

The Bible and Creation

The Early Earth and the World to Come

Genesis 1:1-2 & Revelation 21, 22

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Introduction

I. The time of creation was set by God (“in the beginning”).

- This is a reference to the opening part of the first day of creation and is the beginning of time, space, and matter (Ex. 20:11).
- This is not the beginning of John 1:1. Christ is the eternal Word and therefore existed prior to creation.
- The translation that stands in the KJV, NASV, RSV, NIV is correct, for this is an independent clause in the Hebrew, not a dependent clause as is translated in the NEB, GNB, JB, and Anchor Bible. Where it is translated “when . . .”, it is not dependent in reference to verses 2 and 3.
- This is a reference to the absolute beginning of things. There was no previous existence of space, time or matter. There was no preexistent energy except in the Godhead.
- Genesis 1:1 is not a mere title prefixed to the chapter nor is it a summary of events. The summary is given in Genesis 2:4. Notice also that Genesis 2:1 gives the termination of the work of the six days of creation (“the heavens” is included in the summary). The only mention of “heavens” during the six days is in Genesis 1:1.
- The date of creation is not explicitly stated but is implicit in biblical chronology.

- With a beginning there is a future goal (“new heavens and new earth,” Rev. 21:1). “At the commencement of the creation story the passage declares that God as Sovereign knows and controls the ‘end from the beginning’ (Isa. 40:10).” Kenneth A. Mathews

II. The source of creation was the omnipotent, infinitely wise God of the universe (“God”).

- The subject of the sentence and the one who dominates the whole creation scene is God (30 times in 31 verses).
- His name in the Hebrew is Elohim, the plural of El. It emphasizes “His majestic power and glory.”
 - It draws special attention to His omnipotence.
 - It allows for the New Testament revelation of the triunity of the Godhead.
- We know from further revelation that the Father planned the creation, the Son spoke the creative word, and the Holy Spirit carried out and finished the work of creation (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2).
- The Bible assumes the existence of God. Genesis refutes atheism, polytheism, pantheism, etc.
- Man cannot arrive at a true understanding of origins apart from God.

III. The act of creation was a supernatural and sudden work of God and is to be accepted by faith (Heb. 11:3) (“created”).

- The world came into being not by natural processes but “in a way that was entirely different from anything that may be observed in the present universe.” (Dr. John C. Whitcomb, *The Early Earth*)
- No preexisting materials were used.

- The verb (*bara*) is never used other than divine activity. Only God can create, and He created something out of nothing (*creation ex nihilo*).
- This can only be understood by faith (unconditional submission to the authority of the Word of God).
- Evolutionism requires its own faith commitment.
- Creation was sudden. It was instantaneous.
- Creation was the first great period of miracles.

IV. The objects of creation were “the heavens and the earth.”

- God spoke into existence the heavens, the “upper regions” (plural of intensity, the heavenly spheres). The Bible refers to three different heavens.
- God spoke into existence the earth, the “basic elements of matter in the universe.”
- God created the earth in states of incompleteness. It is described in its unfinished state, not in a state of ruin or chaos.
 - “*And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.*”
 - Its condition: “and the earth was” (not “became” or “had become”). *Tohu* – unformed, not yet in shape. *Bohu* – empty, no inhabitants (Jer. 4:23; Deut. 32:10). The earth had to be shaped and peopled.
 - Its covering: “darkness” (absence of light, a shoreless ocean). God names the darkness in verse 5, “night.”

- Its care: The presence of the Holy Spirit. God's satisfaction with the first phase of His creative work.
- The God of the beginning is the God of the middle and the God of the end.
 - The world to come (2 Pet. 3:13)
 - No night there (Rev. 21:25)
 - No more sea (21:1)
 - No need of sun or moon (21:23)
 - Man in a prepared city (21:2)
 - River flowing from God's throne (22:1)
 - Gold in the city (21:21)
 - Tree of life throughout the city (22:2)
 - All manner of precious stones (21:19)
 - God dwelling with His people (21:3)