

Part I

The Question on Hand

1 Introduction

Genesis often comes up as a matter of debate among christans, scholars and critics. The six day creation account has generated plenty of controversy as to the method of interpretation of Genesis 1-3 and therefore how much of it can be trusted.

It is the prevailing scientific thought that the universe is billions of years old and the earth is several billion years old. Earth was formed through gradual processes, and life somehow evolved as a matter of a combination of abiogenesis and evolution. Evolution attempts to explain the many forms and types of life present on planet earth while abiogenesis attempts to explain how the first cell was formed.

Such prevailing thoughts seem to contradict the account given in Genesis. Thus generating the said controversy.

2 Scope

Seeing how the subject matter is so broad, it is important to narrow the search down to several specific questions:

- What are the prevailing thoughts of genesis interpretation?
- What is the prevailing scientific consensus of the origin of the earth and life? What methods were used to arrive at such a conclusion?
- What are the implications of the various forms of genesis interpretation?
- What method of interpretation is most plausible?

3 disclaimer

I am human and there will be biases present. I am saying these upfront. As of the start of this research, I am more inclined to believe in a miraculous literal 24 hr creation account having experienced physical miracles personally. I am also keen to look into scientific evidence. The age of the earth is one of them, where it seems K-Ar dating dates the earth to several billion years old. Thus i am more inclined initially to have a variation of gap theory. Earth would be created several billion years ago, formless and empty with water. Thus, elements with their radioisotopes would be present. And God simply terraformed the earth within six 24hr days.

However, i acknowledge this has weaknesses. Why would God wait several billion years with a ball of rock and water?

This most closely resembles gap theory. However, i do not believe earth was created good and then became formless and void, but was created formless and void. As to why, i don't really know.

Part II

Prevailing thoughts of Genesis Interpretation

We start by examining previous scholarly thought much like a literature review. Not all of these come from peer reviewed articles unfortunately, but they do represent the various worldviews held by many christians.

4 biologos review

<https://biologos.org/articles/comparing-interpretations-of-genesis-1/>

According to this website, there are so far eight non exhaustive methods of interpreting genesis 1.

4.1 Young Earth Interpretation

Creation occurred 6000 years ago, during six 24h days literally as described.

4.2 Gap Interpretation

In Genesis 1:1-2, we see that the earth was formless and void. The earth was originally okay. Then "became" formless and void, and was restored over six literal 24hr days. One might view the age of the rocks being very old, (cite here).

4.3 Day-Age Interpretation

The word day or yom יום should not be interpreted as 24 hr periods, but rather as long epochs lasting billions of years long.

4.4 Appearance of Age Interpretation

Earth was created as is in six 24 hr days along with the entire universe. The universe was functional and mature as is. However, with prevailing scientific theories and dating methods, we might view this to be billions of years old.

4.5 Proclamation Day Interpretation

Time was relativistic between God's throne room and earth. The day here refers to days in God's frame of reference and not from earth's frame of reference.

4.6 Creation Poem Interpretation

Genesis 1 is to be interpreted like a poem, and not literally.

4.7 Kingdom and Temple Interpretation

Similar to Proclamation Day interpretation, the days and events here do not refer to earth directly, but from God's perspective. The text does not focus on this physical universe. God then gives humans a "land grant" covenant (i have little idea what this is, though i take it to mean that God just leases land to human beings, calling them to be fruitful and multiply.)

4.8 Ancient Near Eastern Cosmology Interpretation

Genesis 1 was written to match the context of the ancient world, where they had a certain concept of how the earth was created. Genesis 1 was written for the ancient audience and not modern scientific audience.

Using this as a starting point, we now compare it to other sources which say how christians might interpret genesis.

5 Gospel Coalition review

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/evangelical-interpretations-genesis-1-2/>

Firstly, the young earth creationism view is exactly the same as above. Six literal 24 h days with no gap between earth being formless and void and then being created on by God.

Secondly mature creation theory closely correlates to the appearance of age interpretation. For which God creates this universe as is, seemingly mature.

Thirdly, revelatory day theory is discussed. The six 24 hr days refer to six 24 hr days where God revealed creation to Moses, not six 24hr days of creation on earth.

Fourthly, gap theory correlates to gap theory above. And the cause of the earth being formless and void was due to the fall of Satan.

Fifth, local creation theory. Genesis pertains to a small section of creation of the earth, not the whole earth.

Sixth, intermittent day theory. Between each 24 hr day, there were long unspecified periods of pauses.

Seventh. Day age theory corresponds to the day age interpretation discussed above.

Eighth, analogical Day theory. Days are not 24 hr literal, but correspond to God's cycles of work and rest. There is some overlap with the proclamation day interpretation.

Ninth, framework view. Genesis 1 is a literary framework which is something of a poem rather than something of literal historical value. This corresponds to the creation poem interpretation.

Tenth, religion only interpretation. Genesis shows who God is and is not to be taken literally. The bible is about who and why and the science is about how. This corresponds to the creation poem and Ancient Near Eastern Cosmology interpretation view.