

# APOLOGETICS 30 – WHICH GOD? – PART 3

## BIBLICAL CREATION VS. PSEUDO BIBLICAL CREATION

### **INTRODUCTION**

Apologetics - ἀπολογία apologia

The definition of Christian Apologetics is “the information that enables a believer to provide a defense for why a doctrine is believed.”

1 Peter 3:15 – But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.

In our previous topics, we have determined that there is a supernatural, unseen creator. But which god is God?

Acts 17:23-24 – Using this text, we will contrast the account of creation from the Bible with that of pseudo-biblical religions.

### **VS. ISLAM**

Many have claimed that Islam is near, similar to, or even parallel with the Bible. Some even claim that the god of Islam (Allah) is simply the word for “god” and that Christians, Jews, and Muslims all believe in the same God. Is this true? Let's look at the creation account according to Islam.

The Qur'an says that "the heavens and the earth were joined together as one unit, before We clove them asunder" (21:30). Following this big explosion, Allah "turned to the sky, and it had been (as) smoke. He said to it and to the earth: 'Come together, willingly or unwillingly.' They said: 'We come (together) in willing obedience'" (41:11). Thus the elements and what was to become the planets and stars began to cool, come together, and form into shape, following the natural laws that Allah established in the universe.”

The Qur'an states that "Allah created the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, in six days" (7:54).

While on the surface, this might seem similar to the account related to the Bible, there are some important distinctions.

The verses that mention "six days" use the Arabic word *yawm* (day). This word appears several other times in the Qur'an, each denoting a different measurement of time. In one case, the measure of a day is equated with 50,000 years (70:4 - "through which" the angels and the "holy" spirit will ascend to Him on a Day fifty thousand years in length.). Whereas another verse states that "a day in the sight of your Lord is like 1,000 years of your reckoning" (22:47).

Thus, the word *yawm* is understood to be a long period of time—an era or eon. Therefore, Muslims interpret the description of a "six-day" creation as six distinct periods or eons. The length of these periods is not precisely defined, nor are the

## APOLOGETICS 30 – WHICH GOD? – PART 3

### BIBLICAL CREATION VS. PSEUDO BIBLICAL CREATION

specific developments that took place during each period. The standard understanding is Day/Age Theory.

After completing the creation, the Qur'an describes how Allah "settled Himself upon the Throne" (57:4) to oversee His work. A distinct point is made that counters the biblical idea of a day of rest:

"We created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days, nor did any sense of weariness touch Us" (50:38).

Allah is never "done" with His work because the process of creation is ongoing. Each new child who is born, every seed that sprouts into a sapling, every new species that appears on earth, is part of the ongoing process of Allah's creation.

"He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then established Himself on the Throne. He knows what enters within the heart of the earth, and what comes forth out of it, what comes down from heaven, and what mounts up to it. And He is with you wherever you may be. And Allah sees well all that you do" (57:4).

Allah's throne was created and set above the water. Allah was the only "being" in the universe before this.

Allah then created a pen and told it to write down everything that was going to happen in creation. The pen wrote it down on a tablet that is called the Lawh al-Mahfooz (the preserved tablet).

Islam says that 50,000 years after Allah wrote the Lawh al-Mahfooz, he created the heavens and the earth in six days and presided on the seventh day.

In Islam, water is the essence of life. Allah sends down water onto the earth and all living things come from it.

Allah created the sun and moon for humans to be able to keep track of time.

Angels are messengers of Allah that are created from light. Jinns are made to worship Allah like humans, but they are not all obedient to Allah like angels are. It is a belief that Satan was from the jinn.

Allah created Adam and his wife as the first humans.

#### **The main differences between the Islamic and biblical creation story**

The Islamic creation story is not entirely different from the biblical creation story, but there are a few key differences to point out.

#### **The preserved tablet**

The first big difference is the part about the Lawh al-Mahfooz, the pre-written history of the world. There is no mention of this happening in the Bible. The Bible does talk

## APOLOGETICS 30 – WHICH GOD? – PART 3

### BIBLICAL CREATION VS. PSEUDO BIBLICAL CREATION

about God's omnipotence, His everlasting power and knowledge, but there is no scripture to support Islam's claim about the history of the world being written down.

#### **Created from water**

Muslims believe that water is the essence of life and, therefore, all living things come out of the water. In the Bible, animals came forth from the earth.

#### **Timeline differences**

The Bible tells us that God made the sun and moon and stars before He made the living animals on the earth, but Islam's version says that Allah made the sun and moon last before the angels, jinn, and humans.

#### **Worshipping Adam**

In the Quran and Hadith, Adam is the first human, and he is made out of clay. All of the angels and jinn are commanded to bow down to Adam as a sign of reverence to him, but Satan refuses, so he is cursed by Allah and rejected (Quran 2:34).

### **VS. JUDAISM**

The Hebrew people obviously use the Hebrew text for their reading and study. All Jews acknowledge that the creation account appears in the Torah. But what do they think about it?

There are various thoughts on this. Some state that God made everything in one week. Jewish literalists also believe that Adam and Eve sinned on the first day.

Some Jews believe that both naturalistic evolution and special creation in six days are true, but religion and science will approach the information from a non-exclusive point of view.

There are few in Judaism who believe in a literal young earth created in six days. Most will treat the Bible not as a history book but as a philosophical book. The majority of Jews would state that Genesis 1-2 is not about the how but the why. "The actual basic Jewish/Judaic approach to EVERYTHING in the Torah is to see each narrative as a LESSON. Genesis 1 is true AS A LESSON. It can be a perfectly true lesson, without bothering with whether it is or isn't factually accurate. Factual accuracy is - very nearly - irrelevant.

It's a lesson.

In fact - it contains a lot of lessons.

'Did it really happen?' is a child's question.

# APOLOGETICS 30 – WHICH GOD? – PART 3

## BIBLICAL CREATION VS. PSEUDO BIBLICAL CREATION

### **VS. MORMONISM**

Like Islam, Mormonism seems to be close to biblical Christianity.

Under the direction of Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ created the heavens and the earth. From scripture revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith, we know that in the work of the Creation, the Lord organized elements that had already existed. He did not create the world “out of nothing,” as some people believe.

According to Joseph Smith, matter is eternal. Creation in Mormonism took place “ex materia,” or out of material already present. Because God did not have the power to create anything out of nothing, He had to reorganize elements that were already present and have no beginning or end; these elements cannot be destroyed.

Smith also claimed that Elohim, our Heavenly Father, was the supervisor of creation (not actually involved) and that Jehovah (or Jesus) together with many helpers from the spirit kingdom, acted under direction to organize the existing elements into the Adamic world. It is interesting to note that these helpers supposedly included such worthy spirits as Michael (who later became Adam), Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Peter, James, John, and of course, Joseph Smith—all the “noble and great” worthy ones of Mormonism.

Elohim talks to Jehovah and Michael, and He instructs them to “go down and organize yonder matter into a world like unto the other worlds that we have heretofore formed.” This instruction is repeated three times until the earth is completed. When the time comes to create man, Elohim causes a sleep to come over the spirit Michael and when he awakens, he is Adam, the first man. Elohim and Jehovah converse and agree it is not good for man to be alone, and so Eve is also created.

Lucifer enters the story and begins to play a most prominent role. As Lucifer begins to lead Adam and Eve astray, Elohim appears and rebukes him for tempting Eve, and it is interesting to note that Lucifer is permitted to argue and contend with Elohim for quite some time before being ordered to depart. Another interesting point is that Lucifer states that he has merely done to Adam and Eve what has been done many times before on other worlds—making him somewhat of a ‘hero’ for assisting in the fall. This is in keeping with the Mormon teaching that Adam’s fall was pre-ordained and very necessary to enable the procreation of mankind and physical birth of all the little spirit children waiting patiently for a chance at earthly existence.

It is also interesting that the six-day creation account is not where creation began. “He ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth.”

This is a paradox of man: compared to God, man is nothing; yet we are everything to God. While against the backdrop of infinite creation we may appear to be nothing, we have a spark of eternal fire burning within our breast. We have the incomprehensible promise of

## APOLOGETICS 30 – WHICH GOD? – PART 3

### BIBLICAL CREATION VS. PSEUDO BIBLICAL CREATION

exaltation—worlds without end—within our grasp. And it is God’s great desire to help us reach it.”

Mormons believe in other gods who have created other worlds and that one day, those who have extreme privilege will be able to visit their worlds. They believe that Elohim used to be as Adam and that one day the worthy will also become like Elohim and be god over their own world, creating spiritual babies and eventually having them tested in their eventual existence in the flesh.

#### **CONCLUSION**

As we can see, creation accounts in Islam, Judaism, and Mormonism resemble the creation account that we studied in the Bible. Literal six-day creation by an omnipotent God is substantiated by the history of the world and the scientific process of what we can discover.

However, the other near-biblical religions all have a pseudo-biblical approach. They either do not take the biblical account literally, or they add some non-sensical information in which the spiritual reality is rationalized by people with great imaginations.

Islam and Mormonism cannot be taken seriously. Consequently, Judaism typically does not take its own creation account seriously or literally.