cause problems. Theologian John Klotz writes of the issues associated with adopting a non-literal view.

Probably the earliest suggestion in an attempt at reconciliation was the suggestion that the days of Genesis be regarded as long periods of time, comparable to geologic ages . . .

It is apparent that this was the first step in moving away from the view that the Genesis record was historical. Once it was admitted that the days of Genesis might not be ordinary days but could be understood as long periods of time, it was difficult to maintain the historicity and the literal interpretation of other aspects of the creation account. . .

It was not long until there were those who suggested that these first chapters of Genesis were saga. They were indeed based on historical events, but they were not to be understood as history in our usual sense of the term. Rather they were a 'beefed-up' account of what actually happened . . . From the viewpoint that this account was a saga, it was but a few steps to regarding it as a myth; that is, it was viewed as totally ahistorical, a series of stories - parables or allegories - intending to convey some great truth (John Klotz, *Studies in Creation*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1985, p. 85, 86).

While the age/day theory does not necessarily lead one down the path to deny the historical truth of Genesis, it can be the first step toward that direction. This has caused many to be cautious about accepting this as the proper understanding of the days in Genesis 1.

QUESTION 18

What Is The Literary Framework View?

Another way of looking at the Genesis creation account is what is known as the literary framework view. This view holds that the days in Genesis chapter 1 are not meant to be understood chronologically but rather logically. The days are not sequential but are rather written in a literary framework. The writer of Genesis was not intending to tell us about either the length of a day or the order of creation.

The First Three Days Correspond To Days Four, Five And Six

The first three days correspond to days four through six. The first three days are days of forming while the next three days are day of filling. The comparison is as follows.

Day 1 God separated the light from the darkness. On Day 4 God placed the sun, moon, and stars in heaven.

Day 2 The sky and the waters were separated. On Day 5 God filled the water with the fish and the sky with birds.

Day 3 The dry land and the seas were separated. God also made the plants and trees. On Day 6 God made the land animals and man and woman.

Consequently the arrangement of the six days is not a chronology of what happened but rather a literary device that teaches God created all things.

This Theory Fits With Science

Since there is no chronology in the Genesis creation account, there is no need to harmonize it with modern science. There was no intention of the author to give the reader any scientific information.

There Is Disharmony In The Sequence Of Events

The literary view sees problems in the chronology in the Genesis account. They see a disharmony in the sequence of events in Genesis. Genesis 2:7 seems to say that God made man before He made the plants (Genesis 2:8) and animals Genesis 2:19.

DIFFICULTIES WITH THE LITERARY FRAMEWORK VIEW

There are numerous problems with this view. They are as follows:

1. It Is Not The Natural Reading Of The Text

The main problem with this theory is that the natural reading of Genesis is that of a chronological sequence. There is a natural build up in the account moving from the simple things to the more complex. The dry land, waters, and sky are first made and then filled with fish, birds, animals, and finally humans. This is a natural chronological progression.

Genesis 1 also gives a series of numbers with each day (Day 1, Day 2, etc.). The natural reading of this would be consecutive days.

Therefore, we find no hint that it is merely a literary device that lists creation in logical rather than chronological order.

2. The Sabbath Pattern Was Six Days Work And One Day Of Rest

When God commanded humanity to work six days and then rest upon the seventh it was based upon His pattern of work.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep in holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God . . . 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 (Exodus 20:8-11).

People are supposed to imitate God by working six days and then resting on the seventh. To make any sense of this commandment, God must have worked six days and then ceased working on the seventh.

3. The Days Do Not Exactly Correspond

The days do not exactly correspond as the theory is stated.

There is no exact parallel between Day 1 and Day 4. The lights created on Day 4 (the sun, moon, stars) are placed in the expanse that was created on Day 2, not Day 1. The expanse is not even mentioned on Day 1 but it is stated five times on Day 2 (Genesis 1:6-8). Therefore there is no parallel between Day one and Day 4 with respect to creating the expanse and then filling it.

4. There Are Other Problems With The Parallels

The parallels between Day 2 and Day 5 are also a problem. The preparation for the fish and birds comes on Day 3, not Day 2. It is on the third Day of creation when God gathers the waters together and calls them seas (Genesis 1:22). On Day 5 He fills the seas with fish.

Likewise there are problems with the parallels between Day 3 and Day 6. Nothing was created on Day 6 to fill the seas that were gathered together on the third Day of creation.

Consequently, there is no precise correspondence between the first three days of creation and the last three. The “literary framework” is not there.

5. This Theory Tries To Accord The Bible With Modern Science

This theory, like so many others, seems to be an attempt to harmonize the Bible and science. Like other theories, it is held because of a belief in an ancient earth and universe, not because the Bible clearly says the earth is old.

6. The Text Does Harmonize Without Resorting To This Literary Framework Idea

This theory assumes the account of creation cannot be harmonized as it stands. However if Genesis 1 is understood as a general account of creation, while chapter two is seen as filling in the details of this general account, then there is no disharmony in the text. Genesis two does not say that man was created before the plants and animals – it is merely filling in the details previously revealed. If chapter two is understood as supplementing the information already revealed in chapter one, then there is no contradiction between the two chapters and no need to find some literary answer.

Summary

The literary framework view sees days 1 to 3 in the Genesis creation account corresponding to days 4 to 6. Consequently the account needs to be seen as a literary work describing creation – not necessarily a listing of chronological events.

While the literary framework view allows Scripture to harmonize with the views of modern science with respect to the age of the earth, there are too many problems with the theory to make it acceptable. The harmonization is forced. The days do not match up as the theory state.

QUESTION 19

What Is The Religious Only View Of Genesis?

A popular way to view the days in Genesis is the religious only approach. According to this view, it was not the intention of the author to give any information of a scientific nature. Theologian Victor Hamilton explains this theory.

This approach leaves open the possibility for taking “day” literally or nonliterally. It begins by placing the Gen. 1 Creation story in its historical context. This is a word from God addressed to a group of people who are surrounded by nations whose cosmology is informed by polytheism (belief in many gods) and the mythology that flows out of that polytheism . . . The contest is not between a religious view (Israel’s) and a secular view (non Israel’s). There were no Charles Darwins in the ancient world who operated from nontheistic presuppositions . . . The writer’s concerns, then were theological and historical - what happened, and why and so what . . .

A literary reading of Gen 1. still permits the retention of “day as a solar day of 24 hours. But it understands “day” not as a chronological account of how many hours God invested in his creating project, but as an analogy of God’s creative activity. God reveals himself in a medium which they can identify and which they can comprehend (Victor P. Hamilton, *Genesis*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1990, pp. 55,56).

Some See This As An Irrelevant Question

Therefore some scholars see questions about the length of the days in Genesis as irrelevant because it is not the Bible’s intent to reveal this type of information. They contend that Genesis speaks in religious terms, while science has the job of explaining how it happened. Anthropologist R. Clyde McCone writes.

Many seemingly unresolvable controversies regarding the Bible are the result of attempting to find scriptural answers to questions that contain non-biblical assumptions. One such controversy focuses on questions concerning the date of ‘the beginning’ (Gen 1:1) and the length of the days of creation. Such questions carry the assumptions that (1) creation was an event that took place in time, that (2) the Genesis account describes a process in time that is scientifically explainable, and that (3) Genesis was written to make known the original point in time as well as the subsequent process through time (R. Clyde McCone in *The Genesis Debate*, Ronald Youngblood Editor, Thomas Nelson, 1986, pp. 12,13).

It Is Wrong To Look For Scientific Answers

Those holding this point of view assert that it is wrong to attempt to discover scientific information in Scripture. They believe that every attempt at reconciling Genesis with the exact requirements of modern sciences has been doomed to failure. Only a forced interpretation of the text can make Genesis conform to modern science. Theologian Bernard Ramm explains.

The religious-only theory would assert that the theologian who tries to derive science from Genesis is as much in error as the scientist who sees nothing of God in Nature. It would assert that it is not necessary to harmonize geology and Genesis for it is impossible to do so with theological utterances on the one hand and scientific ones on the other . . . Genesis is theologically a true view of Nature; but scientifically it is of no moment (Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View Of Science And Scripture*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1954, p. 123).

Among those who hold this position are Christians who adopt the theory of evolution.

DIFFICULTIES WITH THE RELIGIOUS ONLY INTERPRETATION

This approach attempts to remove the tension between science and Scripture by making it a non-issue. The problem is that it undermines the authority of Scripture while giving all authority to science. It makes the statements of Genesis irrelevant. If the scientific matters are not to be considered, then why are they recorded and given so much emphasis in Scripture? Why is the account recorded at all? The Genesis account of creation must mean something.

Summary To The Religious Only Interpretation

The religious only interpretation of Genesis sees it as not attempting to give any information with respect to the time in which God created the heavens and the earth. The author merely states that God is the Creator but does not give any details of fact. Consequently there is no reason to harmonize Genesis and science.

While the main purpose of Genesis is to emphasize God as the Creator there are details in the account that must be taken seriously. It obviously means something. In addition, other parts of Scripture assume that the creation account of Genesis is a literal understanding of what occurred in the beginning.

QUESTION 20

In What Sense Do We Need To Consider Time When Attempting To Date The Earth And The Universe?

One of the factors that must be considered when attempting to date the earth and universe is time. Whether the universe is young or old, it has changed to some degree with time. Scientist Donald Chittick writes.

A veil to our understanding of what the original earth was like, and therefore how changes which have occurred since have affected it is the factor of time. By ordinary human standards, creation took place a long time ago. Even if we take the position that creation took place a few thousand years ago, this is still a long time by human standards. A lot of changes can take place even in a thousand years. Time itself has erased many of the details and much of the evidence. Some of the human artifacts may have rotted completely while others have deteriorated; geological features, erosion, and other physical changes have destroyed some of the original evidence. Time is one of the major veils to our understanding of the original earth and to our attempts to reconstruct its condition (Donald Chittick, *The Controversy*, Portland, Oregon, Multnomah, 1984, p. 186).

Therefore whenever we approach the question of the age of the earth and universe, we must consider the factor of time. This has often been overlooked by those on both sides of the age of the earth issue.

The Fall And The Flood

There is the matter of two events that would have reshaped the earth in the past – the fall of humanity and the flood in Noah’s day. While Christians debate the extent of the Flood, whether it was worldwide or localized, there is no debate as to the effects of the Fall. Everything on the earth was affected – everything was changed from perfection to imperfection. The Bible says that God created everything very good.

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning - the sixth day (Genesis 1:31).

The World Became Subject To Death And Decay

However when sin entered the world, all things became subject to death and decay. The Bible says the ground was now cursed.

To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return” (Genesis 3:17-19).

The present world is totally different than the world that was initially created. This fact has to be taken into consideration when we attempt to date the past. Along with the normal changes that time makes, we also have the catastrophic event of the Fall.

Summary

It is essential that we realize that time changes everything. Even a short period of time can significantly alter things here on the earth. Therefore whenever we speak about evidence for a young earth or an old earth we must realize that the ravages of time make difficult our quest to determine how long the earth has existed.

QUESTION 21

What Is The Idealized View Of Time? (Mature Creationism)

There is the theory known as the “idealized view of time”. This is also known as “mature creationism.” The idealized view of time makes the distinction between actual time, and ideal, or perceived time.

Mature Creationism Means Creation With The Appearance Of Age

This theory recognizes that God created Adam and Eve with the appearance of age. When Adam was thirty seconds old he looked like a full-grown adult. The same was true of Eve. Neither of them had to grow up or learn a language - they were created fully mature.

If God made the remainder of the universe along this same line, then the actual age would not be the same as the age that things appear to be. Trees would have been created fully mature, animals did not have to grow up, and the stars were already shining in the sky. If this is the case, then the universe could look millions or billions of years old but actually be relatively young. Therefore, there is no conflict between the Bible and science because God made the universe to look old when He created it a relatively short time ago.

A BIBLICAL EXAMPLE OF MATURE CREATIONISM: THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

From Scripture, we find an example of God creating things fully mature – the feeding of the five thousand. The Bible describes the miracle in the following way.

And he [Jesus] directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children (Matthew 13:19-21).

Here we have an example of God creating something fully mature – it looked older than it actually was. There were five thousand men, as well as a large number of women and children, who were hungry. The entire multitude was fed with these five loaves and two fish. After giving thanks, Jesus gave the five loaves and two fish to the disciples and they distributed them to the multitude. Every person in the crowd ate and was satisfied. Then the disciples collected twelve baskets of fragments that were leftover. This was indeed a miracle!

The Bread And The Fish Were Fully Mature

We note that the bread and the fish that were provided for this miracle were created fully mature. The bread never grew in the field, never had to be harvested, and never had to be baked. It was created fully mature and ready to eat

The same is true with the fish. The fish never started out as eggs. They were never young fish who grew to be larger fish. These fish were created fully mature and ready to eat.

Both the bread and the fish were created with a superficial appearance of age. The people eating them were not able to tell the difference between these loaves of bread and these fish from regular bread and

regular fish. Yet the bread and fish that Jesus created was only minutes old. However they looked fully mature.

IMPORTANT LESSONS LEARNED FROM THIS MIRACLE

This miracle tells us a couple of important things. First, God has the ability to create things that look older than they actually are. The fish and bread appeared to be older than a few minutes.

Second, God is willing to create things with a superficial appearance of age. He had no problem with creating something that looked older than it was.

Since God has demonstrated the ability and willingness to create things with a superficial appearance of age, it is not impossible that this is what He did at the beginning. He may have created the entire universe along the same line. He created everything in six days only a few thousand years ago. However the universe was created fully mature. Consequently the idea of a mature creationism by God is certainly within the realm of possibilities.

DIFFICULTIES WITH THE IDEALIZED VIEW OF TIME

It is true that all creation would have to have some appearance of age. The problem with this view is that it makes it impossible to detect any age of the earth. All scientific attempts at trying to date the earth are futile because the appearance of age has been built-in into God's creation.

Some argue that this theory makes God a deceiver. On the one hand, the universe gives the impression of being very old, while, in actuality, it is only a few thousand years old with age built-in to the creation. However, this would not be the case if He has told us that this is exactly what He has done. There is no deception on God's part if He created everything "fully mature" and then revealed that fact to humanity.

Summary

The idealized view of time holds that God created the earth relatively recently but with the appearance of age. The fact that there is built in age in all things that God created makes irrelevant any attempts to date the earth the way it is now. The actual age is not the same as the perceived age.

The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand demonstrates the ability and willingness of God to create with a superficial appearance of age. Therefore it is highly possible that He created the entire universe the same way.

Did God create the universe relatively recently with the appearance that it is millions of years old, or did He really create everything millions of years ago?" Or is it possible that the earth really is relatively young and that modern dating methods are irrelevant? These are the questions that continue to divide Bible-believers.

QUESTION 22

Does The Fall Of Humanity Have To Be Considered When Dating The Earth? (Uniformitarianism)

There is the mistaken idea that the earth can be reliably dated because all things have continued the same since the beginning. This is known as uniformitarianism. It holds that everything has been developing at a uniform rate. This allows us to accurately date the earth and the universe.

Uniformitarianism Would Be Popular At The Time Of The End

The Bible predicts that the idea of uniformitarianism will be popular at the time of the end.

First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation” (2 Peter 3:3,4).

The Fall Must Be Considered

One factor that needs to be considered in dating that earth is the Fall of humanity recorded in Genesis 3. The Bible says that the world was radically different once sin entered into it.

This being the case, any attempt at dating the actual age of things must take into consideration that the world is not the same one that God created. Sin has marred its perfection. There is no way of knowing what the extent of the changes may have been after the Fall. Consequently any attempt to accurately date the earth is futile.

DIFFICULTIES WITH THIS IDEA

While it is very important to consider the Fall of humanity in dating the earth there are other things that need to be considered. Modern science, using different methods, has come up with a consistent date of the earth and universe in the billions of years. This has caused some to think that the Fall of humanity does not keep one from coming up with a date of the creation of the universe.

Summary

Without divine revelation humanity would assume that the earth has been developing at a consistent rate from its beginning. Uniformitarianism is the idea that things continue on at basically the same rate. Peter warns us that one of the sins of the last days is the doctrine of the uniformity of all things.

The fall of humanity would have drastically altered the earth. From its original perfection came death and dying. Everything changed after the Fall. Therefore we cannot know the extent of the changes that were made. This makes dating the past something near impossible.

On the other hand, it is argued that modern science consistently comes up with dates of millions of years for the earth. Therefore the Fall does not totally obliterate all the evidence.

QUESTION 23

How Does Flood Geology Affect The Dating Of The Earth?

One of the ways to understand the age of the earth is through what is known as “Flood geology.” Flood geology assumes that the Flood recorded in Genesis 6-9 was universal – the entire globe was covered with water. The geological upheaval caused by the Flood would change the entire structure of the earth. The mountains would have been pushed up and the seabeds lowered. The world after the flood would have been radically different from the world before the flood. Therefore any attempt to date the earth by geological formations would be futile for nothing of the original earth would have been left.

DIFFICULTIES WITH FLOOD GEOLOGY

The main difficulty with Flood geology is that the majority of scientists, including those who are Bible-believers, do not find evidence of a one-year global Flood. There is also the biblical possibility that the Flood recorded in Genesis was not universal but was rather localized to one geographical area. Consequently, it is contended that Flood geology should not be the determining factor in attempting to date the earth.

Summary

If the Flood in Noah’s day was universal, as held by “Flood Geology” then catastrophic upheavals took place everywhere in the earth. The original geologic formations would have been drastically altered making it futile to attempt to date the earth.

However not every Bible-believing scientist thinks the Flood was universal. If the Flood were localized then it would be basically irrelevant in dating the age of the earth.

QUESTION 24

Is It Possible To Date The Creation Of The Heavens And The Earth From Scripture?

The idea that the Bible gives us enough information to exactly date the creation of the heavens and the earth is held by many people. Traditional Judaism holds the year 2000 is 5,780 years after the creation of the universe. In the seventeenth century the Irish Archbishop James Ussher put the date of creation in the year 4004 B.C.

The Age Is Computed From The Genealogies

These attempts to date creation were based mainly on the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 10. When the different ages of the men in those genealogies were added up, they believed the result was the number of years between Adam and Abraham. Figuring backward from the time of Christ (in the case of Christians) the year 4004 B.C. was arrived at.

THERE ARE PROBLEMS IN DATING THE AGE OF THE EARTH FROM GENEALOGIES

There are two main problems with doing this. First, the genealogies in the Scripture are not complete - there are gaps in them. This can be seen as follows.

Matthew's Genealogy Is Only Selective

In Matthew chapter 1 we read of the following people in the genealogy of Jesus.

And to Asa was born Jehoshaphat; and to Jehoshaphat, Joram; and to Joram, Uzziah; and to Uzziah was born Jotham; and to Jotham, Ahaz; and to Ahaz, Hezekiah (Matthew 1:8,9)

After Uzziah (or Ahaziah) we have Jotham. Yet when we read 1 Chronicles 3:10-12, we discover that there are three generations that are omitted by Matthew – Joash, Amaziah, and Azariah.

Now Solomon's son [was] Rehoboam, Abijah [was] his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son, Joram his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash his son, Amaziah his son, Azariah his son, Jotham his son.

Although Matthew lists Jotham after Uzziah (or Azariah) the writer of 1 Chronicles adds three different names. Therefore Matthew's genealogy is selective – it is not a complete list of everyone in the line of Jesus.

The Genealogies Are Incomplete In First Chronicles

There is another example in 1 Chronicles 26:24 that biblical genealogies are sometimes incomplete. The writer gives a list of officers that were appointed when David made Solomon king in his place. This occurred approximately 970 B.C. In the list we read the following.

Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was officer over the treasures (1 Chronicles 26:24).

Gershom was one of the actual sons of Moses (Exodus 2:22). He was born before the children of Israel left Egypt. This occurred approximately 1445 B.C. Yet Shebuel, living in 970 B.C., is called Gershom's son. There are approximately ten generations that would have existed between Gershom (before 1440

B.C) and Shebuel (970 B.C). This is another example of the biblical genealogies being selective, not complete.

The Genealogies In Genesis Contain Gaps

Since we know that other biblical genealogies contain gaps, it is possible that the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 also contain some gaps. If this is the case, then it is impossible to calculate the exact number of years from Adam to Abraham. We simply do not know how many people lived, and how much time elapsed between the creation of Adam and the time of Abraham. Therefore the exact time in which Adam lived can never be known.

Genesis 1:1 Is Assumed Not To Be Part Of First Day

The next problem in attempting to date the age of the earth is the assumption that Genesis 1:1 is part of the first day of creation. This verse may be more of a general statement of what God did in the beginning. It may not be part of Day one of creation. If this is the case, then it is impossible to date when the heavens and earth were created. Since the creation of the heavens and earth is purposely not dated, we should give up any attempt to date the age of the earth and the universe from Scripture.

The Hebrew Says Day One, Not Necessarily The First Day

Furthermore, the Hebrew text of Genesis 1:5 merely says, “there was evening and there was morning, day one.” While it can be translated “first day” this is not necessarily the case. When the word “first” is used in English translations it implies nothing preceded this day. Yet this is not necessarily the idea behind the Hebrew phrase. It could simply mean one day without commenting, one way or the other, if anything preceded it. Consequently the phrase translated “one day” in the first chapter of Genesis does not necessarily mean that this was the first day of creation.

The General Date Can Be Known

While no one can know the exact date of the earth and universe, it is argued that the general age of the earth can be known. The earth was created very recently in six literal days, and it is thousands, not millions or billions, years old. Although there may be gaps in the genealogies in Genesis, these gaps are not for millions of years.

The Gaps Are Only Hundreds Of Years

In the two biblical examples given where genealogies do contain gaps, there is, at the most, only 510 years between the two names. Consequently, the biblical evidence is that Adam appeared several thousand years ago, not several million years ago. Therefore the earth can be dated to a general, though not a specific, time frame.

Summary

We do not have any specific date from Scripture as to exactly when the heavens and the earth were created. The writers of God’s Word leave this matter silent. Furthermore, there are problems with gaps in the genealogies. This does not allow us to come up with any specific dates. In addition, there the question as to whether Genesis 1:1 is part of the first day of creation. All of these factors eliminate the possibility of arriving at an exact date of Adam’s creation.

Since the Bible does not list any date with respect to the original creation, we should be careful in our insistence as to the age of the earth and the universe.

It is possible that we can generally date the earth and universe as relatively recent based on a literal understanding of the first chapter of Genesis. The question remains, "Is this what the writer of Genesis intended the biblical account of creation to be understood? Bible-believers today still remain divided over this issue.

QUESTION 25

What Should Be Our Conclusion About The Days Of Genesis And The Age Of The Earth?

As we have considered the various options on how the term “days” in Genesis should be interpreted and the age of the earth we discover there are various possible answers to these questions. What are we to make of the various answers?

THERE ARE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES WITH EACH VIEW

Each of the possible scenarios has their strengths and their weaknesses. This can be seen as follows.

1. LITERAL DAY – THE RECENT CREATION VIEW

This is the view that God created the earth in six literal days a few thousand years ago.

Strength: This theory is consistent with Scripture taking the word day in its normal sense.

Weakness: The young age of the earth seemingly contradicts modern scientific measurements.

2. LITERAL DAY/ CREATION NOT DATED

Genesis 1:1 is not part of the first day of creation. The days of creation started with Genesis 1:2.

Strength: Genesis can harmonize with modern science about the age of the earth.

Weakness: Genesis 1:1 may be a summary statement about God’s creation, saying nothing about God’s creation before the first day.

3. LOCAL CREATION

Genesis 1:1 refers to the creation of the universe while Genesis 1:2 speaks of the making of the Promised Land, not the entire earth.

Strength: This fits with the emphasis in Genesis of the land God gave to His people.

Weakness: This leaves the Bible saying nothing specifically about the original creation of the heavens and the earth.

4. THE GAP THEORY

Genesis 1:1 describes the original creation while Genesis 1:2 assumes a gap of time has occurred when God judged the first creation. The remainder of Genesis records God’s re-creation of the earth in six literal days.

Strength: It takes the days of Genesis literally and also allows Scripture to harmonize with the long ages of science.

Weakness: Neither Scripture nor science supports this theory.

5. GAPS BETWEEN THE DAYS

The days in Genesis are consecutive but not sequential. Between each creation day millions of years could have elapsed where God created. God progressively created most things between the literal days.

Strength: Takes the days of Genesis literally and harmonizes the age of the earth with modern science.

Weakness: Add a number of gaps in the record that are not there.

6. THE REVELATIONAL DAY THEORY

Creation was revealed to Moses in six days, not completed in six days. The days in Genesis are days of revelation not creation.

Strength: Takes the days literally and allows Genesis to harmonize with science.

Weakness: Account reads like chronology of creation, not revelation.

7. THE AGE/DAY THEORY

The age/day theory understands the days as long periods of time rather than solar days.

Strength: This allows Genesis to harmonize with the consensus of modern science that the earth is old.

Weakness: The idea of day representing a period of time is not the natural way to understand the word.

8. LITERARY FRAMEWORK

This position understands the days in Genesis to be more logical than chronological. No order of creation is given in the account.

Strength: Understands Genesis has a distinctive framework to its composition.

Weakness: The account reads like a chronology.

9. THE RELIGIOUS ONLY VIEW OF GENESIS

This view says that Genesis is not meant to be read scientifically but rather religiously. There is no attempt to give the reader any scientific information about the creation or the age of the universe.

Strength: There is no need to harmonize Genesis with science since it was not the intent of the author to do so.

Weakness: It makes the entire account meaningless with all its specifics.

10. TIME ITSELF

Time itself must be considered in any dating of the heavens and earth. This is true whether or not the universe is young or old.

11. THE IDEALIZED VIEW OF TIME

The real time of creation may not be the same as the perceived time. God created everything with a superficial appearance of age. This has to be taken into consideration when attempting to date the earth and universe.

Strength: It recognizes God created everything in the universe fully mature. The actual age was not the same as things actually looked.

Weakness: There is no way to tell how old the universe actually is because there is built-in age to everything. If the universe looks old, then maybe it is old.

12. UNIFORMITARIANISM AND THE FALL OF HUMANITY

Uniformitarianism says that things have continued at basically the same rate from the beginning. This allows us to accurately date the earth and the universe.

However the fall of humanity changed everything in the universe.

Strength: All things are now different from when they were originally created. This includes time.

Weakness: We do know the extent, if any, that time changed after the Fall.

13. FLOOD GEOLOGY

Assumes the Flood in Genesis 6-9 covered the entire globe. All methods that attempt to date the age of the earth must take this into consideration.

Strength: Accepts the account in Genesis 6-9 as a literal account of what occurred – the entire world was covered with water from a judgment of God.

Weakness: Most geologists, including Christians, do not find evidence of a one- year global flood. In addition, the language of Scripture can be used to support a local flood.

All of the above factors need to be taken into consideration when one attempts to understand the days of Genesis and the age of the earth.

Good People Differ On How Old The Earth May Be

This is a case where godly people differ on their interpretation. Whatever particular view we hold we should do it with humility and with the understanding that this is one of the issues where good people differ upon what the text means. As we have already emphasized, the biblical writers were not that concerned about the time of creation as they were about the fact of creation. It is essential to believe God's Word to be true.

This Doctrine Should Not Cause Division

We should not cause division with one another over the timing of creation. The key thing that all parties must remember is that the Scripture teaches that God specifically designed and created the heavens, the earth, and humanity for a specific purpose. We should never lose sight of that fact.

We agree with the assessment of Bernard Ramm, who writes.

We should be charitable toward all evangelical efforts which try to clear up the problems of the early chapters of Genesis (Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View Of Science And Scripture*, Eerdmans, 1954, p. 153).

Summary

The question as to the meaning of the term “day” in Genesis and its implications is an issue that continues to divide Bible-believers. Whatever particular position one may take, they should hold it with humility. There is room for disagreement among those who accept the authority of the Bible.

Summary To The Days In Genesis And The Date Of Creation (Topic 2)

After looking at what the Bible says about the days in Genesis and the date of the original creation we can make the following observations.

Question 10. The word day in the first chapter of Genesis has been understood in a number of ways by Bible-believing Christians. Some see the days as literal solar days, others as long ages, while still others see them as symbolic days.

Other factors that need to be considered when attempting to date the age of the earth are time, the fall of humanity, and the Genesis Flood. There is also the view that everything was created recently but with the appearance of age.

All of these things add to the difficulty of attempting to date the age of the earth and the universe.

Question 11. The literal day/recent creation theory holds that the earth was created in six literal days a few thousand years ago. The strength of this theory is that it takes the creation account at face value and is consistent with the rest of Scripture that God created the world in six days. The obvious problem concerns the age of the earth and universe that seems to be much longer according to modern science.

Question 12. . The literal solar day/creation not dated theory holds the days in Genesis were literal but that there is no attempt made to determine the age of the earth. It is argued that Genesis 1:1 is not part of the first day and there may have been thousands or millions of years between the time God originally created the universe and the time He formed the earth. The time between the original creation and the forming of the earth is unknown.

Though this particular theory holds to a literal understanding of Scripture and of the days in Genesis it, like every other theory with respect to this tough question, still has its problems.

Question 13. The local creation view sees the Genesis account referring primarily to the Promised Land and not to the entire earth. Therefore the account is geographically localized and not meant to be an explanation of the creation of the entire earth. This means the account has nothing to say with respect to the forming of the present world.

The problem with this view is that the account reads as though it is referring to the entire earth. In addition, other portions of Scripture say that God created the heavens and earth in six days and not just the Promised Land.

Question 14. The Gap Theory teaches that Scripture is not giving an account of God's original creation in Genesis but rather the re-creation of the earth after some terrible judgment. The re-creation took place in six literal days a few thousand years ago while the initial creation, recorded in Genesis 1:1 is dateless.

Though the Gap Theory attempts to solve the time problem and the fossil problem, it is beset with problems. First, something has to be read into the text that is not obviously there. There is not one verse in the Bible that explicitly teaches an earlier creation.

Also, the Gap Theory breaks the connection between the first two verses of the Bible where the text has no break. It builds our world on the ruins of a former world with no connection between the two. It leaves the original creation to just one verse. All of these problems make the theory highly suspect. Although those who hold to the Gap theory are well-meaning Bible believers, the facts, both biblical and scientific, do not justify this view. A better answer needs to be found.

Question 15. Progressive creationism sees Genesis 1 as speaking of six literal days but with gaps between each day when God did much of His creating. Each of these gaps could have been millions of years long. This allows the days of Genesis to be solar days while the earth can be millions of years old.

The problem with this view is that there is no evidence in the text for gaps between the days. In addition there are no examples in Scripture where this sort of thing occurs.

Question 16. The revelation day theory holds to six days of revelation, not six days of creation, in the first chapter of Genesis. All Genesis reveals is what Moses was told on six literal days. The account has nothing to do with the time it took the earth to be created.

If the revelatory day theory were true, then it would solve several problems facing us in the Genesis creation account. We could understand *yom* to mean literal days in Genesis 1, but still have an ancient earth and universe. This would nicely harmonize the Bible and science. Though this view is certainly possible, the evidence is scanty. There is nothing in the account that would lead us to believe we are talking about days of revelation rather than days of creation.

Question 17. The age/day theory does not view the days in Genesis in a literal sense but rather sees them as indefinite periods of time. The strength of the age/day theory is that it harmonizes Genesis and modern science. The weakness is that it is a forced interpretation of the text, not something that is obviously there.

Though the age/day theory does not necessarily lead one down the path to deny the historical truth of Genesis, it can be the first step toward that direction. This has caused many to be cautious about accepting this as the proper understanding of the days in Genesis 1.

Question 18. The literary framework view sees days 1 to 3 in the Genesis creation account corresponding to days 4 to 6. Consequently the account needs to be seen as a literary work describing creation – not necessarily a listing of chronological events.

While the literary framework view allows Scripture to harmonize with the views of modern science with respect to the age of the earth, there are too many problems with the theory to make it acceptable. The harmonization is forced. The days do not match up as the theory state.

Question 19. The religious only interpretation of Genesis sees it as not attempting to give any information with respect to the time in which God created the heavens and the earth. The author merely states that God is the Creator but does not give any details of fact. Consequently there is no reason to harmonize Genesis and science.

While the main purpose of Genesis is to emphasize God as the Creator there are details in the account that must be taken seriously. It obviously means something. In addition, other parts of Scripture assume that the creation account of Genesis is a literal understanding of what occurred in the beginning.

Question 20. It is essential that we realize that time changes everything. Even a short period of time can significantly alter things here on the earth. Therefore whenever we speak about evidence for a young earth or an old earth we must realize that the ravages of time make difficult our quest to determine how long the earth has existed.

Question 21. The idealized view of time holds that God created the earth relatively recently but with the appearance of age. The fact that there is built in age in all things that God created makes irrelevant any attempts to date the earth the way it is now. The actual age is not the same as the perceived age.

The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand demonstrates the ability and willingness of God to create with a superficial appearance of age. Therefore it is highly possible that He created the entire universe the same way.

Did God create the universe relatively recently with the appearance that it is millions of years old, or did He really create everything millions of years ago?" Or is it possible that the earth really is relatively young and that modern dating methods are irrelevant? These are the questions that continue to divide Bible-believers.

Question 22. Without divine revelation humanity would assume that the earth has been developing at a consistent rate from its beginning. Uniformitarianism is the idea that things continue on at basically the same rate. Peter warns us that one of the sins of the last days is the doctrine of the uniformity of all things.

The fall of humanity would have drastically altered the earth. From its original perfection came death and dying. Everything changed after the Fall. Therefore we cannot know the extent of the changes that were made. This makes dating the past something near impossible.

On the other hand, it is argued that modern science consistently comes up with dates of millions of years for the earth. Therefore the Fall does not totally obliterate all the evidence.

Question 23. If the Flood in Noah's day was universal, as held by "Flood Geology" then catastrophic upheavals took place everywhere in the earth. The original geologic formations would have been drastically altered making it futile to attempt to date the earth.

However not every Bible-believing scientist thinks the Flood was universal. If the Flood were localized then it would be basically irrelevant in dating the age of the earth.

Question 24. We do not have any specific date from Scripture as to exactly when the heavens and the earth were created. The writers of God's Word leave this matter silent. Furthermore, there are problems with gaps in the genealogies. This does not allow us to come up with any specific dates. In addition, there the question as to whether Genesis 1:1 is part of the first day of creation. All of these factors eliminate the possibility of arriving at an exact date of Adam's creation.

Since the Bible does not list any date with respect to the original creation, we should be careful in our insistence as to the age of the earth and the universe.

It is possible that we can generally date the earth and universe as relatively recent based on a literal understanding of the first chapter of Genesis. The question remains, "Is this what the writer of Genesis intended the biblical account of creation to be understood? Bible-believers today still remain divided over this issue.

Question 25. The question as to the meaning of the term day in Genesis and its implications is an issue that continues to divide Bible-believers. Whatever particular position one may take, they should hold it with humility. There is room for disagreement among those who accept the authority of the Bible.

In our next section we look at the question of the extent of the Flood as recorded in the Book of Genesis.

Did the Flood cover the entire earth or was it limited to one geographic area?

Were all the inhabitants of the earth killed?

Topic 3

THE EXTENT OF THE FLOOD

Did The Flood Cover The Entire Earth Or Was It Localized?

A much-discussed topic among Bible believer is the extent of the Flood in the days of Noah. This section will explore the various ways the Genesis Flood account has been understood. Some believers think the Flood was worldwide in its scope destroying every living thing on the planet. Only those in the ark survived. Others think the Flood did not cover the entire earth but rather was localized to a small geographic area. All sides appeal to Scripture to support their case.

We will examine the biblical arguments for the various positions and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. Our goal is to give the best arguments that are put forward for each particular view. Our desire is to be thorough without being exhaustive. The student can then decide which view best fits the facts or whether the evidence is not conclusive to hold any one particular view.

QUESTION 26

What Was The Extent Of The Flood?

One of the most difficult and hotly debated topics among Bible-believers concerns the extent of the Flood recorded in the Book of Genesis. Sooner or later, those who seriously study the Bible must face this question: Was the Flood localized to one certain area of the earth or did it cover the entire globe? Did all life die in the Flood, or were only a portion of humankind and animals killed? If the Flood covered all the high mountains that exist today, it would have been at least six miles deep all over the globe. Is this what the Bible said happened? Was the Genesis Flood local or universal? Does the Bible clearly tell us the extent of the Flood?

This Issue Interests Believers Only

This question is only discussed among believers. Those who do not believe the Bible reject the idea that the Flood occurred. They see the Flood account as a myth or allegory. Therefore, they are not interested in debating the extent of the Flood. This issue, like the time of creation, and the meaning of the word “day” in Genesis, is a matter of interest only to Bible believers since those who reject the authority of Scripture do not believe these accounts are factual.

The Truth Of Scripture Is Not In Question

This issue, when discussed among believers, does not challenge the truth of the Scripture but rather how to properly interpret all the facts. All agree that the Flood did occur precisely as the Bible says. The question to answer is, “What exactly does the Bible say happened?” Is there enough evidence to make a clear determination? Therefore this is a matter of how to interpret what the Bible says, not a question of whether the Bible is right or wrong.

This Is Not A Test Of Orthodoxy

Unfortunately, some people have made their particular position with respect to the Flood as a test of orthodoxy. Those who do not agree with view are, in many cases, accused of compromise with the world. This is an unfortunate position to take because there are good Bible-believers who hold different positions.

THERE ARE FIVE BASIC POSSIBILITIES AS TO WHAT HAPPENED WITH THE FLOOD

If the Flood actually occurred as the Bible says it did, then we basically have five possible ways in which to understand its extent.

1. The Flood Was Local To One Geographical Region, Not Everyone Was Killed

Some Christians believe the Flood was localized to one geographical area - Mesopotamia. Therefore the Flood killed only the people and animals that lived in that area. People and animals, which were living in other parts of the globe, were not affected by the Flood.

2. The Flood Was Local In Geography, But It Was Universal With Respect To Life

Another view says the Flood was localized but so was humanity and the animals. The Flood was universal in the sense that it killed every living thing but everything that was alive at that time was living in only one small part of the world.

3. The Flood Was Geographically Localized But Uncertain About Humans And Animals

This position believes the Flood was localized to one particular area, but is uncertain as to whether there were humans and animals living outside the destruction of the Flood. They do not believe there is enough evidence with respect to population of other parts of the globe.

4. The Flood Was Universal: The Entire Earth Was Covered And All Life Was Destroyed

The traditional view is that the Flood covered the entire world, killing every living thing. God's judgment was toward everything living on the planet. The only life that survived was that which was inside the ark.

5. There Is Uncertainty As To What Happened

Some who have studied this issue do not believe that any one position has convincing arguments. Because of the uncertainty as to which position is correct, these Bible students do not adopt a particular view on the extent of the Flood. They believe the Flood occurred, but they are not certain as to its extent.

The following sentiments are representative of many who have tackled this problem. Howard Vos writes.

It should be clear from a study of the arguments for and against a universal flood that neither side has the preponderance of answers at the present stage of research (Howard Vos, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Volume 2 E-J*, p. 318).

After summing up the arguments for the extent of the Flood, Old Testament authority, Walter Kaiser Jr., concluded.

Our conclusion is that the jury is still out on this question . . . Some believe that the flood was spread out over the whole earth, while others insist that it was limited to the Mesopotamian basin or some other defined geographical area in the Near East. The point is that Scripture is anxious to teach that it was God's judgment on all mortals living on the earth except the eight on the ark. On the other matters we must await more information (Walter Kaiser Jr. in *Hard Sayings of The Bible*, Walter Kaiser Jr. Peter H. Davids, F.F. Bruce, Manfred T. Brauch, Intervarsity Press, 1996, p. 114).

R.K. Harrison observed.

The extent of the flood has aroused much debate. The word translated "earth" can also mean country and "heaven" can describe the sky visible within one's own horizon (I Kings 18:45). While some arguments may suggest a limited flood, the fact that the mountains were submerged implies a more extended one (Genesis 7:19-20). Genesis supports arguments for both a local and universal deluge, with traditional biblical teaching favoring the latter and regarding the flood as punishment for unrepentant wickedness (Gen 6:5) (R.K. Harrison, in *Evangelical Dictionary Of Theology*, Edited by Walter A. Elwell, Baker Books, 1984,, p.419).

We Need To Examine The Evidence

There are two basic positions with respect to the geography of the Flood: either the entire globe was covered with water or only a portion of the earth was flooded. Under the local Flood view, there are various ways in which to understand the extent that the Flood affected humanity. Either everything was killed, everything was not killed, or the evidence is unclear as to the death of all humans and animals.

Summary

The Bible says that God sent a Great Flood in the days of Noah. This Flood was to judge sinful humanity. While Bible-believers agree that the Flood occurred there are a number of things about it that are not agreed upon. Some feel the Flood was worldwide in its coverage and killed every living thing except those in the ark. Others believe it was localized to a particular geographic area. There are differing positions among those who hold this view as to whether all life on the planet was destroyed. There are some who argue that all life was destroyed in a local Flood while others say it was not. Still others are uncertain about this question.

Finally, there are those who are uncertain as to whether the Flood was local or universal. They believe the biblical evidence can be read either way and do not think there are enough facts to make a commitment to a universal or local Flood.

QUESTION 27

Was The Flood In Noah's Day Localized To One Geographic Area?

There are many Christians who see the Flood as a local deluge, limited to a particular geographical area rather than being worldwide. This view comes in a number of forms.

1. THERE WAS LIMITED GEOGRAPHY AND LIMITED LIFE DESTROYED

The first position is that humans and animals were spread out all over the globe. The Flood affected a limited portion of the earth killing only those who lived in a small geographical area. The rest of the people and animals were spared.

2. IT WAS LIMITED ONLY GEOGRAPHICALLY BUT ALL LIFE WAS DESTROYED

Others hold that all life was limited to one particular region. Though the Flood was geographically limited, the Flood killed every living thing since all life was confined to one geographical area.

3. THERE IS UNCERTAINTY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO HUMAN AND ANIMAL LIFE

Some who hold to a local Flood do not think there is sufficient evidence to make a decision as to whether humans and animals lived in other parts of the globe at the time of the Genesis Flood. Although accepting a geographically local Flood, they do not take a position as to how to the extent of the Flood with respect to animals and humanity.

All Agree The Flood Was Geographically Limited

Local Flood advocates all agree that the Flood was geographically limited - whether or not it destroyed all of humanity and all of the animal kingdom. There is no agreement, however, as to the exact geographically extent of the Flood.

The Local Flood View Explained

The local Flood view is that God sent a destructive Flood to a limited part of the world to destroy the evil inhabitants that dwelt there. These were people who had received special privileges from God and lived in highly favorable circumstances. Instead of honoring Him, they were evil continually. God, therefore, wiped out all of the people and animal in this geographical area except for eight people - Noah and his family.

They Are Not Degrading Scripture

Those who hold this view should not be accused of having a low view of Scripture. Bernard Ramm comments.

It is not a question as to what God can or cannot do. Those who believe in a local Flood believe in the omnipotence and power of God as much as any other Christian does. The question is not: 'What can God do?' but 'What did God do?' (Bernard Ramm,, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, Eerdmans, 1954, p. 163).

We should not assume, therefore, that those who hold to a local Flood have a low view of the power of God and the divine inspiration of the Bible. There are many good Bible-believing Christians who think the Scriptures teach the Flood was not worldwide in scope but rather limited to a local geographical area.

Most Local Flood Arguments Are The Same

As we have noted, there is disagreement between local Flood advocates as to whether there were people and animals living in others parts of the globe. Whatever the particular position that local Flood advocates take on this issue, their arguments for a localized Flood are basically the same. Therefore we will group the arguments together making note where there is disagreement between those who advocate a restricted Flood.

THE BIBLICAL CASE FOR A LOCAL FLOOD

Those who argue a biblical case for a local Flood believe that Scripture can support this position. They believe terms used in Genesis do not force one to believe in a universal Flood.

1. All Does Not Always Mean All

Though the word “all” is found throughout the Flood account, it is not necessary to assume that it is used in a universal sense. There are many places in the Bible where “all” does not mean every last one. For example.

I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, My people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land (Joel 3:2).

Though the Scripture says “all” nations, we know from the context that the nations are limited to those around Judah and Jerusalem.

Another example can be found in the statement of Cyrus.

Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him! Let him go up (2 Chronicles 36:23).

His kingdom, though great, did not encompass the entire globe.

Therefore “all” does not mean every last one. Therefore when we find the term “all” in Scripture, the context has to tell us if it means every last one. It is not always necessary to assume that it is used in a universal sense.

2. Universal Language In Scripture Is Often Hyperbolic

In Scripture, universal language is often hyperbolic - deliberate exaggeration for effect. For example, the Apostle Paul wrote.

If you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant (Colossians 1:23).

This is obvious exaggeration. Not everyone, everywhere in the earth had heard the gospel at this time.

This is another indication that universal expressions in Scripture are not necessarily universal. The context must be the determining factor. Statements which sound universal in the English Bible may have a local reference.

The universal terms could have been used to emphasize that this was no normal flood. Though local in extent, it nevertheless was devastating in its destruction.

3. The Hebrew Word Earth Can Be Translated Land

The Hebrew term *eretz* translated “earth” in Genesis 6-8 should be translated “land” instead of earth. The word *eretz* is used more than 2,500 times in the Old Testament with 80% of the time being translated land rather than earth. Therefore, the Hebrew writers employed the word with its much more restricted meaning about four times as frequently as they employed it with a broader meaning. What is in view, in the Flood account, is not the entire earth, but the land around Noah.

If the word “land” is substituted for “earth” in the Flood account then the passage has an entirely different sense. Consider how the passage would then be understood.

Now the land was corrupt in God’s sight, and the land was filled with violence. And God saw that the land was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the land. For my part, I am going to bring a flood of waters on the land, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the land shall die (Genesis 6:11,12,17).

The point is as follows: the extent of the Flood cannot be decisively settled based upon the Hebrew word for earth.

4. The Hebrews Had A Better Word For The Entire Earth

When the Hebrews wished to convey the idea of the whole habitable earth, they used the word *tetel*, as in Psalm 24:1.

The earth is the LORD’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it (Psalm 24:1).

This word is not found in the Genesis Flood account – another indication that the entire earth is not in view.

Consequently, the words “all” and “the whole earth,” which are found throughout the Flood narrative, may not really be as widespread in their implications as the text seems to state. The Hebrew language cannot, by itself, be decisive in determining the extent of the Flood.

5. There Is An Emphasis On The Promised Land

The writer of Genesis was mainly concerned about God’s covenant people and the land which they were promised – it was not on the entire globe. Old Testament authority, John Sailhamer, writes.

Two primary themes dominate the Creation account: the land and the blessing. In recounting the events of Creation, the author has selected and arranged the narrative to allow these themes full development. The preparation of the land and the divine blessing are important to the author or Genesis (and the Pentateuch) because these two themes form the basis of his treatment of the

patriarchal narratives and the Sinai covenant. In translating the Hebrew word *eretz* (earth) in 1:1-2, the English versions have blurred the connection of these early verses of Genesis to the central theme of the land in the Pentateuch. Although *eretz* can be translated by either “earth” or “land,” the general term *land* in English more closely approximates its use in chapter 1. Thus from the start the author betrays his interest in the covenant by concentrating on the land in the account of creation (John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch As Narrative*, Zondervan, 1992, pp. 81,82).

Consequently a local Flood that covered the Promised Land is consistent with his emphasis.

6. The Mountains May Not Have Been That High

If Noah lived in the plains, then the term “high mountains” could refer to mountains that were relatively low - a few hundred feet. They were high mountains from his perspective on the plain. If this is the case, then it would not force us to assume that the entire world was under water.

7. The Water Level Was Relative To The Mountains

While it is true that water seeks its own level, the covering of low lying mountains, a few hundred feet in height, would not necessitate a universal Flood.

8. The Flood Was Universal From The Author’s Perspective

All admit that universal terms are used in the Flood account. It is argued that the terms are meant to be understood as universal from the author’s (Noah’s) perspective. From his limited standpoint, everything was covered with the waters of the Flood. When Noah used the phrase “the entire heaven” it would have meant all the sky that he could see. We find this limited sense of heaven in the Book of First Kings.

In a little while the heavens grew black with clouds and wind; there was a heavy rain. Ahab rode off and went to Jezreel (1 Kings 18:45).

The heavens do not refer to the sky around the entire globe, but merely the sky in one limited area.

The same limitation is found in a statement in Deuteronomy.

This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the peoples everywhere under heaven; when they hear report of you, they will tremble and be in anguish because of you (Deuteronomy 2:25).

All peoples under heaven does not refer to everyone on the planet, it merely refers to those living in that part of the world.

What is important about this reference is that it is from the same person who wrote the Book of Genesis – Moses. Since this phrase in Deuteronomy is limited in its extent, it is consistent to interpret the phrase in a limited extent in Genesis.

Consequently, when Moses wrote of the heaven and earth in the Flood account, it would have referred to all the sky and all the land in which surrounded Noah. As far as Noah was concerned, the Flood was universal.

9. The Exact Site Of Landing Is Unknown

The Bible says that the ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat – not necessarily present day Mount Ararat. This Hebrew word refers to a range, not one specific mountain. The range is a one hundred thousand square mile area. Old Testament authority, Gordon Wenham, explains.

On the mountains of Ararat does not mean on a mountain called Ararat, but on the mountains in the area called Ararat. Ararat is the Hebrew term for Urartu, a kingdom north of Assyria (2 Kgs 19:37; Isa 37:38; Jer 51:27) later called Armenia, now part of eastern Turkey, southern Russia, and northwestern Iran. Various mountains in Armenia have been identified with the one on which the ark landed . . . But it should be repeated that the biblical text does not give a precise location (Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Waco, Texas, Word, 1987, pp. 184,185).

Since we do not know exactly where the ark landed, we do not know what mountains were covered. They could have been relatively small.

10. A Local Flood Prevented The Need For A Universal Flood

If humanity was limited to one specific geographical area, then God could have used a local Flood to keep the corrupt human race from spreading out all over the globe. The local Flood recorded in Genesis kept God from sending a greater destruction later in human history.

11. It Was Too Hard For The Animals To Disembark From Great Height

Some interpreters have questioned the identification of the present day Mount Ararat with the spot of the ark's landing.

Mt. Ararat is c. 17,000 feet high, but the name was only later applied to this peak, and Heb. implies no more than a peak in this region. It is a gratuitous assumption of a miracle to make the animals find their way down through ice and snow from such a height (H.L. Ellison, *The New Layman's Bible Commentary*, G.C.D. Howley, F.F. Bruce, H.L. Ellison, editors, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, p. 142).

12. Noah Did Not Go Far To Preach

Also, the Biblical record indicates that Noah did not go to far countries to preach. This is consistent with the local Flood view but is difficult to reconcile with a universal Flood theory - which says the population was geographically spread out. If God send a global flood, there would have been people who would not have heard about the coming judgment.

13. The Ark Was A Sign

The building of the ark was a testimony only to those who saw it. Why should others believe Noah's testimony about an upcoming Flood if they were living far from the ark's construction? Therefore the Flood must have been geographically limited to those who could have witnessed the construction of the ark.

14. There Was No Time To Warn Everybody

The building of the ark could have occurred in a relatively short period of time. This would not have provided Noah with ample time to warn those living in other parts of the globe – if those parts were populated at the time.

15. An Endless Supply Of Miracles Would Be Needed

Some writers feel that an endless supply of miracles are necessary for a universal Flood account to be established. Bernard Ramm writes.

If one wishes to retain a universal Flood, it must be understood that a series of stupendous miracles is required. Further, one cannot beg off with pious statements that God can do anything (Bernard Ramm, *ibid.*, p. 165).

As we study Scripture, we find what is known as an “economy of miracles.” This means that God does not do more than is necessary in a particular situation - He does not flaunt His mighty power. He would not have sent a universal Flood if it was not necessary. David E. O’Brien writes.

God’s demonstration of His power throughout the Scripture is rare enough to remain awe-inspiring but always restrained. God doesn’t swat mosquitoes with meteorites. If His aim was to eradicate all life, with the exception of Noah and his family, the flood would have been extensive enough to accomplish that goal, but not more extensive (David E. O’Brien, *Today’s Handbook For Solving Bible Difficulties*, Bethany House Publishers, 1990, p. 218).

16. The Ark Would Not Survive A Universal Flood

It is also contended that the ark could not survive the physical stress of a universal Flood. The continuous upheavals of the earth for five months would have destroyed the ark.

17. The Ark Could Not Hold All The Animals

Noah’s ark would not have been big enough to hold two of each animal that is known today - let alone those that have become extinct since the Flood. At best, it could hold about 30,000 species of animals - a small percentage of all known species both past and present.

18. The Ark May Have Been Smaller Than Traditionally Believed

If the standard measurement, the cubit, was smaller in Noah’s time, then the ark could have been considerable smaller than traditionally believed. A smaller ark would lend further support for a local Flood.

19. The Animals Could Not Have Come From All Over The Globe

If the Flood were universal, then thousands of animals from all over the world would have had to get to the ark. How would animals from other continents, such as Australia, cross the ocean to get to the ark?

20. The Difficulty In Caring For The Animals

The caring for the animals is another problem raised with the idea of a universal Flood. The text indicates that the animals did not hibernate since Noah was told to store away food.

Also take with you every kind of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them (Genesis 6:21).

With some 4,500 species of animals and over 8,000 species of birds as well as other types of life, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for eight people to handle and feed all these animals.

In addition, the animals lived in different environments and many had special diets. It does not seem possible that they could have survived for a year in the ark with their own unique needs.

21. The Number Of Species To Save Is Believable With A Local Flood

A local Flood would reduce the total number of species to be saved. There would be no need to save every type of specie on the planet. This would have made it possible for Noah and his family to care for the animals. Also, the creatures that Noah took on the ark correlate to those that were made on the fifth and sixth day. These were animals necessary for human society - domesticated animals and animals to be used for sacrifice

22. Other Destructive Floods Do Not Break God's Promise

God promised Noah that He would not send a similar flood upon the earth.

I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth (Genesis 9:11).

It has been argued that this promise has been broken if the Genesis Flood was only local. Many devastating local floods have happened since Noah's time killing thousands in their destruction.

However, the purpose of the Genesis Flood was to destroy all life, not simply to cover the globe with water. Since the time of Noah there have been no more floods that have destroyed all life. Therefore, even if the Genesis Flood was local, the promise to Noah has not been broken.

23. The Fountains Of Water Were Not Continually Breaking Up

We should not necessarily assume that the "fountains," or "springs," of the great deep continued to break up for five months. Genesis 8:2 could be rendered in the past tense. Both the *New International Version* and the *New Revised Standard Version* translate the verse in this way.

Now the springs of the deep and the Floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky (Genesis 8:2 NIV)

The *New Revised Standard Version* says.

The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained (Genesis 8:2 NRSV).

If this is the case, then the springs of the deep were not a constant water source for five months. The shorter time span for the source of water for the Flood is another indication that it was geographically limited.

24. The Chronology Of The Flood Supports A Local Deluge

If the Flood covered all the high mountains, this would include 17,000 foot Mt. Ararat. Scripture says it took about 300 days for the waters to run off. Dividing this into 17,000 feet reveals that the waters would have had to have receded about 50 feet a day! This does not seem possible. A universal Flood would have needed a much longer time for the waters to recede.

25. Where The Ark Rested Supports A Local Flood

The ark came to rest only five hundred miles from the origin of where it was built. If the Flood was a year-long and worldwide, we would expect the ark to land farther away from its origin.

26. The Distribution Of The Animals Supports A Local Flood

Many find problems with the animals leaving the ark and then moving to the various spots on the earth. How would they disperse to all parts of the globe? How could they have crossed the oceans? A local Flood does not have this problem.

27. Noah Began Immediately Using The Land

If the earth suffered the tremendous upheavals necessitated by a universal flood, then Noah and his family would not have been able to immediately start agricultural work. Yet the Scripture says that he started working the land after the Flood. This necessitates the Flood being local.

28. The World Of Humanity Was Destroyed

Peter's statement, in the New Testament, does not necessarily indicate a universal Flood as some have claimed.

For they willingly forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being Flooded with water (2 Peter 3:5,6).

The text merely says that the world that then existed was destroyed - not the entire globe. The Flood was only as spread out as was the population. Since the population was limited to one geographical area, so was the Flood. Because certain areas of the planet were not populated at that time, there was no need for the Flood to reach those unpopulated areas. The flood only occurred where people lived. There would be no reason whatsoever for God to flood an uninhabited area.

29. Noah's Ark Has Not Yet Been Discovered

One of the arguments for a universal Flood is that parts of Noah's ark have been discovered high atop Mt. Ararat in Eastern Turkey. Since Ararat is 17,000 feet high, there must have been a global Flood – since water seeks its own level.

There are two problems with this contention. First, the Bible does not give a specific location as to the landing of the Ark, it merely says the mountains of Ararat. This does not necessarily mean that it landed on the Mt. Ararat of today. Second, it has not been established with any certainty that the wood found high upon Mt. Ararat is from the time of Noah.

30. The Geographical Place Names Are Limited

The Book of Genesis gives no geographical place names outside of Mesopotamia until after the Flood. This is an indication that civilization was centralized and limited to one geographical area.

If the Flood happened early enough in human history, then it would have destroyed everything living because humankind and animals all dwelt in a limited area.

31. There Was No Need For Noah To Migrate

If the Flood were only local, then why didn't Noah and the animals simply migrate to an area that the Flood would not touch?

God did not allow Noah and the animals to migrate out of the Flood area for a number of reasons.

First, God wanted to give the people fair warning. The fact that Noah took time to build the ark and preach to the people left them without an excuse. If he and his family migrated, then the people would not have had a fair warning about the upcoming judgment – something God always gives. Building an ark would give them all a clear warning.

If Noah had migrated, it is possible that some of the evil people would have left the area with him. It would not have taken an act of trust in God to leave the area. This would be similar to the mixed multitude who went out of Egypt with the children of Israel. If this happened, the purpose for the Flood – the destruction of the sinful humanity – would have been thwarted.

The fact that Noah and his family could have migrated from the area to escape the Flood shows that the ark was not necessary. However, God always warns before judgment. The act of building the ark in a plain by a respectable man like Noah would have called the attention of everyone to it. Therefore, in one sense, the ark was necessary.

32. It Was Necessary To Save Animals

A case also has to be made for taking animals on the ark. Why did they have to join Noah and his family? They were not necessary to testify to the people of the upcoming Flood?

Many local Flood advocates argue that only domesticated animals went onto the ark. At this time in history, sheep, cattle, pigs and goats had been domesticated. If Noah had simply migrated, then all the domesticated animals would have been wiped out by the Flood. The domestication of animals would have had to have begun all over again.

Had the domesticated animals left the area of the Flood on their own they would have been easy prey for predators. This necessitated why they should join Noah and his family on the ark.

33. It Was Not Necessary To Take Dinosaurs On The Ark

Local Flood advocates are not in agreement whether dinosaurs may have existed at this time in human history. Many advocates of a global Flood, however, insist that Noah took dinosaurs with him on the ark.

If they did exist, local Flood advocates believe that it would have been unthinkable for Noah to take them on the ark. Is it really likely that Noah would take a seventy-foot long dinosaur on the ark? Are we to

assume that a male and a female Tyrannosaurus Rex was housed next to the other animals? It seems absurd to argue that Noah would have had large carnivorous dinosaurs housed with all the other animals.

34. Flood Stories In Other Cultures Do Not Testify To The Universality Of Flood

The fact that many cultures around the world have their own Flood stories does not testify to a universal Flood. Some of the stories only bear a superficial resemblance to the Genesis account and many of the stories can be attributed to Christian missionaries. These stories do not force the belief in a universal Flood.

LOCAL FLOOD, NOT EVERYONE KILLED

As we have mentioned, some local Flood advocates believe there were people and animals living in other parts of the globe who were not affected by the Flood. They contend the ark saved eight people and a number of animals that lived in that particular region of the world, the Flood did not destroy every other human being and animal. Their arguments are as follows.

1. There Were People Living Elsewhere

There is evidence that people lived on other parts of the globe at the time of Noah and were not affected by the Flood. Bernard Ramm writes.

If the evidence is certain that the American Indian was in America around 8,000 B.C. to 10,000 B.C., then a universal flood or a destruction of man, must be before that time, and due to Genesis and Babylonian parallels there is hardly an evangelical scholar who wished to put the flood as early as 8,000 to 10,000 B.C. (Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View Of Science And Scripture*, Eerdmans, 1954, p. 336).

If this is the case, then the Flood was limited geographically – it did not cover all the earth, and anthropologically – it did not kill every human being then alive.

2. It Was The Whole Known World – Not The Whole World

The world described in Genesis is the world known to Noah – not the whole inhabited earth. Therefore the Flood was limited to the world that Noah knew.

The “whole world” in Scripture is often the whole *known* world, not the entire planet. We also read the following in the Book of Genesis.

Moreover, all the world came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine became severe throughout the world (Genesis 41:57).

It is not necessary to assume that the famine was of global proportions.

In the New Testament we read.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered (Luke 2:1).

This is the whole Roman world, not the entire globe.

The Flood, therefore, would have killed all humans and animals known to Noah, not those living in other parts of the globe.

3. All Sinful People That Noah Knew Were Destroyed

The statement that the Flood destroyed all sinful people means only the sinful people Noah was aware of - not necessarily the entire world. Noah was unaware of people living in other parts of the world. All the people that he was aware of were destroyed in the Flood. Therefore, from his standpoint, all people were destroyed. This allows for other people and animals, not living in other parts of the globe, to have survived the Flood.

4. Where Are All The Human Fossils?

If millions of people were killed in a worldwide Flood, why don't we find their fossils? If they lived alongside of dinosaurs why don't we see them buried with them. The fact that we do not find these human fossils shows that the Flood was limited.

WE DO NOT KNOW IF OTHER CONTINENTS WERE POPULATED

Other local Flood adherents are not certain, either way, whether there were people and animals living outside the waters of the Flood. Though all life was probably not limited to the Mesopotamian Valley, there is not enough evidence to know, one way or the other, whether other parts of the globe were populated at that time. How far humanity migrated is unknown. Therefore, they argue, that the Flood was localized geographically and may, or may not, have killed all the remainder of humans and animals on the earth.

Summary

These are the non-scientific arguments that local Flood advocates have put forward to support their case that the Genesis Flood was geographically localized and did not extend to the entire world.

SCIENTIFIC ARGUMENTS FOR A LOCAL FLOOD

There are also a number of scientific arguments that are raised against a universal Flood.

1. The Mixing Of Salt And Fresh Water Would Have Killed Marine Life

If the Flood covered the entire earth, it is contended that the mixing of the salt waters with the fresh water would have killed the marine life. Those that were not killed would have been crushed by the water pressure or would have starved by the loss of their feeding ground. In any case, nothing would have survived.

2. The Leaf From The Olive Tree Shows A Local Flood

The Bible says that after the Flood, Noah sent out a dove that brought back an olive leaf.

When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth (Genesis 8:11).

It is doubtful that any olive tree could have survived the upheavals caused by a global Flood. In addition, olive trees grow in the lowlands, not high up on mountains. This is another indication of a local Flood. Theologian Ronald Youngblood writes.

The freshly picked olive leaf brought to Noah by the dove (8:11) virtually rules out Ararat as the ark's landfall since olive trees do not grow within thousands of feet of that high elevation. In fact, that one olive leaf may turn out to be the Achilles' heel of the universal-flood theory, because it implies that somewhere an olive tree had survived the flood (probably atop a relatively low mountain) (Ronald Youngblood, *The Book of Genesis*, Second Edition, Baker Book House, 1991, p. 114).

3. All Plant Life Would Have Been Destroyed

Being submerged under salt water for a year even if the waters were diluted would destroy most plant life.

4. The Amount Of Water Supports A Local Flood

The amount of water needed to cover Mt. Everest is about eight times as much as presently is on the earth. There is no known source for the water for a global Flood and no way of getting rid of it afterward. Where did the water come from and where did all the water go? Evaporation is not a sufficient answer. Neither is the suggestion that the water returned to subterranean cavities. They could only a small fraction of the water necessary to cover the highest mountains around the world.

Therefore, the amount of water from the rain would support a local Flood, not a universal one.

5. There Was No Water Vapor Canopy

Many who believe in a universal Flood argue that a water vapor canopy existed above the earth before the Flood. This canopy is the "waters above" referred to in Genesis 1:7. This canopy provided a tremendous amount of water for the Flood.

Local flood advocates deny the existence of such a canopy. They believe the waters above simply refer to the clouds. Furthermore the waters above still existed long after the Flood.

Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created. He established them forever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed (Psalm 148:4-6).

Since the "waters above" are everlasting, they could not have been the source of the water for the Flood.

6. Petroleum Products Were Available Before The Flood

It has been argued that the universal Flood is the source of the petroleum products of today. However we find Noah using petroleum products before the Flood.

So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out (Genesis 6:14).

Pitch or bitumen, is a petroleum product. There were at least some petroleum products before the Flood.

7. A Strong Wind Works For A Local Flood

The Bible says that God sent a strong wind to dry up the waters of the Flood. This would work well with a local Flood that occurred in a plain but it would be of no help in a universal deluge. In addition, it shows that God used evaporation to get rid of the water rather than an upheaval of the earth as is argued by those holding to a global flood.

8. There Is No Geological Evidence For A Universal Flood

If the Flood were universal in geography, then we should find evidence of this. It is argued that the evidence is not there. Donald Boardman, emeritus professor of geology at Wheaton college, writes:

It thus seems most likely that the continents at the time of the Flood were about the same as they are now, both in extent and in elevation. Geologists should be able to find evidence of a Flood that covered the entire earth within the last few thousand years. No distinctive beds, sequence of beds, or erosional features that are the result of running water or wave action have been recognized, and it is reasonable to assume that such are not present (Donald Boardman in *The Genesis Debate*, Ronald Youngblood Ed., Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986, pp. 218, 219).

Though signs of localized catastrophic floods are found everywhere, there is no clear sign of one, global Flood.

9. Flood Geology Has Been Discredited

Most Christians who have advanced degrees, in science believe that the geological evidence supports a local Flood. The majority Christian scholars do not recognize flood geology, which argues for the universal nature of the deluge. It has been rejected both scientifically and biblically. Howard Vos explains.

The flood geology position has been discredited in university geology departments and is being rejected almost universally by evangelical geologists. This is true in part because it does not agree with scientific arguments according to which, e.g., many geologic features could not have been formed under water or in so short a time. . .

Flood geology is also rejected because it does not tally very well with Scripture itself. Geography or topography, e.g. does not seem to have been changed greatly by the Flood. Mesopotamia with its great rivers appears to have been much the same after the Flood as before it. . .

Those who oppose flood geology observe that the Flood was designed to be an event in redemption history, not in geological history. . . . one can hold to a universal flood brought on by rain and tidal waves, which deposited surface material such as gravels and silts, without holding to flood geology. Flood geology is an interpretation of the universal flood and its effects, but is not synonymous with a belief in a cataclysmic or even a universal flood (Howard Vos, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Volume 2, E-J, Revised Edition, Eerdmans, 1982, p. 318).

10. Rapid Development Is Needed For A Universal Flood

If the Flood was universal, then all the animals today descended only from those brought upon the ark. However, the ark could hold, at most, only a few thousand pairs of different species. This would mean that the millions of different species we find today descended from these animals taken upon the ark. This would involve a very rapid development in a very short period of time. There is no evidence that this did happen or even possibly could have happened.

11. The Fossil Sequence Shows A Local Flood

Another problem with regard to a universal Flood is the fossil sequence. Wayne Ault writes:

The sequence of fossils in the strata of the world or in the stratigraphic column in any one region simply cannot be explained on the basis of a one year Flood. The fossil species are not hopelessly mixed. Rather, many index fossils, distinctive of a given geologic period have been recognized and used successfully by geologists around the world. Different brachiopod species, for example, which are index fossils for different periods, may have distinctly morphological features but may be quite similar in shape and size. There is no way that these fossils could be selectively winnowed out of worldwide Flood waters and deposited in their respective strata except that they lived at different times and were buried where they lived (Wayne Ault, "Flood" in *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Merrill Tenney General Editor, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, Volume II, 1975, p. 562).

This leads many to believe that the scientific evidence supports a local Flood.

Summary To The Local Flood View

There are arguments, both biblical and scientific, that have led people to believe that the Bible teaches a local, rather than a universal Flood. Those who hold this view feel this view is the most compatible with both science and Scripture. Without denying the supernatural character of the account, local Flood advocates believe God sent a Flood to only part of the world.

QUESTION 28

Did The Flood Cover The Entire Earth? (A Universal Flood)

The traditional view is that the Bible speaks of a universal Flood that covered the entire earth, and destroyed all life except that which was taken on the ark.

Background Of The Event

The Bible says that humans were commanded to multiply and fill the earth. Instead the earth was filled with violence. God regretted that He had created humanity. Therefore He judged the human race by wiping out all of His creation except for eight souls. He did this by sending a universal Flood.

THE CASE FOR A UNIVERSAL FLOOD

The arguments for a universal Flood are as follows.

1. It Is The Natural Reading Of The Text

The natural reading of the text would lead one to believe in a universal Flood. If one simply reads the Genesis Flood account as it is written, the conclusion would be that the author is speaking of a worldwide Flood. The global extent of the Flood is stated more than thirty times in Genesis 6-9.

Furthermore, there is nothing in the account itself to cause the reader to deny the universal sense. It may be asked, "How could God have taught a universal Flood more clearly?"

2. It Is The Historical View

The historical view of the Jews and the church has been to understand the Flood in a universal sense. The idea of a local Flood is comparatively recent in church history. Therefore there must be compelling reasons to deny the traditional view.

3. All Bible Translations Use Universal Terms For The Flood

All Bible translations understand the account of the Flood in universal terms. We find none of them substituting the word "land" for earth or using any other terms that would imply a limited scope for the Flood.

4. Universal Terms Speak Of A World Wide Flood

Universal terms are used throughout the narrative which speak of a world wide Flood. Old Testament authority Victor Hamilton writes:

Geographically, the problem is an infested earth. Note that in 6:5-13, the earth (*ha ares*) is mentioned eight times. Thus the description has all the appearances of a universal condition rather than a local one. To be sure, *eres* is frequently rendered as "(local) land," "ground," and even "underworld." When *eres* refers to a particular piece of land, however, it is often followed by a prepositional phrase that further identifies the land (e.g., the land of the Canaanites, land of the east,

land of the fathers), except in those places where mention is made theologically of the land promised to Israel. Furthermore, the reference in 7:3 to the animals of *kol-ha ares* argues for an understanding of *eres* elsewhere in the Flood as “earth” in that almost all of the uses of *kol-ha ares* (outside of Deuteronomy and Joshua-Samuel) are references to the earth (Gen. 1:26, 28; 11:1; Exodus 9:14, 16; 19:5). Yet, verses such as Gen. 13:9,15 show that even in Genesis *kol-ha ares* refers to the whole land (Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, Chapters 1-17, Eerdmans, 1990, p. 279).

Scholar Kenneth Matthews concurs.

This inclusive language as elsewhere in the account suggests that the cataclysm was worldwide in scope. An alternative understanding is that the comprehensive language of the text is hyperbolic or a phenomenal description (from Noah’s limited viewpoint), thus permitting a regional flood . . . And “earth” can rightly be rendered “land,” again allowing a limited venue. This kind of inclusive language for local events is attested elsewhere in Genesis (e.g. 41:54-57), but the insistence of the narrative on the encompassing character of the flood favors the literal understanding of the universal view (Kenneth Matthews, *Genesis 1:-11:26*, The New American Commentary, Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996, p. 365).

Commenting on Genesis 7, Matthews writes.

The inclusive language “all” “every” occurs eight times (in Hebrew) in vv. 19-23 leaving no doubt about the all-encompassing nature of the destructive floods and the depth left behind. There can be no dispute that the narrative depicts the flood in the language of a universal deluge (“entire heavens”), even the “high mountains” are “covered” (2x; vv. 19-20) (Kenneth Matthews, *ibid.*, p. 380).

The clear sense of the passage is that the Flood was universal. Although the universal terms found in the account can be understood in a limited sense, there is nothing in the story to force one to understand it this way, or to even suggest that this was the authors’ intent. The passage plainly speaks of a worldwide destruction.

5. Under The Whole Heaven Speaks Of Universality

Though the Hebrew term *eretz* translated “earth” can be rendered “land,” the phrase “all the hills under the whole heaven” (Genesis 7:19) cannot be so easily disposed of. This has a universal sense. Therefore, it is hard to believe it refers to some local geographic region.

Furthermore, the double use of the Hebrew word “all” (*kol*) in Genesis 7:19 gives strong testimony to a universal Flood. H.C. Leupold writes:

A measure of the waters is now made by comparison with the only available standard for such waters - the mountains. They are said to have been “covered.” Not a few merely but “all the high mountains under all the heavens.” One of these expressions alone would almost necessitate the impression that the author intends to convey the idea of the absolute universality of the Flood, e.g., “all the high mountains.” Yet since “all” is known to be used in a relative sense, the writer removes all possible ambiguity by adding the phrase “under all the heavens.” A double “all” (*kol*) cannot allow for so relative a sense. It almost constitutes a Hebrew superlative. So we believe that the text disposes of the question of the universality of the Flood.

By way of objection to this interpretation those who believe in a limited flood, which extended perhaps as far as mankind may have penetrated at that time urge that *kol* is used in a relative sense, as is clearly the case in passages such as 41:57; Exod. 9:25; 10:15; Deut 2:25; I Kings 10:24.

However, we still insist that this fact could overthrow a single *kol*, never a double *kol* as our verse has it (H.C. Leupold, *Genesis*, The Wartburg Press, 1942, pp. 301, 302).

6. All Humans Were Killed

The Bible is clear that every human being, with the exception of Noah and his family, died in the Flood.

And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, domestic animals, wild animals, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all human beings (Genesis 7:21).

The New Testament affirms this.

Who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water (1 Peter 3:20).

Peter also wrote.

And if he did not spare the ancient world, even though he saved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood on a world of the ungodly (2 Peter 2:5).

Old Testament authority, Walter Kaiser Jr., concluded.

The flood was extensive enough to wipe out all living humans on the earth except the eight persons who were on board the ark (Gen 7:23; 1 Pet 3:20). That is the main point of the biblical narrative and the one nonnegotiable argument in the whole discussion (Walter Kaiser Jr. in *Hard Sayings of The Bible*, Walter Kaiser Jr. Peter H. Davids, F.F. Bruce, Manfred T. Brauch, Intervarsity Press, 1996, p. 112).

7. All The Animals Were Killed

In addition, Genesis speaks of *all* the animals being brought to Noah.

You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive (Genesis 6:19-20).

Note the use of the words “all” and the repetition of “every kind.” This clearly speaks of universality.

There is no limitation in the text. There were wild animals as well as domesticated one. The Scripture makes this clear.

They and every wild animal of every kind, and all domestic animals of every kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every bird of every kind - every bird, every winged creature (Genesis 7:19).

When disembarking the ark, the Bible emphasizes that every type of creature on the earth had been on board.

So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds - everything that moves on the earth - came out of the ark, one kind after another (8:18-19).

If all of the animals were brought to the ark, then the flood was universal as far as living things were concerned.

8. The Covenant With Noah Assumes A Universal Flood

The New Covenant, which God made with Noah after the Flood, assumes the extent was worldwide. God said to Noah.

I establish my covenant with you: never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a Flood; never again will there be a Flood to destroy the earth (Genesis 9:11).

Note the terms “all life” and “the earth.” The emphasis is universal.

9. The Earth Was Populated From Noah’s Sons

In addition, from the family of Noah, the entire earth was populated. Scripture says.

These were the three sons of Noah, and from them came the people who were scattered over the earth (Genesis 9:19).

This necessitates that all other human beings were destroyed in the Flood.

10. There Are No Qualifications In The Text

There are no qualifications in Genesis 6-9 about the scope of the Flood. Passages like Exodus 9:24 are often used as support of a local Flood.

There was hail with fire flashing continually in the midst of it, such heavy hail as had never fallen in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation (Exodus 9:24).

The text mentions “all the land of Egypt” when clearly all of the land of Egypt was not in view. Therefore, “all” does not mean everything.

However, this passage actually supports a universal Flood. Though the text says “all the land of Egypt” it also clarifies that Goshen is excluded.

Only in the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were, there was no hail (Exodus 9:26).

This makes the statement unequivocal regarding the rest of the land of Egypt. There are no such statements in Genesis 6-9 excluding any part of the earth or the people. The assumption, therefore, should be that the Flood was universal.

11. The Purpose Of The Flood Was Universal Destruction

The purpose of the Flood was to destroy sinful humanity. The Bible explains why God sent the Flood.

The LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, “I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created — people together with animals and creeping things and birds

of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.” But Noah found favor in the sight of the LORD. (Genesis 6:5-8).

Only a universal Flood would accomplish this. A local Flood would not have destroyed all human life. Old Testament scholar Kenneth Matthews comments on this passage.

This horrid paragraph is an expose of the degeneracy of the human heart. Collectively, society has decayed beyond recovery in God’s estimation. . . He himself brings sanctions against all humanity, including the most vulnerable (animals). The threat of extinction is not only inclusive of all living things but it is also geographically all-encompassing. Repeatedly, “on the earth” highlights the divine intervention to obliterate the living world he has created by his own voice and formed with his own hands (Kenneth Matthew, *Genesis 1-11:26*, p. 339).

12. There Are Parallels To The Creation Account

We find a number of clear parallels between the creation account in Genesis 1 and the Flood story in Genesis 6-9. Scholar Gordon Wenham explains the link.

Thus this final paragraph (6:5-8) of the second great section of Genesis introduces us to the theme of the section (6:9-9:29), the universal judgment from which Noah alone will be saved. 5:1-6:8 began with creation and closes with a warning that this creation will be destroyed. The world is going to be reduced to a watery chaos before a new start can be made. . .

Gen 5:1-6:8 could be described as the story of the old world, the world before the flood. It begins with the creation of Adam, traces the multiplication of his descendants, and concludes with the total annihilation of every living creature. Chap. 5 links these two primal events, creation and the flood, by a genealogy of ten patriarchs (Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Bible Commentary, Waco, Texas, Word Publisher, 1987, p. 145).

The linkage between the two events shows that the Flood should be understood, like creation, as a universal event. We find the following specific links between the creation and the Flood.

The terminology of the Flood account reflects Genesis 1 (particularly verses 20, 24-30). There is a deliberate attempt by the author to compare the two events.

According to Genesis 6:13, the earth itself was to be destroyed. The Hebrew word for earth *eretz* is the same word found in Genesis 1:1 which describes what God created. In Genesis 1:1 it refers to the entire earth, it also does in Genesis 6:13.

There are also many parallels between Adam and Noah. Allen Ross writes.

The parallels to the beginning of Genesis must not be missed . . . Noah was commissioned to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, for he now was the new man of the earth. But then in the following unit Noah’s failure was displayed in his lying naked, just as the knowledge of nakedness was evidence of the fall. In both cases curses resulted from the failures. Thus there is a deliberate parallel between Adam and Noah and between Adam’s world and Noah’s world. With Noah there is a new beginning of God’s creation, but there is also a new beginning of evil (Allen Ross, *Creation & Blessing: A Guide To The Study and Exposition Of Genesis*, Baker Books, 1988, p. 189).

Scripture says that the water from the Flood was everywhere. This is similar to the state of the earth at creation where water submerged everything. After the Flood there was nothing remaining on the earth. This is similar to the earth at the beginning before God created anything.

Genesis 6:12 can be compared to Genesis 1:31.

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day (Genesis 1:31).

In Genesis 6:12 it reads.

And God saw that the earth was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth (Genesis 6:12).

In each case God looked down and saw the earth. This comparison of the Flood to the original creation gives further testimony of it being worldwide. God looked down and saw everything, not just one localized plot of land.

The Flood was the undoing of creation reversing what God had done in the beginning. God, in a sense, started over with Noah and his family. The waters of the Flood washed everything away that He had previously created.

13. Humanity Was Not Limited To Mesopotamia

There is no need to assume that humanity was confined to the Mesopotamian valley. God had told Adam and Eve, some 1,600 years before, to be fruitful and multiply. Considering the longevity of early humans, as well as the normal rate of population growth, it has been calculated that there may have been several hundred million inhabitants of earth. We need not assume that they all lived in the Mesopotamian valley. Even if humanity were confined to this one area, the animals were not. Genesis 6:11-13 says that the whole earth was filled with violence and needed to be destroyed.

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw that the earth was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth. And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; now I am going to destroy them along with the earth (Genesis 6:11-13).

This does not have a local sense.

14. The Flood Account Is From God's Perspective Not Noah's

The Flood account does not record Noah's limited perspective. What we have is God's perspective, not Noah's. The idea of the Flood covering all the high hills is from God's perspective in heaven, not Noah's limited vantage point inside the ark. There is nothing to suggest that merely local small mountains were being described, or that we should assume that the Flood was universal only in the sense of what Noah could see or was aware of. The description is God's, not Noah's. If the Flood was local, then God would have misled the people about the extent of the Flood.

15. The Need For An Ark

If it were only a small Flood that was going to destroy a localized area, then Noah and his family could have simply moved to some dry area. Why take the time and trouble to build an ark and round up all the

animals? Why couldn't the animals be moved? Why couldn't the birds simply have flown away? Building such a huge ship when God gave them advanced warning of judgment does not make sense.

If there was going to be some unique species destroyed by the Flood, then God could have supernaturally caused them to leave the area just as He caused the pairs of animals to come to Noah. The ark, therefore, was unnecessary.

If Genesis 6:3 refers to the time of advance warning, one hundred and twenty years, then Noah and his family could have gone anywhere upon the earth to escape the Flood.

The idea that the ark was somehow necessary to give the evil people on the earth an advance warning of the coming judgment is not what the account says. The ark was built to *save* Noah and the animals, not to warn the people on the earth. The purpose of the ark was one of salvation, not one of warning.

Furthermore, in the example of the destruction of Sodom, there was no warning the people. God entirely removed Lot and his family and then destroyed Sodom without warning. No object lesson, such as the ark, was given.

16. Why Save The Animals?

Furthermore, why save two of each animal if the Flood was limited? If the Flood was localized, then the animal population would not have all been wiped out. The ones left could reproduce and populate the earth.

The fact that some animals would have had to have been domesticated over again is no reason to put all these animals in the ark.

17. The Size Of The Ark Fits A Universal Flood

If it were a local Flood, an ark of that size would not have been needed. The dimensions of the ark four hundred and fifty feet by seventy-five feet by fifty feet, as the Bible gives them, would hold two of all the different types of animals that are known to exist. If only the animals from Mesopotamia were on board, the ark would have been much smaller.

It was not until the 19th century that another ship of the ark's dimensions was constructed. Why build such a big ark for a local Flood?

18. The Ark Would Have Survived A Universal Flood

There is no reason to assume that the ark would not have survived the Flood. A number of studies have been made that show the seaworthiness of the ark, and its ability to withstand the Flood. It would not have been destroyed in a universal Flood as some people contend. Furthermore its length to width ratio of six to one would provide excellent stability.

19. Dinosaurs Could Have Been Aboard

As for dinosaurs having been taken upon the ark, not all who hold to a global Flood believe that dinosaurs existed at the same time as humans. To them it is a non-issue.

Those who do believe dinosaurs existed at the time of the Flood have differing views. Some feel the dinosaurs were purposely left off of the ark for some unexplained reason. It is speculated that their great

size would have been a threat to humanity after the Flood because they changed from vegetarians to meat-eaters.

Others believe dinosaurs were placed upon the ark. They argue that the number of actual dinosaurs was not that great – perhaps less than fifty. Also their average size was not that big – about that of a horse. Since the idea was to repopulate the earth only young dinosaurs would have been taken aboard. Therefore, there is no reason why they should have been left off of the ark.

Furthermore, it is contended by some Bible students that the Book of Job describes two different types of dinosaurs (Job 40,41). Some argue that Job was written after the Flood. If this is the case, then it shows that dinosaurs were taken upon the ark.

20. Miracles Are Miracles

Those who believe in the universality of the Genesis Flood wonder why these miracles are any more miraculous than miracles found elsewhere in Scripture. To suppose the miracles in Genesis are somehow greater than miracles elsewhere in Scripture is not a valid conclusion.

21. The Time Spent In The Ark

Noah, his family, and the animals were in the ark for more than a year. Why stay in the ark that long for only a local Flood?

22. Dry Land Would Have Appeared Earlier In A Local Flood

After the waters of the Flood had stopped and began to abate Noah waited four months before sending out a dove. Although the Flood waters had been going down for four months, the dove that Noah sent out still could not find dry ground.

But the dove found no place to set its foot, and it returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took it and brought it into the ark with him (Genesis 8:9).

If it were only a local flood, we would expect some dry land to appear after four months.

23. The Confirmation Of Isaiah Of A Universal Flood

Isaiah the prophet confirmed the worldwide nature of the Flood.

This is like the days of Noah to me: Just as I swore that the waters of Noah would never again go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you and will not rebuke you (Isaiah 54:9).

24. The Testimony Of Peter

There is also evidence from the New Testament that the Flood was universal. Scripture speaks of the world that was.

For they willingly forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water (2 Peter 3:5,6).

The “world that then existed” is contrasted to the “world to come.” The world to come refers to something global. Therefore the parallel between the two worlds speaks of something that is worldwide in scope- in the past with a universal Flood, and in the future with a worldwide judgment.

Peter goes on to speak of the coming judgment of the entire heaven and earth.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat (2 Peter 3:10-12).

This is another indication of the global nature of the subject matter. The future destruction of the heavens is compared to the destruction of the earth in Noah’s day. Both events are universal.

25. The Testimony Of Jesus Is To A Universal Flood

Jesus said the Flood destroyed “all humanity.”

And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: they ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the Flood came and destroyed them all (Luke 17:26,27).

The testimony of Jesus, God’s Son, indicates a universal Flood - at least as far as humanity is concerned. He compared the events around His Second Coming to the time of the Flood. The Second Coming would be global, not local. The judgment will be as extensive as the Flood. If the Flood was local, does this mean that the judgment at His coming is also local?

26. The Height Of The Flood

One of the strongest arguments for universality is the height of the Flood - fifteen cubits, or approximately twenty-two feet, above the highest mountain.

The waters swelled above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep (Genesis 7:20).

The ark was thirty cubits in height. Fifteen cubits speaks of the draught of the ship - which was one half its height. The point of this verse is that the waters were at least high enough to make certain that the ark did not hit the tops of the mountains for the five months in which it was floating. The passage does not limited the water to only fifteen cubits, or twenty-two feet, above the mountains. It was *at least* fifteen cubits.

Thus the highest mountains were covered by at least fifteen cubits of water. Since water seeks its own level, the entire earth had to have been flooded to cover the highest mountains and to allow the ark to float for five months. This is a universal Flood!

27. The Height Of Mount Ararat

The ark landed in the Ararat region. The mountain that is today called Mt. Ararat, which is in that region, is over 17,000 feet high. This means that the water level rose more than 17,000 feet above the present sea level. How could the level have been that high at Ararat without being the same height all over the rest of the world? The most likely answer is that the Flood covered the entire earth.

28. The Place Of Landing

The Bible says that the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat. This is some five hundred miles from where the ark was built. If it were merely a local Flood we would not expect the ark to have landed that far away.

29. The Duration Of The Flood

The fact that the Flood lasted over one year is another argument for its universality. The waters of the Flood peaked five months after the deluge began (Genesis 7:11; 8:3,4). The waters then began to abate. This period of abatement lasted several months.

It's hard to imagine a local Flood lasting an entire year but it is entirely consistent with the idea of a universal Flood. The slow rate of decline of the water level seems to point to a universal rather than a local Flood. A year long Flood that covers the mountains, by at least twenty-two feet, is not a local Flood.

30. Global Communication Was Possible

It is wrong to assume, as some have, that it was impossible for Noah to communicate to all people living on the earth. The Bible says the following.

Then the LORD said, "My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred twenty years" (Genesis 6:3).

If this statement refers to the one hundred twenty years that it took for Noah to build the ark, this would have given him plenty of time to communicate God's judgment to the world.

31. The Universality Of Other Flood Accounts

The universality of flood accounts does show that many cultures retained the story of a giant flood that destroyed the entire earth. All these stories cannot be attributed to Christian missionaries. The universality of flood stories seems to require a universal Flood.

32. No Animals Escaped

Scripture makes it clear that the Flood killed every human and animal that was not on the ark. A local Flood would not have the same result. Francis Schaeffer perceptively observes.

Another difficulty arises if the flood is not universal, and I don't see how anyone can get around this factor. If a flood occurs in a limited area, a lot of animals can be drowned but not all of them. There is no way you can eliminate them all unless they are all in a sealed canyon. When a forest fire or flood comes, the animals take off (Francis Schaeffer, *Genesis In Space And Time*, Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 1972, p. 134).

33. How Could All The Animals Die?

This brings up a further point. How could all the animals on earth die if the Flood were only local? Local Flood advocates, who want to say that every human died in the Flood, must also believe that all the animals died in the Flood. Scripture makes it clear that both humankind and beast perished. Yet Genesis tells us that God created these animals and placed them upon the earth – the entire globe. Unless one

wants to argue that God created the animals to live in only a limited geographical area, it seems that the Flood would have had to have been worldwide to kill all the animals who were spread out in the entire earth.

34. Mesopotamia Is Not Watertight

If one grants a local Flood limited to Mesopotamia, there are many problems that have no apparent solution. For example, Mesopotamia is not a watertight basin. Howard Vos writes.

Even if one were to grant the reality of a local flood, great difficulties would remain. As already indicated, water seeks its own level. Mesopotamia is no watertight basin to be filled with flood waters; and certainly inhabitants could scurry up the slopes of the Zagros or other mountains flanking the lowlands (Howard Vos, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Volume 2, E-J, Revised Edition, Eerdmans, 1982, p. 318).

35. There Have Been Other Floods

God promised there would never again be such a Flood.

I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a Flood to destroy all life (Genesis 9:15).

The phrase, “all life,” has universal implications. If the Flood were only local, then God’s promise of never sending a destructive Flood seems to have been broken. There have been other serious Floods in the world’s history that have killed thousands of people. This includes the area of Mesopotamia. The rainbow that God placed as a promise of no similar Flood would be a meaningless promise.

36. No One Escaped Judgment

According to some local Flood advocates, there were people living outside the Flood area who were not killed. The question is, “Why weren’t they judged for their sin?” Jesus likened the coming judgment of all humanity to the days of Noah.

As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. (Matthew 24:37-39).

The coming judgment concerns all living human beings – so did the Flood on Noah’s day.

Therefore the biblical arguments are compelling evidence that the Flood in Genesis was universal in scope.

SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE FOR A UNIVERSAL FLOOD

Those holding to a universal Flood point to the geological evidence as being consistent with a worldwide catastrophe.

1. There Was A Sufficient Water Source

One of the arguments often used against a universal Flood is that rain for forty days and forty nights would not be sufficient to fill the entire earth. This does not take into account what the Bible says concerning the Flood - for it specifies two particular things that happened – the fountains of the great deep were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened.

And on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened (Genesis 7:11).

The fountains of the great deep were breaking up for one hundred and fifty days while rain from the windows of heaven lasted forty days and nights.

John Whitcomb and Henry Morris expand on the meaning of the term fountains of the great deep.

There can be little question that the phrase *tehom rabbah* (“great deep”) points back to the *tehom* of Genesis 1:2 and refers to the oceanic depths and underground reservoirs of the antediluvian world. Presumably, then, the ocean basins were fractured and uplifted sufficiently to pour waters over the continents. . . . But the most significant fact to be observed is that these geological phenomena were not confined to a single day. In fact, the Scriptures state that this breaking up of ‘the fountains of the great deep’ continued for a period of five months for it was not until 150 days had passed that ‘the fountains of the deep. . . were stopped (8:2)’ (John Whitcomb and Henry Morris, *The Genesis Flood*, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1962, p. 9).

The breaking up of oceanic depths for the five months will cause more than a local Flood.

The “windows of heaven” could refer to a water vapor canopy that was located above the earth. This canopy, created by God on day two, could have supplied the necessary water to cover the entire earth. Though the existence of this water vapour canopy is not certain, it is one possible means by which the water could have been supplied to cover all the earth.

Therefore, the Bible says that it was more than simple rain that caused the great Flood. Something powerful from heaven unleashed the water, as well as some underground source also provided the needed water.

2. The Ocean Beds Sank And The Mountains Raised

There is also the matter as to how the water could have subsided so quickly. Evaporation is not a sufficient answer. Most likely, some of the waters returned back into the oceans. There were vast topographical changes including the sinking of the ocean beds and the raising of the mountains. Most of the mountains of today did not exist before the Flood. Mount Everest, the tallest mountain in the world, has marine fossils at its peak.

3. Where Did The Water Go?

Psalms 104 may provide the answer as to where the water went after the Flood.

He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved. You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. But at your rebuke the waters fled, at the sound of your thunder they took to flight; they flowed over the mountains, they went down into the valleys, to

the place you assigned for them. You set a boundary they cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth (Psalm 104:5-9).

After the waters covered the mountains God rebuked them and they fled. At this time, the mountains rose and the valleys sank. God then set a boundary where they would never again cover the earth.

4. The Olive Leaf Is Not A Testimony To A Local Flood

It is argued by some local Flood theorists that the fact that the olive leaf could be picked off by the dove shows that vegetation was not destroyed. This, however, is not the case. Olive branches that were floating in the water could have taken root and begun to produce leaves on the side of a mountain. There certainly was sufficient time for this to happen during the months that the waters were abating.

5. Plant Life Would Have Survived

The survival of plant life does not depend upon a local Flood. Seeds of land plants could have survived a long period of time floating in the waters of the Flood. Again, we do not know the level of salt in the water before the Flood.

6. Petroleum Products Were Not Needed Before The Flood

It is not necessary to assume that Noah used petroleum products to pitch the ark. Pitch does not have to be made from petroleum. In Europe, pitch has been made from pine resin for several centuries. The pitch, therefore, did not have to come from petroleum products.

7. The Distribution Of Animals

Those holding to a local Flood point to the problem of the distribution of the animals. The animals of Australia and New Zealand, for example, had to get to Mesopotamia and back. They had to do this without populating other parts of the world. This seems difficult to reconcile with a universal Flood.

As for certain animals who lived long distances, we should not assume that they had to come over water to get to the ark. John Whitcomb comments:

How could kangaroos have traveled from Australia to Noah's Ark? Answer: They didn't. At least two of each of all the kinds of air-breathing animals - including kangaroos - must have lived on the same continent where the Ark was built, so they could come to Noah by divine guidance (Genesis 6:20; 7:9) without having to cross oceans . . . How did kangaroos reach Australia from Mount Ararat after the Flood? Answer: A great land bridge apparently connected Asia and Australia in the early post-Flood period. During this most intense phase of the 'ice age,' such vast quantities of water were locked in the polar regions that ocean levels were hundreds of feet lower than they are now. The National Geographic map of the Pacific Ocean Floor (October, 1969) clearly shows the shallow continental shelf that extends now from Indochina almost to Australia (John Whitcomb, *The World That Perished*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973, p. 25).

The animals, therefore, migrated from the Ararat regions to the various spots on the globe.

8. The Fish Would Have Survived

What about the fish and marine life? Would not the mingling of ocean water with the rain have resulted in a lethal saline concentration in which the fresh water fish would have died? How could they have survived?

First, we do not know how salty the sea was before God sent the Flood. The degree of salinization is unknown. Although we do not know the adaptability of fish at that time, it is conceivable that even if most were destroyed God could have preserved at least two of each species. Today there are certain species of migratory fish that live in both fresh and salt water.

9. Rapid Development Is Possible

It is not impossible to believe that all of today's land animals descended from those upon the ark. Varieties of animals can arise rapidly, especially if they are isolated into small population groups. Furthermore catalogued fossil species number about 200,000. About 95% of these are marine invertebrates – creatures that Noah was not commanded to take upon the ark. Consequently the rapid development of species after the Flood is not as difficult as it first seems.

10. Flood Geology Has Not Been Discredited

Though it is often stated that Flood geology has been discredited, more and more scientists are concluding that the world once experienced a cataclysmic flood. It is not true that the science of geology has ruled out the possibility of a universal Flood.

A Universal Flood Is Not Inconsistent With Evidence

These arguments have convinced many that the idea of a universal Flood is not inconsistent with the Scriptural evidence and is the most likely way in which to interpret the text. They believe it is the natural and obvious way to interpret the text. This is why the Jews and the church have historically held to a universal Flood.

Summary

There are those who argue, both biblically and scientifically, that the Genesis Flood was worldwide in scope. They believe the best way to understand the text is to read it the way it would be normally understood – a universal Flood.

QUESTION 29

What Conclusions Should We Make About The Genesis Flood?

The question of the extent of the Flood is one that continues to divide Bible believers. This is an issue where good people disagree. We have observed five ways in which the Flood account in Genesis is understood.

1. Local Flood Geographically, All Life Killed

This view holds that the Flood was universal in its extent – all life was killed except those humans and animals upon the ark – but that the geographical extent was limited.

2. Local Flood Geographically, Local With Respect To Living Things

This position understands that there were other people and animals living outside of the area of the Flood who were not affected by it.

3. Local Flood Geographically, Uncertain With Respect To Living Things

Others who hold the Flood was local geographically are unsure whether or not other people and animals lived on other parts of the earth.

4. The Flood Was Universal In All Respects

The traditional view is that the Flood was worldwide in all respects. All living things on the entire globe died except those who were in the ark.

5. The Evidence Is Inconclusive

Finally, there are those who believe the evidence is inconclusive about the extent of the Flood. The jury is still out as to whether the Flood was geographically localized or universal.

ISSUES OF AGREEMENT

There are a number of issues that Bible-believers can agree upon regardless of their view of the extent of the Flood. They include the following.

1. Noah Was A Genuine Person

Noah is a historical figure. He is connected to Adam, another historical person, by the genealogies in Genesis 5. Noah is also connected to another historical person, Abraham, by the genealogy in Genesis 11.

2. God Did Judge The World With A Flood

All sides agree that God sent a judgment on the world at Noah's time. The Flood was a historical event that has happened in the history of our world.

3. Supernatural Elements Were Involved In The Genesis Flood

However one decides the extent of the Flood, the episode cannot be completely explained by natural causes. The Flood was a supernatural judgment of God, not merely a series of natural events. All sides agree on this fact.

There Are More Compelling Issues For Christians

Finally, it must be emphasized that there are more compelling issues than the extent of the Flood. Old Testament authority David O'Brien stated it well.

In a world where nearly three billion people have never heard the name of Christ, there are more important issues at stake for the evangelical community than the extent of the flood.

And there are more crucial issues at stake within the church. I hope that we can learn to live together even when we disagree on this issue (David E. O'Brien, *Today's Handbook For Solving Bible Difficulties*, Bethany House Publishers, 1990, p. 220).

Summary

The issue of the extent of the Flood is one that Bible believers will continue to disagree about. It is important that this issue is discussed but there are many more important matters that Christians should be emphasizing.

Summary To The Extent Of The Flood (Topic 3)

After looking at what the Bible has to say about the extent of the Flood recorded in Genesis we can make the following observations.

Question 26. The Bible says that God sent a Great Flood in the days of Noah. This Flood was to judge sinful humanity. While Bible-believers agree that the Flood occurred there are a number of things about it that are not agreed upon. Some feel the Flood was worldwide in its coverage and killed every living thing except those in the ark. Others believe it was localized to a particular geographic area. There are differing positions among those who hold this view as to whether all life on the planet was destroyed. There are some who argue that all life was destroyed in a local Flood while others say it was not. Still others are uncertain about this question.

Finally, there are those who are uncertain as to whether the Flood was local or universal. They believe the biblical evidence can be read either way and do not think there are enough facts to make a commitment to a universal or local Flood.

Question 27. There are arguments, both biblical and scientific, that have led people to believe that the Bible teaches a local, rather than a universal Flood. Those who hold this view feel this view is the most compatible with both science and Scripture. Without denying the supernatural character of the account, local Flood advocates believe God sent a Flood to only part of the world.

Question 28. There are those who argue, both biblically and scientifically, that the Genesis Flood was worldwide in scope. They believe the best way to understand the text is to read it the way it would be normally understood – a universal Flood.

Question 29. The issue of the extent of the Flood is one that Bible believers will continue to disagree about. It is important that this issue is discussed but there are many more important matters that Christians should be emphasizing.

Our next section looks at the question of dinosaurs. We will look at questions such as the following.

What are dinosaurs?

Does the Bible speak about dinosaurs?

Could dinosaurs still exist today?

Topic 4

DINOSAURS AND THE BIBLE

What Does The Bible Have To Say?

This topic is one that causes a lot of interest – dinosaurs. These huge creatures that once roamed the earth fascinate us all. There are a number of questions that naturally arise concerning the dinosaurs. What are dinosaurs? Where did they come from? Why did God create them? What happened to them? Could some dinosaurs still be alive today? Does the Bible have anything to say about this subject?

QUESTION 30

What Are Dinosaurs?

One of the most often-asked questions about Genesis concerns the existence of dinosaurs and how they fit into the Biblical record. Though we know that dinosaurs once roamed our planet there are many unsolved mysteries regarding these creatures. What did they look like? What does the fossil evidence tell us? Have human beings ever seen dinosaurs? Do any dinosaurs still exist? Does the Bible have anything to say on this subject?

Dinosaurs Defined

The word dinosaur refers to reptiles that once roamed the planet. The word dinosaur means “terrible lizard.” Therefore it technically speaks of those creatures who lived on the land, not in the sea.

They Are Distinct From Other Reptiles

Dinosaurs are distinct from modern-day reptiles by the position of their limbs. Dinosaurs had a fully erect posture – the limbs of their body supported them from beneath. Thus dinosaurs walked like a horse with their limbs beneath them. This allowed them to walk upright like other mammals. Most modern day reptiles, such as alligators, have limbs that project from the side. They do not walk like horses, cows, or the dinosaurs.

Dinosaurs ranged greatly in size. The largest dinosaur weighed as much as eighty tons and stood seventy feet in length. The smallest ones were less in size than a chicken.

The History Of The Study Of Dinosaurs

The modern history of the study of dinosaurs takes us back only a few centuries. In 1677, when the first bones were discovered, they were so big that they were thought to belong to a giant elephant. The first name given to them was *Scrotum humanum*. The name “dinosaur” did not come into existence until two centuries later.

A Discovery Is Made In England

In 1822 Mary Anne Mantell went for a walk along a country road in Sussex, England. As the story goes she found a stone that glittered in the sunlight. The stone was taken home to her husband who was a fossil collector. Dr. Mantell found the stone contained a tooth that was similar to that of modern reptiles. However, this tooth was much larger than that of any living reptile. He concluded that it belonged to some extinct plant-eating reptile with teeth like an iguana’s. Dr. Mantell is usually given the credit as the person who began to popularize the age of reptiles. Shortly after this discovery the famous British paleontologist, Sir Richard Owen, coined the term “dinosaur,” or terrible lizard, to refer to these ancient reptiles that once roamed the planet.

They Are Bones Of Contention

The fact that dinosaurs existed is beyond dispute. The information that we have regarding dinosaurs comes from fossils. Fossils are ancient dead plants and animals or something that was left by them. Entire fossil skeletons of these giant creatures have been unearthed. Though the fact of their existence is undeniable, the time in which they lived and the way in which they became extinct is a matter of much controversy.

Reconstruction's Are Not Easy

While the skeletal remains of dinosaurs have been preserved in rocks, it is not always easy to make an accurate reconstruction of these animals. The putting together of dinosaur bones is not an easy process. Often the reconstruction's made are from a single leg, bone or tooth which could be badly damaged. There is also the possibility that bones from one dinosaur were mixed in with those from another. This adds to the confusion of reconstructing these creatures. The conclusion is as much guesswork as it is fact.

Only 40% Of Any Creature Is Known

Even if all the bones were found, there would be only about 40% of the animal left to tell scientists what they originally looked like. We cannot tell the color of the animal or if it were a vegetarian or a meat eater. The presence of sharp teeth tells us only that the food was ripped, not what food was ripped. Therefore many of the conclusions of scientists are guesses with respect as to how the dinosaurs lived and behaved. Consequently we must be careful about accepting too quickly the artists reconstruction's of these creatures. No picture in any book on dinosaurs is exactly right as to their color, shape, and size.

The Brontosaurus: The Wrong Body With The Wrong Head

One of the most curious stories regarding the reconstruction of dinosaurs is that of the Brontosaurus - probably the most famous of all the dinosaurs. The Brontosaurus was reconstructed when a dinosaur head was placed together with a dinosaur body. The problem with that reconstruction is that the head and body were found three or four miles apart. Dr. O. C. Marsh, the man who made the original discovery of the head and the body, never reported they were found apart. He put the two together and named his discovery the Brontosaurus. It has since been discovered that the wrong head was placed with the wrong body. The skeleton actually belonged to one creature - a type of Diplodocus while the skull was from another dinosaur - an Apatosaurus. The Brontosaurus never existed! Though millions have seen and heard of the Brontosaurus and though its picture has been in every book on dinosaurs and every museum that reconstructs dinosaurs, this creature did not exist!

When Did They Exist?

A key question with respect to dinosaurs concerns the time in which they lived. The general consensus from modern evolutionary science is that dinosaurs ruled the earth for 140 million years and then died out, for some unknown reason, 65 million years ago.

Summary

Dinosaurs, or terrible lizards are reptiles. They are distinct from modern day reptiles in that they walked with their limbs supporting them.

Evidence from paleontology makes it clear that dinosaurs did once exist on our planet. They ranged in size from smaller than a chicken to eighty tons.

The term dinosaur is a relatively new, coined in the 19th century.

Though we know that dinosaurs did exist, there is much still unknown about how they looked. The episode of the Brontosaurus shows the problems that are involved with any dinosaur identification.

Modern evolutionary theory holds that the dinosaurs died out 65 million years ago. Before their demise they roamed the earth for 140 million years.

QUESTION 31

According To The Bible, When Were The Dinosaurs Created?

Although the theory of evolution teaches that all plants and animals came about by natural processes, the Bible says that everything creature that exists is a result of the special creation of God. If God created all things, then the dinosaurs were certainly part of that creation.

They Were Created On The Fifth And Sixth Day

The Bible has something to say with respect to the origin of dinosaurs. The first chapter of Genesis tells us that God created all the animals on the fifth and sixth day of creation. The birds and sea creatures were created on Day five.

And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas and let the birds increase on the earth." And there was evening, and there was morning – the fifth day (Genesis 1:20-23).

The land animals were created on Day six.

And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals, according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good . . . God saw all that he had made and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning – the sixth day (Genesis 1:24,25,33).

OPTION 1 THEY LIVED AT THE SAME TIME AS HUMANS

Adam was also created on the sixth day. If these were solar days, then human beings were contemporaries of the dinosaurs. Dinosaurs would have had to have lived at the same time as humans because they were part of the animal kingdom created by God.

Adam Named The Dinosaurs

Along with all the other animals, Adam would have named the dinosaurs. The Bible says that Adam named all the animals.

The Lord God had formed out of the ground all of the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to Adam to see what he would name them. Whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air, and all the beasts of the field (Genesis 2:19-20).

OPTION 2 **THEY DID NOT LIVE AT THE SAME TIME AS HUMANS**

If the days in Genesis were long periods of time, then it is possible that dinosaurs had already become extinct before humanity came on the scene. This view assumes there was death in the animal world before the Fall of Humanity recorded in Genesis 3.

Are They Mentioned In The Creation Account?

Whether the days in Genesis were solar days or long periods of time, dinosaurs, like all the other animals God had made, began to populate the earth after the initial creation. Israeli scientist Gerald Schroeder writes:

As to whether or not dinosaurs are mentioned in Scripture, consider this: Although there is no reference to individual species (other than humans) in the 31 verses that describe the first six Days, there is an allusion to those creatures we have labeled dinosaurs: And God created the large *taninim* . . . (Gen. 1:21). *Taninim* is variously translated as “crocodiles,” “whales,” or “sea-monsters.”

The word *tanin* also appears in Exodus. At the Burning Bush, Moses cast his staff to the ground “and it became a *nahash*” (Ex 4:3). But later, when confronting Pharaoh, Moses again throws down his staff “and it became a *tanin*” (Ex. 7:10).

From other places in Scripture, it becomes clear that *nahash* refers to a particular type of animal - a snake. In chapter one of Genesis, only general categories are mentioned. Since *tanin* is used there, it must refer to the general category within which snakes are found. Thus, *tanin* must refer to reptiles.

So a more accurate translation of Genesis 1:21 is: “And God created large reptiles” (*The Jerusalem Post*, International Edition, Week ending September 4, 1993, p. 6).

Why Did God Create Them?

As to the exact reason for the dinosaur’s creation, we are not told. It is possible that the dinosaurs were created to show humankind the great power of the Creator but any conclusion regarding the purpose of the dinosaur’s creation is only speculation.

Summary

God created the dinosaurs at some time in the past. There is no agreement among Bible- believers as to when this happened.

If the days in Genesis were solar days, and the creation was recent, then dinosaurs lived at the same time as humans.

If the creation in Genesis occurred millions of years ago, it is possible that the dinosaurs died out before humanity came on the scene.

QUESTION 32

Does The Bible Have To Anything Specifically to Say About Dinosaurs?

Does the Scripture have anything directly to say about the existence of dinosaurs? If not, does this mean that they did not exist alongside humanity? We can make the following observations.

The Word Dinosaur Is Not Found In The *King James Version*

The word dinosaur is not found in the classic *King James Version* of 1611. This is to be expected since the term dinosaur was not invented until two hundred years after the *King James Version* was translated. Therefore, the lack of use of the word in the *King James Version* means absolutely nothing, one way or the other, about dinosaurs.

The Authorized Version does translate certain Hebrew words as dragons. This has led some to think that the subject was an actual dinosaur. There are, however, alternative explanations for dragons.

There Are Possible Passages Referring To Dinosaurs

There are a couple of passages in Scripture that may give a specific reference to dinosaurs. These passages are found in the Book of Job and they refer to creatures known as the “behemoth” and the “leviathan.” The Bible says the following concerning the behemoth.

Look now at the behemoth, which I made along with you; he eats grass like an ox. See now, his strength is in his hips, and his power is in his stomach muscles. He moves his tail like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are tightly knit. His bones are like beams of bronze, his ribs are like bars of iron. He is first of the ways of God; only He who made him can bring near his sword. Surely the mountains yield food for him, and all the beasts of the field play there. He lies under the lotus trees, in a covert of reeds and marsh. The lotus trees cover him with their shade; the willows by the brook surround him. Indeed the river may rage, yet he is not disturbed; he is confident, though the Jordan gushes into his mouth, though he takes it in his eyes, or one pierces his nose with a snare (Job 40:15-24).

Job 41 gives a more detailed description of the leviathan.

Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook, or snare his tongue with a line you lower? . . . Can you put a reed through his nose, or pierce his jaw with a hook? . . . Can you fill his skin with harpoons or his head with fishing spears? Lay your hand on him; remember the battle—never do it again! Indeed any hope of overcoming him is vain; shall one not be overwhelmed at the sight of him? No one is so fierce that he would dare stir him up. Who then is able to stand against me . . . I will not conceal his limbs, His mighty power or his graceful proportions . . . On earth there is nothing like him, which is made without fear. He beholds every high thing; he is king over all the children of pride (Job 41:1-2,7-10).

They Are Not Mythological Or Symbolic Creatures

While many Bible students think these creatures were mythological or merely symbolic creatures, these creatures were actually created by God. The following reasons show this to be true.

1. In Job 38:39-39:30 there are 12 animals that are mentioned by God. All of these are real creatures. This would indicate that the final two creatures mentioned would also be real.
2. God told Job to look at the behemoth (40:15). He could only look at a real creature.
3. God told Job that He made the behemoth as He had made man (40:15).
4. The Bible provides detailed descriptions of the physical characteristics of the Leviathan and behemoth. This is not consistent with mythological creatures.
5. The Leviathan is spoken of elsewhere in the Bible as being part of God's creation

How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. . . There the ships go to and fro, and the leviathan, which you formed to frolic there (Psalm 104:24,26).

The Behemoth Described

The following things can be ascertained from the description of the behemoth.

1. It was a grass eater, it was not a carnivore or meat eater.
2. The behemoth eats grass like an ox but is not an ox.
3. His strength in its hips and power in his stomach muscles.
4. The creature moves its tail like a cedar
5. The sinews of his thighs are tightly knit.
6. He has large bones like beams of bronze and ribs like bars of iron.
7. The behemoth is first in the ways of God.
8. Only God can control this creature.
9. He visits the mountains along with the other creatures. They all seem to play there.
10. Though he is this creature of great strength and size, he lets other beasts play near him unhurt.
11. He lives an inactive life under the lotus tree and in the marsh.
12. He is not disturbed when the river rages.

WHAT WAS IT?

Some commentators state simply that it is an animal of unknown origin. The *New King James Version* footnotes Job 40 and 41 as follows:

A large animal, exact identity unknown . . . (*New King James Version*, p. 535, notes 55).

The idea that this is a poetic description of a non-existent animal is also popular among commentators.

A Water Ox

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown argue that the behemoth is the Egyptian water-ox.

The description in part agrees with the hippopotamus, in part with the elephant, but exactly in all details with neither. It is rather a personification of the great *Pachydermata*, or *Herbivora* (so “he eateth grass”, the idea of the hippopotamus being predominant. In vs. 17, “the tail like a cedar” hardly applies to the latter. . . Behemoth seems to be the Egyptian water-ox (*JFB*, p. 402).

Hippopotamus

Many people think the behemoth refers to the hippopotamus.

The reference in Job is to some marsh dwelling mammoth such as the *Hippopotamus amphibius* which inhabits the Nile and other African rivers. In the Apocrypha the name denotes the male counterpart of the Leviathan (2 Esd. 6:49,52) (R. K. Harrison, Behemoth, *ISBE*, Vol 1, p. 452)

G.S. Cansdale writes:

This is the most common Heb. word for beast . . . The pl. form occurs nine times in the OT, and in all passages except one where it is tr. “beast” or “beasts.” The exception is in Job 40:15 where the context clearly suggests a specific animal for which most Eng. VSS. give the transliteration “behemoth” but RSV mg. has “hippopotamus.” . . . The passage is largely fig. and the only points which seem clear are that it is aquatic and powerful (vs. 23) and eats grass (v. 15). Also there are ancient records of hunting hippos with harpoons and barbed hooks (Diodorus Siculus 37:35). The hippo was certainly known in Biblical times, esp. in Egypt where its numbers were greatly reduced by Romans because of damage to the crops, but it finally disappeared in the 12th cent. A.D. (G. S. Cansdale, Behemoth, in *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia Of The Bible*, Vol. 1, p. 511).

Roy Zuck notes:

The common view that this huge creature is the hippopotamus is supported by several observations. The hippo is herbivorous (it feeds on grass like an ox, v. 15). Therefore wild animals do not fear being attacked by it (v. 20). (2) It has massive strength in its loins, stomach muscles . . . tail . . . thighs, metallike bones and limbs (vv. 16-18). Unlike the elephant, a hippopotamus’ stomach muscles are particularly strong and thick. The rendering that his tail sways like a cedar (possibly meaning cedar branch, not a cedar trunk) suggests to some that the “tail” means the trunk of an elephant. However, Ugaritic parallels indicate the verb “sways” (which occurs only here in the OT) means “stiffens.” In that case the hippopotamus’ tail, though small, was referred. The tail stiffens when the animal is frightened or is running. (3) The hippopotamus was the largest of the animals known in the ancient Near East (he ranks them first among the works of God, v. 19). The adult hippo today weighs up to 8,000 pounds. . . . (4) The hippo is difficult if not impossible to kill with a mere hand sword. The words His Maker can approach him with His sword (v. 19) suggest that only God dare approach the beast for hand combat. Nor can it be captured or harpooned when only his eyes or nose show above the water (v. 24) (5) As a hippopotamus . . . lies hidden in the marsh . . . the stream, and the river (vs 21-23), its sustenance (perhaps vegetation) floats down from the hills (v. 20). This huge creature is undisturbed by river turbulence for the rivers are his habitat (v. 23). An elephant or brontosaurus would hardly be described this way. A surging river would hardly reach the depth of the Brontosaurus mouth (Roy Zuck, Job, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 772).

Is It A Description Of A Dinosaur?

There are some commentators who believe that the behemoth describes a dinosaur. The idea that the behemoth was an elephant or a hippopotamus does not fit all the facts. Neither of these has the tail of a cedar, one of the largest trees in the ancient world. However this description does fit the dinosaurs. Therefore, it is argued that the behemoth was a gigantic plant-eating dinosaur such as the Diplodocus.

The Leviathan

The Bible also describes a sea creature called the Leviathan. Its identity is also grounds for much speculation.

A large sea creature, exact identity unknown (*New King James Version*, p. 535, notes 55,56).

The Leviathan is spoken of as the greatest creature in the sea. What sort of creature was the Leviathan? Many answers have been given.

Crocodile

A popular view is that the Leviathan was a crocodile. The word Leviathan means “the twisted animal.”

The proper name (it always occurs without the definite article) of a large aquatic animal perhaps reflecting a mythological monster . . . Job 41:1-34 the most extended description of the Leviathan, suggests to many the crocodile . . . In his confrontation with Job, the Lord’s point seems to be that while Job is no more a match for the power of evil than he would be for a crocodile (G.P. Hugenberg, *ISBE*, Volume 3, p. 109).

Dinosaur

There are some students of Scripture who believe the Leviathan is a dinosaur:

The “leviathan” the Bible talks about in Job 41 is described as the greatest creature of the sea. Unlike a crocodile or fish, it was useless to try and catch the leviathan with hooks. Nothing on earth is his equal—a creature without fear” (Job 41:33, *NIV*).

What was the leviathan? The large size, strong jaws, great teeth, fast swimming ability and its protected back and undersides all give clues. It could have been a *Kronosaurus* (KRONE-oh-SOR-us) or something like it. This was one of the greatest, most overwhelming animals ever to swim the seas. It was not a true dinosaur, but it was reptile-like and had great sharp teeth.

It seems these animals were still alive at the time of King David. Psalm 104 says they played where the ships go to and fro. This was probably in the Mediterranean Sea (Paul Taylor, *The Great Dinosaur Mystery*, El Cajon, California, Master Books, 1987, p. 48).

Not All Agree That The Behemoth And Leviathan Are Dinosaurs

Thus we see that among students of Scripture there are a variety of ways this has been interpreted.

Calling the behemoth and the leviathan dinosaurs wrongly dates Job’s lifetime within only a few hundred years of the Flood (Roy Zuck, *ibid.* p. 772).

Therefore the exact identity of these creatures is unknown.

Summary

Does the Bible specifically mention dinosaurs? The following conclusions can be made.

The word dinosaur is not found in the 1611 *King James Version* of the Bible. This is to be expected since the term was not invented until 18th century.

It is possible that the term translated “dragon” in Scripture refers to dinosaurs.

There are two creatures mentioned in the Book of Job, the behemoth and the leviathan, that may be actual dinosaurs. However this identification is disputed.

QUESTION 33

What Happened To The Dinosaurs?

While dinosaurs once roamed on the earth, for some reason they are no longer alive. As to what happened to the dinosaurs there are a number of possible answers. The theory of evolution holds that dinosaurs lived during the Mesozoic Era - roughly 230 million to 65 million years ago on their time scale. At the end of the Cretaceous Period of the Mesozoic Era they died out. Among evolutionary scientists there is no consensus of opinion with respect as to why they died out.

Evolutionary Views As To What Happened To The Dinosaurs

The most popular evolutionary views as to what happened to the dinosaurs include the following:

1. A comet struck the earth killing all the dinosaurs.
2. A giant meteor crashed into the sea. This sent a great tidal wave throughout the earth and drowned most of the dinosaurs.
3. The sun became too hot for dinosaurs to exist.
4. The sun became too cold to support dinosaur life.
5. The climate of the world became too dry.
6. The world's climate was too wet.
7. The magnetic field of earth reversed and killed most of the dinosaurs.
8. A supernova exploded near the earth sending radiation throughout our planet.

This is but a small sample of the theories the secular scientists have adopted to explain the demise of the dinosaurs. There is no consensus of opinion. There are a number of unexplained problems no matter what theory one adopts.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Among Bible-believers there are a number of possible answers to this question. They include the following:

OPTION 1. THEY PERISHED BEFORE HUMANS EXISTED

There are Christians who believe and teach that the dinosaurs perished before the creation of humanity. They contend that dinosaurs roamed the earth millions of years before God created humans. For some unexplained reason, they died out before humankind was created. Therefore dinosaurs were never seen by human beings. Those holding this view would include individuals who hold the age/day concept of the universe or those who do not see the Bible teaching anything with respect to science. In addition, those who hold to the Gap Theory argue that the dinosaurs are fossils from a previous creation before that which is recorded in Genesis.

OPTION 2. THEY DIED AFTER THE FALL BUT BEFORE THE FLOOD

Another possibility is that the dinosaurs existed at the same time as Adam but died out before the Flood of Noah. For this reason there were no dinosaurs taken upon the ark.

OPTION 3. THEY PERISHED IN A UNIVERSAL FLOOD

Some feel that the dinosaurs were not taken aboard the ark. For some unspoken reason, they were allowed to perish in the Flood. Several possibilities have been suggested.

First, God knew that fear and dread of human beings would be placed in all the animals after the Flood. Because of their tremendous size, Noah and his descendants would not have been able to deal with them if they became hostile.

Dinosaurs were tropical in nature. If the temperature extremes did not occur until after the Flood the environment would have been hostile to these creatures. Knowing all this, God in His wisdom did not allow them to be taken upon the ark.

OPTION 4. THEY SURVIVED THE FLOOD

It is also possible that dinosaurs survived the Flood. There are a two ways in which this could have happened.

They Could Have Survived A Geographically Local Flood

There is the possibility that the dinosaurs, if still existing, would have not been affected by a local Flood. Those that hold this view would argue that the dinosaurs perished for some other reason than a universal Flood.

They May Have Been Taken On Board The Ark

It is also possible that Noah took two of each kind of dinosaur with him on the ark.

Since the Bible is clear that there were two of each kind of animal taken upon the ark, this includes dinosaurs. Some people have argued that because the dinosaurs were such large creatures they would have never fitted into the ark. However, they do not realize that most of the dinosaurs were rather small. Most of the publicity regarding dinosaurs have been given to a few of the larger kind such as Tyrannosaurus Rex. Even the largest dinosaurs were not as large as the blue whale.

If the dinosaurs were taken upon the ark they were, most likely, young adults rather than fully grown creatures seeing that the creatures that were on the ark were there to repopulate the earth. Therefore any animal taken upon the ark had to be at a place in life where it could still reproduce. There would have been sufficient room in the ark for two of each dinosaur.

All Life Was Destroyed, The Geography Was Changed

The Scripture says that the waters of the Flood killed every living creature on the face of the earth including of course, all the dinosaurs. The sediments would have buried many of them rapidly. The massive fossil graveyards give testimony to the flooding.

In addition, the geography of the earth changed. Seventy per cent of the earth's surface is still covered with water. All previous geographical sites were destroyed including the Garden of Eden. Mountains were formed where there was none.

The Fossils Are A Reminder Of God's Judgment

Dinosaur fossils can serve as a reminder that God judged the world in the past. The remnants of Noah's Flood remind us that God is both the Creator and Judge of dinosaurs.

Did They Survive After The Flood?

There is the possibility that certain types of dinosaurs existed for quite some time after the Flood. Since the beginning of recorded history, there have been many stories of "dragons." The stories and the pictures people have left behind testify to the existence of unusual reptile-like creatures. Many of the ancient descriptions of these dragons sound like an encounter with a dinosaur. Legends are usually based on some degree of fact rather than just simple imagination. The fact that the dragon stories are widespread all over the world lends credibility to the fact that these people actually saw dinosaur-like animals.

WHY DID THEY BECOME EXTINCT?

Over a period of time, the dinosaurs did become extinct. This could have happened after the Flood due to a number of factors.

1. Temperature Extremes

One cause for their demise could have been the changes in the temperature. Many parts of the world became hotter after the Flood while other parts became much cooler. Because the dinosaurs needed a tropical climate to exist, they would have been limited to where they could have lived. Temperatures became more extreme. In some parts of the globe, a short "ice age" may have followed the Flood.

2. There Were Other Catastrophic Events

It is possible that other catastrophes, apart from the Flood, contributed to the demise of dinosaurs.

3. Lack Of Food

If there was only a small geographical area in which dinosaurs could exist this would cause a struggle to find enough food to survive. The huge great forests that once existed were no longer there. Lack of food may have contributed to their extinction.

4. The Atmospheric Protection Was Gone

In addition, harmful radiation from the sun and space probably came down. The world before the Flood may have been protected by a water vapor canopy that kept harmful radiation from reaching the planet. This canopy, the "windows of heaven," was released at the Flood." As already mentioned, the existence of this canopy is not clearly taught in Scripture.

5. Their Habitats Were Destroyed

The world that existed after the Flood could have seen destruction of some of the dinosaur habitats.

6. Hunting By Humanity

The hunting, by human beings, would have also caused the extinction of the dinosaurs. The mammoths and mastodons were wiped out by hunters. People in ancient times could have also killed the dinosaurs for food, or possibly for sport.

As to the exact cause of their extinction no one knows. It is a fact that a number of animals still become extinct each year.

Summary

The great dinosaurs that once roamed earth are now extinct. As to why, no one knows. Evolutionary scientists pose a number of theories – none of which can be proven.

The Bible does not specifically say what happened to the dinosaurs for allows for a number of possibilities. It is impossible to be certain which theory is correct.

QUESTION 34

Does It Matter If Dinosaurs Lived At The Same Time As Humans?

We may ask what significance if these, or other findings, prove that humans lived at the same time as dinosaurs? On the evolutionary scale man is a relative newcomer appearing only during the last ten million years. Dinosaurs supposedly lived from 70-120 million years ago. If they both lived at the same time then human is older than previously thought. The late A. E. Wilder-Smith comments.

If, according to Darwinian theory, man developed via the amphibians, the reptiles, and the mammals, then this development must have required a great deal of time. However if man lived at the same time as the dinosaurs, he must himself either be as young or as old as they are. If he is as old as they are alleged to be, his evolutionary family tree will have automatically been reduced by some 70-120 million years. Precisely this time span reduction of the evolutionary tree cannot, however be reconciled with Darwin's theory of evolution. His entire ladder from primeval cell to man required at the very least 600-700 million years in order to allow development of the primeval cell up to man by chance and selection. If man, however, lived at the same time as the dinosaurs, then approximately 20% of the required evolutionary time span has been lost. But just this reduction by 20% is fatal according to mathematical probability theories on an evolution based on chance and selected mutations. If man and the dinosaurs are considered to be geologically equally young, other grave problems arise for the evolutionary tree (A. E. Wilder-Smith, *The Natural Sciences Know Nothing of Evolution*, San Diego: Master Books, 1981, p. 97).

The significance is important. The theory of evolution needs millions of years for the different developments it claims to have taken place. If it can be demonstrated that humans and dinosaurs lived at the same time, it would render a telling blow to the theory of evolution.

Summary

If dinosaurs lived at the same time as humans this would upset the entire evolutionary time frame. Dinosaurs must have died out millions of years before humanity came on the scene to make the evolutionary scenario work.

QUESTION 35

Is It Possible That Dinosaurs Are Alive Today?

Finally, we come to the question, "Is it possible that dinosaurs still live today?" Several modern reports lend credence to this idea.

World War I Incident

In World War I a German submarine captain named George von Forstner described the following encounter with a creature that seems like the one mentioned in Job 41:1,2.

On July 30, 1915 our U28 torpedoed the British steamer Iberian carrying a rich cargo in North America. The steamer sank quickly, the bow sticking almost vertically into the air. When it had gone for about twenty-five seconds there was a violent explosion. A little later pieces of wreckage, and among them a gigantic sea animal (writhing and struggling wildly), was shot out of the water to a height of 60 to 100 feet. At that moment I had with me in the conning tower my officers of the watch, the chief engineer, the navigator, and the helmsman. Simultaneously we all drew one another's attention to this wonder of the seas . . . we were unable to identify it. We did not have the time to take a photograph, for the animal sank out of sight after ten or fifteen seconds. It was about 60-feet long, was like a crocodile in shape and had four limbs with powerful webbed feet and a long tail tapering to a point (cited by Paul Taylor, *ibid.* pp. 48,49).

A Discovery Off Of New Zealand

On April 10, 1977, near Christchurch New Zealand, a Japanese fishing boat named the Zuiyo Maru brought up from 900 feet of water a decayed body of a dinosaur that was supposedly long extinct - a plesiosaur. Photographs and tissue samples of the creature were taken but the carcass itself was thrown back into the sea because of the smell and decay. The creature was 32 feet long, weighed approximately 4,000 pounds and had four fins which were approximately three feet in length. Since it is impossible to think that only one of these creatures has survived on its own, scientists concluded that others must still exist.

Other Sea Monsters

Further tales of sea monsters are also told in modern times. The following incident took place in 1969.

The U.S.S. Stein tangled with such a creature on its way to track submarines near South America. When its sonar equipment suddenly stopped working, the captain headed the ship back for repairs at the Long Beach Naval Dockyard. When the tough underwater sonar dome was examined in dry dock the crew found a big surprise. The rubber covering that protects the dome was torn and battered with dozens of big gouges. Hundreds of sharp, hollow teeth (or claws) were left broken off in the covering. Some were longer than an inch.

It looked as if some large sea creature had been attracted to the underwater sounds of the sonar and tried to bite it and break it. After months of examination, scientists at the Naval Oceans Center made a decision. The animal "must have been extremely large and of a species still unknown to science" (Paul Taylor, *ibid.*, p. 46).

Because of reports such as these, we should not rule out the possibility that dinosaurs still exist in our world today.

Summary

There have been reports of dinosaurs in both ancient and modern times. The fact that some seem to still exist is a problem for the theory of evolution which says they all became extinct about 65 million years ago.

Summary To Dinosaurs (Topic 5)

With respect to dinosaurs there are several observations that we can make.

Question 30. Dinosaurs, or terrible lizards are reptiles. They are distinct from modern day reptiles in that they walked with their limbs supporting them.

Evidence from paleontology makes it clear that dinosaurs did once exist on our planet. They ranged in size from smaller than a chicken to eighty tons.

The term dinosaur is a relatively new, coined in the 19th century.

Though we know that dinosaurs did exist, there is much still unknown about how they looked. The episode of the Brontosaurus shows the problems that are involved with any dinosaur identification.

Question 31. God created the dinosaurs at some time in the past. There is no agreement among Bible-believers as to when this happened.

If the days in Genesis were solar days, and the creation was recent, then dinosaurs lived at the same time as humans.

If the creation in Genesis occurred millions of years ago, it is possible that the dinosaurs died out before humanity came on the scene.

Question 32. The word dinosaur is not found in the 1611 *King James Version* of the Bible. This is to be expected since the term was not invented until 18th century.

It is possible that the term translated “dragon” in Scripture refers to dinosaurs.

There are two creatures mentioned in the Book of Job, the behemoth and the leviathan, that may be actual dinosaurs. However this identification is disputed.

Question 33. . The great dinosaurs that once roamed earth are now extinct. As to why, no one knows. Evolutionary scientists pose a number of theories – none of which can be proven.

The Bible does not specifically say what happened to the dinosaurs for allows for a number of possibilities. It is impossible to be certain which theory is correct.

Question 34. If dinosaurs lived at the same time as humans this would upset the entire evolutionary time frame. Dinosaurs must have died out millions of years before humanity came on the scene to make the evolutionary scenario work.

Question 35. There have been reports of dinosaurs in both ancient and modern times. The fact that some seem to still exist is a problem for the theory of evolution which says they all became extinct about 65 million years ago.