

## GENESIS 1

1 In the beginning, God (אֱלֹהִים)<sup>1</sup> created (בָּרָא)<sup>2</sup> the heavens and the earth.<sup>3</sup> 2 Now the earth was without form and void,<sup>4</sup> and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit/breath/wind (רוּחַ)<sup>5</sup> of God was hovering (רָחַף)<sup>6</sup> over the face of the waters.<sup>7</sup>

### *First Day*

3 And God said,<sup>8</sup>

Let there be light,

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<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew word *Elohim* is a plural noun. The plurality intensifies the name *El*. Hebrew is the only ancient Semitic language that intensifies nouns by making them plurals. Though [elohim] is plural in form, it is singular in meaning when referring to the true God. Some have called this the plural of majesty (Constable, 13).

<sup>2</sup> In the Bible, only God is said to בָּרָא. See *God as Creator*. **Re 4:11** 11 Worthy are you, our Lord and our God, to receive glory, honor, and power. For you created all things, and because of your desire they existed and were created.

<sup>3</sup> The “heavens and earth” is a merism that refer to the entire universe. There is no single word in Hebrew for “universe” (Constable, 13). There are three major views concerning the relationship of v. 1 to the rest of the chapter: (1) V. 1 describes the original creation of the universe. Then God began fashioning the earth, and it became fully formed, as we now know it, in v. 2 or v. 3. This “double-creation” view may involve a gap in time between vss. 1 and 2. Some advocates of this view believe that the original creation became chaotic as a result of divine judgment. (2) V. 1 describes part of what God did on the first day of creation (1:1-5). It is a general statement followed by specific details. (3) V. 1 describes in very general, introductory terms the same creation activity God did on all six days of creation (1:2-31). It is a topic sentence that introduces the whole creation account that follows (Constable, 13). See *Age of the Universe and Age of the Earth*.

<sup>4</sup> V. 2 describes the earth in its pre-formed existence, before God gave it form and filled it (Constable, 14). The earth was “formless and empty” (a *hendiadys* meaning unorganized, unproductive, and uninhabited) before God prepared it for animal and human habitation (Constable, 15). **Is 45:18** 18 Thus says Yahweh, who created (בָּרָא) the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): I am Yahweh, and there is no other. **Jer 4:23-27** 23 I looked on the earth, and behold, it was without form and void (תֵּהוֹ וְרֵקָה), and to the heavens, and they had no light. 24 I looked on the mountains, and behold, they were quaking, and all the hills moved to and fro. 25 I looked, and behold, there was no man, and all the birds of the air had fled. 26 I looked, and behold, the fruitful land was a desert, and all its cities were laid in ruins before Yahweh, before his fierce anger. 27 For thus says Yahweh, The whole land shall be a desolation, yet I will not make a full end.

<sup>5</sup> See *The Holy Spirit*. The Spirit was like a wind (the words are identical in Hebrew)(Constable, 15).

<sup>6</sup> “[L]ike a bird, that moves its wings back and forth” (*HALOT*, 1219).

<sup>7</sup> V. 1 summarizes creation, v. 2 pictures the pre-creation condition, and vss. 3-31 explain the process of creation (Constable, 15).

<sup>8</sup> God speaks 15 times in this chapter. He has the power to speak things into existence. He is there, and he is not silent. **Ps 33:9** 9 He spoke, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast. **Jn 1:3** 3 All things came into being through [the Word], and apart from him nothing came into being that has come into being. **Heb 11:3** 3 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.

and there was light.<sup>9</sup> 4 And God saw that the light was good (טוֹב).<sup>10</sup> And God separated (בָּדַל)<sup>11</sup> the light from the darkness.<sup>12</sup> 5 God called (קָרָא)<sup>13</sup> the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.<sup>14</sup>

### *Second Day*

6 And God said,

Let there be an expanse (רָקִיעַ)<sup>15</sup> in the midst of the waters, and let it separate (בָּדַל)<sup>16</sup> the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so.<sup>17</sup> 8 And God called the expanse Heaven (שָׁמַיִם).<sup>18</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

### *Third Day*

9 And God said,

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<sup>9</sup> The light might not have been sunlight. Perhaps it came from a source fixed at a distance from the earth such as the *shekinah*, the light that manifests God's glory (Re 22:5). Or perhaps God created the sun on the first day, but it became visible on the fourth day. Or perhaps God created the sun, moon, and stars on the first day and assigned them their specific functions on the fourth day (Constable, 21). See *Light and God as Light*. Is 45:7.

<sup>10</sup> "Good" indicates beauty, purpose, and order (von Rad, 50). "Good" appears seven times in Ge 1 (vv. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, and 31).

<sup>11</sup> "[T]o separate, to divide from...; to make distinction between" (*BDAG*, 110).

<sup>12</sup> Darkness, which was over the face of the deep (v. 2), is never called good. It is not a creation but rather the absence of light. **Ex 10:21-23** 21 Yahweh said to Moses: Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even a darkness which may be felt. 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. 23 They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the sons of Israel had light in their dwellings. **1 Sa 2:9** 9 [Yahweh] keeps the feet of his godly ones, but the wicked ones are silenced in darkness. **Joe 2:1-2** 1 The day of Yahweh is coming. Surely it is near, 2 a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness.

<sup>13</sup> God loves to name to things. This is a function of thought, language, and sovereignty. In biblical thought, having a name equals having existence, and the act of giving a name means the exercise of a sovereign authority (Constable, 21).

<sup>14</sup> Each day includes: spoken command, report, separation, naming, evaluation, and chronology (Waltke, *Genesis*, 56). The terms day, night, evening, and morning imply the beginning of the earth's rotation (Constable, 21).

<sup>15</sup> "[T]he beaten metal plate, or bow; firmament, the firm vault of heaven: ...the gigantic heavenly dome which was the source of the light that brooded over the heavenly ocean and of which the dome arched above the earthly globe" (*BDAG*, 1290).

<sup>16</sup> God separated the waters so that some of them remained on the earth in a liquid state, and some were above the earth as moisture in the atmosphere (Constable, 22).

<sup>17</sup> What God speaks does happen. His word is powerful and effective.

<sup>18</sup> "Heaven" is the same as the "expanse." It is a general term to describe everything above the earth from man's viewpoint.

Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.<sup>19</sup>

And it was so. 10 God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. 11 And God said,

Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed (עֵרֶב), and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind (מִיֵּן),<sup>20</sup> on the earth.

And it was so. 12 The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind.<sup>21</sup> And God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.<sup>22</sup>

#### *Fourth Day*

14 And God said,

Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate<sup>23</sup> the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, 15 and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.<sup>24</sup>

And it was so. 16 And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule<sup>25</sup> the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.<sup>26</sup> 17 And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate

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<sup>19</sup> The separation of water from the land so that man could enjoy the land prepares us for the stories of the Flood and the Red Sea crossing. The “waters” were an obstacle to man’s enjoyment of the land (Constable, 23).

<sup>20</sup> “[T]ype, kind (in natural science, species)” (*HALOT*, 577).

<sup>21</sup> God created adult varieties of plants and animals with the appearance of age and the ability to reproduce.

<sup>22</sup> “With the conclusion of the third day yet another color is added to God’s cosmos. To the basic white and black of day and night has been added the blue of sky and sea. Now the canvas is adorned with green. The golden-yellow sun and the reddish human being will complete this rainbow of colors” (Hamilton, 126). “Both vegetation and humanity, symbolizing the fertility of life, were considered pinnacles of creation in the ancient Near East. The first triad [of days] ends climactically with the creation of vegetation; the second, the creation of humanity” (Waltke, *Genesis*, 36). During the first three days, God readies the heavens and the earth to be populated. In the last three days, he populates the heavens and earth with the hosts of life.

<sup>23</sup> God likes to separate and distinguish things. He wants everything in their proper places. He is an orderly God.

<sup>24</sup> “The narrative stresses [the] function [of the sun, moon, and stars] as servants, subordinate to the interests of the earth. . . . This differs significantly from the superstitious belief within pagan religion that the earth’s destiny is dictated by the course of the stars” (Mathews, 154). Moses’ perspective is geocentric, not heliocentric. He uses the phenomenological language of appearance that is common to men (sunrise, sunset, etc.). Creationists have proposed several solutions to the problem of how light from stars that are millions of light-years away could reach Adam if the universe was only days old. The best explanation is the appearance of age. As God created plants, animals, and man fully formed, so he created light from distant stars to be already visible on the earth (Constable, 25-26).

<sup>25</sup> God likes rulership. He likes someone or something to be in charge. Here, the sun and moon are in charge.

<sup>26</sup> “[T]he biblical creation story gives the stars only the barest mention, as though the writer shrugged and said, ‘And, oh, yes. He also made the stars’” (*Nelson Study Bible*, 5).

the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

### *Fifth Day*

20 And God said,

Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures (גַּפְּשֵׁי תַיִם),<sup>27</sup> and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.<sup>28</sup>

21 So God created the great sea creatures (תַּנִּינִי)<sup>29</sup> and every living creature (גַּפְּשֵׁי תַיִם) that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 And God blessed (בֵּרַךְ)<sup>30</sup> them saying,

Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply<sup>31</sup> on the earth.

23 And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

### *Sixth Day*

24 And God said,

Let the earth bring forth living creatures (גַּפְּשֵׁי תַרְוֵם) according to their kinds—livestock, creeping things, and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.

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<sup>27</sup> This Hebrew word and the English “soul” imply conscious life, in contrast to plants that have unconscious life. So in the sense of having conscious life, animals as well as people have souls (Constable, 26).

<sup>28</sup> God created creatures by domain (air, sea, and land) and not by apparent evolutionary complexity. In other words, all creatures of the air and sea were made on day five, regardless of whether they are today considered birds, fish, insects, or mammals. God loves animal life.

<sup>29</sup> “[S]ea-monster, sea-dragon” (*HALOT*, 1764). These were large fish, whales, squid, and other large creatures living in the water. Pagans worshipped these, but Genesis 1 portrays them as relatively insignificant and under God’s authority (Constable, 26).

<sup>30</sup> “The blessing of God is one of the great unifying themes of Genesis. God blesses animals (1:22), mankind (1:28), the Sabbath (2:3), Adam (5:2), Noah (9:1), and frequently the patriarchs (12:2-3; 17:16, 20, etc.). God’s blessing is most obviously visible in the gift of children, as this is often coupled with ‘being fruitful and multiplying.’ But all aspects of life can express this blessing: crops, family, and nation (Deut 28:1-14). Where modern man talks of success, OT man talked of blessing” (Wenham, *WBC*, 24). Notice God blesses fish and birds before man exists.

<sup>31</sup> Blessing equals multiplication. It is the same with church planting. Birds and fish rule their respective realms by multiplying (Waltke, *Genesis*, 63).

And it was so. 25 And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.<sup>32</sup> 26 Then God said,

Let us<sup>33</sup> make man/humanity (אָדָם)<sup>34</sup> in our image, after our likeness.<sup>35</sup> And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the heavens, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.<sup>36</sup>

27 So God created (ברא)<sup>37</sup> man in his own image. In the image of God he created (ברא) him. Male and female<sup>38</sup> he created (ברא)<sup>39</sup> them.<sup>40</sup>

28 And God blessed (ברך) them. And God said to them,

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<sup>32</sup> It doesn't mention specifically that the land animals are blessed.

<sup>33</sup> "Us" is probably a plural of intensification or majesty, though some regard it as a plural of self-deliberation. **Ge 11:7** 7 Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech. Others believe God was addressing his heavenly court, the angels. However, "us" does not include the angels, because God made man in his image and not in the image of angels. We should not use this "us" as a formal proof of the Trinity because this reference by itself does not prove that one God exists in three persons. "The theological controversy in Moses' day was not between trinitarianism and unitarianism but between one self-existent, sovereign, good God—and many limited, capricious, often wicked gods" (Constable, 27).

<sup>34</sup> Some feminists have restricted the use of "man" to males, but this is not the primary meaning of the English word. Its primary meaning is "human being" or "human race." "Mankind" normally means "the human race" or "humanity," unless it is in contrast to "womankind" (Constable, 23).

<sup>35</sup> Man is the visible image of the invisible God.

<sup>36</sup> **Ro 1:22-23** 22 Claiming to be wise, [men] became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, animals, and creeping things.

<sup>37</sup> God specially created the first male and female. They did not evolve over a long period of time from a lower life form. There is no genetic relationship between men and primates. **Mt 19:4** 4 [Jesus] answered, Have you not read that he who created [humanity] from the beginning made them male and female...? **Mk 10:6** 6 From the beginning of creation, God made [humanity] male and female.

<sup>38</sup> Human males and females are ontologically equal.

<sup>39</sup> The threefold repetition of the verb "create" is striking.

<sup>40</sup> Verse 27 is likely the first poem in the Bible. God is a poet.

Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth,<sup>41</sup> subdue (כבש)<sup>42</sup> it, and rule (הרה)<sup>43</sup> over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.<sup>44</sup>

29 And God said,

Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.

And it was so.<sup>45</sup> 31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.<sup>46</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

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<sup>41</sup> This “cultural mandate” applies to the entire human race. To fulfill God’s command to subdue the earth, the man and woman must have sex and produce and raise children who have sex and produce and raise more children. Thus the earth becomes filled with God’s image-bearers. Sex is essentially good.

<sup>42</sup> Man’s God-given mission is to subdue and rule. Man is qualified to do so because he is made in God’s image.

<sup>43</sup> To subdue and have dominion implies a degree of sovereignty and control that God delegated to man over nature and its creatures. This constitutes God’s “Magna Carta” for genuine artistic, material, and scientific progress. God commanded the man and woman to acquire knowledge, master the physical environment, and bring all its elements into the service of all creatures on earth (Constable, 31). God gave man authority and responsibility to regulate nature and advance civilization. Nature was to serve man, not vice versa. This does not give man the right to abuse nature, however (Constable, 33).

<sup>44</sup> God’s five-fold mandate to man, at this point in history, was to: bear fruit, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it, and rule over it. We cannot assume that was the only project God was to give man in his innocence. “We have in this verse the three essential elements of a dispensation (stewardship, household management): a divine revelation of God’s desire for human conduct, consequent human responsibility, and a period of time during which God tests people as to their obedience to this responsibility. A “dispensation” is a period of time during which God tests man in relation to his obedience to a specific revelation of God’s desire. The “dispensations” constitute a progressive, connected revelation of God’s dealings with humankind” (Constable, 33). See *Dispensations*. **Mt 6:10** 10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. **Mt 28:18-20** 18 Jesus came and said to [the eleven], All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

<sup>45</sup> Ge 1:27-31 is a general account of human creation. A more detailed account follows in Ge 2:4-25. The two accounts do not contradict. The first account places the creation of man in the larger context of cosmic creation. The second account prepares the way for the biblical saga of man’s relationship to God (see Constable, 33).

<sup>46</sup> Creation is very good only when man is created in God’s image and given authority to rule over it as God’s vice-regent. God is the ultimate determiner of what is good, not man. Pre-fall creation was very good in every aspect, including human free will.

## Seventh Day

2:1 Thus<sup>47</sup> the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host (צָבָא)<sup>48</sup> of them. 2 And on the seventh day (שְׁבִיעִי) God finished (כִּלָּה)<sup>49</sup> his work (מְלָאכָה)<sup>50</sup> that he had done, and he rested (שָׁבַת)<sup>51</sup> on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 3 So God blessed (בָּרַךְ) the seventh day<sup>52</sup> and made it holy (קֹדֵשׁ),<sup>53</sup> because on it God rested (שָׁבַת) from all his work (מְלָאכָה) that he had done in creation (בְּרָא).<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ge 2:1-3 belongs with Ge 1.

<sup>48</sup> On days one to three of creation, domains were established to be populated. On days four to six of creation, appropriate hosts were placed into those domains. God created domains to be populated by hosts.

<sup>49</sup> “[T]o stop, come to an end... [T]o be finished, completed (*HALOT*, 476-77). **Ex 40:33** 33 [Moses] erected the court around the tabernacle and the altar and set up the screen of the gate of the court. So Moses finished (כִּלָּה) the work.

<sup>50</sup> God himself is a worker, and he created man for work.

<sup>51</sup> God was not tired (Is 40:28); he stopped creating because he had finished his work (Constable, 35). Also note God did not specifically command the man and woman to rest on the seventh day. This came later with the Mosaic Law. However, Scripture does teach the importance of periodic rest (Constable, 36). The sabbath points forward to a time when God will bring “a perfect and complete cosmos out of chaos.... The weekly rest-experience of the Sabbath [under the Mosaic Law] served to epitomize the future peace and rest of the Messianic age” (S. Bacchiocchi, “Sabbatical Typologies of Messianic Redemption,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 17:2 (December 1986): 155, 165). See *The Sabbath and Rest*.

<sup>52</sup> Seventh comes from a Hebrew root meaning “to be full, completed, entirely made up.” God set apart the seventh day from the first six days of creation. It was to be a memorial of his creative work. The threefold repetition highlights its significance (Constable, 35). “Unquestionably, the number *seven* marks in Scripture the sacred measurement of time” (Edersheim, 195). “[A]ccording to one Babylonian tradition, the seventh, fourteenth, nineteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth days of each month were regarded as unlucky: Genesis, however, declares the seventh day of every week to be holy, a day of rest consecrated to God (2:1-3)” (Wenham, *WBC*, xlix-1).

<sup>53</sup> The seventh day is the first thing God set apart as holy.

<sup>54</sup> “The correspondence of the first paragraph, 1:1-2, with 2:1-3 is underlined by the number of Hebrew words in both being multiples of 7. 1:1 consists of 7 words, 1:2 of 14 (7 x 2) words, 2:1-3 of 35 (7 x 5) words. The number seven dominates this opening chapter in a strange way, not only in the number of words in a particular section but in the number of times a specific word or phrase recurs. For example, ‘God’ is mentioned 35 times, ‘earth’ 21 times, ‘heaven/firmament’ 21 times, while the phrases ‘and it was so’ and ‘God saw that it was good’ occur 7 times” (Wenham, *WBC*, 6).

## Discussion Questions | PUP Genesis, Lesson One

### 1. Inductive Bible Study.

- a. When did you do your daily study, and how faithful were you?
- b. Did you begin with prayer?
- c. Did you observe the text without looking at Bible footnotes or commentaries?
- d. What are some rules of interpretation you remember?
- e. Did you meditate/reflect throughout the day on what you are learning?

### 2. Workbook, Day One.

- a. What did you learn from marking references to God (p. 2, 3)?
- b. What repeated phrases did you notice (p. 3, 4)? What are their significance?
- c. Learn to interrogate the text using the 5 Ws and H.
  - (1) Who are the characters of Ge 1?
  - (2) What does God make on each successive day?
  - (3) What time references did you see in Ge 1?
  - (4) What place references did you see in Ge 1?
  - (5) Why does God create things in the order he does? Is there any logic behind it (p. 6, 2)?
  - (6) How does God go about creating everything?

### 3. Tricky Questions.

- a. What is unique about the Hebrew word *bara*?
- b. For how long was the earth formless and void?
- c. How was there light on days one to three without the sun?
- d. Which came first, the chicken or the egg?
- e. Who is the “Us” of v. 26?
  - (1) These cross references help: Mt 3:16-17; Jn 1:1-4; 1 Co 8:6; Col 1:15-17; Heb 1:1-3; Re 4:2, 9-11.
- f. In what three ways is the word *yom* used (p. 11, 1)? See Ge 1:5; 2:2-4.
  - (1) Does Ge 1 require an interpretation of six literal, 24-hour days?
  - (2) See Ex 20:1-3, 11.
  - (3) Let Scripture interpret Scripture.

### 4. Biblical Worldview.

- a. How important is Genesis 1 to the biblical worldview?
- b. Why do so many doubt Genesis 1 today?
- c. Where do your children stand? Have you asked them?
- d. See Heb 11:1-3, 6.

## *Biblical Worldview*

1. **The first chapter of the Bible confutes all non-biblical worldviews.**<sup>55</sup>
  - a. Atheism, for God does exist. See *Atheism*.
  - b. Pantheism, for God is distinct from his creation. See *Pantheism*.
  - c. Polytheism, for God alone created the universe.
  - d. Radical materialism, for God created the material universe.
  - e. Naturalism, for the existence of the universe is a miracle. See *Naturalism*.
  - f. Fatalism, for God freely chose to create the universe. See *Independence of God*.
  
2. **The fact the Bible starts with our origin means our origin is important.**
  - a. So many Kiwis simply do not think about origins. Probably this is because it's too painful.
  
3. **The most basic idea of the biblical worldview is that God exists.**
  - a. See *The Existence of God*.
  - b. Understanding who God is is the key to understanding who we are.
    - (1) “The main point of the story of creation... is that God turned chaos into an orderly, blessed, good creation by His word. The original Israelite readers of Genesis would have found encouragement in this revelation to trust God. They would have hoped in Him to transform their national life from chaos, in a pagan chaotic environment (Egypt)—to order and blessing, in an environment He would create for them (Canaan). God’s superiority over the forces their pagan neighbors worshipped out of *fear* (gods of the darkness, the sun, moon, planets, and stars, the watery deep, etc.) would have strengthened their *faith*. Their God had also created them as a *nation*, so they could look forward to the future with confidence.”<sup>56</sup>
  
4. **The Trinity is present in the first three verses of the Bible.**
  
5. **God created the universe from nothing (*ex nihilo*), without help from anyone.**
  - a. **Ge 1:1** 1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
  - b. God is the only actor in Ge 1. Man does nothing. Angels (not mentioned) do nothing.
    - (1) “The creation account is theocentric, not creature centered. Its purpose is to glorify the Creator by magnifying him through the majesty of the created order. ... ‘God’ is the *grammatical* subject of the first sentence (1:1) and continues as the *thematic* subject throughout the account.”<sup>57</sup>
    - (2) Ge 1 shows man is not the measure of all things, contra Descartes.
      - (a) Ge 1 turns all modern philosophy on its head.
  - c. **Jn 1:3** 3 All things were made through [the Word], and without him was not any thing made that was made.

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<sup>55</sup> See T. L. Constable, “Notes on Genesis,” <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/genesis.pdf>, 14.

<sup>56</sup> T. Constable, “Notes on Genesis,” <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/genesis.pdf>, 40.

<sup>57</sup> Mathews, 113.

- d. **Ro 4:17** 17 [God] gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.
- e. **Heb 11:3** 3 By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.
- f. “The Big Bang theory sounds very much like the story that the Old Testament has been telling a long time.”<sup>58</sup>
- g. See *God as Creator* and *Origin of the Universe*.

**6. God’s word is all-powerful. What he says happens. Seven times!**

- a. Ge 1:3, 7, 9, 11, 15, 24, 30

**7. God pronounces his creation “good” six times. The seventh time it is “very good.”**

- a. Ge 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31
- b. Man’s free will and responsibility was and is very good.

**8. God separates and gathers to bring order to creation.**

- a. Ge 1:4, 7, 9-10
- b. God is a logical, orderly, rational God.
- c. Orderliness requires categorizing, separating, and gathering.
- d. “A place for everything, and everything in its place.”

**9. God names some things and leaves it to man to name other things.**

- a. Ge 1:4, 8, 10

**10. God created the heavens and the earth as we know it in six literal, 24-hour days.**

- a. Moses does use “day” in all three ways in Genesis 1 and 2: (1) a 12-hour period of daylight (1:5, 14, 16, 18), (2) a 24-hour day (1:14), and (3) the entire seven-day period of creation (2:4).<sup>59</sup>

- b. Interpreters have put forward several views.

(1) Six literal 24-hour days theory.

- (1) This view is most consistent with the principles of literal, historical, grammatical interpretation. The fact that the number of days corresponds to the number of weekdays also favors this view. Whenever [yom] occurs with a numeral in the Old Testament, it refers to a 24-hour period. The main problem with this view is that the activity of some days (the sixth) seems to some to require more than 24 hours.<sup>60</sup>

- (2) **Ex 20:11** 11 In six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

(2) Day-age (or geologic day) theory.

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<sup>58</sup> Lance Morrow, *Time* (Feb. 5, 1979), 149.

<sup>59</sup> T. Constable, “Notes on Genesis,” <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/genesis.pdf>, 37.

<sup>60</sup> T. Constable, “Notes on Genesis,” <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/genesis.pdf>, 37.

- (a) This view interprets the terminology less literally. Advocates argue that the events recorded seem to require more than 24-hour days. They also point out that solar days may not have begun until the fourth day. Advocates of this theory tend to be theistic evolutionists or progressive creationists. Progressive creationists generally seek to correlate the geologic ages with the six days of creation. The main problem with the day-age theory is that it interprets figuratively terms that seem to have obvious literal meaning.<sup>61</sup>
- (b) I never thought I'd say this, but Francis Schaeffer is wrong: "[D]ay in Hebrew (just as in English) is used in three separate senses: to mean (1) twenty-four hours, (2) the period of light during the twenty-four hours, and (3) an indeterminate period of time. Therefore, we must leave open the exact length of time indicated by *day* in Genesis."<sup>62</sup>
- (3) Literal days with intervening ages theory.
  - (a) This view regards each day as a time of completion of creative activity only. It is an attempt to take the "morning and evening" references seriously but still allow the time that seems necessary within the days. It is a combination of the two preceding views. However, it strains the text. Also, Moses could have described this method of creation more clearly than he did if long ages interspersed the six days. Few scholars have adopted this view.<sup>63</sup>
- (4) The revelatory day theory.
  - (a) The least literal interpretation holds that God revealed, rather than accomplished, creation in six days. A major problem with this view is Exodus 20:11.<sup>64</sup> A variation of this view understands the days as "structures of a literary framework designed to illustrate the orderly nature of God's creation and to enable the covenant people to mimic the Creator."<sup>65</sup>
- (5) Ordered by content, not sequence in time.
  - (a) A few scholars have argued that the sequence of days is not chronologically ordered at all. This view has not enjoyed wide acceptance.
- c. Presuppositions are extremely important.
  - (1) "Presuppositions are extremely important in this controversy. If one believes that scientific 'facts' are true, he or she may try to make the Bible fit these. On the other hand, if one believes in an inerrant Bible, he or she will give priority to statements in the text. If one believes both are true, he or she will soon learn that both cannot be true. For example, the text says God created the trees before marine life (1:11, 20), but most evolutionists believe that trees developed after marine life. Also, the Bible implies that marine life and birds came into existence about the same time (1:20), but evolutionists hold that they evolved millions of years apart. No theory explains the conflict between biblical statements and

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<sup>61</sup> T. Constable, "Notes on Genesis," <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/genesis.pdf>, 37-38.

<sup>62</sup> F. Schaeffer.

<sup>63</sup> T. Constable, "Notes on Genesis," <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/genesis.pdf>, 38.

<sup>64</sup> T. Constable, "Notes on Genesis," <http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/genesis.pdf>, 38.

<sup>65</sup> Waltke, *Genesis*, 61.

scientific statements adequately. In the end, one really is forced to ask: ‘Do I put more confidence in what God says or in what scientists say?’”

(2) Only two chapters later, Satan asks, “Did God actually say...?” Satan knows man’s faith in God’s word is the single most important thing he must attack.

(a) **Ge 3:1** 1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, Did God actually say, You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?

d. Is this good advice or bad advice?

(1) “Though historical and scientific questions may be uppermost in our minds as we approach the text, it is doubtful whether they were in the writer’s mind, and we should therefore be cautious about looking for answers to questions he was not concerned with. Genesis is primarily about God’s character and his purposes for sinful mankind. Let us beware of allowing our interests to divert us from the central thrust of the book so that we miss what the LORD, our creator and redeemer, is saying to us.”<sup>66</sup>

e. Why did God take six days when he could have created the universe in one second?

### Leading Models of Genesis 1

Model	Pro	Con	Proponents
<b>Seven, 24-Hour Day Model</b>	Traditional understanding. Best fit for the term yom. Best first for “evening and morning.”	Days one and four are awkward. Day six seems implausible. Present-day scientist believe the earth is billions of years old.	
<b>Day-Age Model</b>	Seven days are literal, long periods of time. Sequential. Day one is a veiled sun. Sabbath is figurative. Harmony with present-day science. Resolves six-day issue. Day three plants have sunlight. Ancient earth (Hab 3:6; 2 Pe 3:5)	Days one and four are awkward	Hugh Ross Gleason Archer
<b>Revelatory Day Model</b>	Creation account is from author’s perspective. Days are literal, 24-hour days in which God revealed his works to the author. Topical arrangement of events. Age of earth not at issue. In harmony with present-day science. Follows Babylonian 6-tablet creation account pattern.	No explicit biblical support. No mention of author within the account.	Bernard Ramm P. J. Wiseman J. H. Kurtz

<sup>66</sup> Wenham, liii.

Model	Pro	Con	Proponents
<b>Framework Model</b>	Figurative. Sequence of days not literal. Days are “heavenly days” or a literary device. Age of earth not at issue.		Meredith Kline Lee Irons Henri Blocher Bruce Waltke

**11. God created the universe with the appearance of age.**

- a. Sun, moon, and starlight that reaches the earth.
- b. Adult animals.
- c. Adult man and woman

**12. All living things that multiply—plants, animals, and man—do so after their kind.**

- a. Ge 1:11-12; 21; 24-25;
- b. This is called the fixity of species.
- c. Interestingly, the word “kind” is not associated with human beings. This may indicate the God’s special creation of each individual human soul in his own image.
- d. Obviously, human beings do reproduce after their own kind.

**13. By design, we are the only earthly creatures made in the image and likeness of God.**

- a. Ge 1:26-27
- b. See *The Image of God in Man*.

**14. Maleness and femaleness is essential to our identity and purpose as human beings.**

- a. Ge 1:26-27
- b. See *Gender*.
- c. “The image [of God] is found in the type of relationship that was designed to exist between male and female human beings, a relationship where the characteristics of each sex are valued and used to form a oneness in their identity and purpose. ...By ruling as one, male and female fulfill the purpose of God for which they were created. ...[I]t is this unity between male and female, and between humanity and God, that is destroyed in the Fall described in Genesis 3.”<sup>67</sup>
- d. “As a husband and wife demonstrate oneness in their marriage, they reflect the unity of the Godhead. ...Oneness is essential for an orchestra, an athletic team, and a construction crew, as well as a family, to achieve a common purpose. Oneness in marriage is essential if husband and wife are to fulfill God’s purposes for humankind.”<sup>68</sup>
- e. Our maleness and femaleness together in unity is the image and likeness of God.

<sup>67</sup> H. Lazenby, “The Image of God: Masculine, Feminine, or Neuter?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 30:1 (March 1987):67, 66.

<sup>68</sup> T. Constable, 28.

(1) God created man male and female as an expression of his own plurality: “Let *us* make man....” God’s plurality requires man’s plurality. The human relationship between man and woman thus reflects God’s own relationship with himself.<sup>69</sup>

**15. God has created us for blessing, not cursing.**

- a. Ge 1:22, 28, 2:3
- b. See *Blessing*.
- c. “According to the account of creation in Gen 1, the chief purpose of God in creating man is to bless him. The impact of this point on the remainder of the Pentateuch and the author’s view of Sinai is clear: through Abraham, Israel and the covenant this blessing is to be restored to all mankind.”<sup>70</sup>

**16. The earth is fine-tuned for the existence of plant, animal, and human life.**

- a. This is called the “Anthropic Principle.” See *The Existence of God*.

**17. Genesis 1 does not discuss the angelic realm, which is left for later revelation.**

- a. This is probably by design. God is sending a message that we must not be overly concerned with the angelic realm.
- b. See *Angels* (esp. Is 14; Eze 28).

**18. We must believe the deaths of animals and humans did not exist before the Fall.**

- a. We really don’t know how a no-death earth would have actually worked in operation. Perhaps the new heaven and earth will be such a place.

**19. Tips on reading Genesis 1.**

- a. Understand Genesis 1 is prose, not poetry.
- b. Understand Moses writes Genesis 1 using phenomenological language, from the viewpoint of earth.
- c. Try to imagine what the original author (Moses) was trying to communicate to his original audience (Israel in the wilderness).

**The Compatibility of Genesis 1 with Present-Day Science**

Interpretation of Genesis 1	Christian Model	Integration with Present-Day Science
Literal interpretation	Young Earth/Instantaneous Creationism	Minimal integration
Literal-literary interpretation	Old Earth/Progressive Creationism	Moderate integration
Literary interpretation	Old Earth/Evolutionary Creationism	Maximum integration

<sup>69</sup> Sailhamer, “Genesis,” 38.

<sup>70</sup> Sailhamer, “Exegetical Notes,” 80.

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*Notes*