

# Creation—What Does Scripture Say?

## Introduction

There is a long-running debate between the *Creationists* and the *Evolutionists* regarding creation science and the theory of evolution. Briefly, creation science says that the earth was created in six 24-hour days and concludes that all geologic strata are the result of the great flood of Noah's day, while the theory of evolution explains that all life originated and developed through natural processes without a spiritual influence (i.e., God). This study does *not* compare the two viewpoints on a point-by-point basis; instead, it focuses on the Scriptural and spiritual perspective of the accounts of creation and the garden of Eden, with a brief discussion of the flood account. What does the Bible actually say in the first two chapters of the book of Genesis, and for what purpose?<sup>1</sup>

Before looking into the subject of creation, we need to put it in perspective. Because it is the first subject of the Bible, it is often taught that the creation account is the foundation on which all of the Bible doctrines are built. It is taught that if we do not believe in a literal six-day creation then we cannot or do not believe in the rest of the Bible. This viewpoint is not correct, however. The redemptive work of Christ is the true foundation because this was God's plan since *before* the world began. This perspective will be addressed during this study.

## The Truth of Scripture

To truly understand creation from a Scriptural and spiritual perspective, one must be a child of God. In our natural condition since birth, all people are lost in sin and are considered by God to be children of wrath (i.e., children of Satan—Ephesians 2:1-3). In this lost condition, a person cannot understand the things of God and does not even truly seek after God (I Corinthians 2:14; Romans 3:10-11; 8:6-8). God provided a means—*one way*—to escape a life of sin and its eternal consequences: He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us.

**For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.** (Romans 3:23)

**For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**  
(Romans 6:23)

The Lord Jesus Christ, though sinless, took upon Himself the sins of the world (our sins) and paid the ultimate price by dying on the cross and descending into hell (Romans 3:21-26; II Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 4:9-10; Acts 2:31). By the power of God, however, He was raised from the dead and ascended to His rightful place at the right hand of God in the heavens (Ephesians 1:19-20; Acts 2:32-33). This power of God that raised Christ from physical *and* spiritual death is also the power of salvation to us. All we need to do to be saved from the consequences of our sinful condition is simply to believe that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised again (I Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 5:6-11). By believing this, we are automatically and instantaneously sealed by the Holy Spirit as children of God forever (Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 8:16-17). Spiritually speaking, at the moment of belief a person is changed

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<sup>1</sup> All references are quoted from the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB 1996). Words in brackets are either equivalent words from the *King James Version* (KJV) or, if in italics, were added by the author for clarification.

from being dead in sin to alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:4-9). God considers a believer to be a new creature, or a new creation (II Corinthians 5:17). As believers, we have the sure hope of eternal life and have the promise that nothing can ever separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23; 8:31-39).

**Now I [Paul] make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.** (I Corinthians 15:1-4)

**In Him [Christ], you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.** (Ephesians 1:13-14)

By the grace of God, those who believe in the redemptive work of Christ on the cross for us—that He died for our sins, was buried, and rose again—have the Spirit of God within them and are able to understand the things of God (Romans 8:9-11; I Corinthians 2:6-13). That which God desires us to know, He has revealed through His word as contained in the Bible. All Scripture is inspired by God and is complete—God is not adding to it through prophets, visions, the word or ministry of angels, or by any other means (Colossians 1:25; 2:18-19; Galatians 1:8-9).

**All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching [doctrine], for reproof, for correction, for training [instruction] in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate [complete and proficient], equipped for every good work.** (II Timothy 3:16-17)

Satan used Scripture incorrectly in his effort to tempt Christ to sin (Matthew 4:1-10). Unfortunately, God’s own people have a long and continuous history of misusing and abusing the word of God to further their own purposes. We are exhorted to rightly divide, or handle accurately, the word of God, and to walk wisely and worthy of our salvation in Christ (II Timothy 2:15; Philippians 1:9-10; Ephesians 4:1-3; 5:15-17; Colossians 1:9-12). There is much false doctrine being taught by Christian churches and organizations today, and we must be careful to discern it and avoid it (II Timothy 3:1-5; 4:3-4; I Timothy 6:20-21).

## **Is the Bible a Science Book?**

Science may be defined as the observation, identification, description, experimental investigation, and theoretical explanation of natural phenomena. In simpler terms, it is the study and explanation of natural things. Is the Bible a science book? Did God intend it to be used as a science book? Please consider the following things.

From beginning to end the Bible is full of miracles. Think about all the miracles associated with Israel’s exodus from Egypt and sojourn in the wilderness. Recall that Enoch, Elijah, and Philip were instantly transported elsewhere (Genesis 5:21-24; II Kings 2:7-14; Acts 8:26-40), a talking animal (Numbers 22:28-35), the fiery furnace (Daniel 3), Daniel and the lion’s den (Daniel 6:16-24), Jonah and the great fish (Jonah 1 – 2), an enemy army being destroyed by the angel of the Lord (II Kings 19:32-36),

healings (Matthew 8:14-17), people were raised from the dead (Luke 7:11-15; John 11:1-44; Acts 20:7-12), all the recorded miracles of Christ and His apostles, etc. Did these things really happen? Yes, because God says so. Can we prove they happened? No, because there is nothing in nature that can be used to explain them—we know they happened by faith. Every miracle was an unnatural or supernatural occurrence, which is the complete opposite of science. Just as science or nature cannot be used to explain a miracle, we cannot use the Bible as our reference document for understanding geology, biology, physics, mathematics, engineering, astronomy, or any other science-related subject. Why? Because the Bible is not a science book.

Is the earth flat? Most people today know with certainty that it is a globe. Until as recently as about 500 hundred years ago, however, people were taught that the earth is flat. They were told the Bible says so. Indeed, there are verses in Scripture that refer to the four corners of the earth and the foundation of the earth, and others that describe things as being under the earth (Job 38:4-6; Isaiah 11:12; Philippians 2:10; Hebrews 1:10; Revelation 5:3). From these references it was concluded that the earth is flat and anyone saying otherwise was a heretic.

Today, we know the earth revolves around the sun, that our solar system is an infinitesimal part of the Milky Way Galaxy, which is just one of countless galaxies in the universe. We know these things through scientific investigation and accept them as natural fact. However, it used to be taught that the sun revolves around the earth and that the earth is the center of the universe. Where did these teachings come from? They came from the Bible, by inappropriately using such verses as Genesis 1:1, Genesis 1:14-18, and Ecclesiastes 1:5. These conclusions were reached on the basis that every word in Scripture has one literal meaning.

Did God intend for believers to take every word or passage in Scripture literally? During His earthly ministry, Christ sometimes spoke in parables. He used stories that people could relate to in order to describe how things would be in the future kingdom of heaven on earth. The Bible is full of illustrative words or phrases that are not to be taken literally, as demonstrated by the following examples.

- Old Testament prophecies say that King David will sit on the throne during the messianic kingdom; however, we find out later that they are referring to Christ who was born in the line of David (Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 37:24-25; Hosea 3:5; John 1:49; 7:42; Revelation 17:14).
- If we were to take Job 38:22-23 literally, then we would conclude that snow and hail come from treasuries or storehouses that God has somewhere.
- Believers are to put on the armor of God to stand up to the attacks, including *fiery darts* or *flaming arrows*, by Satan (Ephesians 6:10-17). Components of physical armor, something everyone understood because of the constant presence of Roman soldiers, were used to describe spiritual qualities we are supposed to utilize. However, there is not any physical armor to put on, nor are there actual fiery darts to defend against.
- Descriptions in the book of Revelation are highly symbolic and do not represent actual physical appearances (Revelation 12:1-9; 13:1-4).

These are just a few examples. We can believe that the Bible is the inspired and true word of God, which it is, and yet realize that every word or passage is not to be understood in a literal sense. There is always a reason why something is figuratively described, and we can often deduce the meaning by understanding the context of the verse or passage or by taking the entire Bible into consideration.

## The Creation Account

Many, if not most, believers today believe that the creation account in Genesis 1 is literal and straightforward. That is, they believe that the earth was created in six 24-hour days and, based on the genealogy provided in Scripture, the earth must be about 6,000 years old. To support and prove this belief, and to counter the theory of evolution, the field of creation science was developed. At the core of creation science is the precept that the great flood of Noah's day is responsible for all rock formations and land forms we see today, and the presence of all coal beds and fossils in the rocks. A goal of creationism is to prove God to an unbelieving world and to give Christians *ammunition* to stand up to science and scientists. However, what does Scripture actually say about creation?

From the creationist perspective, each day of creation represents a 24-hour day, without question. More and more frequently today this position is considered vital to one's faith. A person's faith in the validity of the entire word of God, his integrity, and even his salvation is questioned if he does not hold to the creationist view. All this is based on the interpretation of one word. Before we take a closer look at the creation account, let us consider the word *day*.

All of the uses of the word *day* and *days* in Genesis 1 are translated from the Hebrew word *yôwm*. This one Hebrew word is used in the following ways in Genesis 1 and elsewhere.

- The period of daylight (Genesis 1:16; 31:39)
- A period of time we consider a 24-hour day (Genesis 22:4; Exodus 12:14-20)
- A certain part of the day such as "in the heat of the *day*" (Genesis 18:1)
- The present time such as "to this *day*" (Genesis 19:37; 22:14)
- An unspecified period of time during which certain conditions existed such as "the *day* of my calamity" (Psalm 18:18), and "the previous famine that had occurred in the *days* of Abraham" (Genesis 26:1)
- A prophetic event of an unspecified duration when something will occur such as "the *day* of His wrath" (Psalm 110:5)

All of these uses signify some type of timeframe or event, but only a 24-hour period of time when the context specifically indicates it. Please consider that in the first six days of the creation account that each day was summarized as an evening and a morning—there is no mention of night as described in Genesis 1:5 and Genesis 1:16. This description for *day* is only found in Genesis 1. However, the sabbath day of the Law of Moses, considered to be a 24-hour period (the seventh day of the week), is defined as evening to evening in Leviticus 23:32, which would include the night.<sup>2</sup> Keep these various uses of the word *day* in mind as we look at Genesis 1.

Another thing to keep in mind is that the book of Genesis was written by Moses while Israel was in the wilderness after escaping Egypt. Of course, Moses did not witness any of these things—he wrote what God told or inspired him to write, as did all of the prophets of God (Exodus 24:4). Because it was written after the fact, the people were familiar with the sun and moon, the separation of the land and

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<sup>2</sup> In Psalm 55:17, David referred to praying to God in the evening, morning, and noon (a part of the day not mentioned in the creation account), which are all parts of daytime; he would not have been praying while he slept during the night.

seas, and how vegetation and animals multiplied. God used terms and descriptions that the people understood to describe how everything came into being.

### **Genesis 1:1-2 (Beginning)**

**In the beginning God created the heavens [heaven] and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.**

When was the beginning? The presentation of these two verses does not fit the pattern of days presented in the rest of the chapter that all begin with “And God said” or “Then God said,” depending on the translation. Therefore, these first verses describe conditions *prior* to Day 1. When was the beginning? Only God knows for sure. Apparently, the definite article “the” is not in the Hebrew text, so a timeless beginning is implied. Perhaps the order is significant—did God create heaven before the earth? God did not consider it necessary to explain it to us.

If verse 1 is taken literally, it is reasonable to conclude that God the Father is the Creator. However, we see in verse 26 that someone else was involved in creation. Not until much later are we told who it was. In John 1:1-3 and Colossians 1:15-16, we find out that Christ was in the beginning with God, He is the first-born of all creation, and all things were created by (or through) Him and for Him.

God made the earth formless and void. One cannot say with any certainty what this description means, but it implies a wasteland without life. However, as Isaiah 45:18 says, God did not form the earth in vain to be a wasteland, but formed it to be inhabited. Verse 2 also implies that the earth was completely covered with water (as does verse 9).

### **Genesis 1:3-5 (Day 1)**

**Then God said, “Let there be light;” and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated [divided] the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one [the first] day.**

What does it really mean by saying that light was separated from darkness? Taken literally, it implies that half of everything was light and the other half was dark at the same time. One could say that this is exactly what happens each day—when it is daylight at one side of the globe, it is night at the other side. However, this explanation is reading something into these verses that is not there.

Where does our daylight come from? It comes from the sun. Why do we have days and nights? Because the earth revolves on its axis once every 24 hours as it revolves around the sun. The sun as the source of light is the most logical explanation for this verse. However, the sun is not referred to until Day 4. Is the light of Day 1 from something other than the sun? Some say it is from the Son of God, who is light (John 1:9; 8:12; Revelation 21:23-24), but Christ was already in existence and was co-creator with the Father. Anyway, this explanation is a spiritual interpretation and not a literal one.

The Hebrew word for day is used two different ways in Genesis 1:5. God called the light day and the darkness night, so how much time does this definition of the word *day* represent? Based on our understanding, the period of daylight is part of a 24-hour day. Furthermore, as we have seen, the description of evening and morning does not literally define a 24-hour day as described elsewhere in

Scripture. Therefore, it cannot be stated with certainty that the description of the first day represents a 24-hour day.

### **Genesis 1:6-8 (Day 2)**

**Then God said, “Let there be an expanse [a firmament] in the midst of the waters, and let it separate [divide] the waters from the waters.” God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. God called the expanse [firmament] heaven, and there was evening and there was morning, a second day.**

What exactly does God mean here when He refers to dividing the waters? Explanations involving the division of bodies of water (oceans and seas) from the water in the atmosphere do not provide adequate answers in a literal sense. Genesis 1:7 and Psalm 148:4 speak of the waters *above* the heavens, which tends to complicate the explanation of Day 2. God did something on this day, but the true understanding of it belongs to Him. Opinions can be formed, and some may be closer to the truth than others, but it is not possible for us to truly understand this passage only in the context of Scripture.

It is interesting to note that God had already created the heaven (or heavens) prior to Day 1. So, is the heaven in Day 2 a different heaven? The word *heaven* is translated from the same Hebrew throughout the book of Genesis and, in the KJV, that word is translated as *heaven* or *heavens* to describe the beginning heaven (Genesis 1:1), the firmament or expanse that was called *heaven* (Genesis 1:8), the realm of the sun, moon, and stars (Genesis 1:14-18; 15:5), the place where birds fly (Genesis 1:20), the place where rain comes from (Genesis 7:11; 8:2), and the abode of God (Genesis 24:7; Deuteronomy 26:15; I Kings 8:30). Furthermore, the same Hebrew word is also translated as *the air* to describe where the birds fly (Genesis 1:26, 30; 2:19-20). Depending on how it is used, therefore, *heaven* can be described as anything above the surface of the earth, our solar system, the entire universe, and the abode of God, wherever that is.

### **Genesis 1:9-13 (Day 3)**

**Then God said, “Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear;” and it was so. God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters he called seas; and God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation [bring forth grass]: plants [the herb] yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them,” and it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation [grass], plants [herb] yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good. There was evening and there was morning, a third day.**

There were two parts to this *day*. In the first part, God made dry land appear, causing the waters to go into *one* place. This implies that land was in one place and was completely surrounded by water. However, He called the gathering of waters “seas,” which implies more than one place. This is confusing if taken literally.

In Genesis 1:1, we know that God created the heaven and the earth. It is not a stretch to understand that *earth* is referring to our globe, whether or not the Israelites of Moses’ day understood the concept of the earth being a globe. On this third day, the same Hebrew word is used to describe the dry land as *earth*. As with *day* and *heaven*, the Hebrew word for earth has many connotations depending on the

context in which it is being used. For example, most of the uses of earth in Genesis 1 refer to the land or ground, rather than the globe. In fact, the Hebrew word is also translated as *land* and *lands* (Genesis 2:11; 10:31), *ground* (Genesis 18:2), and *country* and *countries* (Genesis 10:20; 12:1) in the KJV.

The second part of this day has to do with the creation of vegetation. This passage refers to vegetation on land—there is no reference in the creation account to vegetation in the seas. In this day, not only was the vegetation made, but seed-bearing vegetation yielded seeds, and fruit-bearing vegetation bore fruit.

Please consider these events as they are written. Land appeared out of the waters and dried out, and vegetation appeared but not in maturity—it sprouted, grew, and then matured to produce seeds and bear fruit. Just as we know the earth is not flat and is not the center of the universe, we know it takes a growing season for plants to go to seed, and usually takes several growing seasons for fruit trees to mature enough to bear fruit. We also know that the energy of the sun is needed for nearly all plant types to grow (terrestrial and aquatic), but the sun does not appear until Day 4. If one argues that the energy was from the light of Day 1 and the sun was not present, then what kind of light was it that could cause vegetation to grow? One is required to make interpretations based on additional information (beyond the text provided to us) to explain this passage.

Could God have caused all this to happen in a 24-hour day? With God, anything is possible, but why force this interpretation? Nowhere in Scripture does it say He accelerated all vegetative processes during creation and then caused everything to slow down to the pace mankind has always known. Brethren, God is the author of natural processes, and too many things happened on the third day for it to be a 24-hour day.

### **Genesis 1:14-19 (Day 4)**

**Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse [firmament] of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth,” and it was so. God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern [rule] the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also. God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.**

Though not specifically stated, it appears obvious that the greater light refers to the sun and the lesser light refers to the moon. They were made to provide light on the earth. We know that the sun is a star that produces energy in the forms of heat and light, and that the moon is a planet that reflects sunlight onto the earth. We know that some of the *stars* in the heavens are actually planets that are reflecting light, as well as galaxies that are so distant that they appear as a single light. We also know that seasons, days, and years are determined by the rotation of the earth on its axis, the rotation of the moon around the earth, and the rotation of both around the sun. These are details known through science and are not explained in any way in Scripture.

Think about this passage. The sun and the moon were made to separate the day from the night, but in Day 1 God already separated the day from the night. Among other things, He provided them to define

days, and yet three *days* had already passed. Things are not as simple and clear as many would like to think. A *possible* explanation is provided later in this study.

### **Genesis 1:20-23 (Day 5)**

**Then God said, “Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.” God created the great sea monsters [whales] and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” There was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.**

This short passage appears straightforward, implicitly establishing God as the creator of sea creatures and birds. However, as with vegetation in Day 3, the water brought them forth after their kind. This implies that natural reproduction was occurring during this *day*, just as plants yielded seed and fruit trees bore fruit. He blessed this process and planned for it to continue so that the creatures would multiply. Whales, also translated as sea monsters, are mentioned, perhaps to demonstrate that even the large and fearful creatures were made by God.

### **Genesis 1:24-31 (Day 6)**

**Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind; cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind;” and it was so. God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.**

**Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule [have dominion] over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill [replenish] the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food [meat] for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food;” and it was so. God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.**

This is another two-part *day*. First, the earth *brought forth* all the living things on land after their own kind, including cattle, creeping things, and beasts of the earth. Again, as with vegetation and the sea creatures, the implication is that reproduction was occurring. Also, God is making a point that not only did He make cattle, which were useful to man, but He also made the apparently less desirable creatures including creeping things and beasts—all creatures were His.

After God and Christ were done making the creatures from the earth and after they were reproducing after their own kind, they created man (male and female) in their own image. We do not know what is meant by the image of God, but the basis of the meaning probably is spiritual. God is



eternal, and man was made as a spiritually eternal being—God made us so that we able to commune with Him. Not only was man spiritual, but was given dominion over all other things made by God.

The Hebrew word for *man* in Genesis 1:26 (*ʾâdâm*) includes male *and* female, so it is referring to mankind. The same word was used for the man named Adam, who will be discussed later. It is also translated as *men* (Genesis 6:1-4), *man*, referring to mankind (Genesis 6:5-7), and *man* as an individual (Leviticus 1:2). Please note that in Genesis 1:27 that it says that God *created* man (male and female); creation usually refers to making something from nothing.

Brethren, it is not reasonable to deduce, from how the text is written, that God brought forth all these things in a 24-hour day. Why do so many think that we must do so?

### **Genesis 2:1-4 (Day 7)**

**Thus the heavens and the earth were completed [finished], and all their hosts. By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done [made]. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. This is the account [These are the generations] of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven [the heavens].**

The seventh day followed the six days of creation—it was the day that God rested from His creation work. The Bible does not, however, describe the seventh day as an evening and morning as it does for the first six days—there is no definite timeframe associated with it.

In the text preceding Genesis 2:4, God demonstrates that He made everything, and that His creative efforts started at some point and ended at some point. Most translations indicate that the creation account ends with Genesis 2:3 and that a new paragraph starts with verse 4. However, the context implies that the account actually ends with a one-sentence summary in verse 4. If paragraphs were indicated in the Hebrew text, which they were not, then the next paragraph would start with Genesis 2:5 where an entirely different subject begins to be explained.

We must be careful to note that this summary verse refers to the entire account (*or generations* in the KJV) of the heavens and the earth when they were created and the *day* that the Lord God made the heavens and the earth. The Hebrew word for “generations” (*tôwldâh*) means descent or history, such as later used to describe the generations of Adam and Noah (Genesis 5:1 and 6:9). It certainly refers to something more than one 24-hour day. The singular word *day* in Genesis 2:4 is from the same Hebrew word used for *day* and *days* throughout the creation account and describes the *entire* creation process and not a specific 24-hour day.

### **How is the Word *Day* Used in the Creation Account?**

As previously noted, the same Hebrew word is translated as *day* or *days* throughout the creation account. However, the manner in which the word is used describes different periods of time and, in some cases, something not associated with time. The word *day* is described or used in the following ways.

- As an evening and morning, which are not all of the parts of a 24-hour day (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31)

- As light, with no reference to time (Genesis 1:3-5)
- As a 24-hour day: "for *days* and years" (Genesis 1:14)
- As the period of light (less than 24 hours), derived from the sun, during the daytime (Genesis 1:16)
- As the *entire* event of creation: "in the *day* that the Lord God made earth and heaven" (Genesis 2:4)

Therefore, in the context of the creation account, the Hebrew word for *day* is used *five* different ways. In only one instance is it used to describe a 24-hour day as we know it (Genesis 1:14). No theories adequately explain the time period covered by Genesis 1:1-2, which was a time *before* the activities of God described as the first day. Because God's creation work ended on the sixth day, it is possible to speculate that He is still resting from it, which could be concluded to mean that it is still the seventh day (the Bible does not say that He went back to work on the eighth day). This is all conjecture, but shows what should be considered before making a stand on a literal six-day creation.

Why, then, are so many brethren, theologians, pastors, and teachers absolutely certain that the Bible says that the earth was created in six 24-hour days, when it does not actually say that? Perhaps it is because false doctrine perpetuates easily, as in the case of a flat earth, or the earth being the center of the universe, or the many traditional, yet unscriptural, doctrines governing Christianity today (I Timothy 6:20-21; II Timothy 4:1-4).

## The Garden in Eden

Contrary to traditional teaching and the inserted headings in many Bible versions, the account of the garden in Eden in Genesis 2 is *not* a summary or a refinement of the creation account in Genesis 1. As we will see, this statement is proven by Scripture itself, with no need for a scientific explanation. Genesis 2:5 begins the account of a garden, which was a specific place made by God in a land known as Eden in the time of Moses. Let us take a closer look at the garden account and see what Scripture actually says.

### Genesis 2:5-6

**Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the Lord God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground. But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground.**

Because this account describes a specific place for a specific purpose, these verses are not describing the earth as a globe. Recall that the Hebrew word for *earth* is also translated as *land* and *ground* (and *country*). Therefore, these verses are most likely describing the initial conditions of a specific portion of land where God was about to plant and maintain a garden of special importance. The spiritual significance of the garden will be addressed later.

### Genesis 2:7

**Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being [soul].**

God formed man (a male only)<sup>3</sup> from the dust of the earth to cultivate and manage the garden that He was about to establish. The breath of life that God breathed into the man caused him to be a living soul. Being a living soul separates mankind from animals—we are made in the image of God and are able to commune with Him.<sup>4</sup> At some point God called this man “Adam,” which is translated from the Hebrew word *’ādām* as described earlier. Please note that God *formed* Adam from the dust of the earth (and later fashioned Eve from Adam’s rib). This process appears to differ from the *creation* of mankind as explained in Genesis 1:27.

### **Genesis 2:8-9**

**The Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**

God planted a garden to the east in Eden and placed Adam in it. East of where? It could mean that it was planted east of where God made Adam, or, more likely, it was east of where the Israelites were when Moses wrote this account. Besides trees that were pleasing to the sight and good for food, God caused to grow two spiritually significant trees: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

### **Genesis 2:10-14**

**Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is Pishon [Pison]; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush [Ethiopia, *Kûwah*]. The name of the third river is Tigris [Hiddekel]; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates [*Perâth*].**

This passage is a parenthetical section that describes where the garden was in relation to four rivers and neighboring lands. Apparently, the garden was in only a portion of the land of Eden because it was watered by a river that flowed *out of Eden*. The location of the garden cannot be determined from this description, other than somewhere in the Middle East (if it was east of where the Israelites were in Moses’ day). Unfortunately, Bible translators have made some assumptions and applied modern names to a couple of the rivers. The Tigris (NASB) and Euphrates (KJV and NASB) rivers most likely were not known as such in the time Genesis was written, and the translators should have stayed with the Hebrew names (Hiddekel and Perath, respectively) provided in the Hebrew text. It is very possible that the Tigris and Euphrates rivers are not the subsequent names of the rivers named in the Hebrew text. The same

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<sup>3</sup> The context of this account verifies that *man* referred to a male only—the man Adam. This differs from man described as male *and* female in Genesis 1:27.

<sup>4</sup> *Breath of life* appears to have two meanings in this passage—it gave Adam physical life (and the spirit of man), and also an eternal soul to enable him to commune with God. Because mankind was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27), it is most probable that God would have breathed the same breath of life into them, also. Although animals also had the breath of life (Genesis 7:15, 22) to be alive and to commune with their own kind, there is no indication in Scripture that God gave them souls.

can be said for the names of lands.<sup>5</sup> It is probably a fruitless effort to try to figure out the locations of the land of Eden and the garden.

### **Genesis 2:15-17**

**Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”**

If verses 10-14 were removed, then one would see that this passage is a continuation of what is said in verses 8 and 9, with both repetition and elaboration. Of great significance, however, we see God’s first recorded command to Adam: he was told that he could eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The consequence for doing so would be death; however, whether God was referring to physical or spiritual death, or both, is not revealed in this passage. However, Adam did not physically die on the actual day that he ate of the fruit, but he did eventually die (he would not have physically died if he had remained sinless). We learn the spiritual ramifications of his sin much later, as will be discussed.

### **Genesis 2:18-20**

**Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper; suitable for him.” Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky [air], and brought them to the man [Adam] to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. The man [Adam] gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.**

God knew, according to His plan, that Adam would need a helper. In the meantime, God formed animals and birds for the garden and brought them to Adam to be named. We do not know the names that he gave them, but they may have been as simple as horse, cow, sheep, pig, eagle, dove, sparrow, etc. Of course, there was not a suitable companion found among the animals because man needs to commune with man (I Corinthians 2:11).<sup>6</sup>

### **Genesis 2:21-25**

**So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man [Adam], and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man [Adam] said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.**

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<sup>5</sup> The land of *Kûwah*, which may refer to Cush, probably existed at the time of Moses so the people would have a frame of reference; however, the land or country of Ethiopia, though perhaps referring to the same area as Cush, was not called as such at the time of Moses.

<sup>6</sup> We should never elevate animals to the level of man or to consider animals to have spiritual qualities. God made us spiritually different from the animals—we are made in His image.

God formed a woman out of a rib of Adam and brought her to Adam. From verse 20, woman was made to be a helper for the man. Also, at this time God established the divine principle of marriage and the oneness of husband and wife. Later, Adam called this woman “Eve” (Genesis 4:20).

Carefully note the sequence of events in the Garden and compare this sequence with that found in Genesis 1. *If* the events of Genesis 2 are a summary of the creation account of Genesis 1, as is usually taught, then one account or the other is wrong. When comparing the same items, the sequence in Genesis 1 is vegetation, then birds, then animals, then humans (male *and* female). In Genesis 2, however, the sequence is man (Adam), vegetation, then animals and birds, and finally, woman (Eve). In Genesis 2 there is no mention of the other creation events described in the first chapter. Furthermore, there is no indication of the time covered in the garden events. Does this represent an error in Scripture? No. Rather, it reveals a significant misunderstanding and misrepresentation of these passages by most Bible scholars and teachers because God is actually describing completely separate events.

***Sequence of Similar Events In Creation and Garden Accounts***

<b>Sequence</b>	<b>Creation Account</b>	<b>Garden Account</b>
1	Plants (Day 3)	Man (Adam)
2	Sea animals and birds (Day 5)	Plants
3	Land animals (Day 6)	Land animals and birds
4	Man—male and female (Day 6)	Woman (Eve)

**Purposes of the Creation and Garden Accounts**

A person who considers himself a creationist may say something like this: “Geologists say the earth is billions of years old, but we know better because the Bible clearly indicates that the earth is only about 6,000 years old.” Unfortunately, the Bible does not say that the earth is about 6,000 years old. Yes, a study of Biblical genealogy indicates that Adam probably was made by God approximately 6,000 years ago, but the error is to say that the events involving the garden and Adam and Eve are directly tied to the creation account in Genesis 1. As we have seen, the sequence of events in the first two chapters of Genesis do not match. There are reasons for this discrepancy, and the reasons are spiritual.

**The Creation Account**

The creation account does not say why there was a creation. It does establish, however, that God is the Creator. This must be accepted by faith and should not be disputed. As previously shown, the Hebrew word for *day* has many applications. Therefore, it is presumptuous for anyone to say with absolute certainty that the six days of creation represent six 24-hour days. If the creation *days* do not represent 24-hour days, why would God present it that way? Here are some possibilities for consideration.

On the fourth day God called forth the sun and the moon to separate the day from the night and provided them for signs, seasons, days and years. Instead of viewing this passage in a literal sense, we will look at it in a spiritual sense. God says the lights were provided for *signs*, seasons, days, and years— if signs were not part of this list, a strictly literal interpretation might be appropriate. Scripture shows us

that the Jews required signs for God, or Christ, or prophets, or apostles to prove themselves as genuine; unfortunately, they failed to believe the word of God despite all the miracles they witnessed (I Corinthians 1:22-23; John 4:48). Many signs came from the heavens, such as manna, fire and brimstone, the *star* that led the wise men to the young Jesus, etc., and many will come from the heavens as prophetic events unfold in the future when God is dealing with Israel again (Luke 21:10-11).

The people of Israel could understand the concept of days. Days have a beginning and an end, and certain things happen every day. When the creation account was revealed to Israel through Moses, they may have already received the Law of God from Moses. In the Law, God established many holy days, months, seasons, and years for the people of Israel to observe (Leviticus 23). One of the days was the Sabbath day (Exodus 20:9-11), which was a day of rest to be observed in a very specific way once every seven days (to be preceded by six days of labor). Furthermore, God established the Sabbath *year*, with specific requirements for resting the land one year out of every seven (Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 25:1-7). These laws are more easily understood based on how God presented His creation account.

What about in this dispensation of the grace of God (Ephesians 3:1-2)? Through the Apostle Paul, we learn the full ramification of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 3:21-26; 5:6-11; 6:1-11). That Christ would die for our sins was kept as a secret by God since *before* the world began, and He did not reveal it until He did so through our resurrected Lord Jesus Christ to Paul. Paul refers to this secret as the mystery (Romans 16:25; I Corinthians 2:6-8; Ephesians 3:1-12), and a major aspect of the mystery is the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24). The principal component of the gospel of grace is that we are no longer under the requirements of the Law of Moses but under grace—the Law was nailed to the cross and taken out of our way because we cannot be justified by works of the Law (Romans 6:14; Colossians 2:13-14; Galatians 3:11-14). With the removal of the Law, there are no longer any spiritually significant days, months, seasons, or years (Galatians 4:10-11). Even the Sabbath day does not exist in this dispensation of grace.<sup>7</sup> Nor is God revealing Himself to us or the world through miraculous signs (I Corinthians 13:8-13).

Brethren, the Apostle Paul never mentions the creation as a 6-day event, because we are no longer under the Law of Moses.<sup>8</sup> In Genesis 1:26 we see that there was an unnamed co-creator. Not until the Paul do we learn that all things were created through Christ and for Christ (Colossians 1:15-17). Paul, however, did allude to the spiritual significance of creation by informing all believers that, when we believe the gospel of salvation, we are considered by God to be new creatures or creations (II Corinthians 5:14-17). We were dead in sin but are now alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:1-6). We have been regenerated, or born again (Titus 3:4-7).

As with most events in Scripture, the spiritual aspect of the creation account may be of far greater significance than the physical aspect. God established the fact that He created the heaven and the earth. Near the end of the book of Revelation we see a description of a new heaven and new earth following

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<sup>7</sup> Some denominations and religions attempt to keep the sabbath day, but none come close to following all of the requirements for observing sabbath days and years as outlined in the Law of Moses (Exodus 31:12-15; Leviticus 23:1-44; 25:1-7).

<sup>8</sup> Some say that Paul did not need to say anything about the 6-day creation account because it was already revealed. However, Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 11:13), and the Gentiles would not have heard of the account.

God's judgments of the nations and the earth during the great tribulation (Revelation 21:1-5).<sup>9</sup> God ties the initial physical creation event to a new physical creation, thus revealing the spiritual nature of His creation work. As part of Paul's revelation, we find out even more about the eternal purpose of the creation. He refers to the dispensation of the fulness of time as part of the mystery of God's will (Ephesians 1:7-10). Through this revelation we learn that all things in Christ, both in the heavens and on earth will be one in Christ. This will occur after the great white throne judgment when everything is perfect (I Corinthians 15:20-28).

## The Garden Account

This garden appears to be a type of the Israel's promised kingdom of heaven on earth when Christ will reign as King of kings (referred to as New Jerusalem in Revelation 21). The garden was made without sin or death (Adam and Eve were made perfect), and there will be no sin or death in the future kingdom (Ezekiel 36:26-29; 37:21-23; Revelation 21:22-27). The animals and birds that God made for the garden lived in harmony (without death), as will the animals in the future kingdom (Isaiah 11:6-9). Additionally, the garden contained the tree of life, as will New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:14). We will see later that Adam was a type of Christ (Romans 5:14) and what Scripture says about his purpose. The spiritual significance of the garden account, therefore, is far greater than the physical significance.

Most of the Bible revolves around God's plan for His chosen nation Israel. Although Israel does not start until Jacob (Genesis 35:9-12), everything before that was pointing toward a chosen nation that would be established in a promised land. The key here is promised *land*. This land, first promised to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:12-21), and later confirmed to his son Isaac and then to Isaac's son Jacob (Genesis 26:1-5; 28:13-15), would be a permanent dwelling place for God's people (the redeemed remnant of Israel). God confirmed the kingdom promise to Moses in the wilderness (Exodus 19:5-6). The Old Testament prophets spoke of this everlasting kingdom, the gospel accounts confirm that Christ will be the King in the kingdom, and the book of Revelation provides greater detail concerning Christ's physical return to earth and the establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Because of the sinfulness of mankind and the nations, God had established the nation of Israel for Himself to be different and separate from the godless nations and to glorify Him (Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 26:18-19). Gentiles—referring to everyone outside of Israel and its promises—had no hope but to face the righteous judgment and wrath of God. That is, until God saved Saul (later named Paul), the chief of sinners, to reveal His message of salvation by grace to everyone without distinction (I Timothy 1:12-16; Acts 20:24; I Corinthians 12:12-13; Galatians 3:26-28).

After Israel's continued disobedience (the nation rejected the witness of God the Father by killing His prophets, the witness of God the Son by crucifying Christ, and the witness of God the Holy Spirit by stoning Steven—Acts 2:22-23; 7:51-60), God temporarily set the nation and His promises to them aside and initiated His plan for the Gentiles through Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 1:1; 11:13, 25).

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<sup>9</sup> Contrary to most traditional teaching, the new heaven and new earth will occur *prior* to the establishment of Christ's prophesied kingdom on earth. Revelation 21 does not chronologically follow the great white throne judgment described in Revelation 20:11-15, at which time *all* of the lost will be judged and they, along with death and hell (Hades/Sheol), will be cast into the eternal lake of fire (Gehenna). Revelation 21 and 22 describe the messianic (millennial) kingdom where the nations and sin will still exist outside the gates of new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:24-27; 22:14-15); the great white throne judgment, however, will occur at the end of the initial 1,000-year period of the kingdom.

In the book of Acts and in Paul's letters, his message is referred to as the gospel of the grace of God, the gospel of Christ, and the preaching of the cross (Acts 20:24; Philippians 1:27; I Corinthians 1:18). Everything in his message centers on the completed work of Christ for our salvation. Unlike the rest of the Bible, the message of reconciliation revealed through Paul is applicable to Jews and Gentiles alike, with no differences between male and female, or slave and free (Galatians 3:28). Unrealized by most believers, the gospel of grace is a major component of what Scripture calls the revelation of *the mystery*, or the secret plan of God (Colossians 1:25-27; Ephesians 3:1-12; Romans 16:25). This previously unrevealed secret (it had been hidden in God since the world began) includes such truths as the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:32; I Corinthians 12:12-13), Israel's temporary blindness (Romans 11:25), and the *rapture* (I Corinthians 15:51-52; I Thessalonians 4:14-17). In this dispensation of grace (Ephesians 3:1-3), believers are considered by God to be citizens of heaven and look forward to a heavenly hope—unlike the children of Israel who have an earthly hope (Philippians 3:20-21; Ephesians 2:4-6).

Beginning with Genesis 1:2 and continuing through the garden account, therefore, God establishes the foundation of His earthly program that points to redeemed Israel living in their promised land with Christ as King of kings. God kept the revelation of His heavenly program as a secret to Himself until He chose to reveal it through the Apostle Paul. Based on this, it would appear that the spiritual significance of these accounts is far greater than the physical significance, and we should not spend too much time or effort trying to decipher the physical nature of the accounts.

### The Purpose of Adam

As noted above, the creation account in Genesis 1 says that God created man, male *and* female, while the garden account in Genesis 2 says that God made Adam and sometime later made Eve from Adam. Because these two accounts cannot be referring to the same event, is it possible that Genesis 1:27 is referring to people who existed *before* Adam? Adam's son Cain went to the land of Nod, settled there, married, and built a city (Genesis 4:16-17). Who did he marry? It is taught that he married his sister (which is not said or even implied in Scripture), but is this a reasonable assumption considering that such a thing was considered wicked by God under the Law of Moses (Leviticus 18:9-11, 29-30; 20:17; Deuteronomy 27:22)?<sup>10</sup> Who did he build a city for? No one builds a city for his own family. It is *not* heresy to think that there were humans, and perhaps even civilizations, present on the earth before God made Adam. Brethren, do not scoff at those who say that the history of mankind began far more than 6,000 years ago, because they are correct.

But does not Genesis 5:1-5 imply that Adam was the first man? No. This passage explains mankind and Adam in the same way the creation and garden accounts do. Adam was *made* in the same likeness that God had *created* man (male and female). Therefore, in this passage, it is reiterated that God created man (male and female) as a parenthetical phrase in the first two verses,<sup>11</sup> and then we have the beginning of the genealogy of Adam starting in the third verse.

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<sup>10</sup> Who did Cain's brother Seth marry? And so forth.

<sup>11</sup> In the KJV, Genesis 5:2 says God called the male and female "Adam." However, because the words for *man* and *Adam* come from the same Hebrew word, the correct rendering is *man* (for mankind) as in Genesis 1:27.



Was Adam the first human to sin? The Bible is used to prove that he was, but is this what Scripture says? Actually, the first *recorded* sin was when Eve succumbed to Satan's deception (Genesis 3:1-6; I Timothy 2:14). Adam was held responsible by God, apparently because he disobeyed the direct command of God without being deceived by Satan. So, was Eve the first human to sin?

Please read Romans 1:18-32. Paul describes the fall of mankind because they worshipped the creature rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25). Consequently, God turned all mankind over to their sin.<sup>12</sup> This has nothing in common with Adam's sin in the garden, nor is this sinful fall described anywhere in the Old Testament.<sup>13</sup> *Perhaps* this passage in Romans 1 is a glimpse into the condition of mankind *before* Adam, thus establishing the need for a Savior and, therefore, the reason God made Adam.

With this in mind, Adam was made because a Savior was already needed. Otherwise, all mankind was condemned to remain in sin and separate from God. From God's point of view, Christ the man was a direct descendent of Adam even though Joseph was not His actual father (Luke 3:23-38). Both Adam and Christ are referred to as sons of God (Luke 3:22, 38). God made Adam perfect but he later sinned; Christ, who knew no sin, took our sins (and the consequences of Adam's sin) upon Himself (II Corinthians 5:21).

Consider the following questions:

1. According to Scripture, who was called the first man?
2. According to Scripture, who was called the second man?

The answer to first question is *Adam*, and the answer to the second question is *Christ* (not Cain). Where does Scripture tell us these things? This is revealed only in I Corinthians 15:45-49, where it also refers to Christ as the *last Adam*. The creation account does not call or refer to Adam as the first man or the first human. The purpose of Adam was far greater than what was revealed about him in the book of Genesis; therefore, we need to understand Adam more from a spiritual perspective than from a physical perspective.

Why does Scripture say that sin entered the world through Adam? In Romans 5:12-21 and I Corinthians 15:45-49, we see the crucial spiritual relationship between Adam and Christ. Through the *first man*, Adam, we are physical and condemned to death because of his sin. Through the *second man*, Christ, we are spiritual and (if saved) have the promise of eternal life. Please note that Christ was not physically the second man, so Adam does not have to be the first physical man—the primary relationship between Adam and Christ is spiritual. Just as Christ's provision of eternal life through His death for our sins was imputed to all who believe (*before* and *after* His death and resurrection—Romans 3:25), the eternal spiritual consequence of Adam's sin was imputed to all mankind (all those *before* and *after* Adam). All children of God before the revelation of Christ's death for our sins (beginning with Adam) were saved on the basis of Christ's future redemptive work on the cross, even though they had no knowledge that this was the case. Every person before Adam was lost because they worshipped the creation instead of the Creator and God had given them completely over to sin.

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<sup>12</sup> It says this three times, in Romans 1:24, 26, and 28.

<sup>13</sup> Some teach that this passage in Romans refers to the time of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). However, the Babel passage does not say that God turned the people over to sin. That time was long after mankind was sinful and was after the flood.

**Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread [passed] to all men, because all sinned—for until the Law [of Moses] sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**  
(Romans 5:12-21)

As briefly discussed earlier regarding the purpose of the garden account, Adam was made because mankind already needed a savior. The fact that Christ came to die for our sins was not an afterthought of God in response to Adam's sin. Because He is the sovereign Almighty God, He knew ahead of time that, given a choice, mankind would choose to worship the creation rather than worship the Creator. God knew that, given a choice, Adam would disobey God and fall into sin. God knew that even if He brought forth a nation separate to Himself (Israel), that the nation would reject Him and His word just as everyone else had done. Therefore, because of His grace, God planned to provide a Savior and made Adam (called the son of God) to be the beginning of the line of Christ (the son of God). The redemptive plan of God was established *before* the world began, so it is truly the foundation of all the doctrines of God. This plan, referred to as the mystery, was not revealed to mankind until our resurrected and glorified Lord Jesus Christ did so through the Apostle Paul.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the true purpose of Adam was not revealed until Paul.

**Now to Him [God] who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past [since the world began].** (Romans 16:25)

**Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages [world] to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.** (I Corinthians 2:6-8)

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<sup>14</sup> The facts of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection were prophesied in veiled terms in the Old Testament. However, God's full, eternal purpose of Christ's work on the cross was not revealed until Paul.

**For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—if indeed you have heard of the stewardship [dispensation] of God’s grace which was given to me for you; that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight [knowledge] into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations [ages] was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God’s grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable [unsearchable] riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration [fellowship] of the mystery which for ages [from the beginning of the world] has been hidden in God who created all things [by Jesus Christ]; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him. (Ephesians 3:1-12)**

Adam’s purpose in the overall plan of God is not dependent on him being the first physical human, but only the first human through whom the consequences of sin were imputed to mankind, and the first human in the line of Christ through whom God would provide redemption from the consequences of sin to those who believe. The presence of humans before Adam, *all* of whom were given over to sin and were separated from God, should not alter our faith or our belief in the truthfulness and completeness of the word of God.

### **A Different Perspective of the Creation Account**

For the sake of addressing the fundamental claims of creation science, an alternative perspective of the creation account is offered *for consideration only*.<sup>15</sup> It is by no means presented as the actual meaning or final word on the creation account. Keep in mind that this is purely an academic issue, because *no one* can come to an understanding of God through an understanding of creation.

Brethren, the earth is very old. Geologic evidence, when viewed from a spiritually unbiased perspective, confirms that the earth is very old. It also confirms that it has gone through many significant changes over the ages, long before Adam or the flood. This geologic evidence was left in place by God, and God would not have left the evidence to confuse us (I Corinthians 14:33). One cannot learn and understand geology by what is presented by the doctrine of flood geology. The geological sciences cover a multitude of disciplines and are complex. Like all the sciences, it takes years of specialized education and hands-on experience to understand geology and geological processes. It is reasonable to think that if a person needed surgery, then he would want a surgeon who is qualified to do the procedure. Think about the education and experience it takes for a person to become a board-certified surgeon. One should not presume to think he understands geology because he has read some books or taken some classes. The same can be said for all of the sciences.

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<sup>15</sup> Please see my brief biography and personal notes at the end of this study.

From a geological perspective, the *days* of creation represent periods of *activity* with a beginning and an end. However, these periods had different lengths of time, and the next *day* did not necessarily begin after the end of the previous *day*.

In Genesis 1:1, prior to Day 1, it says that God created the heavens and the earth. This order may be significant, for scientific study has demonstrated that the universe is much older than the earth. The geologic record confirms that the earth began as a lifeless system. Our oldest rocks indicate much geologic activity, but they are void of fossils. Also, our oldest rocks are metamorphic rocks—they were formed from previously formed rocks. This is one reason why scientists place the age of earth as older than the oldest dated rocks (radiometric and other dating methods used by geologists are far more complex than presented by creationists).

What about the light appearing on Day 1 and the sun on Day 4? Consider the planet Venus. We know by telescopic and space probe observations that Venus is shrouded in an opaque cloud of gas—no one has physically seen the surface of the planet (although the surface has been mapped by sensors that *see* through the gas layer). If a man were to stand on the surface of Venus, what would he experience? There would be light and darkness, but he would not see the sun. The light would be from the sun, and the darkness would be caused as Venus rotates on its axis. Perhaps the creation account, first revealed to the people of Israel, can be better understood from the perspective of a man on the earth's surface. This would explain why there was light and darkness the first three *days* but no sun until the fourth *day*—the sun was there all along but did not show itself until the earth's atmosphere changed.

The rock record suggests, through studies of specific oxygen isotopes, that the earth may have been completely covered by water for a period of time (as indicated in Genesis 1:2). Furthermore, geologic evidence also suggests that the earth may have been enshrouded with a cloud of water vapor for some period of time—so dense that the form of the sun would have been obscured if viewed from the surface of the earth (as during an overcast day). The earth's atmosphere has undergone many dramatic changes through time. Characteristics of the chemical compositions of sea water and of the atmosphere are preserved in certain rocks, minerals, and fossils. *Perhaps* these activities are summarized in the Day 2 account.

There is much scientific evidence pointing to a time when all the continents we know today were grouped into one land mass.<sup>16</sup> *Perhaps* Day 3 alludes to that occurrence, but this would not have meant anything to the people of Moses' day who were hearing this creation account for the first time. They had no knowledge of the western hemisphere, Australia, or Antarctica (or most other places for that matter). They could, however, understand the concept of seas because they knew about the seas we now call the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea.

Also on Day 3 vegetation was created. The rock record indicates that the oldest fossils (which were single-celled organisms) include a type of algae that bear no resemblance to the seed- and fruit-bearing plants of Moses' day. The types and complexities of vegetation, both on land and in the sea (not

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<sup>16</sup> Through the understanding of plate tectonics and geologic characteristics of the continents, the continents as we know them were grouped into a single (or at least mostly single) landmass that had formed when plates with dispersed land masses had collided.

referred to in the creation account), changed dramatically over time. The Day 3 account refers to only the types of vegetation that were familiar to the people of Israel.

On Day 4, God provided lights for signs, seasons, days, and years. The spiritual significance of this day was discussed earlier. As discussed above for Day 1, the sun, moon, and stars would have already been in existence by this time.

The appearance of sea creatures and birds are covered in Day 5. The rock record verifies that sea life appeared after algae appeared, but long before seed- and fruit-bearing land plants. Therefore, God introduced sea life long before He was finished with His work on vegetation, indicating an overlap of creation during Day 3 and Day 5. The activities of Day 5 were not completed until after Day 6 started, because land animals appear in the rock record long before birds.

Day 6 covers the completion of God's creation with the appearance of land animals and humans. Land animals appear in the rock record before the types of plants described in Day 3, so Day 3 covers a period of time that includes parts of Day 5 and Day 6. Cattle, as well as many other types of land creatures present in Moses' day and as we have with us today are not present in the rock record. The early land animals are long-since extinct, and were extinct and their bones preserved as fossils in sedimentary rocks long before the flood of Noah's day occurred. God does not mention or describe these extinct animals (including dinosaurs, for example) because it would not have meant anything to the people of Israel.<sup>17</sup> God may have described it as He did simply to establish that He is the Creator of all things.

The last life to appear is humans. Neither human remains nor any evidence of humans are preserved in anything but the most recent surface sedimentary rocks and soil (despite the claims of creation science). It appears that God prepared the earth for mankind, so all of His creation work involving plants, sea and land creatures, and birds was finished when he created man to have dominion over the earth. As discussed earlier, mankind (male *and* female) of Day 6 existed before Adam. Archeological evidence indicates humans with spiritual tendencies many thousands of years before Adam. These ancient people (including Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon man) buried their dead and sometimes included items of some personal significance with the bodies. Throughout time, this has demonstrated man's expectation or hope of an afterlife. Therefore, mankind *before* Adam consisted of spiritual beings—but they worshipped the creation rather than the Creator.

If one is not constrained by a 24-hour day, then geologic evidence appears to support the creation account. This should not be surprising to a believer. However, the geologic record does not prove, and cannot be used to prove, that God created the earth and all that is in it. We must accept by faith that God did so.

Nothing has been said to this point about evolutionism. The *theory* of evolution could be broadly summarized as man's attempt to explain his existence. The error of evolutionism is that everything we see in the past and today is a result of *natural* processes without the need of God or some other spiritual force. This position does not explain why nature works as it does, for God is the creator of natural processes. However, when one remembers that the natural man cannot understand the things

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<sup>17</sup> It is possible that extinctions and the appearance of new creatures are implied in Psalm 104:24-30, but without detail or explanation.

of God, then it should be no surprise that the theory of evolution, at least as it is usually portrayed today, is godless. Therefore, it is pointless for believers to challenge the theory of evolution. As with all sciences, however, there is much more to evolution than most believers understand or seem to be willing to consider.

In its basic meaning evolution means *change*, and the rock record indicates incredible change in the earth and in all life forms. Change continues today in everything, from the earth and its atmosphere to viruses and bacteria—not to mention the entire universe. If one takes an honest look at mankind, he must wonder and marvel at the variations within humans. We have several races and many variations within those races—the Bible does not mention anything about this (it is an unwise and a severe misuse of Scripture to suggest that Noah's sons were of three different races). The reasons and causes of these variations in humans are best left to God. God created natural processes, and natural processes constantly lead to changes (i.e., things *evolve*). Instead of fighting this fact of life, Christians should praise God for what He has done.

There is not room in this study to substantiate this information, but the following statements are facts that are proven by science according to the laws of nature that God established. The Bible does not describe any of these things because it is not a science book. The efforts of creation science to compress all of these things into a 6,000-year-old earth are exceedingly misguided and false.

- The earth is more than 4 billion years old, and the universe is much older.
- The earth's crust is composed of plates that are moving with respect to each other and have done so from the beginning.
- The land surfaces have always changed through faulting, folding, uplifting, down-warping, volcanic activity, erosion, and sedimentation, and continue to do so.
- The dinosaurs appeared on earth about 245 million years ago and went extinct about 65 million years ago; they did not coexist with mankind.<sup>18</sup>
- Continental and mountain glaciation sculpted vast areas of the earth during multiple ice ages, the most recent ending about 10,000 years ago.
- Neanderthal man and Cro-Magnon man existed, and did so long before Adam was made by God.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, we have multiple races of people today.
- The western hemisphere was populated (and has been continuously populated) by mankind long before Adam was made.

### **Brief Notes on the Flood**

As mentioned earlier, the major tenant of creationism is that all geologic formations and surface features are the result of the great flood of Noah's day. The main purpose of this tenant is to prove that the earth and everything on it was created in six 24-hour days. I hope you have seen that Scripture does not support a literal 6-day creation and that the garden account is completely unrelated to the creation

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<sup>18</sup> The behemoth described in Job 40:15-24 is not referring to a dinosaur. It is translated from a Hebrew word that in every other usage is translated as *cattle* or *beast(s)*. In this one instance where it is translated as *behemoth*, it is describing a large, strong animal that lives on land and in water such as a hippopotamus.

<sup>19</sup> These people would be included in mankind before Adam, but are not described in Scripture other than as sinful beings who worshipped the creation rather than the Creator.

account. Therefore, there is no need to attribute all things geologic to the flood. Brethren, please read the flood account (Genesis 6:1 – 8:22) and see what it says and what it does not say. Then, please consider the following statements.

- The flood was miraculous, and there is no physical evidence of any other miracles in the Bible besides the creation itself.
- There is no indication that the flood changed the surface of the land. When God judges the earth during the great tribulation, landforms will change and there will no longer be a sea (Revelation 6:12-17; 21:1).
- The flood did not kill vegetation (Genesis 8:10-11).
- There is no Scriptural evidence that Noah's sons were three different races (or that Adam's offspring were of different races).
- There is no mention of any animals even remotely describing dinosaurs (or their eggs) being on the ark.
- Scripture does not say that the ark came to rest on Mt. Ararat.

Did the flood actually cover the entire globe? Remember the uses of the Hebrew word translated as *earth*—it is also translated as *land* and *ground* throughout Scripture. People do not occupy the globe, which is mostly covered by water; instead, they live on the land. The globe did not dry up, but the land affected by the flood did. The words *land* or *ground*, depending on the context, could be substituted for every instance of the word *earth* in the flood account.

Consider the possibility that God's intent was to destroy the descendants of Adam, who had been exceedingly corrupted by breeding with fallen angels and, therefore, were continually evil (Genesis 6:2-7). Although not mentioned in Scripture, by the time of the flood, mankind had populated every continent except Antarctica. However, God had given them over to sin long before the fallen angels interacted with mankind, and God had not judged them.<sup>20</sup>

Where did the ark come to rest? Most Bible translations say that it came to rest on the mountains of Ararat (not on Mt. Ararat—Genesis 8:4). The Hebrew word that has been translated as "Ararat" is also translated as "Armenia" in II Kings 19:37; however, Armenia did not exist as a country when Moses wrote Genesis. Even "Ararat" is a subjective translation of the Hebrew word. As with other place names, it is very possible that Bible translators used place names they were familiar with to match Hebrew names that were not recognized. Mt. Ararat was named as such in the middle ages, at which time it was first believed to be the resting place of the ark. The Bible translators most likely were aware that Mt. Ararat was the tallest mountain in the region (perhaps it was thought to be the tallest mountain in the world) and, because fairly recent legend already placed the ark there, it was logical for them to translate the Hebrew word as *Ararat*. This is all purely academic; no one knows where the ark came to rest.

Creation science says that all sedimentary strata, including coal beds, and land features are the result of the flood. The fact that the dove brought an olive branch back to the ark demonstrates that

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<sup>20</sup> When Paul described the sinful fall of mankind in Romans 1:18-32, there is no mention of the influence of fallen angels, nor does he mention the destruction of mankind by the flood in that passage or anywhere else in his letters. The flood was associated with God's earthly plan for Israel and, therefore, most likely involved only the descendants of Adam.

vegetation was not killed during the flood (God did not tell Noah that he would destroy the vegetation), and that the land upon which the olive tree grew had not changed. Brethren, all of the sedimentary rock formations, certain of which contain coal beds and certain of which contain fossils, were already in existence through natural processes long before the flood occurred.

If the flood occurred about 4,400 years ago (according to the genealogical record in Scripture), and if the flood destroyed all mankind on the globe except those who were on the ark, then all people on the earth today are descendants of Noah's family. First of all, there are no references to different races of people in the Bible. Like many things, one has to go outside the Bible to explain the races. Also, the Egyptian and Chinese civilizations (and likely others) were in existence before and after the time of the flood with no break. The western hemisphere began to be populated well over 10,000 years ago and it was not wiped out and restarted 4,400 years ago. The Aborigines have continuously inhabited Australia for at least 50,000 years.

Brethren, the great flood of Noah's day was a miracle. Because it was a miracle, it is not a stretch to think that it was a local flood intended to destroy the direct descendants of Adam (some of whom had intermarried with fallen angels) and the animals that God made for Adam.<sup>21</sup> If it is impossible or illogical to think that God somehow confined the flood of water over a limited region, then how did God divide the Red Sea<sup>22</sup> so that His people could cross on dry ground? Could God have destroyed all mankind on the face of the earth with the flood? With God all things are possible; however, there is not sufficient information in Scripture to say that He absolutely did so.

### The Error of Creation Science

The Bible is *not* a science book. Creation science has been developed to prove God to an unbelieving world, which, according to Scripture, cannot be done. It tries to take things in nature to prove that the earth was made in six 24-hour days. This position is dependent upon and *proven* by the unscriptural and false premise that all geologic strata, including sedimentary formations, coal beds, fossils, landforms, etc., are the direct result of the flood of Noah's day. This is not a study of the flood, but the Scriptural account of the flood does not support *anything* proposed by the doctrine of flood geology perpetuated by the Institute of Creation Research and the many spin-off organizations. Brethren, the flood was a miracle and, like all other miracles (as discussed earlier), *there is no physical evidence to prove that it occurred*.

The so-called scientific facts of creationism cannot be challenged without a solid understanding of geology (and biology, physics, and astronomy, which are not addressed here). Unfortunately, the disciples of creationism have been fed with such a convincing diet of distorted scientific facts and observations that they consider all *secular* geologic information to be false and all *creationist* (flood)

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<sup>21</sup> There are nearly 22,000 described species of mammals, birds, and reptiles on the planet, along with more than one million other species of *creeping* things. There would not have been enough room for two to fourteen (seven pairs of *clean* animals and birds) of each of those species, along with their necessary food, on the ark of the size described in Scripture (Genesis 6:14-21; 7:2-3).

<sup>22</sup> The Hebrew name translates to the *sea of reeds*, so the Israelites likely crossed some other substantial body of water along the border of Egypt.



geology as true. Therefore, no attempt will be made to evaluate geology versus flood geology on a point-by-point basis.

The teaching of creationism serves no useful purpose. Instead, because it is a false doctrine, it causes many people to blaspheme God just as the Gentile nations blasphemed God because of Israel's sins (Romans 2:24; Ezekiel 36:16-21). They do this because the claims of creation science have no real basis in science (similar to the old *flat earth* doctrine), yet are put forth as scientific fact in the name of God. As with other false doctrines, the teaching and preaching of creation science in the name of God is taking His name in vain. Creationism falls under the category of "profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so-called" (KJV) or as "worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called knowledge" (NASB) as warned against by the Apostle Paul (I Timothy 6:20-21). It is gaining momentum in Christian circles because its proponents are teaching things people want to hear—it appears that many believers want whatever they can use to fight and ridicule the world (II Timothy 4:3-4).

## Conclusion

God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ created the universe with its countless galaxies—a universe that is continually changing. They created the earth and all its life forms, which are changing also. God is almighty and sovereign. As believers, we can and should praise Him for what He has done in creation. However, the creation account of Genesis 1 does not establish the purpose of God. The word of God centers on Christ and His redemptive work at the cross, which He planned before the foundation of the earth.

A huge conflict has arisen between Christianity and the secular science community over creationism versus evolutionism. This is unfortunate because God is the author of the scientific principles based on facts of nature that we observe all around us. Yes, the theory of evolution is wrong because it leaves out God and because of some of its unsubstantiated conclusions, but even more wrong are the many false doctrines, including creationism, proclaimed in the name of God. Any Christian who thinks he knows for certain how or why God created the heavens and the earth as He did should pay heed to Job 38 – 42. Hopefully, like Job, he will realize his own humility and recognize the sovereignty of our Almighty God (Job 40:1-4; 42:1-6; see also Romans 9:14-21).

More and more, the belief in creation science and a literal 6-day creation is being tied to salvation. People are expected to believe these things in order to be prepared to believe the gospel of salvation or to prove or validate their salvation. Brethren, nowhere in Scripture is believing in creationism tied with salvation. Nor is believing God as the Creator a prerequisite to be saved—this knowledge comes as the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of the believer to this truth. Furthermore, the Apostle Paul never refers to a 6-day creation because days are irrelevant in this dispensation of grace—we are *not* under the Law of Moses.

All believers must remember that faith is the substance (assurance) of things hoped for, and the evidence (conviction) of things *not seen* (Hebrews 11:1). Romans 1:18-25 implies that mankind *had* a chance to know God through His creation, but they *forever* lost that opportunity when they chose to worship the creation instead. The world around us today and the oldest archeological evidence bears out the fact that mankind has always sought out a god or a purpose in life through the creation—

mankind is not seeking God (Romans 3:11). Therefore, God is not offering His creation as a means for unregenerate man to approach and understand Him. Our *only* path to God is through the realization of our sinful condition and humble acknowledgment that Christ died for our sins. This is faith, and it comes from God (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:8-9).

So, what if the earth is billions of years old? What if there were spiritual humans before God made Adam and Eve? These things do not invalidate the word of God in general or even the creation account in particular. We should realize that the written account of creation covers about 0.1 percent of the Bible, and view it as a very brief summary of God's vast and complex creative work. Furthermore, we should remember that any attempt to prove God and His word through scientific means is fruitless. Instead of fearing and fighting scientific knowledge and information,<sup>23</sup> however, we should focus on the redemptive work of Christ and the message of reconciliation, and desire and endeavor to walk worthy of our salvation and as workmen who do not need to be ashamed (II Corinthians 5:20-21; Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 1:9-12; II Timothy 2:15; Philippians 2:14-16).

Dick Johnson  
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<sup>23</sup> Christians who oppose or are afraid of science should ponder for a moment on how science affects their everyday lives. Think of medicine and all of our medical capabilities (I would not have lived past the age of 18 and my wife would not have survived infancy without medical science). We could not grow food as productively as we do without science. We could not purify our water supplies (or, if the source is groundwater, obtain water supplies) without science. We would not have air travel without science. We would not have solar or nuclear energy without science. We would not have computers, cell phones, or satellites without science. The list goes on and on. Oh, and thank a geologist the next time you get in your vehicle—the various metals originated from ore, and the plastics, fuel, and lubricants came from oil that were discovered by geologists (additionally, the ore and oil were transformed into useful products by countless other scientists). As a child of God, I thank Him and give Him the praise for how He has used science and worked through scientists to benefit my life.

### Author's Brief Bio:

- Born in 1956
- Saved by the grace of God (born again) in 1965
- Began to understand the distinctiveness and importance of Paul's apostleship and message (the gospel of the grace of God) in 1974
- Began teaching the word of God for home-based Bible study groups in the late 1970s, continuing to the present
- Earned Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in geology from Colorado State University in 1979 and 1982, respectively
- Married Linda in 1981; we have three daughters
- Employed as a geologist, project manager, and supervisor from 1981 to 2019
- Became a Certified Professional Geologist through the American Institute of Professional Geologists in 1989

### Personal Notes:

I love God and my Lord Jesus Christ. I love the word of God, and teach it as God has given me understanding. I teach it with fear and respect, realizing the authority and sovereignty of our Almighty God and my own human limitations and weaknesses. My desire is to teach the truth and live accordingly.

Regarding my geological background, I'm thankful to God for the measure of understanding He has given to me. When I look at a mineral, rock, geological formation, or landscape, or peer into the heavens, I see the mighty hand of God and praise Him for His work. I share my life with my wife who loves the Lord and who appreciates God's creation as I do (she is not a geologist).

I have been ridiculed by fellow believers because of my education and experience in geology. For the record, I am neither an evolutionist nor a creationist—the former is a godless doctrine of man, and the latter is a false doctrine in the name of God. Neither side of the debate deserves attention by members of the body of Christ. Instead of attending creation seminars, watching creation movies, reading creation literature, and debating creationism with unbelievers, the believer's faith and walk would be better served by understanding and adhering to the word of God. The Bible tells us how to walk worthy of our salvation, and we must humble ourselves to accept God's instructions. As I suggest when I teach and to anyone who asks, I recommend that a believer begins with the letters of Paul (Romans through Philemon) to understand God's instructions to members of the body of Christ in this dispensation of the grace of God. As a believer begins to understand the revelation of the mystery and the gospel of the grace of God, then the rest of Scripture will begin to fit into place and be more easily understood and appreciated, with all praise going to God and our Lord Jesus Christ.