

## Thoughts on the Creation from a Christian perspective

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When reading the description of the creation of the universe and its contents given in Genesis 1 in the Bible, there are several things to keep in mind when trying to understand this.

The primary purpose of the Bible is for God to reveal himself to His creation, humans, and to give us information on who He is and how we should live in a relationship with Him. In order to do this, the Bible was written over a period of time by several authors. From the point of view of a believer in God, I believe He guided and inspired these authors as to what they should write. At the same time it must be kept in mind that each author wrote his/her text in a certain time period (historical context) and from a certain cultural perspective (cultural context). The writers wrote for the people of their time, using references and knowledge that they assumed a reader from that time would understand. It is thus very important for a reader in the year AD 2020 to understand, as far as possible, the context within which each section of the Bible was written in order to understand what the writer was trying to say. Without this context, a literal interpretation of what is written is very likely to lead to misunderstandings at best.

When it comes to the description of creation, the Bible is meant to answer the question “Who created?”. The descriptions of creation in the Old Testament was meant to make sense to the people living at the time of the writing of the creation story. The Bible thus uses descriptions and a world view that is very different from what humans in AD 2020 have.

When one asks the question “How was the universe created?”, then the Bible is not a suitable source of information. This question requires science knowledge to provide the answer. The Bible is not a science textbook and was never intended to explain the detailed scientific processes that underlie creation. (The Bible is not a historical textbook, either, although it describes history in some of its books).

So a huge amount of confusion results if one applies the wrong question when studying creation. If one asks the “Who?” question of science, then there is no useful answer as science is not equipped to provide it. Similarly if one asks “How?” from the Bible, expected rigorous detail, it has no useful answer as it is not equipped to provide an answer.

So to me God is the being who created the universe, using the methods such as the Big Bang, galaxy and star formation and planet formation to create the components of the universe we observe today. He also used the mechanism of evolution to give rise to life on earth. God is the being who created life, and the How? of this is given by the Evolution Theory. The question of when humans as thinking cognitive beings originated during the evolution process is a separate discussion.

We don't understand all the details of the How? processes yet. Science is continually discovering and refining knowledge so that humans progress on a path of understanding themselves and their environment better. It is important from a Christian perspective that God is still always present in all of this work. Just because we understand more of how things work, God is not diminished, i.e. He is not just a God of that which we do not understand. He is the God that created all and as we discover and understand more about the details of His creation, it increases the wonder at the beauty and harmony of his creation.

To me the exact details of the creation descriptions in Genesis are not that important. They conform with the worldview and understanding of the writer in a particular historical and cultural context.

There is a great deal of interesting detail in the Genesis description if one has knowledge of Jewish culture. (I know this from attending a presentation on the topic several years ago but I can't remember much detail. I know it required a specialist understanding of Hebrew to start with.) The overall message that is important is the fact that God was the Creator and He loves his creations and wants to interact with them and live in an active relationship with them.

The above is limited to trying to describe how I understand the creation story in the Bible should be interpreted. There is an additional question that can be asked – “Why did God create?”. This is also a question where the Bible gives answers and where science does not provide any answers.