

# *Origins*

## **Creation, Forming the World**

Lesson #2 for January 12, 2013

Scriptures: Genesis 1:1-13; Isaiah 45:18; 1 John 1:5; Revelation 22:5; 2 Corinthians 4:6; 2 Peter 3:5; Job 38:4-7.

1. Our focus for this study will be on the first three days of creation week. This is the period of time some scholars have called the “forming” of the earth.
2. We have suggested on previous occasions that there are many, many scientific variables that need to be exactly right for life to exist on this earth. Doesn't that suggest design and purpose? Or, does that suggest accidental evolution? When God decided to create this world, He chose to take seven days to do it. He could have done it in a matter of seconds; but, for the benefit of the beings of the onlooking universe, He did it step-by-step. The first three days were spent forming the earth. The next three days were spent “filling” it. He even created the days.
3. Many modern Christians with a scientific bent are inclined to believe in “theistic evolution.” They believe that God somehow set things in place; and then, those things gradually evolved. Does this imply that God somehow created things with an inherent purpose built in? The theistic evolutionists would like us to believe that God does not impose His will on us in any way.
4. So, how would you decide if nature has a built-in “purpose”? Pure evolutionists say everything developed by pure chance. Theistic evolutionists say that God “built in” a purpose; and then, evolution happened. But, few of them seem to know how it actually worked. Of course, creationists believe that God created everything just the way He designed it to be.
5. Read Genesis 1:1-2. What kind of earth existed here before God began the process of creating our world? From the text, it seems that it was “unformed, unfilled, dark, and wet.” A lot of scientific exploration and billions of dollars have gone into the exploration of the moon and Mars and other planets to try to discover the presence of water. The reason water is so important is that it is impossible to imagine life as we know it without the presence of water. So, what was here before God began the creative process as described in Genesis 1?
6. Read Revelation 12:9; Genesis 3:1; Luke 10:18; and John 1:1-3. It should be clear that Satan was here on this earth in the Garden of Eden to tempt Eve almost immediately after human beings were created. He must have been here before this world was created. Revelation 12:9 suggests that he was cast down from heaven. To what was he cast down?
7. What other beings were present when God began to create this earth? Read Job 38:4-8. See the handout “The Great Controversy in Scripture” on the [www.theox.org](http://www.theox.org) website at [https://www.theox.org/images/images\\_A2115/GrtContinScripture.pdf](https://www.theox.org/images/images_A2115/GrtContinScripture.pdf)
8. Is it possible that God created the rocks and maybe even the water here on this earth a long time before He created the world as we know it? The Bible does not tell us exactly when the earth as opposed to the world was created. In biblical terminology, the word *earth* (Greek: *gae*) means the rock surrounding the ball of molten metal. The *world* (Greek: *cosmos*) means the biosphere and the things that live on the surface of this earth. Did God necessarily create the earth and the world at the same time? What covered the earth before God created the world?
9. Who were the other beings described in Job 38? Read Job 1:6; 2:1. There are apparently other beings living on other worlds throughout the universe. We do not know if they live on worlds suitable for our habitation or not. It is possible that there are different kinds of beings living in very different kinds of worlds. We must not limit God's creative ability in any way.
10. One thing is very clear: God made our world to be inhabited by beings like us. (Isaiah 45:18) Clearly, God stated that the earth, before He began His work with it, was unfit for habitation. It is important for us to recognize that even if the earth was created long before this world, God

was not in any way dependent upon pre-existing matter in His creative process. (8T 258.4 (1904); MH 414.3; FLB 24.3) It is possible that God used some matter that He had previously created when He made our world or just possible that He created entirely new matter. In either case, it was matter that He Himself had created at one time or another.

11. Read Genesis 1:3-5. What do you think happened when God said, "Let there be light"?
12. It should be clear that the creation of our world was not the first "light" that had been seen or created. If there was no light, that would suggest that there were no previous stars, suns, or even God Himself. (John 1:4-8; 8:12; 9:5; Revelation 22:5) Of course, we understand that God is not necessarily dependent on our particular spectrum of light to lighten other places in the universe. We know that other stars and nebulae emit energy in other wavelengths that our eyes cannot see; but, it is possible that there are other beings who can see those wavelengths. Could it be that the creation of "light" might mean that God either started our earth spinning so we would have a day and night cycle, thus producing "light" for the formerly dark side of the earth for the first time, or that it was at this time that God was preparing to make a group of creatures with eyes that are sensitive to this particular wavelength? Our eyes are only sensitive to approximately one "octave" of wavelength. Our moon does not spin relative to our earth; the heavier side always faces our earth.
13. Since it is quite clear that light was not created for the first time when our earth was created, what is the meaning of these verses? The day and the night as we know them are created by the spin of our earth. Is it possible that God set our earth spinning at that point in time, thus creating day and night? Clearly, God named light "day" and darkness "night"; thus implying that since He created them, He is in charge of them.
14. Anyone who has stood outside on a clear night realizes that there are many other sources of light besides our sun. It is possible that this earth was surrounded by thick clouds before God began His creative action here. In many places God Himself is described as *light*. (1 John 1:5; Revelation 21:23; 22:5) There are some other possible explanations for those words as well.
15. Read Genesis 1:6-8. What is a "firmament" or an "expanse"? The ancient peoples to whom Moses was writing could not comprehend the idea that something could sit in space without being held up or supported by something solid. Even scientists today cannot really explain how gravity works! Thus, they believed that there must be some kind of solid substance out there in space holding up the stars and even the birds.
16. What was actually created on the second day? It seems clear that it was our atmosphere. The word *firmament* comes from the word *raqia* and means "to stamp out" or "pound into a thin sheet" often referring to metal which is pounded thin to cover another substance such as an idol. (Exodus 39:3; Isaiah 40:19; Jeremiah 10:9; and Numbers 16:39) The idea is that God spread out a thin (17 km at the equator and 7 km at the poles) "expanse" of air/atmosphere to cover our earth. According to their ancient beliefs, it was to provide some means of "supporting" the things that were out there: from the birds in the air to the astronomical bodies in space.
17. It is clear that God proceeded very methodically in His creation process. He left nothing to chance. Step-by-step He began with the most basic of elements and produced our world. Once again, we see a clear design and purpose in everything that God does.
18. Read Genesis 1:9-13. From these verses it seems clear that originally our world was completely covered with water. On the third day, God raised up continents and deepened other areas on this earth to contain the runoff water. Thus, God produced the third division in His creative process. The first division was between light and darkness, the second between water above and water below, and the third between dry land and seas. Once again, we find that God "named" everything He produced. What does *named* imply?
19. On the third day, God not only created the dry ground but also the green grass, the herbs, the

fruit trees, the decorative trees, and presumably all vegetable and plant life on that same day. These were to be sources of food for the creatures He was later going to create.

20. When studying the layers of the earth, geologists notice that below the Cambrian layer there are almost no forms of life. Then suddenly, above that level there are many kinds of life. What do you think? Considering: 1) All the different fossil forms that have been discovered, and 2) The fact that even today certain species of animals and plants are disappearing from our planet, were there more differences in life forms back in the beginning? Or, are there more differences in life forms today? Many species are disappearing from our earth today. Does that contradict evolution?
21. Even from the very lowest layers in the geologic column or from the earliest times in history, we see an incredible diversity of life forms. That is not a picture suggesting a single ancestor giving rise to several different forms which eventually led to more forms. For example, does it even make common sense to believe that the incredible variety of fruits and vegetables happened by chance?
22. Try to imagine the variety of fruits that must have been available to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. How did they decide what to eat? Remember that vegetables were not added to their diet until they were outside the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:18) When Adam and Eve were required to leave the Garden of Eden, what did they eat? Did the necessary plants just suddenly appear in the territory around them? Were those plants mature and ready to be eaten? Was this a completely new diet? Or, did Adam and Eve carry with them seeds from the Garden of Eden?
23. Whatever happened—and we hope one day to see the whole history in 3-D living color—it is clear that all was created by God’s omnipotent power. He spoke and it happened. (2 Corinthians 4:6; Psalms 33:6,9; and Isaiah 55:11)
24. Even in the New Testament, there are many references to the history of creation. Read 2 Peter 3:5. Those who choose to believe an evolutionary explanation for the origins of things on this earth have to deny the clear testimony of Scripture from beginning to end.
25. There are many cultures around the world that have creation stories of various kinds. But, the biblical account as written down by Hebrew prophets is the only one where God simply spoke and it happened without any violence or resistance. Does it seem logical to you that a God of love and kindness and grace and peace would choose to create our world through violence and conflict as suggested by the non-biblical accounts?
26. The Bible clearly teaches that death is the result of sin. (Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23) How could that be true if God’s means of creating our world was through competition, elimination of the weak by the strong, and all the death and suffering that are part of the evolutionary process? It is really not feasible to harmonize the teachings of the Bible with evolutionary theory.
27. If possible, look again at the handout “The Great Controversy in Scripture” for plenty of evidence that many parts of our universe including intelligent beings from other areas of the universe existed before our world was created. Satan is the one who brought conflict, sin, death, and trouble to our planet. For those of us who understand the great controversy as presented in Scripture, it is possible to explain the existence of an evil world despite having a good God.
28. However, the earth as originally created was not tainted by evil in any way.

As the earth came forth from the hand of its Maker, it was exceedingly beautiful. Its surface was diversified with mountains, hills, and plains, interspersed with noble rivers and lovely lakes; but the hills and mountains were not abrupt and rugged, abounding in terrific steeps and frightful chasms, as they now do; the sharp, ragged edges of earth’s rocky framework were buried beneath the fruitful soil, which everywhere produced a luxuriant growth of verdure. There were no loathsome swamps or barren deserts. Graceful shrubs and delicate flowers

greeted the eye at every turn. The heights were crowned with trees more majestic than any that now exist. The air, untainted by foul miasma, was clear and healthful. The entire landscape outvied in beauty the decorated grounds of the proudest palace. The angelic host viewed the scene with delight, and rejoiced at the wonderful works of God.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 44.

29. Many of a scientific bent in our generation make fun of Genesis 1-11 because they say it is too simplistic. I would like to pose a question to those who think like that. Suppose theoretically that God miraculously gave Moses a full knowledge of all the scientific information that we now know and even more details about the steps God went through in creating our world. Moses lived at a time when the first alphabet had just been created. Language was very simple. Even if Moses understood how God had done each step in the creative process, it would have been impossible for him to tell anyone! We must remember that everything that was written was written in context. That is the primary determinant of how it was written.
30. Does the orderliness of the creative process tell us anything about God's plans for our lives even today? Can we understand God's plan for our lives?
31. Instead of creating millions or even billions of human beings to fill this earth, God created one male and one female. He instructed them to multiply and fill the earth. What does that teach us about God's plan for human families. Does your understanding of the creation story impact your life today in any significant way?
32. Apparently, Charles Darwin got his initial idea about the evolutionary process from his visit to the Galapagos Islands. After a careful study of what actually happened on the Galapagos, David L. Hall stated: "The God of the Galapagos is careless, wasteful, indifferent, almost diabolical. This is not the sort of God to whom anyone would be inclined to pray."
33. Are there any limits on God's creative power? Does God limit His creative power in order to allow us human freedom? Does God always respect our freedom? Are there times when God finds it necessary to violate human freedom? Has He ever done that? What about the flood? What about the firstborn in Egypt?
34. Some would suggest that while God has the power to create, He is so limited by His desire to allow freedom that we, in effect, are given the power to self-create and self-determine. Can you find support for this idea in Scripture?
35. One other fairly old idea is the theory described as deism. Deism suggests that God created everything long ago like winding up a clock and then set it going on its own. Deists say that after that initial experience, God has had little to do with events here on this earth.
36. What would be the point of praying to a God who had turned over His responsibilities for this earth to those who live here?
37. We believe in a God who hears and answers prayer. That presupposes a God who cares and who is willing to intervene when necessary in the events of earth. Would you want to be saved and taken to heaven if God were capricious and untrustworthy? If God chose to create as theistic evolutionists say, He did so through the use of violence and death. Would that make you want to love Him more? Would a Sabbath day's rest in celebration of creation have been meaningful if we were celebrating violence and death in a long-term evolutionary process? Would it be fair to God for God to condemn us for exercising violence if that was one of His chief means of creating?

© 2012, Kenneth Hart, MD, MA, MPH. Permission is hereby granted for any noncommercial use of these materials. Free distribution is encouraged. It is our goal to see them spread as widely and freely as possible. If you would like to use them for your class or even make copies of portions of them, feel free to do so. We always enjoy hearing about how you might be using the materials, and we might even want to share good ideas with others. So, let us know. [Info@theox.org](mailto:Info@theox.org)

Last Modified: December 7, 2012

Z:\My Documents\WP\SSTG-Hart\Origins\SS-2-Origins-2013\_01\_12-Fin+.wpd