

## Genesis In The Beginning Part 2

Earth Age

*Genesis 1:1-26*

*Memory Verses: Genesis 1:2*

### MANUSCRIPT

#### Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth. Last week we looked in depth at what creation teaches us about God. The Bible definitively proclaims that God is the author of all. All the universe, all the stars, planets, galaxies, and solar systems... God is the author of it! He wrote it into existence with his voice. He is the author of all the earth; all the plants, animals, mountains, seas, and sky. And he is the author of humanity! He spoke us into existence from the dust of the ground. His is the author. He is the all powerful creator. He created everything that has been created or ever will be created by his power. There is no greater power the world has ever known. The power to create everything from nothing and think it into existence. The power to create life and sustain it. He is the intricate designer of all. Not only by the power of his word did he speak all into existence, he intricately designed everything down to the infinitesimal detail. This isn't a slapped together science project at the last minute. This isn't a styrofoam ball on a coat hanger or a cup of dirt... no, God has created everything with such meticulous thought and mechanical engineering that it can't even be comprehended by our greatest minds.

And what does this mean for you today? If he is the author of everything then he is your authority! He is the boss, he is the master, he is the Lord! He has authority over your life because he made you! The maker makes the rules! It means that if he is all powerful then you can trust his power to work for your good according to his purposes. He has the power of salvation and the power of damnation. It means that if he is the designer then the details of life matter. We must be intricate and meticulous followers. We must live sold out and urgently on task. We must do it better because our God is greater.

But ultimately all of this points to one thing! The author, creator, and designer of everything is worthy of glory! Everything that was made or will be made was made through and for him. **The chief end of all creation is to glorify God!** Creation inevitably points us to a God who is worthy of all worship, glory, honor, devotion, obedience, and surrender!

Today we want to continue to ponder the greatness of our creator as we hone in on a particular topic concerning creation. One that is nuanced but very important to study. There are varying opinions, interpretations, and ways to observe this doctrine, but in the end we must

come to grips on one thing... God is not playing a trick on us. He means what he says and he says what he means! The topic I'm talking about is of course whether or not the 7 days of Genesis are literal 7 days and how old the Earth is in light of Genesis chapter 1! What exactly is God trying to tell us here?

And I know what you are already thinking. If you are a strict young earth creationist you've already dug your heels in. If you are an old earth theistic evolutionist you've already dug your heels in. If you believe in the day age theory you are already solidified. If you believe in the gap theory you are already unmovable. And here's what I would say to that... stop for a second and listen to scripture and what God wants us to hold tightly to and what God wants us to hold loosely to and let God speak for himself concerning creation.

So let us begin in Genesis 1 and see what God wants to show us this morning. In the end I believe he will prove to be a much greater creator with much more up his sleeve than we could have ever imagined. **The age of the Earth, as with most things we can't fully know, points us to a definitive creator we can put our faith in.** Read with me starting in **Genesis 1:1-2.**

#### Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing this morning is... **Don't Get Stuck In The Gap.** From the simple reading of the passage, in any language, Greek, Hebrew, or English... it appears there is a distinction between **verse 2** and **3**. That distinction must be given some consideration because this "gap" could account for some important theological positions. We will get to all of that in a second. But first we must take a step back and discuss the traditional gap theory which many have found plausible if not actual.

**The Traditional Gap Theory** posits that there must be **Billions of years** before the **7 days of creation** to account for a **previous humanity that God destroyed**. The traditional gap theory doesn't make the distinction between **verses 2** and **3**. Rather it makes the distinction between **verses 1** and **2**. The main basis for this is that the word "was" in **verse 2**, in the Hebrew, could be translated "became." Meaning the earth "became" without form and void. It was essentially reformed. Also, **Genesis 1:28** in the KJV uses the word "replenish" indicating that the earth must have been populated before Adam. Let's quickly examine these claims. First, the word for "was" in **verse 2** is primarily "was," not "became." Hebrews scholars all agree that there is no need to assign the secondary meaning without more evidence in the context that requires the change. Secondly, the word "replenish" in the KJV had a different meaning in 1611 than it does now. It has changed over the years to mean "refill, repopulate," etc... but when it was written in the KJV it simply meant to fill a void! So, I do not believe God destroyed an original created population and reformed the earth as to

repopulate it again with Adam. I don't think critical scholarship deems it viable. But further more I don't like the other theological issues it creates. Namely, that it would mean death and sin existed before Adam's fall and I'm a firm believer that if Adam's fall is not the original sin then the whole of scripture is a house of cards! To some degree, everything hinges on the original fall and Adam and Eve's rebellion being historically accurate according to the Bible. We will get more into this topic in the coming weeks. The bottom line is, if you like this theory... I wouldn't get stuck here. It is very shaky at best.

So now let's go back to where I see a possible and more plausible gap, between **verses 2 and 3**. This theory has been named the Modified Gap Theory. **The Modified Gap Theory states that God created the Heavens and the Earth and some indeterminate time later God came and decided to begin putting the creation plan into action.** You could add any amount of time to this age. Billions, millions, or thousands of years. It really doesn't matter. The point is there is enough time here for something to happen that we are unaware of. Let's look at what we know for sure. When God created the heavens and the heavens were separate from earth, the earth was a planet of water with earth under the water. We also know that there was no living organisms on the earth because we haven't arrived at **Genesis 1:11**, which is the third day yet.

So if it's just a formless water planet with no light and no life, what is the point of the Modified Gap theory? I'm glad you asked. First, it could help account for the current almost universally accepted age dating of the earth. Scientists believe the earth to be billions of years old due to its many forms of dating methods. If God created the Earth as a giant water ball with form and left it in this state for billions of years... this answers those questions.

Secondly, it could help account for the Angelic rebellion. It just doesn't make sense to me to put The creation of angels, the fall of the angels, and the banishment of Satan into the literal 6 days of creation time period. However, if there was a creation of the heavens, and the earth in its water form and then a gap... During these hundreds, thousands, millions, or billions of years – who knows, God created the angels. Sometime later the angels rebelled. Sometime later God banished a third of them to the earth along with Satan. For an undisclosed time period Satan and the demons were imprisoned on a formless earth. Dark, wet, lifeless. Kind of like hell. When God finally got around to giving the earth form, light, and life, Satan was given the ability to take a form... like a serpent. This is why he was there in the garden with Adam and Eve.

So as you can tell... I like the modified gap theory between verses 2 and 3. I like that I can theologically and biblically place the story of the angels here. But, since we just don't know. It will remain a plausible

theory which you can choose to take stock in or not. Either way it shows the power of our God to create as he wills and when he wills and it allows us to place our faith in Him without contradicting his word or a reconciliation of his word and science. **The age of the Earth, as with most things we can't fully know, points us to a definitive creator we can put our faith in.**

The second thing to see this morning as we look at this chapter is... **Don't Get Lost In A Day**. Let's briefly browse through **Genesis 1:3-26**. In **vs.3** we see that on day one God creates light, day, and night. In **vs.6** we see that on day two God separates the waters making land, sea, and sky. In **vs.11** we see that on day three God creates plants that reproduce. In **vs.14** we see that on day four God creates the stars, planets, sun and moon. In **vs.20** we see that on day five God creates sea animals and birds, and land animals that all reproduce according to their kind. And in **vs. 26** we see that on day six God created humans. At face value it appears that God took **6 actual 24 hour days** to create the world. But is that accurate? The Day-Age Theory suggests otherwise.

**The Day-Age Theory states that the "days" of creation represent much longer periods of time accounting for a very old Earth and Theistic Evolution.** The main biblical explanation for this position is that the word for "day" in Hebrew, *yom*, sometimes refers to a period of time that is longer than a literal 24 hour day. Of course this is true and we must account for it. But this is easily dismissed in the fact that each of these days is bookended by the phrase, "and there was evening and there was morning." It stands to reason that if God was trying to convey a lengthy period of time that he would not have used the qualifiers evening and morning. Another verse used quite often to support this idea is **2 Peter 3:8** which states a day is like a thousand years to the Lord. Why couldn't God be using day as a metaphor. No doubt, God can call a day a day and it be 1000 years if he wants. We see this in prophetic language all the time.

One of the biggest problem with the day age theory is that it doesn't account for the fact that plants were created before the Sun. If this were a thousand years that would be a problem because plants eat sunlight. Still, the biggest problem with the day age theory is the same as the Traditional Gap Theory, what do you do with death and original sin? Death is a byproduct of sin and the curse. What do you do with millions of years of animals dying before the fall of humans? Also, why do you need millions of years to produce a man... if you are not accounting for evolution? And as we will see in our next sermon in this series, if you have evolution it makes having an original man and woman following the course of the Genesis account very difficult. Bottom line is this. If you can rationalize one of two things; that either the world isn't millions of years old and science is wrong or that the modified gap theory accounts for an old earth, then you don't need the day-age theory. I personally can't rationalize it and have not adopted it.

Regardless if there is a gap between vs.1 and vs.2 or a gap between vs.2 and vs.3 the point stands... I believe in a literal 6 day creation.

But if you disagree I'm all about conversation that leads us closer to the truth of God's word. I will not break fellowship with anyone who stands on the truth of God's word wherever it leads us. Whether God can create everything in 6 days or whether God took millions of years to do it... it doesn't change the fact that our God is a God worth trusting and his word is true! **The age of the Earth, as with most things we can't fully know, points us to a definitive creator we can put our faith in.**

### Application

So how do we apply all of this today? Simple. Do you believe God's word? Do you believe that an almighty author, an all-powerful creator, and an intrinsic designer created the world? Regardless of your position on creation, do you still believe that God did it all and did it for his glory? Is this a God you can put your faith in? Another way of putting it is this... can you put your faith in a God who hasn't given you every answer? I know you have questions. So do I? I know you have doubts. So do I? But if God is big enough to create the world can you trust him with your world? If God is the creator of night and day, can you trust him today? **I don't know what tomorrow may hold, but I know who holds tomorrow!** **The age of the Earth, as with most things we can't fully know, points us to a definitive creator we can put our faith in**

### Conclusion

In conclusion, how old is the earth? I don't know man. Ken Ham and Kent Hovind, who are awesome believers who I really like and trust, believe it to be somewhere around 10 to 6 thousand years old. And if we take a literal 6 day approach to creation, as I do, then after the possible "gap" they are right. Starting in verse 3 we have a timeline that appears to be 6-10 thousand years long. There is tons of proof of this as well that you can look up online. But another strong believer who I trust and follow, Michael Jones, who goes by Inspiring Philosophy online, believes in theistic evolution and the day-age theory and believes that starting in vs.3 the world is billions of years old. I obviously lean more towards the former than the later on this topic, but it doesn't mean we can't still agree on other issues. The point is we serve a great God and put our faith in him as our Lord. **The age of the Earth, as with most things we can't fully know, points us to a definitive creator we can put our faith in**