

## The Beginning

Genesis 1-2; Coast Community Church Pastor's Class; Earl Miles; June 19, 2016

### 1. Atheistic Evolution

Usually affirms these things: There is no God or, at least, we do not have good reason to believe that there is a God. The world developed over a longer period of time than six, twenty-four hour days. The world is much more than a few thousand years old. The life forms we see today arose from prior, extinct life forms. The majority viewpoint in the natural sciences on the age of the world and the origin of present-day life forms is correct. – Jimmy Akin

### 2. Intelligent Design

The theory of intelligent design holds that certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection. Intelligent design has applied scientific methods to detect design in irreducibly complex biological structures, the complex and specified information content in DNA, the life-sustaining physical architecture of the universe, and the geologically rapid origin of biological diversity in the fossil record during the Cambrian explosion approximately 530 million years ago. – intelligentdesign.org

### 3. Theistic Evolution

While maintaining that God did truly maintain control of all creative processes, the view strips Scripture of its accuracy by positing that Adam was not arrived at by fiat creation but through thousands of years of natural evolutionary process aided and directed by a divine touch. – Blue Letter Bible (BLB)

- Theistic Evolution (with a literal Adam and Eve)
- Theistic Evolutionists (no literal Adam and Eve)

### 4. Creationism

- **Gap Theory**

The universe was already in existence for an indeterminate duration before the Creation Week began (and hence allow for a very old earth, but are able still to maintain God's recent fiat creation of mankind). – BLB

- **Gap Theory Restoration Theory**

The universe was created full-form and populated only to be decimated by a cataclysmic war led between God and Satan. This war left the earth a wasteland, "formless and void" (and explains why we find fossilized dinosaur bones that seem to be millions of years old). So then, by theory, the recent Creation Week would be a re-Creation or restoration of a world that was once destroyed. – BLB

- **Gap Theory Historical Creationism**

With the universe already created in Genesis 1:1, the six creative days refer not to the establishment of the universe, but rather, God's preparation of Eden for His people. This view hinges on medieval Hebrew interpretations of the Genesis text. Because "heavens" and "earth" should be translated as "sky" and "land," and "formless and void" is better rendered "uninhabitable wasteland," the Creation Account presents God's preparation of the Promised Land in the midst of an unyielding wilderness — a land prepared special for His people. Similar to the Gap theory, Genesis 1:1 indicates the universe created at a time inconsequential to the needs of the Genesis narrative. God prepares a piece of paradise on earth in the midst of wilderness and continually brings His people back to that place of blessing as a tutorial device pointing them to the blessing of God's covenants with them. – BLB

- **Day Age Theory**

The Day-Age Theory takes aim on the Hebrew word for "day": *yôm*. Stating that the word, while often meaning a 24-hour period, can also refer to an indeterminate duration, these theorists proclaim that a valid

(and moreover, proper) literal understanding of the Creation account will interpret each day as an era, or age, lasting a great length of time. – BLB

- **Day Age Theory Progressive Creation**

God, having created the major types of the animal and plant kingdoms at the beginning of the Sixth Day, waits and watches as they evolve naturally within their groups until at the end of this lengthy period referred to as "the Sixth Day," God creates man of the dust by fiat. – BLB

- **Time-Relative Creationism**

Belief that the universe is both young *and* old depending on your perspective. Since time is not a constant, time at the beginning of creation would have moved much slower than it does today. From the way time is measured today, the succession of moments in the creation narrative equals that of six twenty-four hour periods, but relative to the measurements at the time of creation, the events would have transpired much more slowly, allowing for billions of years. This view may or may not allow for an evolutionary view of creation. They can allow for in a literal Adam and Eve, Garden of Eden, snake talking, and world-wide flood. – Michael Patton (MP)

- **Apparent Age Theory**

God must have created the universe to look as if it were very old. After all, God made Adam full-grown, for what reason should we not believe that He made the rest of the universe old as well? – BLB

- **Punctuated 24 Hour Theory**

Puts millions of years (in the form of geological eras) between the days of the Creation Week. God created on the first day, let that stew for eons, created again on a second creative day, let that simmer for a long while, created once more on the third special day, and so forth. – BLB

- **Scientific Creationism**

Science demonstrates not that the earth is ancient and weathered by millions of years of natural processes, but that it is a comparatively young creation (generally between 7,000 and 15,000 years old). Using this system, affirms that the earth is indeed young and Believers can indeed hold to a literal rendering of Genesis 1. – BLB

- **24 Hour Days**

God created all the universe in the space of six, regular solar days. – BLB

- **Young Earth Creationism**

The belief that the universe and all that is in it was created by God around ten-thousand years ago or less. They insist that this is the only way to understand the Scriptures. Further, they will argue that science is on their side using "catastropheism." They believe that world-wide biblical catastrophes sufficiently explain the fossil records and the geographic phenomenon that might otherwise suggest the earth is old. They believe in a literal Adam and Eve, Garden of Eden, snake talking, and world-wide flood. – MP

- **Old Earth Creationism**

Belief that the old age of the universe can be reconciled with Scripture by understanding the days of Genesis 1 not at literal 24 hour periods, but as long indefinite periods of time. The word "day" would then be understood the same as in Gen. 2:4 ". . . in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens." While this view believes the universe and earth are billions of years old, they believe that man was created a short time ago. Therefore, they do not believe in evolution. They believe in a literal Adam and Eve, Garden of Eden, snake talking, and world-wide flood. – Michael Patton

- **Framework Theory**

Sees the Creation Week as a topical guide unconcerned with a real chronology. The Framework Interpretation sees the six creative days dividing easily into two parallel sets of three (that is, two triads). The first triad — Days One, Two, and Three — deals with the creation kingdoms (or realms), while the second — Days Four, Five, and Six — deals with the creature kings (or rulers). – BLB

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<sup>12</sup>“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to render to every man <sup>[g]</sup>according to what he has done. <sup>13</sup> I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” – Revelation 22:12-13

- It's all about Jesus.
- The end is about Jesus, so it is important.
- The beginning is about Jesus, so it is important.
- The end can only be understood in light of the beginning.

So we want to spend a little time talking about the beginning.

Illus: World Globe – ‘Just happened’?

### Four Main Views

We need to see that there are different views of how it all began and there are two broad categories: views that are inside the ‘pale of orthodoxy’ [either historically according to the protestant confessions or historically according to the Reformed confessions] (variations of view 4) and those that are outside (views 1, 2 and 3). There are also views that you can hold and still be considered a Christian (views 3 and 4) and views that you cannot hold and be considered a Christian (views 1 and 2).

1. Atheistic Evolution (AE)
2. Intelligent Design (ID)
3. Theistic Evolution (TE)
4. Creationism (C)

#### 1. Atheistic Evolution

Richard Dawkins

Usually affirms these things: There is no God or, at least, we do not have good reason to believe that there is a God. The world developed over a longer period of time than six, twenty-four hour days. The world is much more than a few thousand years old. The life forms we see today arose from prior, extinct life forms. The majority viewpoint in the natural sciences on the age of the world and the origin of present-day life forms is correct. – Jimmy Akin

#### 2. Intelligent Design

Intelligent design refers to a scientific research program as well as a community of scientists, philosophers and other scholars who seek evidence of design in nature. The theory of intelligent

design holds that certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection. Intelligent design has applied scientific methods to detect design in irreducibly complex biological structures, the complex and specified information content in DNA, the life-sustaining physical architecture of the universe, and the geologically rapid origin of biological diversity in the fossil record during the Cambrian explosion approximately 530 million years ago. – intelligentdesign.org

Thus, from the observation that human intelligence can communicate by manipulating sequences of alphabetic letters, creationists infer that a similar kind of intelligence was responsible for the message sequences of nucleotide letters in DNA. Some master intellect is the creator of life. But such observable instances of information cannot tell us if the intellect behind them is natural or supernatural. This is not a question that science can answer. – Pandas and People

### 3. Theistic Evolution

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. – Genesis 1:1

What did that involve?

Biologos; Tim Keller

While maintaining that God did truly maintain control of all creative processes, the view strips Scripture of its accuracy by positing that Adam was not arrived at by fiat creation but through thousands of years of natural evolutionary process aided and directed by a divine touch. – Blue Letter Bible (BLB)

- **Theistic Evolution (with a literal Adam and Eve)**

The belief that God created the universe over billions of years, using evolutionary processes to create humanity. At some time, toward the end of the evolutionary process, God, through an act of special creation, created Adam and Eve as the head of the human race. Some also believe that God did not use special creation, but appointed already existing humanoids as the representatives for humanity calling them Adam and Eve. They may or may not believe in a snake talking and usually believe that the flood was local. – Michael Patton

C.S. Lewis' letter to Captain Bernard Acworth:

**September 23, 1944:** "Do I agree that the theory of evolution, its truth or falsehood, is of fundamental importance to the Xtian faith?" This question can have several senses, in some of which the answer *yes* wd. most seriously misrepresent my position. I believe that Man has fallen from the state of innocence in which he was created: I therefore disbelieve in any theory wh. contradicts this. It is not yet obvious to me that all theories of evolution do contradict it. When they do not, it is not my business to pronounce on their truth or falsehood. My "message" on any biological theorem wh. does not contradict (or wh. I, with my imperfect process of reasoning, do not *perceive to contradict*) the Creed, is not "equivocal" but non-existent: just as my message

about the curvature of space is not equivocal but non-existent. Just as my belief in my own immortal & rational soul does not oblige or qualify me to hold a particular theory of the pre-natal history of my embryo, so my belief that Men in general have immortal & rational souls does not oblige or qualify me to hold a theory of their pre-human organic history if they have one.

There is no evidence that Lewis ever read the Genesis account of creation literally. Repeatedly and publicly he described it as a folk tale or myth. In *The Problem of Pain*, published in 1940, four years before his first surviving letter to Acworth, Lewis constructed his own "myth" of human origins, which he described as "an account of what *may have been* the historical fact." Professing no objection to the notion that "man is physically descended from animals," he suggested that over time God "perfected the animal form" that was to become the first man by endowing it with human consciousness. The resulting "Paradisaal man" engaged in full and unbroken communion with God while remaining, by our standards, a savage. Although he was as yet untainted by sin, his technology remained primitive. In joining an evolutionary picture of human biological development to the biblical account of the Fall, Lewis wished to demonstrate that the two views are not (as they seem to be) mutually exclusive. For him, technological backwardness implied nothing about intelligence or virtue, both of which might have been highly developed in prehistoric humans. When early man fell into sin (under circumstances Lewis does not describe), his spirit began to lose the control it had previously held over his body:

The total organism which had been taken up into his spiritual life was allowed to fall back into the merely natural condition from which, at his making, it had been raised—just as, far earlier in the story of creation, God had raised vegetable life to become the vehicle of animality, and chemical process to be the vehicle of vegetation, and physical process to be the vehicle of chemical.<sup>6</sup>

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*Lewis's acceptance of divinely guided human evolution prompted him to modify not only the Genesis account of creation but also the traditional Christian understanding of the Fall.*

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Lewis's acceptance of divinely guided human evolution prompted him to modify not only the Genesis account of creation but also the traditional Christian understanding of the Fall. The existence of pain in the animal kingdom especially troubled Lewis, who devoted an entire chapter to the subject in *The Problem of Pain*. Theologians, he noted, had previously attributed the origin of animal suffering to the Fall of man. But the scientific evidence that carnivorousness was "older than humanity" had led Lewis to conclude that evil had manifested itself long before Adam in the law of tooth and claw. To account for this fact, he postulated a hypothetical pre-Adamic fall, in which Satan corrupted the world and caused animals to live by preying on one another. — Gary Ferngren, *The Acworth Letters*

- **Theistic Evolutionists (no literal Adam and Eve)**

N.T. Wright?

The belief that God created the universe over billions of years, using evolutionary processes to create humanity. Adam and Eve are simply literary and symbolic, representing the fall of humanity and the ensuing curse. – Michael Patton

#### **4. Creationism**

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. – Genesis 1:1

What did that involve?

Westminster Seminary Position Paper

The categories below may or may not be separate and distinct from each other. Some are variations of some of the others. Some are different concepts that a number of the others might include.

- **Gap Theory**

The universe was already in existence for an indeterminate duration before the Creation Week began (and hence allow for a very old earth, but are able still to maintain God's recent fiat creation of mankind). – BLB

Belief that the explanation for the old age of the universe can be found in a theoretical time gap that exists between the lines of Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. God created the earth and the earth *became* formless and void. Therefore God instituted the new creation which begins in Genesis 1:2b. This theory allows for an indefinite period of time for the earth to exist before the events laid out in the creation narrative. Gap theorists will differ as to what could have happened on the earth to make it become void of life. Some will argue for the possibility of a creation prior to humans that died out. This could include the dinosaurs. They normally believe in a literal Adam and Eve, Garden of Eden, snake talking, and world-wide flood. – Michael Patton

- **Gap Theory Restoration Theory**

Scofield Bible Notes

The universe was created full-form and populated only to be decimated by a cataclysmic war led between God and Satan. This war left the earth a wasteland, "formless and void" (and explains why we find fossilized dinosaur bones that seem to be millions of years old). So then, by theory, the recent Creation Week would be a re-Creation or restoration of a world that was once destroyed. – BLB

- **Gap Theory Historical Creationism**

John Sailhamer; John Piper

With the universe already created in Genesis 1:1, the six creative days refer not to the establishment of the universe, but rather, God's preparation of Eden for His people. This view hinges on medieval Hebrew interpretations of the Genesis text. Because "heavens" and "earth" should be translated as "sky" and "land," and "formless and void" is better rendered "uninhabitable wasteland," the Creation Account presents God's preparation of the Promised Land in the midst of an unyielding wilderness — a land prepared special for His people. Similar to the Gap theory, Genesis 1:1 indicates the universe created at a time inconsequential to the needs of the Genesis narrative. God prepares a piece of paradise on earth in the midst of wilderness and continually brings His people back to that place of blessing as a tutorial device pointing them to the blessing (and eventually eternal blessing) of God's covenants with them. - BLB

- **Day Age Theory**

James Boice

The Day-Age Theory takes aim on the Hebrew word for "day": *yôm*. Stating that the word, while often meaning a 24-hour period, can also refer to an indeterminate duration, these theorists proclaim that a valid (and moreover, proper) literal understanding of the Creation account will interpret each day as an era, or age, lasting a great length of time. – BLB

- **Day Age Theory Progressive Creation**

Hugh Ross

God, having created the major types of the animal and plant kingdoms at the beginning of the Sixth Day, waits and watches as they evolve naturally within their groups until at the end of this lengthy period referred to as "the Sixth Day," God creates man of the dust by fiat. – BLB

- **Time-Relative Creationism**

Belief that the universe is both young *and* old depending on your perspective. Since time is not a constant (Einstein's Theory of Relativity), the time at the beginning of creation would have moved much slower than it does today. From the way time is measured today, the succession of moments in the creation narrative equals that of six twenty-four hour periods, but relative to the measurements at the time of creation, the events would have transpired much more slowly, allowing for billions of years. This view, therefore, does not assume a constancy in time and believes that any assumption upon the radical events of the first days/eons of creation is both beyond what science can assume and against the most prevailing view of science regarding time today. This view may or may not allow for an evolutionary view of creation. They can allow for in a literal Adam and Eve, Garden of Eden, snake talking, and world-wide flood. – Michael Patton

- **Apparent Age Theory**

God must have created the universe to look as if it were very old. After all, God made Adam full-grown, for what reason should we not believe that He made the rest of the universe old as well? – BLB

- **Punctuated 24 Hour Theory**

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- **Scientific Creationism**

Henry Morris

Science demonstrates not that the earth is ancient and weathered by millions of years of natural processes, but that it is a comparatively young creation (generally between 7,000 and 15,000 years old). Using this system, affirms that the earth is indeed young and Believers can indeed hold to a literal rendering of Genesis 1. – BLB

- **24 Hour Days**

Ken Ham, John Calvin, Ligon Duncan, RC Sproul, John MacArthur, Al Mohler

God created all the universe in the space of six, regular solar days. – BLB

- **Young Earth Creationism**

The belief that the universe and all that is in it was created by God around ten-thousand years ago or less. They insist that this is the only way to understand the Scriptures. Further, they will argue that science is on their side using “catastropheism.” They believe that world-wide biblical catastrophes sufficiently explain the fossil records and the geographic phenomenon that might otherwise suggest the earth is old. They believe in a literal Adam and Eve, Garden of Eden, snake talking, and world-wide flood. – Michael Patton

- **Old Earth Creationists**  
(also Progressive Creationists and Day-Age Creationists)

Belief that the old age of the universe can be reconciled with Scripture by understanding the days of Genesis 1 not at literal 24 hour periods, but as long indefinite periods of time. The word “day” would then be understood the same as in Gen. 2:4 “. . . in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.” While this view believes the universe and earth are billions of years old, they believe that man was created a short time ago. Therefore, they do not believe in evolution. They believe in a literal Adam and Eve, Garden of Eden, snake talking, and world-wide flood. – Michael Patton

- **Framework Theory**

Meredith Kline; Augustine?

Sees the Creation Week as a topical guide unconcerned with a real chronology. Dividing the works of Creation into two triads, Moses presents his audience with a literary device to demonstrate theological truths of covenant promises and the role of the Sabbath. Although the fiat creative events ("Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light") refer to actual historical events that actually occurred, and the Creation Week is presented in normal, solar days, the Creation Account really functions as a literary structure presenting the acts in a nonsequential, topical order. The purpose for this is theological. The Framework Interpretation sees the six creative days dividing easily into two parallel sets of three (that is, two triads). The first triad — Days One, Two, and Three — deals with the creation kingdoms (or realms), while the second — Days Four, Five, and Six — deals with the creature kings (or rulers). – BLB

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