

On Origin and Creation

Where and how did the cosmos begin and how did life come to be?

The questions of origin and life are both foundational and critical to our understanding of God. And while the advent of modern science¹ in the areas of cosmology and biology have added tremendous understanding to the realm of nature, they necessarily remain limited to the realm of naturally occurring phenomena, (i.e., the material cosmos/world). Such can add insights to a supernatural God², but are not our primary source of understanding in this area. As in all matters of theology, the written Word of God³ is our lead.

We believe that before God, there was not.

In the beginning was the Word⁴. There was a state before time as we understand it where nothing existed but God. He is the only Being that exists that is not contingent upon anything. As Paul said of Jesus Christ:

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (Col 1:17)

Therefore, all space, time, matter and beings find their origin in Him and all were made by Him from that which was not. The church has traditionally called that 'creation ex nihilo' – creation out of nothing. As the writer of Hebrews states:

By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. (Hebrews 11:3)

We believe that God's creation came about through His acts of special creation.

Genesis chapter 1 is our best understanding of the origin of the cosmos and what we generally categorize as species in the plant and animal kingdom. Hence, we find it no surprise that the very best of modern cosmology has come to understand that the cosmos had a beginning, a 'fact' that has only recently been discovered by scientific investigation⁵. So says the Word of God.

Therefore, we understand that God created all life with specific and particular characteristics according to His special creation, initially complete in functionality, and the pinnacle of His special creation is man. Genesis chapter 1 reiterates this fact no less than ten times with the creation of life according to its assigned and designed *kind*. And it is those *kinds* of air-breathing animals which are preserved in the ark through the flood⁶.

To that end, we understand mankind to be created in his and her current biological form and function (to say nothing about man created '*in the Image of God*⁷'). In

conversation, Jesus Christ presumes such a normative understanding as He clarifies the theology of marriage:

He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ..." (Mat 19:4)

Therefore, we reject the seemingly endless theories that life came about through such things as abiogenesis (non-life to life through chemical evolution)⁸ or that life on earth resulted through directed panspermia (scattered upon or delivered to the earth from non-terrestrial sources)⁹.

Therefore, we reject the seemingly endless variations of theories that suggest that the specialization of biological life came about through macro-evolutionary processes. This includes the various forms of materialistic evolution as the origin of species (Darwinian and neo-Darwinian)¹⁰, as well as the various forms of theistic evolution as the origin of species (e.g., BioLogos¹¹). To whatever extent 'decent with modification' has occurred over the years through natural and guided reproduction, we understand those to be mutations and micro-modifications of God's initial and special creation.

We believe that the time period described during the days of special creation in Genesis 1 is best understood as corresponding to twenty-four hour periods.

A straightforward approach to interpreting Scripture will lead to the normal and long-standing interpretation that God is referring to what we understand as terrestrial 'days'. There are a number of reasons for this interpretation, not the least of which include:

- It is always the understanding in Scripture when a numerical qualifier is used before the word 'day' (Hebrew, *yom*). E.g., the first day; the second day; etc.
- It seems most consistent that death would not reign in the animal kingdom prior to the Fall of man in Genesis 3:6. There, the death of mankind begins (spiritual and also in its eventual outworking, physical).
- As God established the Sabbath restriction in the Law, the most reasonable understanding of Exodus 20:8-11 is to make a direct and corresponding connection in the time period of the work week and the creation week:

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. ... For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day."

References:

¹Scientific Method and the foundation of Modern Science

²Psa 19: 1-6; Job 38:4-7; Rom 1:20

³Source for the Bible and our hermeneutic

⁴John 1:1

⁵Hawking, and Ellis, *The Cosmic Black-Body Radiation and the Existence of Singularities in our Universe*, *Astrophysical Journal*, 152, (1968)

⁶Gen 6:20, 7:14

⁷Positional statement/paper on *Image of God*.

⁸Oparin, *Chemical evolution*

⁹Sagan, Crick, and others.

¹⁰Darwin, *Origin of Species*; Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*

¹¹Collins, *The Language of God*