

# Science, Christianity, and Creation

## Part 2: Interpreting Creation Passages in Scripture

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Series Webpage: [www.richknopp.com/lcc-creation/](http://www.richknopp.com/lcc-creation/)

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### Review of Key Points in Part I

- A. The prominence of biblical creation (e.g., Gen. 1-2, Ex. 20:11; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2; 11:3).
- B. The uniqueness of biblical creation (Genesis vs. Egyptian and Babylonian creation accounts).
  - 1. A different picture of deity.
  - 2. A different picture of humanity.
- C. Genesis emphasizes the WHO and the WHY.
- D. Nagging questions:
  - 1. HOW?
  - 2. How LONG?

### I. Principles of Biblical Interpretation

- A. Discover the cultural and historical context (e.g., ancient near-east)
- B. Distinguish between “clock” time and “event” time.
- C. Discern different types of text (e.g., prose, narrative, poetry, biography).
- D. Diagnose different uses of language (e.g., literal, figurative, anthropomorphic, phenomenological).  
[*anthropos* (man) + *morphe* (form); phenomenal (what appears)]
  - 1. “... I stretched out the heavens with my hands (Isa. 45:12; Ps. 102:25).
  - 2. “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host” (Ps. 33:6).
  - 3. The sun “rises” and “sets” (Matt. 5:45; Gen. 15:17).
  - 4. The “four corners of the earth” (Isa. 11:12; Rev. 7:1).
- E. All Scripture is “inspired” (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21) and it should be allowed to interpret itself when possible.
- F. What did the spoken or written word mean to the ORIGINAL audience?
- G. The Bible was written FOR us but not TO us (1 Cor. 10:6-12 “... Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction” (v. 11)).

### II. HOW Did Creation Occur?

- A. “And God said ...” (Gen. 1:3,6,9,11,14,20,24,26).
  - 1. “The universe was created by the word of God” (Heb. 11:3 ESV).
  - 2. “He commanded and they were created” (Ps. 148:5).
- B. Creation *ex nihilo* (from NOTHING).
  - 1. “Create” (Hebrew *bara*): Applied only to God (e.g., Gen. 1:1,21,27; 2:4; 5:1-2) with a sense of creation from nothing. (Cf. John 1:3; Heb. 11:3; Rev. 4:11)
  - 2. “Made” (Hebrew *asah*): Applied both to God (e.g., Gen. 1:7,16,25,26;) and to humans, with the sense of using already existing material for a purpose (Gen. 3:21; Gen. 6:14-16; 13:4).
  - 3. But these words also overlap and are sometimes used interchangeably.
    - a. God *created* (Gen. 1:27) and *made* man (Gen. 1:26).
    - b. God rested from all his work which he *created* and *made* (Gen. 2:4).
    - c. “When God *created* man, he *made* him in the likeness of God. Male and female he *created* them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were *created*” (Gen. 5:1b-2).
- C. “Let there be ...”: light (Gen. 1:3), an expanse (1:6), lights (sun & moon) (1:14-15).

- D. **“Let the ...”:**
1. Waters be gathered and dry land appear (1:9).
  2. Earth sprout vegetation (1:11).
  3. Waters teem with living creatures (1:20).
  4. Earth bring forth living creatures (1:24).
- E. **“According to its kind”**
1. Vegetation, plants, fruit trees (Gen. 1:11-12).
  2. Sea creatures, every moving creature, winged birds (Gen. 1:21).
  3. Earth creatures, livestock, creeping things, beasts of the earth (Gen. 1:24-25).
- F. Big take-aways:
1. God is the ultimate source of the physical universe and of life.
  2. There is           LATITUDE           on what God does and what God “lets” nature do.
  3. There are           LIMITS           on what nature can do.

### III. HOW LONG Did Creation Take? (Oh, what a difference a “day” makes!)

- A. **Pure Naturalism** (e.g., Neil deGrasse Tyson; Richard Dawkins).
1. No God involved.
  2. The universe began c. 13.8 billion years ago and the earth is c. 4.5 billion years old.
  3. Life emerged from physical components and processes.
  4. All living species emerged from *naturalistic* evolutionary processes.
- B. **Young Earth Creationism** (e.g., Bishop James Ussher; Ken Ham at <https://answersingenesis.org>; Kent and Eric Hovind; Creation Research Society; Institute for Creation Research).
1. The “days” (*yom*) of creation are consecutive, 24-hour solar days (144 total hours).
  2. The physical universe is less than 10,000 years old.
  3. The Genesis flood (Gen. 6) was *global*.
- C. **Gap Theory** (e.g., Scofield Reference Bible of 1909 and 1917).
1. A large time gap exists between Gen 1:1 and Gen 1:2.
  2. “The earth *became* [rather than “was”] formless and void.”
  3. A prior creation (perhaps including fallen angels) was destroyed; and God started over.
- D. **Progressive Creationism** (e.g., Hugh Ross at [www.reasons.org](http://www.reasons.org)).
1. Day (*yom*) means indefinite periods of time and God creates during distinct periods.
  2. Accepts the cosmological consensus about the age of the universe (13.8 byo) and the earth (4.5 byo).
  3. Accepts the Bible as “God-breathed” (2 Tim. 2:16-17), authoritative, and trustworthy.
  4. God’s revelation in Scripture and in nature are ultimately consistent.
- E. **Analogical Day View** (e.g., C. John Collins in *Science and Faith: Friends or Foes?*)
1. The “days” of creation are an *analogy* to the familiar workweek (Ex. 20:8-11; Ps 104:23).
  2. “There was evening and morning” highlight a *pause* in God’s creation activity.
- F. **Literary Framework View** (e.g., John Lennox in *Seven Days that Divide the World*).
1. The days are NOT sequential (1-6).
  2. Days 1/4, 2/5, 3/6 are correlated in a literary way.
  3. On days 1-3, God creates a “container” or the “form.” (“formless” in Gen. 1:2)
  4. On days 4-6, God creates things that go *in* the container. (“void” in Gen. 1:2)

#### Genesis 1:3-31

THE FORM	FILLED
<b>Day 1:</b> Light created (day); separated from darkness (night). [3-]	<b>Day 4:</b> Two great lights (sun and moon) and stars—signs for days and years. [14-]
<b>Day 2:</b> A “vault” or “expanse” (heaven/sky) in the midst of the waters; waters separated. [6-]	<b>Day 5:</b> Living creatures in waters; birds; sea creatures; every living creature ... with which the waters swarmed. [20-]
<b>Day 3:</b> Dry land appears (and seas); “let the land produce vegetation”; plants; trees. [9-]	<b>Day 6:</b> Living creatures on the ground; man “in our image” (male and female). [24-]

- G. Meanings for “day” (*yom*) noted by “old earth” creationists.
1. *Yom* refers to the “light” called “day” as opposed to night (Gen. 1:5, 14, 16, 18).
  2. *Yom* refers to the entire creation period (Gen 2:4).
  3. *Yom* refers to an indefinite period of time: “In the day (*yom*) you eat, you will die” (Gen 2:7); “day” of reckoning” (Isa. 2:12); “in the day of Massah ... when your fathers tested Me” (Ps. 95:8-9).
  4. *Yom* as the seventh day of God’s rest does not seem to be a 24-hour day (Gen. 2:2-3).
  5. A “day” is as a thousand years with the Lord (2 Peter 3:8; Ps. 90:4).

#### IV. Reflections and Applications on Biblical Creation

- A. Those who accept the Bible’s AUTHORITY have different interpretations.
- B. The WHO and the WHY are clear.
- C. What’s not so clear are the HOW and the HOW LONG.
- D. Don’t be DOGMATIC about only ONE interpretation.
- E. TRUST the sufficiency of Scripture to accomplish God’s purpose (2 Tim. 3:15-17).

#### Recommended Resources

- A. Richard A. Knopp. “Science and Christianity Video Collection” of 12 videos (<https://roomfordoubt.com/science-christianity>).
- B. Room For Doubt Animation: “Why Do You Still Believe?” (<https://vimeo.com/327406232>)
- C. Richard A. Knopp. *Truth About God: What Can We Know and How Can We Know It?* Six short videos are available (<https://roomfordoubt.com/truth-about-god>).
- D. [www.RoomForDoubt.com/recommened-resources/science-and-the-christian-faith](http://www.RoomForDoubt.com/recommened-resources/science-and-the-christian-faith).