

GENESIS

MORE CLASS



RESOURCES

Chapters 1-2

Prolegomena

The questions we have about Genesis may not be questions that Genesis is intending to answer.

Key Hermeneutical Principles

- There is a great gap between our world and the world of Genesis/Moses.
 - What was God wanting to communicate through Moses to the original audience (post-Genesis Israelites) with the book of Genesis?
 - What timeless truths do we find in this passage?
 - How should we respond to this passage as the secondary audience?
- Approach the Text: Prayer, Humility, Curiosity, Consistency, and Delight
 - Genesis 1-2 is historically, in both the “recordings of past events” and the “*momentous*” type definitions of the word, difficult to interpret for Hebrews, Hebrew scholars, Christian theologians, and other various people indwelt by the very Spirit of God. Therefore, it is important to understand what we must hold onto tightly and what we can hold loosely in this passage.

A Living Thesis

Genesis 1-2 is primarily a theological polemic. In other words, this text was given by God to distinguish his character, his nature, and his plan for creation in general and humanity in specificity from the competing, ancient near-eastern worldviews of their day.

“Both Genesis and science say that the universe is geared to supporting human life. But Genesis says more. It says that you, as a human being, bear the image of God. The starry heavens show the glory of God, yes; but they are not made in God’s image. You are. That makes you unique. It gives you incalculable value.”

- John Lennox

Interpretative Models for Genesis

View / Model	Summary	Notable Figures
Young Earth / 24-Hour Day	Days are literal 24-hour periods. Earth is ~6–10k years old. Death enters only after Adam.	Ken Ham, Henry Morris, John MacArthur, John Piper (leans here), Matt Chandler (leans here), many in Christian Churches / Restoration Movement
Gap Theory	Long gap between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2; creation ruined and re-created in six days.	Origen, Thomas Chalmers, C. I. Scofield, Arthur Pink
Day-Age Theory	Each “day” = long epoch or age, not 24 hours.	Hugh Ross, Charles Hodge, B. B. Warfield, John Lennox
Revelatory Day (Visionary Day)	“Days” are periods of revelation to the author, not periods of creation.	Bernard Ramm, P. J. Wiseman
Framework View	Literary/theological framework: Days 1–3 = forming, Days 4–6 = filling. Not chronological.	Meredith Kline, Henri Blocher, Bruce Waltke, Tremper Longman, J. I. Packer
Local Creation / ANE Contextual	Genesis describes functional ordering in ANE context, not material origins of entire cosmos.	John Walton
Mytho-History	Genesis 1–11 is theological mytho-history: symbolic with a historical core.	William Lane Craig
Theistic Evolution / Evolutionary Creation	God used evolutionary processes. Genesis gives theological truth, not scientific chronology.	Francis Collins, Denis Alexander, John Stott, N. T. Wright, Tim Keller, C. S. Lewis, Tremper Longman
Atheistic Naturalism	Rejects God entirely. Genesis is cultural myth without truth.	Richard Dawkins, Stephen Jay Gould, Carl Sagan

Why Christians Need Not Fear Science nor Be Limited by Science

- (1) The Bible tells us why, science tells us how.
 - (a) Scripture speaks to meaning, purpose, and God's plan of redemption. Science deals with mechanisms, processes, and natural causes. These are not enemies but complementary lenses: God is the author of both the Book of Scripture and the Book of Nature.
- (2) Science studies God's world.
 - (a) The Bible reveals God as the Creator (Gen. 1; Ps. 19; Rom. 1:20). Science is simply the study of how His creation works. Every discovery about the natural world—whether about galaxies, DNA, or ecosystems—ultimately reveals more of His wisdom, power, and creativity.
- (3) Christians can embrace science without embracing naturalism.
 - (a) Naturalism says “nature is all there is” (a philosophy, not science itself). Science, properly practiced, does not demand that view—it just investigates what can be observed and tested. Thus, science is not to be feared, but a deep secularism that says the physical is all that exists is to be rejected. A Christian worldview lets us use the tools of science while recognizing there is more to reality than matter and energy.
- (4) Historically, Christian faith fueled science.
 - (a) Many founders of modern science (Kepler, Newton, Boyle, Pascal) were Christians. They studied the world because they believed in a rational God who created an orderly universe.
- (5) Science has limits.
 - (a) It's powerful for answering questions of process (“How does this work?”), but it cannot answer ultimate questions of meaning, morality, or purpose (“Why are we here? What is good? What happens after death?”). Those belong to theology and philosophy.

“The trustworthiness of God's behavior in His world is the foundation of all scientific truth.”

-AW Tozer

“God is not an alternative to science as an explanation, he is not to be understood merely as a God of the gaps, he is the ground of all explanation.”

-John Lennox

“Will we turn our backs on science because it is perceived as a threat to God, abandoning all the promise of advancing our understanding of nature ... Alternatively, will we turn our backs on faith,

concluding that science has rendered the spiritual life no longer necessary ... Both of these choices are profoundly dangerous. ... The God of the Bible is also the God of the genome. He can be worshipped in the cathedral or in the laboratory. His creation is majestic, awesome, intricate and beautiful — and it cannot be at war with itself.”

-Francis Collins

FAQs

- Is the earth old (millions or billions of years old) or is it young 4000-6500 years old?
 - From what we can observe within creation itself, the universe and earth seem much older than 4000-6500 years. The biblical text does not necessitate a view that the earth is young. While unlikely, it is possible that God made the universe to look old while actually being young. This would be similar to the idea that Adam was not formed as a baby but formed as a man. He was but moments old at his first breath, but had the appearance of being old.
 - Scholars, theologians, philosophers and God-fearing scientists have disagreed on this topic from the beginning until now. It would be wise of us to hold our particular view on this loosely.
- Were Adam and Eve real people?
 - This belongs to the category of “let’s hold this loosely.” The reasoning for this is due to the fact that Adam and Eve are described in both symbolic terms, as representatives for humanity, and seemingly historical terms. Adam is described in genealogies alongside other known, historical figures, and many scholars would say that the use of his name in the New Testament (Rom. 5.14, 1 Cor. 15.22, 45, 1 Tim. 2.13-14, Jude 14) point toward his literal existence. Yet, it is not hard to see why people hold to Adam and Eve being representative of humanity and the human condition based on the symbolic language of Genesis 1-2, the meaning of the names (Adam = man, Eve = to live/to give life). It is possible that what we have is an account of the first people but not an account of all the people that God formed from the dust rather than “bore from the womb.” This would account for the humans that Adam and Eve’s children found to marry in Genesis 4 and line up with the *toledoth motif* found throughout Genesis.
- What about dinosaurs?
 - Just because the Bible does not mention something does not mean that those things did not exist or that something did not happen. The Bible mentions nothing about giraffes, zebras, gorillas, rhinos, pandas, penguins, tigers, moose, elk, bison, or beavers. Many world-renown leaders lived and died within the biblical timeline without a hint of mention in the text of Scripture. Much of human history is not recorded in the Bible. Let the Bible talk about God and his plan for humanity. It does include some history and some information about our world, but it by no means has ever claimed to say everything about all things.
 - It is worth noting that in the old-earth view, dinosaurs, a word not seen until around 1840 meaning terrible lizard, could have easily existed and become extinct prior to the creation of humans.