

The Creation Myth

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Do I have your attention? (PDF/Text)

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1 Why Did I Write This?

Unfortunately, what began as an exciting study into the glory declared by the heavens very nearly ended in dejection just a few days after I started. The level of shrill, rancorous vitriol displayed by those who call themselves Christians can only be described as disgusting. Therefore, before we can explore the heavens to see how they declare the glory of God, we must dirty ourselves by jumping into a mudfight.

Let me give you an example.

I will give you two sets of statements; one is written by hardened, self-proclaimed atheists and agnostics; the other by Bible-believing, Jesus-loving Christians. Tell me who wrote each set of statements:

"somebody fine-tuned nature", "superintellect", "over-whelming design", "miraculous", "hand of God", "ultimate purpose", "God's mind", "exquisite order", "very delicate balance", "exceedingly ingenious", "supernatural Agency", "supernatural plan", "tailor-made", "Supreme Being", and "providentially crafted". (fine-tuning.pdf)

"seriously flawed", "flat-out lie", "greatest misconception of how modern science works", "grossly overstates", "handles information incorrectly", "general sloppiness", "dishonest", "careless and incompetent", "commits other blunders", "obvious errors or mis-statements", "nonsense", "gross oversimplification and overstatement", "incompetence", "misled many people", "scientific sloppiness", "outrageous biblical assertions", "riddled with errors". (dubious-apologetics)

What is your feeling about these statements? What spirit is behind them?

Surprisingly, the first set of statements are made by a large number of primarily atheist and agnostic cosmological physicists. Tragically, the second set of statements are written by Christian "Creation Scientists", describing how they feel about some of these cosmologist's claims that their observations of the Heavens seem to match the biblical record. Evidently, the theologians haven't read Matt 18:6 "But if anyone causes one of these little ones who trusts in me to lose faith, it would be better for that person to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around the neck."

So, how can we know who and what to believe about how the cosmos around us originated? Few of us here are likely to be physicists or cosmologists. Evidently, the "Christian" perspective as quoted above doesn't appear to be trustworthy. The best we can hope to do is check the Word ourselves; can modern Cosmology and the Biblical record possibly both be correct? This is an important question, because the answer demands a decision: if they are not compatible, you must reject either the Bible and its God, or the bulk of modern physics and cosmology. You cannot have it both ways.

2 Can The Bible Possibly Be Describing An Ancient Cosmology?

If the only possible interpretation of the Word is that of a strictly 6000 year old earth, created about 4000 years before Christ in 6 literal 24-hour creation days (144 hours), then we have a problem. There is no realistic way in physics to correlate the apparent age, size and distance of what we observe in the heavens, with what the bible says. One or the other must be incorrect.

Theory after theory proposed by so-called Creation Scientists has been proven incorrect. The stars aren't really that big or that far away. Wrong. Well, they are that far away, but the light was created "in transit" to earth. Nice try, but nonsense. OK, it wasn't created in transit, but as only 6 literal days passed on earth, many billions of years simultaneously passed in the heavens. Actually, this last argument is presently the best working hypothesis put forward by Creation Scientists to explain the apparent age of the heavens with what they claim to be the only allowable interpretation of Scripture. But is it really so? Why are they so averse to the idea of a 6-age creation? Is it because the bible is written in such a way that it is impossible to rationally believe in a 15 billion year creation, or is it because the pride of a lifetime of theological interpretation would come crashing down? Let's see.

2.1 In The Beginning, God...

Unless the observed and hypothesised cosmological order of the creation of the universe, galaxies, stars, solar systems and planets can be unified with Genesis 1, we must reject either modern cosmology, or the Bible. There is no middle ground. Rejecting the Bible is unacceptable to Christians. Rejecting modern physics and cosmological observation without a suitable replacement understanding results in the alienation of the bulk of the world's educated population; the very population which is being dragged, virtually kicking and screaming, toward the acceptance that there is a Supreme Being behind the order apparent in the Universe! What a tragedy it would be, if the bible was disproven simply by observing the heavens; the very heavens that the bible claims in Psa 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."

Therefore, we will begin at the beginning. How does the bible say that the universe was created? Is it in the order claimed by cosmological physicists and astronomers, or in some other order? One of the fundamental difference

between Creation Scientists and cosmologists is certainly in the apparent order of creation laid out in Genesis 1. Lets look first from the perspective of the many Christians, including the Creation Scientists:

A direct reading of Genesis 1 seems to say that on the first day, the heavens and the earth were created:

Gen 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ... And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. ... And the evening and the morning were the first day."

On the second day, the waters in the sky were separated from the waters below:

Gen 1:7 "And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which [were] under the firmament from the waters which [were] above the firmament: and it was so. ... And the evening and the morning were the second day."

On the third day, the dry land and oceans and plants:

Gen 1:10 "And God called the dry [land] Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that [it was] good. ... And the earth brought forth grass, [and] herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed [was] in itself, after his kind: and God saw that [it was] good. And the evening and the morning were the third day."

And on the fourth day, the sun, moon and stars:

Gen 1:14 "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: ... And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: [he made] the stars also. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day."

So, some say that a so-called "literal" interpretation of Genesis 1 must include 6 literal earth-days of creative activity, and an order of creation that includes the creation of plants on day 3 before the creation of the sun on day 4 (presumably, with the Eternal's shining glory sustaining photosynthesis. ... No, really! I'm being serious here! That's the claim of some Christian Scientists! Even though God's own word decrees that in him there is "...no variableness, neither shadow of turning." – James 1:17). All this, using 24-hour earth days, themselves evidently not created until day 4! Well, OK. With God, all things are possible. But, does it have to be that way? Or, are there perhaps other sensible readings of Genesis 1, which are internally consistent with the clear readings of other parts of the bible, and are also consistent with the observations of modern cosmology? We will come back to this a little later. First, let us see how we must interpret Genesis 1 to be

consistent with the cosmological evidence.

2.2 Does the Bible say that God created the Earth before the Sun or Stars?

Fortunately not. It may seem to say that, with a shallow reading of Genesis 1, but the bible provides a directly comparable example of an alternative interpretation – one that is 100% compatible with observed cosmology. And, luckily for us, it is right in one of the "Creation Scientists" favorite passages; the story of Noah! Fortunately, the same simple, direct reading of the Flood texts in Genesis 9 also address the "Creation Scientists" demand for a Global Flood. So, how do we interpret Genesis 1 to allow for a 15 billion year old universe, spanning 6 creation ages?

The problem is one of perspective; the Genesis creation history seems to involve a "change of perspective" between verse 1: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." and verse 2: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness [was] upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Clearly, God was not on the earth, when he created the "heaven and the earth". Also clearly, he was not away in heaven, or speaking from a perspective outside the creation, when he talked about his Spirit moving upon the face of the waters." Is it not possible that his perspective changed, and that the rest of the chronology is now from His perspective on the surface of the Earth? If so, there is no contradiction between cosmology and the Genesis record! We have, instead:

2.3 Biblical Order of Creation Consistent with Cosmological Observation

On the first day, all matter, energy, time, spacial dimensions, and the atomic and galactic-scale forces were created, in an act of perfection so precise that we as humans cannot even begin to conceive of the number which describes the improbability of this act "just happening". The galaxy clusters, super-clusters, and two generations of early galaxies and super-giant stars were created, burned, went super-nova and died, forging the elements required for God's planned physical life to exist. A spiral galaxy was formed on the edge of the Virgo Supercluster, far from harm; Safely nestled between two arms of this Milky Way galaxy, an unusually stable star was formed, ignited and drew together the exact combination of major and minor planets required to especially shield its third planets from harm. At the right moment, and planet sized object with twice the mass of Mars impacted this third planet, Earth,

at exactly the right angle and moment to completely replace its atmosphere and change its crustal composition to be perfect for life, and producing the Moon with perfect size, location and period of orbit to perfectly mix oceans that would not yet even appear for billions of years:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ... And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

On the second day, the waters in the sky were separated from the waters below, in a thermodynamic balancing act so precise, so improbable, that is sears the mind. Over yet more billions of years, under constant bombardment of gigatons of celestial matter, an atmosphere, water cycle and surface chemical composition was made which would be perfect for Human life. At any time, a single change in just one of dozens of Earth's characteristics, to a fraction of a decimal point, would have sent the Earth into a permanent deep-freeze or super-heating cycle, destroying the planet's ability to sustain life:

"And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which [were] under the firmament from the waters which [were] above the firmament: and it was so."

On the third day, the dry land and oceans and plants. Generation heaped upon generation of plant life was created, thrived, cleansed and re-engineered the earth's biosphere, and was destroyed in planet-sterilizing global catastrophes – only to be re-created to perform the next step in the God's terraforming plan. Larger, more complex and beautiful plant life was created and destroyed, time and time again which, along with geological activity, hid harmful atmospheric by-products and created gargantuan hydrocarbon deposits. A stable oxygen/nitrogen/carbon-dioxide atmosphere was produced, which was otherwise impossible for a planet the size and mass of Earth:

"And God called the dry [land] Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that [it was] good. ... And the earth brought forth grass, [and] herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed [was] in itself, after his kind: and God saw that [it was] good."

And on the fourth day, the sun, moon and stars finally became visible, as the atmosphere cleared:

"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: ... And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: [he made] the stars also."

2.4 Staggering Improbability of Accidentally Fine-Tuned Earth

The improbability of the correct combination of all of the tuning parameters required for God's home for human life is conservatively estimated at one in 10^{144} . Under no conceivable circumstance, even given trillions of universes existing in parallel, or coming into existence one after the other, could this have happened by accident – a fact that has not escaped the modern cosmological community.

Robert Griffiths, a respected mathematical physicist, observed, "If we need an atheist for a debate, I go to the philosophy department. The physics department isn't much use." Perhaps astrophysicist Robert Jastrow, a self-proclaimed agnostic, best described what has happened to his colleagues as they have measured the cosmos:

"For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries." (3) (3) Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos*, pg 160.

2.5 Simple Biblical Justification for Genesis 1 Perspective Change

But, how can we possibly justify an interpretation of Genesis 1 that includes a change of perspective like that described above? Creation scientists reject the possibility as repulsive. But we can interpret it that way, because virtually the same words are used, and obviously the same interpretation is demanded, by a simple reading of Genesis 8, the Flood chronology! Since the global flood of Genesis is another favourite topic of Creation Scientists, it is really quite shocking that they haven't noticed this similarity. Or, have they noticed it, but just don't want to talk about it?

2.6 The Dove's Point of View

Lets take a look at some of Noah's chronology of the Flood in Genesis 8:9. Noah has been in the ark for 150 days, and he runs aground on the mountains of Ararat in the 7th month. In verse 4 and 5, we observe that in the 10th month, the tops of some mountains could be seen.

"And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth [month], on the first [day] of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen."

Presumably, this would be from Noah's perspective, or at least from God's perspective where the ark ran aground. Even if not, it seems to be the case that somewhere in the earth, the tops of mountains could be seen. Now, in verse 8 and 9, we see

"Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters [were] on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark." (emphasis mine)

Now, this is exactly the same words used to describe the "face of the waters" (mayim and paniym) on the "earth" ('erets) in Genesis 1:2; Clearly, the writer of Genesis moved cleanly between the perspective of God (where there were mountains above the flood), to the perspective of the Dove (which clearly didn't find any land). The exact same words were used to describe both God's perspective the Dove's perspective – the "whole earth". So, do we reject Genesis 8 as being inconsistent, or do we accept that there could be a valid change of perspective between Genesis 1 verse 1 and 2?

Interestingly, the exact same Hebrew word for "face" (paniym) is used by God in Genesis 6:7 to describe the extents of the flood used to destroy man, as are used to describe what the Dove finds covered with water. However, a different word is used for "earth" ('adamah), which is repeatedly used to mean tilled ground, or the dust of the ground, or the ground where mankind had multiplied to. So, is it not possible that we can read Genesis 6:7 exactly as it is written; that God's intent was to exterminate Mankind from the face of the earth, wherever he lived? It would seem so. If so, the necessity of a Global Flood to fulfill the literal description of Noah's Flood in Genesis 6-9 is unnecessary. In fact, a flood sufficient to kill all mankind better fits the literal Hebrew translation.

3 The Heavens Declare God's Glory

If no contradiction exists between the modern cosmological history of the universe, and the known geological record of earth, why create a contentious issue out of it? If formerly atheist cosmological physicists are coming face-to-face with God, why do some Christians insist on creating unnecessary conflict? It would be truly embarrassing if it were only being done to avoid the admission of error in an interpretation of scripture. The church's behaviour toward Galileo in the middle ages should serve as a warning to us all; what God chooses to reveal through his Spirit, we quench at our own peril.

Here is an image of a small area of black space, taken over days by the Hubble telescope. All objects in this image are Galaxies. This incredible volume and mass of the universe were necessary, to give us the type and stability of physical laws we observe, and which are absolutely necessary for the support of life on our Earth. These all were created, so that we might have a place to live. Isn't it astonishing that a group of Christians would discourage non-Christians everywhere from belief in the Creator God, by claiming that the majesty and intricacy of what is observed is inconsistent with the biblical record?

Hubble Deep Field