



**Question: "How could there be light on the first day of Creation if the sun was not created until the fourth day?"**

**Answer:** The question of how there could be light on the first day of Creation when the sun was not created until the fourth day is a common one. Genesis 1:3-5 declares, "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness. God called the light 'day,' and the darkness He called 'night.' And there was evening, and there was morning " the first day." A few verses later we are informed, "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, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.' And it was so. God made two great lights " the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning " the fourth day" (Genesis 1:14-19). How can this be? How could there be light, mornings and evenings on the first, second, and third days if the sun, moon, and stars were not created until the fourth day?

This is only a problem if we fail to take into account an infinite and omnipotent God. God does not need the sun, moon, and stars to provide light. God is light! First John 1:5 declares, "This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all." God Himself was the light for the first three days of Creation, just as He will be in the new heavens and new earth, "There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 22:5). Until He created the sun, moon, and stars, God miraculously provided light during the "day" and may have done so during the "night" as well (Genesis 1:14).

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). Much more important than the light of day and night is the Light who provides eternal life to all who believe in Him. Those who do not believe in Him will be doomed to "outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:12).

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# Nine Views of Creation

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Everybody these days, it seems, has a different take on the Creation Account. The scientific community once had Christendom running scared with what seemed to be fairly conclusive evidence that the Bible's understanding of the origin of the universe held no ground in reality. Not to be vanquished so easily, many Christians began searching for answers — for ways they might accord Scripture with science.

Differing perspectives on the Creation have existed for ages, but recently, the fervor seems to have raised a notch with people becoming increasingly dogmatic on the side of their own perspective. Christians of one perspective are becoming skeptical of the genuineness of the salvation of those who hold to another interpretation.

With all this in mind, it should be of benefit to summarize the differing views (while supplying bibliographies of additional resources for further studies) and allow Christians to make their own choices as to which view accords best with Scripture.

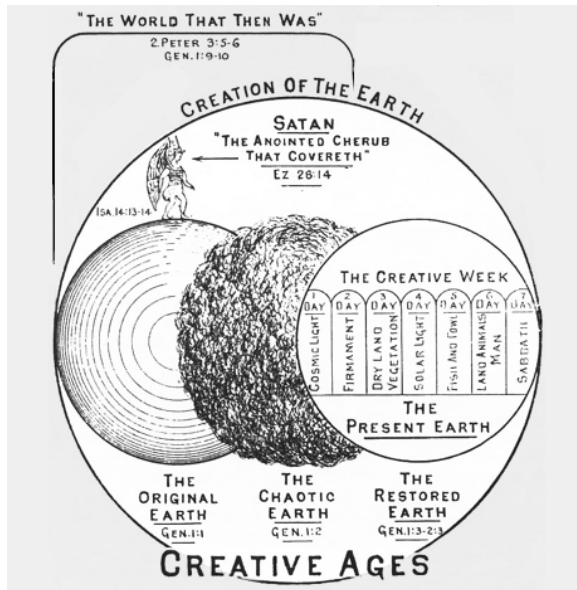
## Interpretative Methods

Facing the modern Christian are two distinct methods for interpreting the Creation Account: by consulting the discoveries of science or by consulting Scripture's testament to itself. Within both methods are several perspectives and so we will treat each one briefly. Because the science-based methods focus more upon interpreting God's Word through the light of empirical data rather than through the hermeneutical demands of context, we will refer to all these methods as "theories," while exegetically-based methods, being naturally more rigorous and adherent to the discovery of the true meaning of Scripture, will be called "interpretations." We shall also begin with the science-based method and then proceed to deal with those views which are more thoroughly entrenched in Scripture in greater depth.

## Science-Based Methods

Science-based views interpret Scripture through the filter of their experience of general revelation. They see the sciences and their own observations of the world around them saying something incontrovertible; and so, they interpret Scripture in light of these things. Truly, the pressure of the scientific communities — both Christian and secular — can seem overwhelming and nobody wants to feel they have their head in the sand and are ignoring plain evidence. But never should the Christian allow current scientific understanding to supercede the historical and literary intent of the authors of Scripture. We will here discuss briefly several of these viewpoints, but dismiss them in the end as being built upon eisegesis.

## Theistic Evolution



Surrendering the historicity and honesty of Scripture beyond all other popular viewpoints, theories of theistic evolution force interpreters to mythologize the Genesis narrative. 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. The specifics of the view are beyond the scope of this treatment as they question seriously traditional and conservative methods for the interpretation of Scripture—as well as its ability to function as an authority for the believer.

## Gap Theory

When the scientific community began discovering evidence to support long geological eras in the 18th century, a segment of Christendom felt compelled to syncretize their interpretation of Scripture with this newfound empirical data. Motive askew, they postulated that 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).

A once-popular revision of this theme is the Restoration Theory. Proponents of this version of Gap Theory believed that 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.

The hinge upon which Gap Theory turns is the interaction between verses 1, 2, and 3 of Genesis 1. But while the theory's suppositions are imaginative and interesting to ponder, they really must be forced upon the text — and are forced upon the text for a poor reason. A clear example of this eisegetical pattern of interpreting Scripture in light of science can be found in the following quote from a Gap Theory supporter:

*"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned..." (Rom 5:12)*

But under Adam's feet, entombed in the sedimentary rocks of the planet, was God's testimony to the reality of the existence of death long before Adam; the fossil record; the evidence of a previous world that was destroyed and wiped off the face of the old earth. <sup>(NOTE)</sup>

This is a distressing demonstration of the Gap Theory hermeneutic. It is as if the author is saying, "Scripture says death came through Adam, but science says it came earlier, so we ought to change our interpretation of Scripture because science is our ultimate authority." This reliance upon science as a hermeneutic principle is why we will not here give any real consideration to the view's interpretive accuracy.

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## Day-Age Theory

Easily one of the most popular of current theories to reconcile scientific evidence with God's Word, the Day-Age Theory takes aim on the Hebrew word for "day": *yōm*. 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.

Popular among those who support a Day-Age Theory is a theory of Progressive Creationism by which 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.

Now, while this is a fairly attractive position for many science-minded Christians, it simply cannot be arrived at from a grammatical-historical understanding of Scripture. There is no hermeneutical reason for any Believer to reinterpret Genesis to fit the Day-Age model.

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## Apparent-Age Theory

Once more relying upon science to form the filter through which we examine Scriptural truth, the Apparent-Age theorists sees a contradiction between science and God's Word and feeling he must reconcile the two, he decides that God must have created the universe to look as if it were very old. After all, he posits, God made Adam full-grown, for what reason should we not believe that He made the rest of the universe old as well?

The Apparent-Age theory falls short in several places. First, it makes a blind speculation upon Scripture — something entirely outside of the revelation God has chosen to give us. Second, though Adam was created as a full-sized human, this does not necessarily mean that he had the wrinkles, cellular degeneration, and evidence of weathering on the day of his creation (and it seems unreasonable to assume he did). And third, the supposition that God creates things to look older than they really are seems to make Him out to be quite a prankster (and a counterproductive one at that!) and even a bit of a liar.

In any case, the Apparent-Age Theory rests upon speculation demanded by science and is not borne out by a clean grammatical-historical hermeneutic.

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## **Punctuated 24-Hour Theory**

Strangely incorporating a 24-hour day perspective, the Punctuated 24-Hour Theory tries to have its cake and eat it too by squeezing millions of years (in the form of geological eras) between the days of the Creation Week. The Punctuated theorist feels that 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.

Surely, an interesting hypothesis it is. But one that just does not find any sort of ground in the text of Genesis 1 and so becomes one more theory to dismiss before consideration because as far as this issue is concerned, we, as Christians holding to the supreme authority of Scripture, are only interested in the interpretation of that which God has revealed in His Word.

## Scientific Creationism

Often supporting its hypothesis using a Flood Geology, Scientific Creationism says that 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, they affirm that yes, the earth is indeed young and Believers can indeed hold to a literal rendering of Genesis 1.

Now while their work may indeed serve an apologetic purpose, this is really no way to come to understand that which of Scripture would speak. The student of Scripture should be able to demonstrate his interpretation of God's Word based upon that Word alone. And so, in the next section, we will look at three methods of interpreting Scripture that find their foundation in the Scriptures themselves (rather than in the fallible witness of natural revelation).

### Bibliography:

- Whitcomb, John C., and Henry M. Morris. *The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record and Its Scientific Implications*. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1961.
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## **Exegetically Based Methods**

Interpretations that seek first to understand Scripture as it was written with no concern for the opinions of science are really the only way to properly look at the issues involved in the Creation Account. Now of course science can be useful to serve as a warning that perhaps we may need to re-examine our previous exegesis, but it should never serve any interpretive purpose for us. We should never allow anything but God's Word to dictate our understanding of the matters of God's Word. If Scripture says the world is flat, then the world is flat — no matter what science might say. If Scripture says the world is 8,000 years old, then the world is 8,000 years old — no matter what science might say. The only real question then is "What does Scripture say in Genesis 1?"

The following four interpretations attempt to decipher what the Holy Spirit truly meant when He inspired Moses to write his introduction to our Bible. Our examination of them will offer more detail and information than our previous summaries, but the final decisions about which interpretation most accurately reflects the true intent of Scripture will be left to you, the reader, for all of these positions are held to by true and learned Christian men. And with that, the views:

## 24-Hour Interpretation

### Brief Summary:

The most traditional of interpretations, the 24-Hour Interpretation holds that God created all the universe in the space of six, regular solar days. Most will argue against an eternal seventh day of rest, but the view is not necessary to the interpretation.

### Argument:

A straightforward reading of the text most consistently supports the 24-Hour Interpretation. When one comes to the text for the first time, their immediate and natural conclusion will be that Scripture is speaking of a regular six-day period in which God gradually created everything from nothing. Verse 1 is generally seen as a summary of the Creation Week, rather than a chronological event occurring prior to the Creation Week. God's purpose in creating over the course of a human week is one of love, knowing that His people would readily identify with the cycle of days.

One of the interpretation's strongest arguments is one from silence: while a figurative interpretation of the Creation Days is not impossible, it is believed entirely unmerited, for nowhere does Scriptural discussion of the Creation indicate or support any sort of figurative rendering. Moreover, the interpretation holds that those who suspect different meanings for the Hebrew word for "day" (*yǎ'm*) "have no reason, other than cosmological assumptions, for construing [it] to mean anything other than a normal day" <sup>(NOTE)</sup>.

And finally, standing on both a strong tradition and a simple (though certainly *not* simplistic) rendering of the text, the 24-Hour Interpreter believes the final and considerable burden of proof sits in the lap of those who would contravene such a venerable position.

### Supposed Problems:

The seeming temporal recapitulation of Day One and Day Four confuses a chronological reading of the days.

The eternity of the Sabbath offers evidence for a figurative understanding of the Creation Week.

The possibility that [Genesis 1:1](#) is not a summarization, but rather, an event preceding the Creation Week.

An argument from silence is inadequate to prove that the Creation Days are not figurative.

The dischronologization and recapitulation present in [Genesis 2](#) present difficulties for a chronological, 24-hour interpretation.

### Bibliography:

- Calvin, John. *Calvin's Commentaries: Volume 1 (Genesis)*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998.
- Duncan III, J. Ligon, and David W. Hall. "The 24-Hour View." *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the Days of Creation*. Ed. David Hagopian. Mission Viejo, California: Crux Press, Inc., 2001.
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- "Biblical Chronology." *Biblical Horizons*. Oct – Dec 1997.
- "Six-Day, Literal Creation: Essential to the Faith" (entire issue). *Chalcedon Report*. No. 398 (September 1998).

## Framework Interpretation

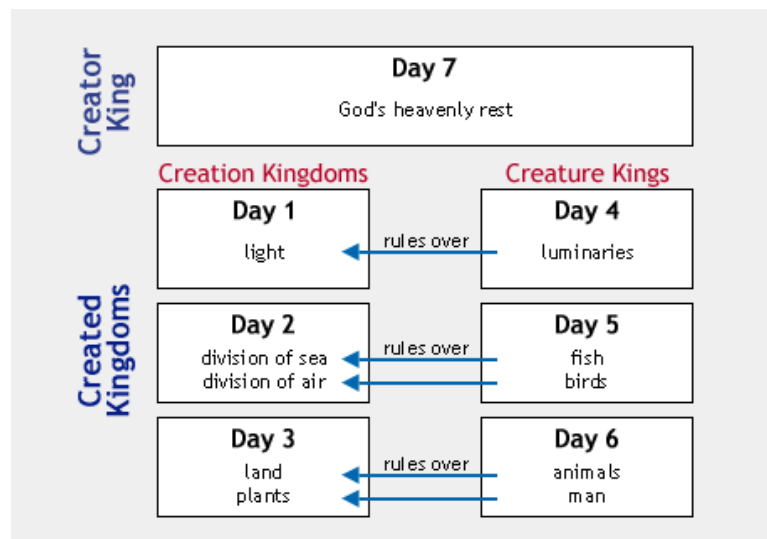
### Brief Summary:

Provoked by exegetical considerations, the Framework Interpretation 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.

### Argument:

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). A visual representation of this framework follows:



The rulers in the second triad are given rule over their realms (the first triad) at the time of their creations: the luminaries are established to "rule over" the day and night; the birds and fish receive a blessing of dominion over their respective realms ("Be fruitful, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth"); and even man is given this dominion over his realm specifically (*cf.* Genesis 2:5) and all the created realms generally (Genesis 1:26, 28). These realms

and rulers are in turn subordinated as a whole under the divine King of Creation in His Sabbath rest on the seventh day. Just as man works six days and consecrates that work to God's glory on the seventh day, so did God create a model for this by bringing the work of His six creative days under divine consecration to His own glory on the Seventh Day.

Not only does this interpretation see a theological frame in the Creation Week, but it sees no need for chronologization inherent in the text. In fact, the interpretation argues fairly sharply against making the Creation Account into a literal 168-hour sequence. Beside literary support

(in the form of parallelism between Days One and Four, the chiasmic nature of Days Two and Five, and dischronologization throughout), the Framework Interpretation applies God's seeming use of ordinary providence in Genesis 2:5-6 to demonstrate that such providence is likely active throughout God's creation of the universe.

This is a brief sketch of a multi-faceted interpretation, and the sources below are recommended to garner a more accurate understanding of the view.

#### Supposed Problems:

The Fourth Commandment seems to demand a regular 168-hour Creation Week to base its command upon.

The difficulty of relating the view is seen as a distinct disadvantage.

Though there is evidence for dischronologization in related passages, this does not necessitate a nonsequential view of the Creation Account.

Just because the Days arrange themselves into theologically relevant triads doesn't mean they can't behave literally as well.

#### Bibliography:

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## Historical Creationism

### Brief Summary:

Due to unfortunate choices in translation in the KJV, a historical interpretation of the Creation Account has been overlooked. 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.

### Argument:

Most recently proposed by John H. Sailhamer, Ph.D., the view of Historical Creationism 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.

The Historical Creationist also contends that most other views of Genesis 1 have been held captive by prevailing worldviews. In modern times, interpreters often push the text to accord with modern scientific views. The Historical Creationist maintains that the 24-Hour Interpretation only became so trenchant because of KJV translators' reliance upon a faulty Platonic cosmogony and their willingness to push their translation into accordance with that view.

### Supposed Problems:

Support for such "historical" translations are difficult to find.

Not many modern scholars have lent their support to the view.

### Bibliography:

Sailhamer, John H., Ph.D. *Genesis Unbound: A Provocative New Look at the Creation Account*. Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Books, 1996.

*Historical Creationism*. <<http://hometown.aol.com/arkvow/creationism.htm>>

## **Final Remarks**

To conclude this article, we should remind ourselves that whichever view we decide to support, it must be one that is presented by the Scriptures themselves and not one that we force upon it. And whichever we choose, we must never fail to uphold the historicity and inerrancy of God's Word for it is that upon which the knowledge of our faith is built.

Additionally, it is important — once one decides upon the interpretation, he thinks best represents the true meaning of Scripture — to not judge other people for their own views. One's view on Genesis 1 is no more an essential to one's salvation and spiritual well-being than is one's eschatological beliefs. There are a number of perspectives on the Creation Week that while not necessarily correct, are not heretical either. We should grant our brethren the same benefit of deciding on an interpretation as we take ourselves.

We hope this brief overview has been helpful. God bless.

# Do you accept "old earth" and evolution?

By John Piper

If by "accept" you mean, "Are there people on our council of elders who hold to the old earth theory?" then, Yes.

If by "accept" you mean, "Is that my view?" here is what I said the other day when the church staff was talking about this. We spent about an hour, talking about how we as a church should orient ourselves in the conversation about old earth and young earth, and I said that there seem to be two viable, biblical views for me. (This is going to offend a lot of people.)

One is young earth, because it seems to me that the natural reading of Genesis 1 is 24-hour days, not Day-Age.

And two, the view that John Sailhamer wrote in *Genesis Unbound* or in his other books, which says that all of creation happened in verses 1 and 2. It may be as old as 4 trillion years, as far as he is concerned, and what was happening in Genesis 1 each day was not the bringing into being of the earth and its various forms, but rather the ordering, managing and structuring of things. This allows for 24-hour days but also allows for an old earth.

I lean that way. I don't believe in evolution as the way that Adam came to be a human. I think God created Adam from the dust of the ground. I think he was unique and that he is the father of all humanity—Adam and Eve—and that he is not the product of a long evolutionary process. I can't make that jive with the way the text reads.

And I think that it's very important that Adam be a historical figure, because that's the way he is treated by the other biblical writers. The heart passage in Romans 5 collapses, and the whole nature of God's making with Adam a covenant and then him failing and then Christ being a second Adam comes to naught, if he's not a historical person.

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**Question: "Old earth vs. young earth - what are the core issues in the debate?"**

**Answer:** Both old earth creationism and young earth creationism seek to solve the apparent conflict between science and the Bible in regard to the age of the earth. What is the apparent conflict? If the book of Genesis is interpreted strictly literally, it seems to indicate that the earth and the universe are around 6,000 years old. In contrast, various scientific dating methods place the age of the earth around 4.5 billion years and the age of the universe around 14.6 billion years.

The options to solve the apparent conflict are as follows: the Bible is wrong, the Bible is being interpreted incorrectly, or the scientific data is being interpreted incorrectly.

Neither old earth creationism nor young earth creationism teaches that the Bible is wrong. Generally speaking, both old earth and young earth creationists believe in the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of God's Word. What differs between these approaches is one's view on what the Bible is, in fact, saying. It's a matter of interpretation.

Old earth creationists believe a strictly literal approach is not the correct way to interpret the early chapters of Genesis. They view Genesis 1–2 as being primarily symbolic and/or poetic. Young earth creationists interpret Genesis 1–2 as a literal, historical account of how God created the universe. Young earth creationists question why, if the rest of Genesis is historical, should the first two chapters be interpreted differently? Old earth creationists question why, if the Bible uses symbolism in many other books, can't metaphor be used in Genesis?

Young earth creationists contend that the scientific data supporting a billions-of-years-old universe is being interpreted incorrectly. They view old-earth arguments developed by naturalistic scientists as primarily being a defense for Darwinian evolution. They contend that the dating methods are flawed, at best, and are implemented by scientists with bias, presuppositions, and agendas. Old earth creationists view the scientific dating methods as being reasonably accurate and therefore accept that the earth and the universe are truly old. Also, a great number of old earth creationists reject Darwinian evolution.

So, in the old earth vs. young earth debate, who is correct? As a ministry, GotQuestions.org definitely leans toward the young earth perspective. We believe that Genesis chapters 1 and 2 are meant to be read literally, and young earth creationism is what a literal reading of those chapters presents. At the same time, we do not view old earth creationism as heresy. We are not going to question the faith or motives of our brothers and sisters in Christ who disagree with us on this issue. Ultimately, one can hold to views other than young earth creationism and still have an accurate understanding of the core doctrines of the Christian faith.

As we interpret it, the Bible indicates that the earth is relatively young. According to secular scientists and those who accept an old-earth reading of Scripture, the earth is very old. Since neither viewpoint can be explicitly proved, we choose to side with a plain/literal interpretation of the Bible.



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## **Question: "What happened on each of the days of Creation?"**

**Answer:** The creation account is found in Genesis 1—2. Most of God’s creative work is done by speaking, another indication of the power and authority of His Word. Let us look at each day of God’s creative work:

### **Creation Day 1 (Genesis 1:1–5)**

God created the heavens and the earth. “The heavens” refers to everything beyond the earth, outer space. The earth is made but not formed in any specific way, although water is present. God then speaks light into existence. He then separates the light from the dark and names the light “day” and the dark “night.”

### **Creation Day 2 (Genesis 1:6–8)**

God creates the sky. The sky forms a barrier between water upon the surface and the moisture in the air. At this point earth would have an atmosphere.

### **Creation Day 3 (Genesis 1:9–13)**

God creates dry land. Continents and islands are above the water. The large bodies of water are named “seas” and the ground is named “land.” God declares that all this is good.

God creates all plant life both large and small. He creates this life to be self-sustaining; plants can reproduce. The plants were created in great diversity (many “kinds”). The earth was green and teeming with plant life. God declares that this work is also good.

### **Creation Day 4 (Genesis 1:14–19)**

God creates all the stars and heavenly bodies. The movement of these will help man track time. Two great heavenly bodies are made in relation to the earth. The first is the sun, which is the primary source of light, and the moon, which reflects the light of the sun. The movement of these bodies will distinguish day from night. This work is also declared to be good by God.

### **Creation Day 5 (Genesis 1:20–23)**

God creates all life that lives in the water. Any life of any kind that lives in the water is made at this point. God also makes all the birds. The language allows that this may be the time God made flying insects as well; if not, they were made on Day 6. All these creatures are made with the ability to perpetuate their species by reproduction. The creatures made on Day 5 are the first creatures blessed by God. God declares this work good.

### **Creation Day 6 (Genesis 1:24–31)**

God creates all the creatures that live on dry land. This includes every type of creature not included

on previous days and man. God declares this work good.

When God was creating man, He took counsel with Himself. "God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness'" (Genesis 1:26). This is not an explicit revelation of the Trinity but is part of the foundation for such, as God reveals an "us" within the Godhead. God makes man, and man is made in the image of God (men and women both bear this image) and is special above all other creatures. To emphasize this, God places man in authority over the earth and over all the other creatures. God blesses man and commands him to reproduce, fill the earth, and subdue it (bring it under the rightful stewardship of man as authorized by God). God announces that man and all other creatures are to eat plants alone. God will not rescind this dietary restriction until Genesis 9:3–4.

God's creative work is complete at the end of the sixth day. The entire universe in all its beauty and perfection was fully formed in these six periods labelled as "days." At the completion of His creation, God announces that it is very good.

### **Creation Day 7 (Genesis 2:1–3)**

God rests. This in no way indicates He was weary from His creative efforts; rather, it denotes that the creation is complete. Further, God is establishing a pattern of one day in seven to rest. The keeping of this day will eventually be a distinguishing trait of God's chosen people, Israel (Exodus 20:8–11).

Many Christians interpret these "days" as literal, 24-hour periods, a position called Young-Earth Creationism. It should be noted that certain interpretations of these "days" suggest they were indeterminate periods of time. Day-Age Theory and Historical Creationism are two theories that interpret the biblical data in a way that allows for an older earth. Regardless, the events and accomplishments of each "day" are the same.

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# What is Old Earth Creationism?

Dr. Shawn Nelson

There are two kinds of Old Earth creationism. One view allows for evolution and the other does not.

## The view that God did *not* use evolution

*Old Earth Creationism, Non-Evolution View.* People in this camp also believe the events in Genesis 1-11 are real historical events involving real places and people. Like Young Earthers, they also believe life was created in distinct kinds (it did not evolve). But unlike Young Earthers, this view agrees with the majority of the scientific community that universe is 13.8 billion years old (earth being 4.5 billion years old). <sup>[1]</sup>

This long span of time suggests there might be other ways to understand the days of Genesis instead of taking them to mean twenty-four-hour days. They believe that it is possible to hold any of these views while still being entirely faithful to the biblical text. These options are shown in Illustration 1 and can be explained as follows: (1) The creation days were ages or long periods of time (Day-Age View). (2) God took a single week to reveal creation events to Adam, but the act took much longer (Revelatory-Day View). (3) The mention of “evening and morning” could have been just a literary technique not meant to be taken strictly (Literary-Framework View). (4) The creative acts were done in single twenty-four-hour days with long gaps of time *between* creative acts (Alternate-Day-Age View). (5) There could have been a long gap of time between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2 and/or between 1:2 and 1:3 (Gap Theories). Finally, (6) God could have created the universe with the appearance of age (Ideal-Time View). The 24-Hour Day View (7) is included for comparison.

### Illustration 1. Common Views for “Day” in Genesis 1 <sup>[2]</sup>

View	Creative Acts	Note
(1) Day-Age View	Long Periods	Creation "days" are long ages.
(2) Revelatory-Day View	Long Periods	God revealed creation events to Moses over six 24-hour days.
(3) Literary-Framework View	Long Periods	Like 1 but biblical events not in sequential order.
(4) Alternate-Day-Age View	24-Hour Windows	God created in 24-hour windows between long ages.
(5) Gap Theories	Six 24-hour days	Long period of time before God began creating in 24-hour days.
(6) Ideal-Time View	Six 24-hour days	God created universe with appearance of age.
(7) 24-Hour Day View	Six 24-hour days	All creation events were finished in six normal 24-hour days.

## The View that God *did* use evolution

*Old Earth Creationism, Theistic Evolution View.* This view holds that “God created the universe, earth, and life over billions of years, and that the gradual process of evolution was crafted and governed by God to create the diversity of all life on earth.”<sup>[3]</sup> Natural selection and other evolutionary mechanisms have been acting over long time periods of time to bring about gradual speciation of new life forms. It is virtually the same as Darwinian evolution except that they believe that God guided the evolutionary process (hence the name *theistic* evolution).

Both Old Earth creationism views are opposed to Young Earth creationism, which says that the universe is no older than six-thousand years.

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1. Ham, *Four Views on Creation*, 13.
  2. Adapted from Norman L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology, Volume Two: God, Creation* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2003), 644–646 and Hugh Ross in Ken Ham et al., *Four Views on Creation*, 72.
  3. Deborah Haarsma in Ken Ham et al., *Four Views on Creation*, 125.

# What Is Young Earth Creationism?

Young Earth creationism teaches that God created the entire universe in six twenty-four-hour days about six-thousand years ago.<sup>[1]</sup> Life was created at the start in “kinds,” or distinct, fully-functioning lifeforms. Adam and Eve were the first human kind and there was no physical death for humans before the Fall<sup>[2]</sup> (physical death being a consequence of the Fall). All the events of Genesis (most notably chapters 1-11) are considered real historical events, which involve real people in real places.<sup>[3]</sup> The Genesis Flood is a very important event (Gen. 6-10) because a global flood (catastrophism) is how fossil evidence is typically explained in a young earth framework.<sup>[4]</sup> Proponents of the Young Earth view claim to be the most faithful to Scripture. And they allege that any other interpretation besides a plain, normal or “literal” interpretation of the days of Genesis is a direct attack on Scripture.

Young Earth creationism is opposed to Old Earth creationism, which holds that the earth is much older than six-thousand years.

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1. Ham in Ken Ham et al., *Four Views on Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 18.
  2. Some (but not all) believe no death of any species at all, e.g., insects.
  3. Ham, *Four Views on Creation*, 19.
  4. Not all Young Earthers believe this point.

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### Question: "What is the canopy theory?"

**Answer:** The canopy theory seeks to explain the reference in Genesis 1:6 to “the waters above the firmament,” assuming that “firmament,” or “expanse,” as the Hebrew word is alternatively translated, refers to our atmosphere. According to the canopy theory, there was a canopy of water above the atmosphere until the cataclysm of Noah’s day, at which point it disappeared either by collapsing upon the earth or dissipating into space. It is presumed to have consisted of water vapor because a canopy of ice could not have survived the constant bombardment of celestial objects like meteoroids which perpetually barrage the earth’s atmosphere.

While Genesis 1:20 (KJV) does say that birds fly in the firmament, suggesting the earth’s atmosphere, it also says that the sun, moon and stars reside there (Genesis 1:14-17), suggesting the entire sky from the earth’s surface outward, where birds fly and celestial objects reside. The Hebrew word alternatively translated “firmament” in some translations and “expanse” in others is *raqiya*. It appears nine times throughout the first chapter of Genesis (in verses 6-8, 14-18 and 20) and eight more times throughout the rest of the Old Testament (in Psalms, Ezekiel and Daniel).

According to Genesis, before there was air or land or any form of life, the earth was a formless mass of primordial water. On the second day of creation, God created the *raqiya*, placing it in the midst of the water, thereby separating it into two parts: “the waters above the firmament [*raqiya*]” and the waters below it. The waters below the *raqiya* He named “sea” (*yam* in Hebrew) and the *raqiya* itself He named “heaven,” “air” or “sky,” depending on your translation of the Hebrew word *shamayim*. But Genesis does not provide a name for the waters above the *raqiya*, nor is there any water above our atmosphere today, assuming that *raqiya* does mean “atmosphere.”

Advocates of the canopy theory once speculated that the collapse of such a vapor canopy might have provided the water for the heavy rains which inundated the earth during Noah’s flood. One problem with the canopy theory, however, is, the latent heat of water and the sheer quantities of water involved. If such a vapor canopy were to collapse into rain, it would literally cook the entire planet. This is because when water converts from vapor to liquid, energy or latent heat is released in the process, causing the surrounding area to heat up; this is known as an exothermic result. Conversely, when water converts from solid form—ice—to liquid or from liquid to vapor, energy is absorbed and the surrounding area is cooled—an endothermic result.

The Genesis account calls for five-and-a-half weeks of constant rain. If a canopy consisting of enough water vapor to provide that amount of rain were to collapse, it would cook the entire planet. This is not to say that there was no vapor canopy or that it did not collapse, only that, if it did, it could not have provided the amount of rain in question (the less water, the less heat).

It is interesting to note that, if a frozen canopy were able to exist in the atmosphere despite cosmic bombardment, its collapse into liquid rain would have an extreme cooling effect and might be an explanation for the commencement of the Ice Age. Despite the fact that we know that it happened, the complex factors involved in getting an Ice Age started makes it seem impossible and baffles modern science to this day. Advocates of the canopy theory also cite the existence of a canopy as a possible cause for a variety of pre-flood anomalies, including human longevity and the apparent

lack of rain or rainbows. They claim that such a canopy would filter out much of the cosmic radiation that is harmful to humans and cause the lack of rain or rainbows. However, opponents dispute such a canopy's ability to produce these results.

In defense of the view that *raqiya* means "atmosphere," the reference in Genesis 1:14-17 to the sun, moon and stars residing there may have simply been a phenomenological statement, just as our modern terms "sunset" and "sunrise" are phenomenological descriptions. That is, we know full well that the sun is stationary and doesn't really "rise" or "set," despite our usage of terms implying its movement from our earth-bound vantage point.

Whatever the case may be, there is no canopy up there today and any suggestion that there was one in the past is speculation because there simply isn't enough evidence one way or the other, except for the one enigmatic reference to waters above the firmament in Genesis 1:6, and no one claims to know for sure what that means.

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