

# **CREATION**

**By: Daniel L. Akin, President  
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Wake Forest, North Carolina**

# The Doctrine of Creation

## Basic Elements in the Creation Account

- Thesis: God created the Universe *ex nihilo* (out of nothing; Heb. 11:3).
- Chaos: Formless and void, darkness on the deep of the original creation material (Gen. 1:1-2).
- Creation: Spirit of God hovering over the face of the water and creatively bringing order out of the disorganized material (Gen. 1:2-31).
- Day 1: Light out of darkness, day and night separated  
Day 2: Waters above and below separated: heaven  
Day 3: Seas gathered and dry land appears: vegetation  
Day 4: Heavenly luminaries formed to rule and divide times  
Day 5: Marine life and birds created and blessed  
Day 6: Animal life created and blessed; human life created, blessed and commissioned
- Completion: Day 7: Creation marked with sanctified rest (Gen. 2:1-3)

Theological Themes in the Creation Account		
Day	Activity	Theological Themes
1	Light created, light divided from darkness	Revelation of God's goodness and separation from evil
2	Heaven divided from waters below	Separation from evil abyss (deep)
3	Land appears and vegetation	Provision of fertile land for all types of vegetation
4	Luminaries designated to rule times and seasons	Designation of appointed times and seasons for ordering creation
5	Living creatures of the sea and air created and blessed	Provision and blessing of all kinds of animal life
6	Land animals created and blessed; human life created and blessed and commissioned to have dominion	Provision of human life (seed) and blessing of fertility and dominion over creation
7	Completion of creation and designation of the seventh day	Provision of sanctifying, or theocratic, rest

# **FIVE MAJOR VIEWS OF CREATION**

## **(An Overview)**

### **Atheistic Evolution**

#### **1. STATEMENT OF THE VIEW**

Everything in the universe has come into existence and has evolved into its present form as a result of natural processes unaided by any supernatural power.

#### **2. POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE VIEW FROM ITS ADVOCATES**

- a. It appears to explain the origin of everything.
- b. It offers a single explanation for everything that exists: it evolved.
- c. It offers the only real alternative to creation by God.
- d. It eliminates God and exalts man. It is thoroughly humanistic, and can be classified as a form of pantheism if one wishes to invoke a deity.

#### **3. PROBLEMS WITH THE VIEW AND ANSWERS BY ITS ADVOCATES**

<b>It cannot explain the origin of matter.</b>	<b>Matter is eternal.</b>
<b>It cannot explain the complexity of matter.</b>	<b>Matter is the product of billions of years of evolution via change and natural selection.</b>
<b>It cannot explain the emergence of life.</b>	<b>Primordial life evolved (via natural selection) from bio-polymers which evolved from bio-organics which evolved from inorganic compounds (ie. life from non-life).</b>
<b>It cannot explain the appearance of God-consciousness and rationality in man.</b>	<b>This too was the product of evolution. In essence rationality emerged from irrationality.</b>

#### **4. EVALUATION OF THE VIEW**

- a. It rests on a foundational hypothesis that cannot be proved to be true (i.e. matter is eternal); it is essentially a faith position (just like creationist positions).
- b. It is supported by little historical (geological) evidence (only the fossil record) which has many gaps in it and is open to subjective interpretation.
- c. It relies on mutations as a necessary mechanism for change, but mutations have never produced new species, and are almost always harmful and destructive.

- d. It is extremely improbable statistically.
- e. It repudiates special revelation concerning creation.

## 5. MODERN ADVOCATES OF THE VIEW

Almost all non-Christian scientists such as Richard Dawkins, Steven Gould, Ernst Mayer, William Provine, Carl Sagan.

### Theistic Evolution

#### 1. STATEMENT OF THE VIEW

Everything in the universe has come into existence and has evolved into its present form as a result of natural processes guided by the God of the Bible.

#### 2. POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE VIEW FROM ITS ADVOCATES

- a. It unites truth known by special revelation in the Bible with truth known by general revelation in nature and discovered by science.
- b. God seems to work according to this pattern in history interrupting and intervening in the course of events only rarely.

#### 3. PROBLEMS WITH THE VIEW AND ANSWERS BY ITS ADVOCATES

<b>It presupposes the truth of evolution which has not been validated.</b>	<b>Evolution is a fact, or at least a strongly accepted theory.</b>
<b>God has intervened in history many more times than the theistic evolutionist suggest.</b>	<b>In the early history of the universe God intervened less frequently.</b>
<b>Divine intervention in the evolutionary process is contradictory to the basic theory of evolutionary process.</b>	<b>The evolutionary process does not rule out divine intervention.</b>
<b>This method of creation does not do justice to the biblical record of creation.</b>	<b>The biblical record must be interpreted more freely and less literally.</b>

#### 4. EVALUATION OF THE VIEW

- a. It cannot do justice to both the tenets of evolution and the teaching of Scripture. One must be given precedent over the other.
- b. It is ultimately destructive of biblical religion (at least this has been the case historically).

## 5. MODERN ADVOCATES OF THE VIEW

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959). (He is a French Roman Catholic priest), scientist at schools like Baylor Univ., Calvin College, Wake Forest Univ., etc.

Some scientists and numerous theologians who have respect for but a deficient view of Scripture hold this view.

### **Progressive Creation** (also known as the Day-Age Theory or Old Earth Creation)

#### 1. STATEMENT OF THE VIEW

God created the world directly and deliberately, without leaving anything to chance, but He did it over long periods of time that correspond roughly to the geological ages and a 15-20 billion year old universe.

#### 2. POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE VIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THOSE WHO HOLD IT

- a. It provides a reasonable harmony between the Genesis record and the facts of science.
- b. The translation of “day” as “age” in Gen. 1 though rare, is an exegetically legitimate one.
- c. It is a tentative conclusion and acknowledges that not all the scientific evidence is in and our understanding of the text may change as biblical (and scientific) scholarship progresses.

#### 3. PROBLEMS WITH THE VIEW AND ANSWERS BY ITS ADVOCATES

<b>There are discrepancies between the fossil record and the order in which plants, fish, and animals are said to have been created in Genesis.</b>	<b>Science may be wrong at this point, or the earliest forms of life may be omitted in Genesis.</b>
<b>Taking the six days of creation as ages is unusual exegetically.</b>	<b>But it is possible and best here.</b>
<b>“Evenings” and “mornings” suggest 24-hour periods.</b>	<b>But the sun did not appear until the fourth day.</b>
<b>Death enters the world before the Fall.</b>	<b>It took on its horror at the Fall but existed before that event.</b>

#### **4. EVALUATION OF THE VIEW**

This view takes the biblical text quite seriously but adopts some unusual interpretations in order to harmonize with scientific data.

#### **5. MODERN ADVOCATES OF THE VIEW**

Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos* (Colorado Springs: Nav, 1993).

Many evangelicals who have been strongly influenced by science, including James Boice, Bernard Ramm.

#### **Six-Day Creationism**

##### **1. STATEMENT OF THE VIEW**

Genesis 1 describes one creative process that took place in six consecutive 24-hour periods of time not more than 6-20 thousand years ago (many would allow for an older earth and creation date).

##### **2. POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE VIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THOSE WHO HOLD IT**

- a. It regards biblical teaching as determinative.
- b. It rests on a strong exegetical base.
- c. It is the clearest meaning of the text.
- d. It is consistent with the laws of thermo-dynamics.
  1. 1<sup>ST</sup> LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS: although energy can be changed in form, it is not now being created. Genesis 2:1-3; Hebrews 4:4-10.
  2. 2<sup>ND</sup> LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS: all physical systems, if left to themselves, tend toward atrophy and become disordered. Romans 8:20-22; Hebrews 1:10-12.

### 3. PROBLEMS WITH THE VIEW AND ANSWERS BY ITS ADVOCATES

<b>Data from various scientific disciplines (astronomy, radioactive dating, carbonate deposits, etc.) indicates the earth is about 5 billion years old and the universe is about 15-20 billion years old</b>	<b>God created the cosmos with the appearance of age and much of scientific opinion is in error and also in flux and changing.</b>
<b>A universal flood cannot explain the geologic strata fully.</b>	<b>It can. The problem is most scientists refuse to even consider it due to biblical bias.</b>
<b>Creation with the appearance of age casts doubt on the credibility of God.</b>	<b>Since Adam was evidently created with the appearance of age, other things could have been as well. This is self-evident in the text.</b>
<b>There is no reason why God would have created things with the appearance of age.</b>	<b>It is consistent with his creating a fully operational and mature universe.</b>

### 4. EVALUATION OF THE VIEW

This view is based on the best exegesis of the text though it contradicts the present conclusions of several branches of science.

### 5. MODERN ADVOCATES OF THE VIEW

Creation Research Society, ICR (Henry Morris, Duane Gish, etc.).

Answers in Genesis (Ken Hamm).

Many conservative evangelicals.

#### **The Gap Theory**

#### 1. STATEMENT OF THE VIEW

Between Gen. 1:1 and 2 there was a long, indeterminate period in which the destruction of an original world and the unfolding of the geological ages can be located. God then recreated our cosmos.

#### 2. POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE VIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THOSE WHO HOLD IT

- a. It rests on an exegetical, biblical base.
- b. It is consistent with the structure of the creation account itself.

- c. It is possible to translate the Hebrew verb “to be,” in verse 2, as “become.”
- d. “Formless and void,” in verse 2, may be a clue to a preadamite judgment of God on the earth (cf. Isa. 45).
- e. It provides a setting for the fall of Satan (Isa. 14: Ezk. 28).

### 3. PROBLEMS WITH THE VIEW AND ANSWERS BY ITS ADVOCATES

<b>It is an unnatural explanation since the text implies an original creation in Gen. 1:2ff. (cf. Exod. 20:11).</b>	<b>This interpretation is a superficial conclusion.</b>
<b>The exegetical data that supports this view is far from certain and highly unlikely.</b>	<b>These interpretations are possible.</b>
<b>This theory does not really settle the problems of modern geology.</b>	<b>The universal flood may have produced some of the geological phenomena.</b>

### 4. EVALUATION OF THE VIEW

While the view builds on a high view of Scripture, several of the interpretations required for it are based on improbable exegesis. In this light some have proposed moving the gap to between John 1:1 and Gen. 1:1.

### 5. MODERN ADVOCATES OF THE VIEW

Arthur C. Constance, *Without Form and Void* (Brockville, Ont: Doorway Papers, 1970).

Many conservative evangelicals including W.A. Criswell, Arthur Pink, C.I. Scofield, C.S. Lewis, M.R. DeHaan, and D.G. Barnhouse hold this view.

### “THE ISSUES AT STAKE”

<b>EVOLUTIONISTS SAY</b>	<b>THE BIBLE SAYS</b>
<b>1. THE WORLD IS GETTING BETTER AND BETTER.</b>	<b>1. SIN HAS CREATION IN A DOWNWARD SPIRAL. GENESIS 2:8,9; 3:17-19</b>
<b>2. LIFE WAS CREATED FROM NON-LIFE.</b>	<b>2. GOD CREATED ALL THINGS. GENESIS 1:27; 2:7</b>
<b>3. THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A UNIFORM GEOLOGY.</b>	<b>3. GOD HAS CATAclysmically INTERVENED PERIODICALLY. GENESIS 7:10-12, 21-24</b>
<b>4. MAN IS AN ANIMAL WITH NO HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.</b>	<b>4. MAN BEARS GOD’S IMAGE AND THOUGH FALLEN IS REDEEMABLE IN CHRIST JESUS. EPHESIANS 2:1-10</b>



- \* *The age of the Earth/universe is not the best or even a necessary place to wage the war of evolution/creation. Leave it open.*
- \* *A historical Adam & Eve is a must and not negotiable. The issue is both Christological and soteriological.*
- \* *Evolution is in trouble. The theory continually changes form. It is my judgment that early in this century it will cease to be viable, at least in its present models. However, it will not go away. It is essential to atheism.*

Summarizing The Creative Work of God in Genesis 1-2		
	Genesis 1 (General creation)	Genesis 2 (Specific of man)
<b>Creation Accounts</b> *(Genesis 1-2 are complementary accounts, not two separate, different and contradictory records as liberal scholars argue).	<b>God the creator</b> <i>Elohim</i> <b>God as powerful</b> <b>Creation of the universe</b> <b>Climaxes with man</b> <b>The six days of creation</b>	<b>God the covenant-keeper</b> <i>Yahweh</i> <b>God as personal</b> <b>Creation of man</b> <b>Climaxes with marriage</b> <b>The sixth day of creation</b>
<b>Six Days of Creation</b>	<b>In the first three days, God formed the Creation</b>  <b>Day 1: light</b> <b>Day 2: water, atmosphere</b> <b>Day 3: earth, vegetation</b>	<b>In the second three days, God filled the Creation</b>  <b>Day 4: sun, moon, stars</b> <b>Day 5: sea creatures, birds</b> <b>Day 6: animals</b>