



## S1E4: “In the Beginning”: How Does That Work?

Part 1 of 3 looking at Act 1: Creation

### GENESIS 1 – POSSIBILITIES

Poetic, non-literal

Evolutionary

24/7– (young earth)

Blend of scientific and poetic (middle earth)

#### OPTION 1 – POETIC, NON-LITERAL

- Account is metaphorical and figurative
- Theological message of God’s sovereignty is what matters
- Borrowed form of creation myth from ancient cultures
- Can’t justify treating concrete language here as metaphorical but then not do so other places
- Age of earth? Usually millions of years or unconcerned with the question

#### OPTION 2 – EVOLUTIONARY METAPHORICAL (Old Earth)

- Account is metaphorical and figurative
- Uses literary format to give ancient people some kind of origin story
- Prescientific world unable to understand evolutionary data so this wouldn’t work
- Moses didn’t know science so he just used what he knew; no divine inspiration
- Bad science? Bad theology? Assumes a humanistic origin of the Bible
- Earth is millions or billions of years old

#### OPTION 3 – YOUNG EARTH

- Takes text at face value, most straightforward reading

- Scientific chronology at work: 24 hour days, 7-day week
- Most often linked to creation taking place around 4000-6000 BC
- Issue with whether Hebrew *yom* “day” should always be treated here as a 24-hour clock
- Issue also with archaeological evidence using legitimate Carbon-14 dating places artifacts such as from ancient Jericho back 9,000-10,000 years ago
- Date of earth’s creation not based on 24/7 view but calculations using genealogies and other dates in Genesis and OT
- You can hold a 24/7 day-week view but not hold the age of the earth that young
- Some young earth creationists allow for age of the earth back to around 10,000 BC

#### OPTION 4 – MIDDLE EARTH

- Older than young earth but nowhere near the evolutionary timeline
- Age of earth is Tens of thousands to perhaps 100,000 years
- Argues a variety of other meanings for “day” seem to apply, not just the 24-hour chronology
- We do the same thing in English: “Back in my day, kids didn’t dress like that”
- View 1: “day” is not a 24-hour chronology but an indeterminate period of time
  - “eon” or “epoch” would be a better English translation
  - Issue here is tendency to treat “day” as always a long epoch in Gen 1 but not insist on that other places in the OT
- View 2: “day” means a 24-hour period of time but not 7 sequential days; not a week
  - The days represent the beginning of distinct acts of God in the creation process. Each day is separated by an indeterminate period of time
  - Text never says this is a week
  - Issue here is the danger of arguing from silence; also requires a more complicated reading of the text than young earth
- Most scholars who hold this view are not attempting to reconcile Genesis 1 with evolution but legitimately attempting to interpret the full text in all its meaning.

#### OBSERVATIONS

- Rejection of evolution as bad science, bad theology. Comes from a beginning point in which the possibility of God is rejected at the start: e.g., materialism.
- All explanations of creation begin with faith: either we believe God can exist outside of creation as Genesis 1 suggests or we don’t. Our explanations fit that assumption.
- Poetic metaphorical view leaves too many unanswered questions in the text itself.
- Either young earth or middle earth view – both compatible with the Bible and science and hold up in a strong biblical worldview
- Whatever the science and time explanation, the primary focal point is on the God’s creation as an act of will
- Theological statement about not only God’s sovereignty and authority but his purposes and intent for creation