Genesis 1-3

The content of the first three chapters in the first book of the Bible establishes the foundation for virtually every other doctrine in the rest of the Bible. These three chapters make a variety of profound claims—God exists and created all things, he is powerful and good, and humans are sinful and in need of a savior. The rest of the Bible explains, expands upon, and provides examples of these truths. If we fail to understand the contents of these chapters, we will fail to understand God, the Bible, ourselves, and our world.

The opening chapters of Genesis are not only foundational to the rest of Scripture but essential to it: without these chapters the rest of Scripture makes little sense. What is more, each category of systematic theology, to one degree or another, touches upon the core tenet of God as Creator and of humankind as his consummative, image-bearing creature.[1]

Psalm 33:6–9 *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.*

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Bob Utley's notes on Genesis 1-11 (freebiblecommentary.org)

Scott Estell's study of Genesis

Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary*

Others as footnoted in the text

[1] Kyle C. Dunham, "The Role of Biblical Creationism in Presuppositional Apologetics," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 25 (2020): 5.

A Brief Introduction to Genesis 1-3

I. Purpose

A. Genesis is a history of Abraham's family. It is not an exhaustive account; it includes only those elements that the author chose as necessary for his purposes. Genesis is an origins story—the book informs the ancient Jews regarding their heritage. Most of the book (chapters 12-50) focuses on Abraham's extended family and what happened to them. The creation account is a fairly small part of the book (only two chapters out of fifty), but it is an exceedingly important part.

By far the great majority of events in Genesis happened within a limited sphere of time and location and can best be described simply as "family matters."[2]

B. The Hebrew title for the book is "in the beginning," the first word of the book in the Hebrew OT (*bereshith*). Ancient books were often named according to the first words of the book.

C. The book derives its common name from the Septuagint, an ancient (3rd century B.C.) Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, which titled it *Genesis*, the Greek word for "beginning," "origin," or "source."

D. The opening words of Genesis form an introduction to the entire book of Genesis and to the whole Pentateuch. The major theme of the Pentateuch is the covenant that God made with Israel on Sinai. Thus the creation account helps the reader make sense of God's covenant with Israel. Even here, there is an emphasis on the land, which later becomes an important part of Israel's inheritance (read Ex 19:5 and Jer 27:5).

E. The author's purpose in these chapters is both historical and theological. Moses is making profound claims about the true and living God of Israel as distinct from all the other so-called gods of the ANE, especially the Egyptian deities. The true creator God has far greater power and authority than any pagan idol. So we must see the theological truths along with the historical account.

[2] John H. Sailhamer, "Genesis," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 4.

F. The fundamental truths revealed here include

1. God exists.
2. God created all things; he is not part of creation.
3. God produced the first humans in a perfect spiritual and physical condition.
4. Humanity descends from a common source, implying the unity of the race.
5. The original creation was good, but human sin plunged the world into depravity and darkness.
6. God responds to the problem of sin by providing salvation.

These foundational truths resonate throughout the rest of the Bible. Without an understanding of them, little else in Scripture makes sense.

> [T]he God of the covenant is the Creator of the universe; and he has a plan of blessing for all people. This is the theological foundation of all subsequent missionary statements in the Bible. … God, the Creator of the universe, has prepared the land as a home for his special creature, man, and that he has a plan of blessing for all of his creatures.[3]

II. Contents

A. This short portion of Genesis deals with two main events: the creation of the world and the fall of man. The writer makes profound claims about these events without defending them. His original readers are his own people—the Jews. The existence of God and his work as creator are asserted as true but not proven or defended.

It seems likely that the author (Moses) is intentionally making a distinction between the true and living God of Israel and the false idols of Egypt and the surrounding nations. Israel had recently come out of Egypt, and some of the Israelites carried Egyptian idolatry with them. While there are some similarities in creation stories among most ANE nations, there is no God like the God of the Hebrews, and the Jewish origin story is significantly different from all others.

> The polytheism of the ANE could not be more distinct from the monotheism presented to the Jews in the Torah.[4]

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[3] John H. Sailhamer, "Genesis," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 14.

[4] Matthew A. Postiff, "Essential Elements of Young Earth Creationism and Their Importance to Christian Theology," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 21 (2016): 47.

B. Moses likely compiled his record from previously-existing materials. No such pre-biblical records exist today, but no doubt the Jews knew their origins long before Moses wrote them down. Perhaps these origin stories were kept alive orally within the Jewish community. Or Moses might have had access to source documents kept by the Jews. In any case, the fact that Genesis is inspired Scripture insures that it is factual and accurate whatever the source documents that Moses used.

C. In the modern world, the claims of these chapters, especially regarding creation, are highly controversial and widely denied. Because of the supremacy of evolutionary views, most people today do not hold a literal understanding of the claims made here. Atheists and secularists do not believe in God or in creation by him. Even religious Jews and Christians do not commonly believe that Genesis is an accurate history of the origin of the universe.

D. Conservative Christians have good reasons to maintain that the opening chapters of Genesis are accurate historical narrative. These chapters provide the theological basis for many other biblical claims. If the foundations of the Bible prove to be unreliable, then the entire institution is liable to collapse—which is exactly what skeptics, liberals, and atheists want.

III. Authorship

A. Although the author never identifies himself or even refers to himself, we believe that Moses wrote the book of Genesis (and the rest of the Pentateuch) under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Other OT writers (e.g., Joshua, Ezra, Daniel) affirm that Moses wrote it. Jesus affirmed that Moses wrote the OT law (cf. Mt 8:4, 19:7-8; Mk 7:10, 12:26; Lk 16:29-31; John 5:46), as do other NT writers. The ancient Jews affirmed that Moses was the author. If we believe these authorities, we must believe that Moses wrote Genesis.

B. Liberal scholars have questioned and denied the Mosaic authorship of Genesis, claiming that the work was written by unknown Jews long after Moses was dead, perhaps during the Babylonian captivity. Conservative scholars have long defended Mosaic authorship of Genesis; there are good reasons for holding the traditional viewpoint.

IV. Date

A. Scholars commonly suggest that Genesis was written during the forty years Moses and the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness of Sinai (1447-1407 B.C.). But it is possible that Moses may have written it before he fled from Egypt (c. 1527-1487 B.C.).

Moses, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, obviously believed that it was important for the Jews to be informed regarding their origins. They were about to become a great nation in a new homeland, so they needed to know where they had come from. They needed to know that they were distinct and different from all the other surrounding nations, especially from Egypt.

B. The date of the events Moses describes in Genesis 1-3 is a matter of heated controversy. When did these things happen? Christians have commonly believed that these events occurred around 4000 B.C. Young earth creationists typically find evidence in the Bible for no more than about 6,000-10,000 years of earth history. Evolutionists disregard biblical claims and assert that the earth is about 4.5 billion years old and is the result of random events in a universe that is nearly 14 billion years old. These two claims (i.e., young earth vs. old earth) cannot be easily reconciled; if one is true, the other is false.

C. Debates over the age of the earth eventually boil down to issues of authority. Do we accept the claims of Moses and Jesus, or do we defer to modern "experts" who often contradict one another? Since the Bible is true in all that it affirms, we should give extra weight to biblical teaching. Although the Bible does not directly tell us the age of the earth, we can come to a fairly accurate date by following the biblical data. When information derived from the Bible contradicts information provided by modern science, we have to decide whom to follow. Or we can just remain unsure and undecided. Having a firm opinion on the age of the earth is not required for salvation or sanctification.

While it's not sinful to claim that you don't know when God created all things, you should not be ignorant of what the Bible says on the topic. If you've read the account, you cannot be ignorant. If biblical statements lead to a conclusion about the age of the earth, then we should not be afraid to follow the biblical data. If the Bible is silent on the issue, then we should be silent, or at least, very tentative about our claims. But if the Bible's teaching on this issue is clear and strong, then we likewise should be bold in our beliefs about it, even if we face ridicule for it.

V. Interpretation

A. Until the last couple of centuries, Jews and Christians typically interpreted the opening chapters of Genesis as historical narrative. That is, they understood the material as conveying what actually happened—God made the world, populated it with plants and animals, created man from the dust of the ground, and placed him and his wife in Eden. Shortly thereafter, the couple succumbed to Satan's temptation, fell into sin, experienced the curse, and were expelled from the garden. People commonly understood this story as historical fact. Was this a reasonable way to interpret the account?

B. A very important rule of Bible interpretation is to consider what the author meant and how the original audience would have understood it. Would the ancient Jews have understood this material as historical narrative or as poetry/allegory/myth? Moses seems to have taken this account as factual history (Ex 20:11, 31:17), as did Jesus (Mt 19:4-5) and many other biblical writers (cf. Rom 5:12). It's also interesting that some of the genealogical records extend all the way back to Adam (cf. 1 Chron 1; Luke 3:38), which would be rather odd if the ancient people took the account as non-historical (where does the myth end and real history begin?). We should follow their example in taking the material as historical narrative, not fiction, myth, or allegory.

Genesis 1:1–2:4a is clearly recognizable as a unit of historical narrative. It has an introduction (1:1), a body (1:2–2:3), and a conclusion (2:4a). These three segments form a unit.[5]

[5] John H. Sailhamer, "Genesis," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 10.

> If we look merely at the form of this document, its place at the beginning of the book of Genesis is sufficient to warrant the expectation that it will give us history, and not fiction, or human speculation. … [T]he biblical account shines out in the clear light of truth, and proves itself by its contents to be an integral part of the revealed history.[6]
>
> The Jewish historian Josephus, who lived in the first century, indicates that the Jews of his day believed that both the first day of creation and Adam's creation occurred about 5,000 years before their time.[7]
>
> Jesus and the biblical writers who refer to the Genesis creation account were not merely accommodating themselves to widely-believed cultural myths (as is often alleged). They refer to these events as true historical accounts. Would Jesus refer to what he knew to be a myth as if it were actual history? What would that say about him if he did that?

C. Genesis presents things from a human perspective, from the way that they would appear to a human observer living on earth (i.e., "phenomenological language"). Genesis is not a modern science textbook. Moses was well-educated in the wisdom of his time, but he was not an astrophysicist. He described things simply, as they would appear to a common person living at that time. It would be inappropriate to apply modern scientific expectations to an ancient pre-scientific text.

   We should be aware that ancient civilizations were probably far more advanced than we give them credit for. If the ancients could build the pyramids, the hanging gardens of Babylon, and the other great wonders of the ancient world, they were probably far more advanced that we assume. These were not ignorant people; they were fully capable of keeping historical records accurately over time.

D. Changing interpretations of the Genesis creation account was not the result of a better understanding of the text of Scripture. Outside influences (i.e., not better exegesis) caused many Christians and Jews to reconsider how to interpret the material.

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[6] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*
[7] Ken Ham, *The New Answers Book 1* (Master Books, 2006), 255. Quoting *The Works of Josephus*.

E. Under the influence of skepticism, rationalism, and evolutionism, the traditional understanding of Genesis as historical fact has become very much out of fashion, even among religious Jews and professing Christians. For many, belief in a young earth is ridiculous, a sign of ignorance and irrationality. Much like those who believe the earth is flat, those who interpret the Genesis account literally are not taken seriously. Some even assert that belief in a literal creation account is a hindrance to modern people accepting the Gospel.

Biblical creationism is viewed with embarrassment as a relic of fundamentalism and as an obstacle keeping reasonable Christians from engaging the world and winsomely defending the faith.[8]

The vast majority today believe that Genesis must be re-interpreted to incorporate the claims of evolution. About 13.8 billion years of universe history must be shoe-horned into the account in one way or another. This has led to a variety of interpretive schemes, all of which deny a straight-forward reading of the text but which seek to preserve God's involvement in creation. The following are examples of old-earth or scientific creationist schemes:

1. "Theistic Evolution" or "Progressive Creationism"—the claim that God used evolution as the mechanism whereby he created the universe. God may have intervened occasionally to make sure evolution produced the desired results, but mostly allowed natural processes to occur without intervention. This idea is widely-held among evangelicals and is commonly taught at evangelical colleges and seminaries.
2. The "Gap Theory" of the "Ruin-Restoration Theory"—the claim that there was a large gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2, during which Satan fell, the creation was marred, and God re-created it. All or most of the time required for evolution is wedged into this gap. This idea was common for many years (as popularized in the Schofield Reference Bible), but is not widely taught or held today.
3. The "Day-Age Theory"—the claim that the six days of Creation are not literal, 24-hour days, but are six geological ages or eons

[8] Kyle C. Dunham, "The Role of Biblical Creationism in Presuppositional Apologetics," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 25 (2020): 4.

4. The "Revelatory Day Theory"—the claim that the six days are not describing the days of creation but the days during which God revealed the events of creation to Moses

5. The "Framework" theory—the claim that Genesis is purely symbolic/poetic/allegorical/pictorial in nature. The intent of the writer was not to give a historical record, but to relate theological truths in poetic language. The material is, essentially, religious myth, legend, or drama (i.e., a "framework") showing God's creative power in various spheres. The material is highly symbolic and pictorial; the events of that era are unknown and can be portrayed only through symbol, analogy, and drama. These chapters are true in a literary sense, but not in a literal sense. The creation narrative is more theology than history.

6. The "Archetype" theory—the claim that Adam and Eve are not actual persons/individuals, but archetypal representatives of the entire human species. Perhaps other species of primitive humans existed before this, and God selected two humans (or a group) and changed them in some way to become the parents of modern humans (*homo sapiens*). Maybe this kind of human evolved to the place where God recognized him/them as human. Perhaps Adam and Eve were the first of this new kind of human, maybe the first to reflect the image of God.

7. The "Nobody Knows for Sure" theory—the claim that we can love and value the first few chapters of Genesis without knowing for sure if the material is narrative history or religious myth. Everyone has his own interpretation, and we should respect those who take a different approach. What is important in this passage is "who" and "why," not "how" or "when." We cannot come to any conclusions about the age or the origin of the earth from this account. The issue is an open question on which good people disagree, so it's best not to come to any conclusions about it; we must hold our views tentatively and with great humility.

A quick glance at Exodus 20:11 should render all such old-earth creation theories null and void.

Exodus 20:11 *For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.*

This passage makes a direct parallel between the days of creation and the days of a normal seven-day week. God made "all that is in" the heavens and the earth "in six days," the same kind of days that Moses was living. What did Moses mean by this statement, and how did his original audience understand it? Almost certainly, they understood Moses to be saying that God made all things in six days, not in the process of billions of years.

Note the Quote: So far as I know, there is no professor of Hebrew or Old Testament at any world-class university who does not believe that the writer(s) of Gen. 1-11 intended to convey to their reader the idea that creation took place in a series of six days which were the same as the days of 24 hours we now experience.[9]

F. It's interesting that those who want to take an allegorical/symbolic view of the creation account also assert that the account is in some sense true. They claim to believe in evolution as the mechanism for the existence of all things, but also assert that we should take Genesis seriously, as theological truth, not mere mythology. The Bible is true, but so is evolution; modern science and theology do not contradict. But it would be more consistent to choose one explanation and stick with it rather than to affirm two antithetical systems.

G. Can one be a Bible-believing Christian and interpret the creation account non-literally? Yes, many professing Christians do not believe that the Genesis creation account is literal/factual history. Such believers are inconsistent and somewhat contradictory in their beliefs. They have compromised theologically so as to (supposedly) remain scientifically acceptable. Such an inconsistent belief is certainly problematic, but it does not constitute a wholesale rejection of the Gospel. Many today profess to be followers of Christ and to be advocates of evolution.

[9] James Barr, Oxford Hebrew professor, quoted in Ken Ham, *The New Answers Book 1* (Master Books, 2006), 94. The quotation is edited slightly.

H. Unless one substantially re-interprets the creation account, it is virtually impossible to integrate it with the findings of modern science. The two ideas are contradictory. One must decide whom to believe—the inspired Genesis account as handed down to us from the ancient Jews, or the ever-changing findings of secular scholarship (cf. the new findings of the Webb space telescope seem to challenge the standard model).

I. One's view of the origin of the universe is essentially a matter of faith. One must exercise faith in God, taking him at his word (see Heb 11:3), or in modern science, believing that modern ideas must replace ancient myths. Both positions require faith, and neither can be proven by purely rational means.

J. Our understanding of Genesis (and the rest of the Bible) must rest on the plain sense of the words contained in it. We dare not base our interpretations on the supposedly "undeniable facts of science" since scientific findings change regularly and often radically (e.g., the recent vaccines and mask usage). Interpretation must depend on the inspired words of Scripture irrespective of what "the science" might claim.

   If we are willing to modify our interpretation of Genesis based on extra-biblical claims (i.e., science), why would we not be willing to change our views of other biblical claims, e.g., the miracles of Jesus, his resurrection, or salvation by faith? Many so-called "experts" also deny these truths. While there may be times that we do change our views (e.g., heliocentrism, slavery), we should be very careful that such modifications do not provide a basis for the collapse of the entire structure of faith (as evolution does).

K. We admit that these chapters of Genesis do not tell us many things that we would like to know. This is not an exhaustive account; it's brief and somewhat vague or veiled in what it says. The author was selective in what he tells us. We should avoid engaging in too much imaginative speculation on the details of creation and the fall. Many things about God's ways are hidden (cf. Deut 29:29), and we should not make bold claims about things not clearly revealed in Scripture.

L. Although secularists, skeptics, and evolutionists would argue otherwise, good reasons for taking a traditional, conservative approach to the text exist. We believe that Genesis is an accurate historical account that reveals what actually happened "in the beginning." We hold a biblical creation view, which assumes a "young earth" creation not more than about 12,000 years ago (most young earth creationists posit from 6,000 to 10,000 years for the age of the earth).[10]

M. We further assert that interpretation of the world should be brought into agreement, as much as possible, with the biblical data. Instead of changing our views of Scripture to align with "the science," we understand scientific claims through the lens of Scripture.

The Scripture is a sufficient witness to creation and does not require the additional input of science to explain the basic elements of creation.[11]

N. We uphold and defend an essentially and consistently literal interpretive method for handling Scripture. We seek to find the plain, normal meaning of the words, sentences, paragraphs, and books of the Bible, as we believe both the human and the divine authors intended the original readers to understand them. Without such a commitment, Scripture means virtually anything to anyone (or nothing to everyone). Thus, we hold the Genesis 1-3 is historical narrative, and we understand it in a plain, normal, literal sense.

God created man in his image with the ability to communicate. We expect that when God communicates, he will do so in an understandable, straightforward way.[12]

[T]he creation account in Genesis should be read as all other historical narrative texts are read: as a straightforward, realistic portrayal of actual events.[13]

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[10] Most cultures of the ANE, in their dating of the earth, extend backward no more than to about 7000 BC. The common view among Christians, until the modern era, was that creation occurred around 4000 BC.
[11] Matthew A. Postiff, "Essential Elements of Young Earth Creationism and Their Importance to Christian Theology," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 21 (2016): 32.
[12] Matthew A. Postiff, "Essential Elements of Young Earth Creationism and Their Importance to Christian Theology," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 21 (2016): 39.
[13] Lee Allen Anderson Jr., "The Relevance of Biblical Creationism in Christian Apologetics," *Journal of Ministry and Theology, Volume 18* 18, no. 1 (2014): 113.

Perhaps if a biblical author referred to the Genesis creation account as anything other than actual history (i.e., as myth, allegory, or fiction), we might have reason to do the same. But the fact is that all the biblical authors who refer to the creation account seem to interpret it as actual history, a record of what really happened. If that's how biblical authors see this material, and if Jesus himself saw it this way (cf. Mk 10:6, 13:19; Lk 11:50-51), that's how we should view it as well. To reject the biblical view is simple unbelief and unfaithfulness.

VI. Importance

A. As noted above, the creation account found in Genesis sets the foundation for virtually everything else that follows. Without this foundation, much of the rest of the Bible would make no sense. Almost all of the books of the NT mention or allude to the first chapters of Genesis.

B. Further, the doctrines of the Bible are largely rooted in the Genesis creation narrative. The material tells us about God (theology proper), man (anthropology), sin (hamartiology), the Spirit of God (pneumatology), salvation (soteriology), and last things (eschatology). Even the preaching of the Gospel is, at root, based on God as the creator, source of truth, and ultimate judge (read Acts 17:24-31).

If the doctrine of creation is detached from the synthesis of Scripture, the authority and sufficiency of the Bible is crippled.[14]

C. An essential doctrinal teaching of the Bible is that God is distinct from his creation. Theologians call this the "Creator-creature distinction." Many ANE religions have creation stories in which their god is part of the existing universe. These gods create the world by manipulating pre-existing materials, often in very unusual and disgusting ways. In contrast to such myths, Genesis asserts that God is the creator, not part of the creation, who caused the materials of the universe to come into existence through his own powerful word. God's role as creator, in turn, leads to the idea that God is the ultimate source of truth. God is the creator of the world and also the highest source of truth, wisdom, and knowledge.

Proverbs 1:7 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

[14] Kyle C. Dunham, "The Role of Biblical Creationism in Presuppositional Apologetics," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 25 (2020): 8.

D. We should be aware that evolutionary claims so popular today are far from scientifically verifiable. Many critics of natural evolution point out the significant failures of the theory to describe the nature of the world. For example:

1. Evolution provides no satisfactory explanation of how something came into existence from nothing.

2. Evolution provides no satisfactory explanation of how life arose from non-life.

3. Evolution provides no satisfactory explanation of how the exceptionally complex data (i.e., information) coded in DNA arose spontaneously from random events and lifeless materials.

   The presence and function of DNA and similar complex biological structures and processes constitute some of the highest hurdles for evolution to jump. Had Charles Darwin known of or understood the complexity of a "simple" living cell, he likely would not have believed in evolution.

4. Evolution provides no satisfactory explanation of how so many elements of fine tuning of the universe came about randomly. Many of the physical constants necessary for existence seem to be exactly right for life on earth, and particularly, for human life (i.e., "the anthropic principle"—the appearance of design). Were these constants any different, life could not exist (at least, on earth).

   It's as if there are a large number of dials that have to be tuned to within extremely narrow limits for life to be possible in our universe. It is extremely unlikely that this should happen by chance, but much more likely that this should happen if there is such a person as God.[15]

5. Evolution provides no satisfactory explanation of the lack of transitional forms between the species. The fossil record lacks evidence for slow, gradual change from one species to another as evolution requires.

[15] Alvin Plantinga, "The Dawkins Confusion: Naturalism ad absurdum." Quoted at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fine-tuned_universe#Examples

6. Evolution provides no satisfactory explanation for morality or ethics. Evolution provides a meaningless world "red in tooth and claw." There is no means of judging good from bad or right from wrong within the evolutionary model.[16]

Evolution is much more of a philosophy than an explanation of what we observe with our senses. Evolution demands that all that exists is material things (i.e., no supernatural or spiritual realms). Everything is matter and can be explained or understood in terms of material or physical processes or forces. This is the assumption underlying the entire theory, but evolution does not prove that the assumption is true. In fact, it's impossible to prove that evolutionary materialism is true. The best explanation of what we see in the world is that a personal, powerful, good Creator made it for his creatures to enjoy.

Ultimately, we deny naturalistic evolution because the theory directly contradicts the clear teaching of the Bible. The inspired, authoritative word of God assures us that "in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." We further reject those theories that attempt to integrate the biblical account with evolutionary concepts. We cannot adopt evolution without seriously compromising biblical truth.

Simply put, the chain of Scriptural evidence [argues] against the ideological commitments and conclusions of evolutionary science at every turn.[17]

VII. Outline of Genesis 1-3[18]

I. The God of creation (1:1)

II. Preparation of the land (1:2–2:3)

A. First day (1:2–5)

B. Second day (1:6–8)

C. Third day (1:9–13)

D. Fourth day (1:14–19)

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[16] Famous evolution promoter and atheist Richard Dawkins said, "The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at the bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no other good. Nothing but blind, pitiless indifference." Richard Dawkins, *River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1995), 133. Oddly, Dawkins does not live according to the viewpoint that he claims to hold.

[17] Kyle C. Dunham, "The Role of Biblical Creationism in Presuppositional Apologetics," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 25 (2020): 28.

[18] John H. Sailhamer, "Genesis," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 16.

E. Fifth day (1:20–23)

F. Sixth day (1:24–31)

G. Seventh day (2:1–3)

III. The gift of the land (2:4–24)

A. Creation of man (2:4–7)

B. Preparation of the garden (2:8–14)

C. Man's place in the garden (2:15–24)

IV. The Land and the Exile (2:25–3:24)

A. Disobedience (2:25–3:7)

1. The transition (2:25)

2. The tempter (3:1)

3. The temptation (3:2–7)

B. Judgment (3:8–20)

1. The scene (3:8)

2. The trial (3:9–13)

3. The verdict (3:14–20)

C. Protection (3:21)

D. Exile (3:22–24)

An Exposition of Genesis 1-3

I. The God of creation (1:1)

A. As noted above, the book in Hebrew is titled "In the beginning" (*bereshith*). *Genesis* is a word implying origins or beginnings. God, of course is eternal; he does not have a beginning (cf. Ps 90:2). So the beginning in view here is the beginnings of "the heavens and the earth" – i.e., the world as we know it. The main claims here are that God exists and that he created the world.

B. One of the great assertions of this text is that creation had a beginning; i.e., matter is not eternal. God is eternal, but created things are not. Modern science affirms this fact, although they explain it differently. The "Big Bang" asserts that everything came from nothing, just like Genesis says (although without a creator—it just happened randomly, for no purpose, with no direction or guide).

C. The Hebrew word for "God" here is *Elohim*. It's a generic word that can be used of the true God or of false gods (idols). Many have noted that this word is plural, possibly implying God's majesty or incomparability. Some see the plurality in this word as reflecting the Trinity, a concept most fully developed in the NT.

D. The term "created" in this grammatical form always describes God's creative work, making something from nothing.

E. The "heavens and the earth" refer to the entire created order—the universe. "Heavens" refers normally to the sky, while "earth" specifies the dry land as distinct from the sea.

F. The creation event marked the beginning of time and space as we know it. Before creation, only God existed. God created all things *ex nihilo*, out of nothing (cf. Heb 11:3) and by his creative word—by *fiat*. Before creation, no material objects existed; only God existed.

> [T]he creation of the heaven and the earth was the actual beginning of all things.[19]

> [T]he formulae "God said … and there was" or "God said … and it was so" indicate an immediate fulfillment of the divine speech, issuing in creative events that happened within moments. The initial acts of creation had to be by fiat speech, for there was no other matter, energy, space, or time that could be used to create things with material, time-bound, and/or space-limited natures.[20]

Note that the creation of all things by God's powerful word was instantaneous—God spoke, and material things began to exist. There was no long process of development here.

G. What was God doing before the beginning? It's impossible to know. Time and space as we know it began "in the beginning," and all that existed before that was God. But there was no time as we think of it before the beginning. God already knew what he would do and what would happen in space and time before the beginning of space and time. God's creative word brought his plan into action.

H. The author makes no attempt to explain or defend his opening claim, that God exists and created everything. Moses is writing this to his fellow Jews for the purpose of strengthening and informing their faith.

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[19] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*

[20] Matthew A. Postiff, "Essential Elements of Young Earth Creationism and Their Importance to Christian Theology," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 21 (2016): 40. The word "fiat" means "let it be done."

In Genesis 1, God just is. Unlike the gods found throughout the Fertile Crescent, God's genealogy is never discussed in the Bible. God does not come from anyone or anything. Unlike everything else in the cosmos, God has no lineage.[21]

II. Preparation of the land (1:2–2:3)

A. First day (1:2–5)

1. Vs. 2

a) This verse gives background information for what follows in the narrative, explaining how the events of vs. 1 happened.

b) At the beginning of creation, after God had made the earth, it was "without form and void," (Heb. *tohu wabohu*), i.e., waste and empty, unformed and unfilled. The earth was empty, formless, and lifeless, covered by water and darkness. The earth was non-functional and disorderly. It was not yet ready for human habitation.

c) The "deep" refers to the waters covering the earth. The word "deep" is from a root meaning "to roar, to rage," which suggests raging, roaring, heaving chaos. God is about to give form and meaning to this chaotic state.

Some of the ANE religions viewed the sea as divine.[22] Their creation myths often included gods and monsters associated with the sea. Moses assures us that the sea is part of God's creation and under God's control. These opening words of the book amount to a polemic against the false gods of the ANE.

d) The Spirit of God "moved" or "hovered" over the face of the waters. The word is used elsewhere of a bird caring for her young in the sense of "brood over," or "incubate" (cf. Deut 32:11). This description suggests that the Spirit is a Person, not simply a "wind" or "breath." The Spirit

[21] Dru Johnson, *The Universal Story: Genesis 1–11*, ed. Craig G. Bartholomew et al., Transformative Word (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press; St. George's Centre, 2018), 21.

[22] For example, according to a Babylonian creation myth, the primordial world is ruled by a female god. Bel, another god, divided the darkness and cut the woman into two halves, of which he formed the heaven and the earth; he then cut off his own head, and from the drops of blood men were formed. Other myths say that the earth was hatched from an egg. The biblical creation story seems rather tame in comparison.

of God seems to be preparing the earth for what is about to happen as creation progresses.

e) Thus, at the initial creation, the earth was formless, empty, dark, waterlogged, and chaotic. But it did not remain in that form for long.

2. Vs. 3

a) God spoke the universe into existence—by *fiat*. This corresponds nicely with the NT revelation that "in the beginning was the Word… all things were made by him" (John 1:1, 3).

b) We find the pattern "let there be … and there was" beginning here. What God calls into existence completely fulfills the divine intent (cf. Ps 33:9, 148:5; 2 Cor 4:6).

c) God dispels the darkness by calling for light. Without light, there is only chaos. With the coming of light, God begins making order from formless emptiness.

d) We know that God did not create the sun, moon, and stars until later in the creation week. So where did this light come from? The text does not tell us. It is no problem for God, who is light (1 Jn 1:5; cf. Rev 21:23) to provide his own light for creation prior to the creation of the sun (cf. Rev 22:5).

3. Vs. 4

a) The light was "good" in the sense that it fulfilled the purpose for which it was created. Light is necessary for life and it dispels the darkness. God himself is good, and this first aspect of creation reflects the goodness of the creator. Every part of creation was good—pleasing, suitable, useful—before the fall.

b) God "divided the light from the darkness." Darkness was not completely eradicated, just dispelled. This separation or division of one thing from another is repeated several times in the creation narrative—light from darkness, earth from water, and earth from the sky. God is beginning to bring order and function to the earth.

c) Separation of good from evil is a key theme throughout the rest of the Pentateuch. God separates between clean and unclean, holy and unholy (cf. Lev 10:10, 11:47, 20:24). It's part of God's nature to separate.

4. Vs. 5

a) This is the first explanation of God naming something. God is clearly sovereign over these events, which is shown by his dividing things and naming them.

b) The description of the "evening and morning" as "the first day" strongly implies that these are regular days, not long epochs of history or eons of time. The word "day" can refer to longer periods of time (cf. 2:4; Isa 61:2), but in this context, with the description of this day as the "first," it seems evident that these are 24-hour days. If the earth were spinning and God provided the light, regular days would be possible.

When the Hebrew word יוֹם (*yom*) is used with a numerical adjective, it refers to a literal day.[23]

[I]f the days of creation are regulated by the recurring interchange of light and darkness, they must be regarded not as periods of time of incalculable duration, of years or thousands of years, but as simple earthly days.[24]

B. Second day (1:6–8)

1. Vss. 6-7

a) God called for an "expanse" or "firmament" that separated water from water. The expanse refers to the area between the sea and the sky/clouds—earth's atmosphere. The word "firmament" suggests something strong and shiny, like a molten mirror (cf. Job 37:18; Ezek 1:22). The sky may have seemed like a glass dome/vault to some observers. Interestingly, it looks something like that from space.

b) We know that the atmosphere is filled with water vapor; the water above is separated from the water below. Some

[23] Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 1:5.
[24] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*

believe that this watery canopy in the original creation shielded the earth from the harmful rays of the sun, thus creating a greenhouse effect for the entire earth and providing long life for all creatures, including mankind. Perhaps much of this watery envelope provided the water for the flood.

Interesting recent news story: scientists have discovered that a vast reservoir of water, enough to fill the Earth's oceans three times over, may be trapped hundreds of miles beneath the surface. The water is locked up in a mineral called ringwoodite about 400 miles beneath the crust of the Earth. This "mantle transition zone" acts as a large reservoir of water.[25] This seems to fit well with the flood narrative—"the fountains of the deep were broken up" (Gen 7:11).

2. Vs. 8 God called the expanse "heaven" or "sky." In this context, it's clear that the word refers to the sky or to earth's atmosphere, not to heaven (i.e., the abode of God).

C. Third day (1:9–13)

1. Vs. 9-10

a) God separated the earth's water from the land. The water had covered all the land, but now the land appeared and the water subsided; it is restricted to a certain place. Perhaps at the beginning, the land was an island with all the water surrounding it.

Interestingly, some geologists believe that all the continents of the earth were once joined into one large land mass—they call it Pangaea. They claim this was the situation about 300 million years ago, but the Bible puts that condition at the beginning of creation.

b) The separation of the land from the sea no doubt resulted in tremendous upheavals and depressions in the earth's crust as the land rose up and the seas plunged into the huge valleys created in the process. This explains some of the topography we see both on the continents and in the sea. Read Psalm 54:8.

[25] Steve Jacobsen, Northwestern university. https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.1253358

Again the sovereignty of God is revealed. Whereas the pagans saw the sea as a force to be reckoned with, God controls the boundaries of the sea.[26]

2. Vss. 11-13

a) God now calls vegetation into existence. The Hebrew word normally means "grass," but it can refer more generally to plants and trees.

b) The plants had within themselves the power to procreate. Seeds were a means of self-perpetuation.

c) God divides the plants into species that can reproduce according to their "kind." Creation has order; it is no longer chaotic. The word "kind" here is roughly synonymous with "species," describing organisms with considerable likenesses within each category.

[T]he herbs and trees sprang out of the earth according to their kinds, and received, together with power to bear seed and fruit, the capacity to propagate and multiply their own kind.[27]

d) The implication here is that these plants sprang to life in a mature form, or that they gained maturity very quickly, without the need for years of growth to prepare for reproduction. Each plant was ready to blossom and bear fruit shortly after its creation. The trees had fruit and seeds right away. There is no gradual process of development here. These plants would have looked fully mature a very short time after God caused them to spring forth.

The appearance of age is a distinct feature of the original creation. Adam and Eve no doubt looked like they were mature adults immediately upon their creation. Likewise, the plants looked mature, although they were very young. The same could be said of the earth itself; although it was created very recently, it looked like it had experienced a long history. Perhaps this was true of the entire universe.

[26] Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 1:9.
[27] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*

e) God sets in motion the processes that will keep everything on earth functioning and progressing. The plants are able to grow and reproduce because the conditions are set for them to do so.

f) God pronounced that the creation thus far was "good." Another evening and morning had passed.

D. Fourth day (1:14–19)

1. God had already created light, and now he creates the sun and the moon—the greater light and the lesser light. The description here, that the lights are "in the firmament of heaven," is not a scientific claim that the sun and the moon are actually in the earth's atmosphere (i.e., the sky). The description is from a human perspective, what appears to be the case from our perspective. We still use similar expressions—the sun comes up and sets, the stars are "in the sky." This is "phenomenological" language—as it appears to the human eye.

2. The sun and moon divide the day from the night and also provide "signs and seasons, days and years." One implication of this is that the process begun at creation has continued thereafter. We still count seasons, days, and years in the same way as then. The days of creation were normal, 24-hour periods of time. This also suggests that God set up the solar system at creation to function as we see it function now. The earth is rotating around the sun, which gives us our days, years, and seasons. Agriculture, navigation, tides, migrations, and many other aspects of life on earth depend on the seasons created by the interaction of the earth, moon, and sun.

3. The Egyptians worshipped the sun as a deity, but this account shows that the sun is a created object, as is the moon. This account refutes that idea. We should worship God as the creator of all these things; we should not worship the creation. Note that the author does not give names to these "lights." Naming these objects might lead to their worship.

4. Almost as an afterthought, the author asserts "he made the stars also." Perhaps it was on this day that the stars began appearing in the sky, or maybe this was the day that God actually made the stars. In any case, the immeasurable distances of space and

the almost infinite variety we see in space demonstrates God's immense power, wisdom, and creativity.

Let us beware of measuring the works of Divine Omnipotence by the standard of human power.[28]

5. There is no biblical support for any claims that objects in space (i.e., planets, stars, galaxies, etc.) have any influence over people on earth, other than for navigation or knowing what season of the year it might be. Astronomy is a legitimate science; astrology is not.

6. Note that Genesis 1:1 asserted that God made "the heavens and the earth" in the beginning. So God's creative work in space may have been going on before the fourth day of creation. Perhaps the creation of the stars was completed on the fourth day, or maybe their light reached the earth on that day. The author is clearly describing things from the viewpoint of an observer standing on earth. This suggests that the earth is the center of God's attention.

7. God repeats the assessment that everything thus far in creation was "good." Another day had passed.

E. Fifth day (1:20–23)

1. God calls the waters of the earth to "swarm with swarms of living creatures." This language emphasizes the abundant fertility and variety of sea creatures God created at this point. The word "swarm" suggest swift, back and forth movement, which is what many sea creatures do. Many fish congregate in large swarms.

2. The "great sea creatures" would obviously include whales and even dinosaurs. The word for "creatures" here is literally "long-stretched," suggesting large, powerful creatures. God "created" (same word as "made" in 1:1) these creatures. They are all part of creation, not objects to be worshipped (as the pagans did).

3. Note that God's blessings on the creatures featured them being fruitful and multiplying, filling the sea and the air with living

[28] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*

things. The blessing was the capacity to propagate and increase in number. Fruitfulness is a blessing from God.

4. It's interesting to note that geology has discovered an "explosion" of life in the lower sedimentary evidence (i.e., in the rock layers). Many small sea creatures appear in the strata suddenly, in abundance, fully formed, and with no evidence of gradual development. Even evolutionists find this remarkable.[29]

F. Sixth day (1:24–31)

1. God calls into existence three categories of land animals: cattle/livestock (i.e., domesticated), creeping things (e.g., reptiles, worms), and wild animals (i.e., undomesticated, freely roving animals).

2. The word "living" is from the Hebrew term "nephesh," soul. That does not mean that animals have souls like humans do, but that they are living creatures.

3. "after their kind" – probably referring to the various classes or species of animals, each category fertile within its own class, but not able to interbreed with other kinds/species. If animals are able to breed together, they are of the same "kind"; if not, they are not of the same kind. E.g., hybrids such as mules or zonkeys (zebra + donkey); zebra, donkey, and horse are of the same "kind" (all are in the family Equidae). Existing within each "kind" is a great deal of genetic diversity—hence the differences among breeds of dog, horse, cat, etc.

4. "Man" is the word "adam," which is related to the Hebrew word for "ground" (*adamah*). A related word, *edom*, means "red" or "blood." Perhaps the dust of which God made Adam was reddish in color. The word "*adam*" can refer to mankind in general, a particular man, or to Adam. The text implies quite clearly that Adam (and later, Eve) are historical persons, not archetypes or allegories.[30]

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[29] A good book to read in this regard is Stephen Meyer's *Darwin's Doubt*. Meyer is a Christian and a proponent of Intelligent Design, but not a young earth creationist. Darwin himself was perplexed about the lack of evidence for precursors to the Cambrian explosion. He wrote, "The case at present is inexplicable; and may be truly urged as a valid argument against the view here entertained" (i.e., his theory of evolution).

[30] Recent news story: Scientists surveyed the genetic 'bar codes' of five million animals - including humans - from 100,000 different species and the results have prompted speculation that we sprang from a single pair of adults after a catastrophic event almost wiped out the human race. https://www.dailymail.co.uk, 6 Dec 2018.

5. The creation of man is distinct from that of the animals. It happened on the same day, but by a separate act of God.

   Man is created as the pinnacle of creation, a priest-king who relates to God and to other humans and who represents God as ruler over the created order.[31]

   The reality of a historic Adam is a significant theological issue which we should not compromise. The NT connects each sinner to the original sin of Adam (Rom 5:12-21). Further, human death originated in Adam's sin. If man did not fall into sin, and if death is not connected to sin, then the claims of the Gospel (and the need for Jesus' death) are nonsense.

   Sadly, many evangelicals today deny the historic existence of Adam and Eve, claiming that the story is allegorical, mythical, or symbolic.

6. God makes man as the pinnacle of creation. He separates man from the rest of creation. Man is not a mere animal; he reflects the image of God.

7. The verb is plural—"let us make…" Who is the "us"? Some see this as a hint of plurality within the Trinity. Some suggest God is speaking of himself along with all the host of heaven (i.e., the angelic host). It seems unlikely that the angels participated in the creation of man; no other passage affirms that. The fact that man is made "in our image, after our likeness" strongly implies that the "our" refers to God, not to angels.

   God makes man in "our" image, yet he makes man "in his own image," not "their" image. The plural "us" switches back to the singular "his," revealing that God is the singular creator.

8. The words "image" and "likeness" are synonymous; they both speak to man sharing something in common with God. What is the image of God in man?

   a) God is spirit and has no physical body or form. Nevertheless, the image of God in man seems to be associated with the male and female forms—"in the image of God … male and female he created them."

[31] Kyle C. Dunham, "The Role of Biblical Creationism in Presuppositional Apologetics," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 25 (2020): 14.

Gender was assigned and respected from the very beginning.

Genesis 5:2 *[God] created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created.*

b) The image/likeness is a spiritual nature, having a soul that can communicate with God.

[T]he man endowed with free self-conscious personality possesses, in his spiritual as well as corporeal nature, a creaturely copy of the holiness and blessedness of the divine life.[32]

The human nature has personality, consciousness, language, volition, and morality. These elements prepare man for fellowship/communion with God. Man is similar to animals in some ways, but no animal relates to God like humans do.

Jesus is the ultimate physical image of the invisible God (cf. 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15).

c) Some see the image/likeness as elements such as intellect, emotion, and will. But some animals seem to have these qualities in some measure.

d) Some suggest that the image/likeness refers to a god-like dignity which separates humans from animals. But some humans are just as degraded, or even more so, than the lowest of animals.

e) Some suggest that "image" refers to physical aspects of humanity, while "likeness" refers to spiritual aspects, but this is highly unlikely. Others assert that the distinction is between rationality and righteousness, or physical nature and spiritual nature. Again, this seems unlikely.

f) A good definition: The image of God in man is man's personal, spiritual, and moral resemblance to God. Man replicates the infinite God on a finite level in these areas.[33]

[32] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*
[33] Rolland McCune, Systematic Theology notes, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, Allen Park, MI.

> The image of God is the defining mark of humanity that sets us apart from animals, plants, and grains of sand. … Mankind has a unique dignity that is seen primarily in the spiritual ability to fellowship with God and others. People can know God, love God, and worship God. We can also think, reason, and choose between right and wrong.[34]

The use of language also seems to be an element that sets humans apart from animals. Animals have a means of communication, but they don't write books. Humans can speak and write in ways that reflect God's abilities to communicate. Adam was "programmed" with language (i.e., he could speak and understand immediately upon his creation), likely a reflection of God's image. Babies seem to have the innate capacity to learn and use language. Use of language is obviously necessary to convey God's revelation from one generation to the next.

Further, human abilities to create, invent, manufacture, and modify seem to reflect God's creative nature. Likewise, human artistic and aesthetic appreciation reflects God's nature. Animals (as far as we know) lack such sensitivities.

Essentially, the human intellect/mind seems to be the focus of God's image in man.

g) The image of God in man also seems to suggest that man in some respect represents God; he is God's representative or delegate.

h) Is the human body part of the image of God? Although God does not have a body (John 4:24), the human body does seem to reflect some of the qualities of the creator.

(1) Human life is experienced in a body. Humans are a composite of body and soul.

(2) Humans have the same sort of senses that God has—sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch. Although God does not experience life like we do, God has senses, and so does man.

[34] Corey Abney, "The Image of God." *The New Answers Book 4* (Master Books, 2006), 385.

> Our bodies therefore have been created by God as suitable instruments to represent in a physical way our human nature, which has been made to be like God's own nature. In fact, almost everything we do is done by means of the use of our physical bodies—our thinking, our moral judgments, our prayer and praise, our demonstrations of love and concern for each other—all are done using the physical bodies God has given us. Therefore, if we are careful to point out that we are *not* saying that God has a physical body, we may say that our physical bodies in various ways reflect something of God's own character as well.[35]
>
> God's purpose for humanity was an embodied existence. … we were a body before we were a person. The body, as it turns out, is not incidental to our personhood. Adam and Eve are given the commission to multiply and subdue the earth. Their bodies allow them, by God's creation and his sovereign plan, to fulfill that task of image-bearing.[36]

i) The image of God in mankind provides the basis for human dignity and worth. Man is not a mere animal; he is something like his creator. He has certain qualities that animals simply do not have. No matter what his condition, mankind is inherently valuable and worthy of protection and of decent treatment. Read Gen 9:6.

j) Because of the fall, God's image/likeness in man was distorted but not entirely lost. Even the most degraded, depraved human soul still bears the image of God. The image was *effaced*, but not *erased* when man fell into sin.

What results when mankind rejects the Genesis creation account? He thinks of himself as merely another animal, and he begins acting like one. Or he starts thinking of himself as a god and sees himself as the center of all things. True meaning, identity, and significance come from identifying ourselves as made in the image of God. The sanctity of human life is largely

[35] Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004), 448.
[36] R. Albert Mohler, "Biblical Theology and the Sexuality Crisis," *The Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, Spring and Fall 2015* 20, no. 1 (2015): 5.

associated with the image of God in man. Without that belief, there is no basis for human dignity, value, or purpose.

9. Why did God create humans?

   a) Was God lonely? No, God experienced perfect fellowship and love within the Persons of the Trinity (cf. John 17:5, 24).

   b) Ultimately, God created humans, along with everything else he created, for his own glory.

   Isaiah 43:7 *Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.*

   Since our highest purpose is to glorify God (1 Cor 10:31; cf. Ecc 12:13), our lives have purpose and significance. We know who we are and why we are here—unlike many people today who struggle to "find themselves" and figure out the meaning and purpose of life.

   When we realize that God created us to glorify him, and when we start to act in ways that fulfill that purpose, then we begin to experience an intensity of joy in the Lord that we have never before known.[37]

10. The fact that God created mankind as male and female suggests the equality of all persons (Gal 3:27-28) and yet distinct roles and authority (Eph 5:21-33). We see similar distinctions within the Trinity—the Persons are equal in divinity, yet distinct in roles.

11. Another fact separating man from the animals is that God gives man "dominion" over all the animals. In fact, God expects man to rule "over all the earth." This also seems to be associated with the image of God. To have "dominion" is to exercise control over something for one's advantage. God intended man to rule the earth as his representative, exercising dominion for the benefit of all. This responsibility is called the Dominion Mandate, and it calls for mankind to be good stewards over the earth's resources.

[37] Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004), 441.

In an ancient Israelite context this would suggest cultivating its fields, mining its mineral riches, using its trees for construction, and domesticating its animals.[38]

Animals were made to serve the interests of man who alone is in the image of God. Animals have no moral or civil "rights" as such because they are not moral and civil beings. Cf. Matt 6:26—"Are you not worth much more than [animals]?" Man has an obligation to be humane toward animals and a duty not to abuse or mistreat them (Prov 12:10—"A righteous man has regard for the life of his beast").[39]

Likewise, man is responsible to "subdue" but not abuse the natural environment. We exercise dominion over the earth's resources, but we should protect and conserve those resources so they remain available for succeeding generations. The physical resources of the earth are intended to benefit mankind, but we must be wise stewards of such supplies.

12. The blessing of man is reflected in the commands "be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" (vs. 28). The capacity for fruitful reproduction is a blessing from God.

13. Man's basic responsibilities thus far: reproduce and rule. Create more human life, harness the potential of the earth and use it wisely, and care for the plants and animals.

    They together, the human race collectively, have the responsibility of seeing to the welfare of that which is put under them and the privilege of using it for their benefit.[40]

14. Food for the man at this point was any plant. Man began as an herbivore. Likewise, all the animals ate plants at the beginning.

15. God again evaluates his creation as good, and the sixth day closes. Everything God had made thus far was adequate for the purpose and function that he intended for it.

G. Seventh day (2:1–3)

1. The "host" refers to everything that God had created. God had completed his work of creation. God is now sustaining the creation, not creating anything new.

[38] Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 1:28.
[39] Rolland McCune, Systematic Theology notes, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary.
[40] Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 1:28.

2. The rest here refers to the cessation of work, not resting from exhaustion. Since God is omnipotent, he cannot be tired from effort; his powerful resources are infinite. God ended his labors in creation because he was satisfied with it, not because he was too tired to continue. God continues to maintain the creation.

3. We find out in Ex 20:8-11, God's resting on the Sabbath Day set a pattern for mankind. As God ceased from his labor on the seventh day, so mankind should do the same. This pattern is rooted in the creation order, not in the OT law, which came much later. The NT shows us (cf. Heb 4:9) that this Sabbath rests looks forward to an eternal heavenly rest for believers.

4. To "sanctify" a day would be to set it apart to God as holy. This is a different day; it belongs to God. It was a day devoted to rest, worship, and spiritual service, not for ordinary work. Although Sabbath Day regulations no longer pertain to us, following the pattern of sanctifying one day per week (i.e., the Lord's Day) for rest and worship is a good idea.

   As a human artificer completes his work just when he has brought it up to his ideal and ceases to work upon it, so in an infinitely higher sense, God completed the creation of the world with all its inhabitants by ceasing to produce anything new, and entering into the rest of His all-sufficient eternal Being, from which He had come forth, as it were, at and in the creation of a world distinct from His own essence.[41]

[41] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*

III. The gift of the land (2:4–24)

A. Creation of man (2:4–7)

1. Vs. 4

a) This passage begins with the heading "these are the generations" or "this is the history." The phrase implies that this is the record of what happened to the person, people, or thing mentioned. In this case, "here is what happened to the heavens and the earth when they were created." The other genealogical accounts in Genesis describe actual people and events (i.e., they are literal); we should expect the same in the first chapters of Genesis.

b) This is not a second or parallel account of creation (as many people claim), but an account of events from creation to the fall. It's an expansion on the previous material; it adds more details to the previous revelation.

c) We find this phrase "these are the generations/this is the account" throughout the book of Genesis; and in each case, the phrase serves as a sort of heading for each succeeding section of the book. The heading introduces the subject matter given in the account. Thus, 2:4f tells what became of creation after God made it. What happened to the earth and the people after God made them? How did the creation develop? What is its history? This is the account of that.

Gen 1:1–2:3 is the grand prologue of the book, showing the sovereign God creating by decree. The narrative beginning in 2:4 is the account of what this God invested in his creation.[42]

d) This is the first instance of the author using God's personal, covenantal name—Yahweh ("LORD").

(1) The name seems to be based on the verb "to be, to exist," and so speaks of existence. God describes himself as "I am" (read Ex 3:14-15), using a verb that looks and sounds very much like his name.

[42] Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 2:4.

God exists in and of himself (the aseity of God—God exists by his own power; he is independent). The name suggests the unchangeable nature of God.

(2) The fact that God has a name indicates personal existence. God is not merely a force, a power, or a concept. He is not all forces put together. He is not the universe or the combination of all things. God is a Person to whom others persons can relate, either positively or negatively.

(3) Jewish respect for God's name led to the custom of substituting the word "LORD" for the actual name, and this custom is reflected in most English Bible translations.[43]

(4) The divine name "points out the Divine Being as moving, pervading history, and manifesting Himself in the world."[44]

2. Vs. 5

This account reveals the state of things before plants and herbs were growing on the earth. Perhaps the reference here is to human cultivation of plants—those "of the field," not the wild plants. Since it had not yet rained, and there was no man to cultivate the ground, these plants were not yet growing as we see them grow today.

3. Vs. 6

The word "mist" could be referring to a heavy fog or dew, or it could refer to springs or underground water systems. Such waters could "go up" on the earth and flood the land.

4. Vs. 7

a) The word "formed" usually implies design or plan. A related root word often refers to artistic design or work (i.e., pottery). God is something like a potter who took

[43] Jews would usually not utter the personal name of God, substituting the word for "Lord," in an effort to avoid profaning the name. When the text included the divine name, they would simply say "Lord" or "the name." Several modern translations of the Bible use the divine name, Yahweh, instead of translating it at "LORD."
[44] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*

some material from the ground, followed a design, and produced a beautiful object—the first man.

b) The "breath of life" here appears to be the animating force that conveyed life to the man. Human life consists of a physical body (from the ground) and divine breath (from God)—both material and immaterial elements.

c) To become a "living soul" implies that the man was a person. The "soul" in Hebrew implies the whole person; an individual is a "soul." Each person has a soul, and each person is a soul. The phrase "living soul/being/creature" is used of both humans and animals (cf. 2:19). The breath of God animated the man and caused him to become a living soul/being/creature.

d) It's unclear whether the author is saying anything about the spiritual nature of man in this verse. The "breath" and the "soul" as an animating force are used in other passages to refer to animals, so it's unlikely that it refers to something special in man (i.e., the image of God). The point seems to be that God made/fashioned the man from inert material and gave him physical life. Man shares the same animating principle as animals (i.e., they both have physical life), but man alone reflects the image of God and has (or is) a personal, spiritual soul.

e) Is mankind's nature dual (body and soul) or triple (body, soul, and spirit)? A couple observations:

(1) Humans are a unity of material/physical and immaterial/spiritual. The emphasis should be on the unity of man, not the diversity.

(2) The Bible often uses the terms "soul" and "spirit" interchangeably. We cannot sustain a major distinction between the soul and the spirit. Cf. John 12:27 and 13:21; Luke 1:46.

(3) Although opinions differ, it's probably best to think of human nature as body and soul/spirit (i.e., material and immaterial) rather than body, soul, and spirit.

B. Preparation of the garden (2:8–14)

1. A "garden" to the Hebrews was "a placed hedged around." So it would have had borders, perhaps like an oasis.

2. The text is unclear as to when God created this garden, but it appears to have been created after the creation of man. The garden was a beautiful orchard or park, a perfect paradise. Note that the name of the place is not given; it was "in Eden," that is, near a place called Eden. It's called the "garden of Eden" (2:15, 3:23-24).

3. The garden was "in the east," probably from the perspective of Moses as he was living near the Promised Land. "East" in that case would point toward Babylon. In fact, the Babylonian term for a lush garden is *edenu*; the Persian word is *paradise*. The Hebrew word apparently means something like "delight" or "pleasure." It's impossible to pinpoint its original location.

4. The garden/orchard/park included all kinds of trees—presumably mature trees that already were producing fruit. These trees were pleasant to look at and "good for food." Once again, we see the appearance of age, even though the constituents of the place had just been created.

5. Two particular trees in the garden are mentioned:

   a) The tree of life—a tree producing life situated in the middle of the garden

   b) The tree of the knowledge of good and evil—a tree whose fruit, when eaten, would provide special knowledge. Eating from this tree would produce a change in the nature of the one eating.

6. Vss. 10-14 relate some of the details of the topography and geography of the area.

   a) The words "a river went out/flowed out" could be taken in the present tense sense— "a river flows out," thus implying that the river was still flowing when Moses wrote this account. However, many believe that all traces of Eden were destroyed in the flood.

b) The place-name "Cush" in the Bible usually refers to Ethiopia, but this Cush must be somewhere in Mesopotamia, near Babylon.

C. Man's place in the garden (2:15–24)

1. Vs. 15

God tasked the man with caring for and maintaining the garden. Work is a pre-fall responsibility and perhaps associated with the image of God in man. God is productive, and so should man be. Work became much more difficult after the fall and the curse.

As nature was created for man, it was his vocation not only to ennoble it by his work, to make it subservient to himself, but also to raise it into the sphere of the spirit and further its glorification.[45]

2. Vss. 16-17

a) He we find the record of the first command in the Bible. The command allowed the man to eat of any tree in the garden other than one – the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man has the freedom and capacity to either obey or disobey.

b) The designation of certain trees to avoid sets up a probationary test. Mankind is morally perfect, created good and without an inner sin nature. Would he obey his creator or not?

c) The consequence of disobedience would be death. "You will surely die," literally "dying you will die." The language emphasizes the certainty of death. We find out in chapter three what kind of a death God was talking about here.

To die physically means separation from the land of the living, but not extinction. To die spiritually means to be separated from God. Both occur with sin, although the physical alienation is more gradual than instant, and the spiritual is immediate, although the effects of it continue the separation.[46]

[45] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*
[46] Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 2:17.

d) Although God created everything good, vs. 18 reveals that something was "not good" in the situation: it was not good for man to be alone. Everything else in creation was set up to "be fruitful and multiply." Man, at this point, could not do so; he could not fulfill God's creation design for him alone, and that was not good.

e) God would make a "helper" suitable (i.e., matching, corresponding to, complementing) for the man.

The word "helper" is used several other times in the Bible, and it even refers to God; it's not a disparaging word. A helper is one who does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. A helper meets one's needs; he or she supplies what is lacking. The Hebrew word "helper" does not suggest or imply a lower status or position. A suitable helper corresponded to the man's form and nature so as to reflect and complement him. The two of them in union would be able to fulfill God's expectations for mankind. Submission of the wife to her husband is a result of the fall.

3. Vs. 19

God had already created the animals on the 5th and 6th days. This must have happened before the end of the 6th day. The text does not require that all of the animals in the world paraded before Adam to receive a name, just those in proximity to the garden, perhaps only the major kinds/species of animals, and perhaps only those that God brought to him.

This part of the account focuses on Adam's naming of the animals. To name something implies authority over what is named. God made both man and animals out of the ground, but God put man in authority over animals.

The fact that Adam could give names to all these animals suggests that he had considerable mental/intellectual abilities. Having been created by God "very good," and not suffering from the effects of the curse, it seems likely that Adam's mental capacities far surpassed what is common today.

4. Vss. 20-21

a) After naming the animals, it became clear that none of them was suitable for Adam as a mate. Adam does not ask for a mate; God takes the initiative to supply what Adam lacked.

b) The word "rib" is literally "side" – "he took one from his sides," i.e., part of his sides. The woman will be made from Adam's flesh and bone.

The woman was created, not of dust of the earth, but from a rib of Adam, because she was formed for an inseparable unity and fellowship of life with the man, and the mode of her creation was to lay the actual foundation for the moral ordinance of marriage.[47]

The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.[48]

5. Vss. 22-24

a) God made (lit. "built") the woman from Adam's rib/sides and brought her to him. Adam's expression "this now" implies something like "at last, this time, finally." No doubt, Adam was a bit frustrated when he saw all the animals with corresponding mates but found no mate corresponding to himself. But when he saw the woman, he joyfully responded, "Finally!"

b) The word "man" in Hebrew is "ish," "woman" is "ishah."

c) The narrator (Moses) expresses what is the typical experience for men and women (there are some exceptions): men and women get married and start new families. In Hebrew custom, young couples would often stay in the same home/dwelling as their parents, with several generations living together in one compound. Leaving and cleaving requires a new relationship between a newly-married man and his parents even if they are living in the same home.

[47] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*
[48] Matthew Henry (probably reflecting an earlier Jewish tradition).

d) The word "cleave" means "to stick to," and it implies the inseparable union of a man and his wife that God intended in marriage. "One flesh" refers to the marriage union itself, the union of a man to his wife, and/or the intimacy of marriage.

Marriage is meant to be monogamous, heterosexual, and permanent. Jesus affirmed that this was God's original intent and that marriage should continue to follow this pattern (Mt 19:5; cf. Eph 5:31).

e) Marriage is the first human institution established by God. The home is most important. All other institutions (e.g., government, education, military, church) depend on the strength and stability of families.

f) God's ideal design for marriage is very clearly established in the first chapters of the Bible. Although some people will not experience marriage, the vast majority will, and they should follow this initial pattern. Sadly, many in our world today reject this pattern and substitute all manner of corrupt and disorderly arrangements to replace biblical marriage.

6. Vs. 25

a) The man and his wife were truly innocent; they knew nothing of sin or evil; they had nothing to hide. Like the animals, they wore no clothing and were not ashamed.

b) Nakedness, in the rest of the Bible, and especially after the fall, often conveys a very negative sense, often associated with immorality, abuse, or slavery. But at this point, nakedness had no evil connotations. And Eden must have been a fairly warm place.

Shame entered first with sin, which destroyed the normal relation of the spirit to the body, exciting tendencies and lusts which warred against the soul, and turning the sacred ordinance of God into sensual impulses and the lust of the flesh.[49]

[49] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*

IV. The Fall of Man into Sin[50] 3:1-24

Genesis 3 is one of the most vitally important chapters in all the Bible. It is the foundation of everything that comes after it. Without it, little else in Scripture or in life itself would make sense. Genesis 3 explains the condition of the universe and the state of humanity. It explains why the world has so many problems. It explains the human dilemma. It explains why we need a Savior. And it explains what God is doing in history. In other words, the truth revealed in Genesis 3 is the necessary foundation for a true and accurate world–view. Every world–view that lacks this foundation is utterly and hopelessly wrong.[51]

Genesis 3 deals with man's fall into sin. Moral behavior or lack of it has no explanation in an evolutionary perspective. Human behavior is simply the outworking of natural processes, natural appetites and inclinations. Moral judgments are merely cultural constructs, the consensus agreement within a social group. Absolute morality has no evolutionary basis. Without God, the concepts of good and evil are virtually meaningless.

Genesis 3 argues against such a viewpoint. Here God responds radically to human sin. The chapter clearly specifies the consequences of rebellion against God. This chapter sets the stage for all other divine commandments and demonstrates the results of disobedience to the Creator.

Genesis 3 gives us the basis for the doctrine of original sin. Man is sinful because he inherits Adam's failure. When Adam sinned, he plunged humankind into a condition of sinfulness (cf. Rom 5:12). Depravity, decay, and death result from man's original sin. Humans are bad because they have an inner sinful nature. God sent the flood because of the depth and breadth of human sin. The history of mankind after the fall is largely a record of human sin and its consequences. This sin had immense consequences for the entire universe. The whole creation groans (Rom 8:22) because of the curse that fell upon it because of Adam's sin.

This sin, and all following sins, provide the reason Christ had to come into the world—"to save sinners" (1 Tim 1:15). The solution to this problem is not physical or psychological; the solution is spiritual—repentance of sin and faith in Christ. Without this chapter (or if this material is purely fictional/mythical/legendary), the work of Christ comes into question.

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[50] This part of the notes is largely based on Rolland McCune's Systematic Theology notes, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary.

[51] John MacArthur, *The Battle for the Beginning: The Bible on Creation and the Fall of Adam* (Nashville, TN: W Pub. Group, 2001), 195.

A. The test

1. The nature of the test

a) The tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:17; 3:6-7) was an ordinary, literal tree without any magical powers in its fruit (or bark, peelings, roots, etc.). The tree did not bring about the knowledge of good and evil and cause death through any inherent physical powers and effects.

b) The power of the tree rested with God alone, and the damage that He would inflict would come through disobedience to Him. Yet the tree was necessary to the arrangement. They had to partake of that particular tree in order to violate God's will. The tree possessed its powers only through God's energy and design.

c) An experiential knowledge between good and evil would result from eating of the tree. Adam and Eve had descriptive or cognitive knowledge from God, but God wanted them to have this knowledge by experience, as he has it (Gen 3:5, 22). This is moral knowledge and ethical discernment from an experiential standpoint.

d) An experiential knowledge of good and evil could come by obeying and doing right (as God always does), or by disobeying and doing wrong. Satan was formally correct in 3:5. What he failed to say was that by disobeying they would receive this knowledge from a depraved and spiritually dead standpoint.

2. The purpose of the test

a) The purpose was to gain the experiential knowledge between good and evil by obeying and thus develop a holy character. God wanted to develop the holy nature into a holy character, and this comes by experience.

(1) Adam and Eve were able not to sin because of their good (i.e., holy) natures before the fall.

(2) God wanted them to be not able to sin, i.e., to be confirmed in holiness.

(3) After failing the test, man is not able not to sin.

Adam had what has been called undeveloped or unconfirmed creaturely holiness, an untested moral purity and tendency. He was created in the image of God and deemed to be "very good" by the creator. There were no flaws, no imperfections, no taint of sin or moral evil in any form. He was morally upright and responsible for his behavior. He had a holy nature but not at that point a holy character. Adam had by creation a disposition to obedience but not the constancy to persevere.[52]

b) If Adam and Eve would have passed the test by obeying God in the face of temptation, it seems likely that God would have permitted them to eat of the tree of life and they would have been confirmed in holiness and in physical life forever. Because they failed the test, they were confirmed in sin (i.e., their nature was changed from holy to sinful). This original sin (i.e., the sinful human nature) is passed along from one generation to the next through the procreation process.

c) There are certain inscrutable mysteries here (cf. Deut 29:29):

(1) Why did God allow the potential for sin in the first place? He could have made a perfect world where sin was not an option—why didn't he?

(2) Why did God not intervene to prevent the temptation and the fall?

(3) Why would innocent humans with a good/holy inner nature be tempted by sin? Why would perfect people in a perfect setting/situation make such a poor choice? Why did they fall so easily?

(4) Where was Adam during the temptation? Why didn't he prevent his wife from eating the fruit? Why did he so casually (it seems) join his wife in sin?

(5) Why didn't Adam immediately confess his sin, repent, and ask for forgiveness (instead of trying to avoid accountability/pass the buck)?

[52] Rolland McCune, Systematic Theology notes, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary.

(6) If God already knew the outcome (and he did), was it possible for Adam and Eve to do anything other than what they did? If the outcome was predetermined (and it was), how are Adam and Eve accountable?

These are all intriguing questions that the Bible does not answer directly or fully. While we can suggest answers, it is best not to speculate too strongly on such issues. We have to live with mysteries and unanswered questions. God is not obligated to reveal everything we'd like to know.

3. The time of the test

The Bible does not indicate how long after their creation that this episode occurred to Adam and Eve. It could have been anywhere from two days to over 100 years after their creation. It probably occurred in a matter of days or weeks since it is unlikely God would have left them in an untested relationship for very long.

The parameters of the time of the test seem to be these:

a) Adam and Eve (who were created on Day 6) must have lived through the 7th Day because God blessed it. It is unlikely that God would have blessed it and cursed the rest of the world on the same day. So the Fall could have happened on Day 8 of earth history at the earliest.

b) Adam was 130 when Seth was born (Gen 5:3). Seth was born after Cain killed Abel, presumably within a year or so of Abel's death. Cain killed Abel after Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden. Assuming that Cain and Abel were in their late teens or early 20s, nearly 110 years could have elapsed before the Fall occurred. However, this is highly unlikely. The test obviously came before they had become confirmed in a pattern of moral action.

c) Most Christians believe that Satan is an angel who rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven. Jesus said, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Lk 10:18). Satan must have been guilty of the very first sin.

He must have sinned and was expelled from the third heaven sometime between chapters 2 and 3 of Genesis. Many believe that passages such as Ezekiel 28:15-17 and Isaiah 14:12-14 describe Satan's fall into sin.

B. The temptation

1. The method (3:1-4)

a) Satan's method was to employ an ordinary serpent, then the most crafty (the word means clever, sly, cunning, prudent, shrewd, wary, or adroit) of the animals. There is nothing necessarily evil in this cunning or craftiness. The same word, in other contexts, can mean "prudent" (cf. Prov 12:16, 23; 13:16; 14:8). The word is obviously used in a negative sense here. And it seems to apply to one particular snake, not all of them.

The story of a "talking snake" is a source of great ridicule and criticism today. Clearly, this occasion was exceedingly unusual, only explainable in supernatural terms. Satan apparently used the snake for his own purposes, and for reasons we do not know, Eve did not seem to be shocked by a talking serpent. We find out later (2 Cor 11:3; Rev 12:9) that the serpent was Satan, who had somehow taken over the body of a snake.

[I]t must be at once apparent that it was not from the serpent, as a sagacious and crafty animal, that the temptation proceeded, but that the serpent was simply the tool of that evil spirit, who is met with in the further course of the world's history under the name of Satan (the opponent), or the Devil (the slanderer or accuser).[53]

Jesus alluded to this event when he described the devil as a murderer and a liar, the father of lies (John 8:44).

Some of the Jewish interpreters held that all the animals of the garden could speak before sin came into the world and lost that capacity as part of the curse.

b) Satan's method was also to employ:

[53] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*

(1) Doubt—3:1 "Yea, hath God said, …?" Note that Satan does not use God's covenant name, Yahweh. He no doubt does not want Eve to think of her personal relationship with God.

The serpent calls God by the name of *Elohim* alone, and the woman does the same. In this more general and indefinite name the personality of the living God is obscured. To attain his end, the tempter felt it necessary to change the living personal God into a merely general divine name and to exaggerate the prohibition, in the hope of exciting in the woman's mind partly distrust of God Himself, and partly a doubt as to the truth of His word.[54]

The gist of *all* temptation is to cast doubt on God's Word and to subject it to human judgment.[55]

This is the first question recorded in Scripture.

(2) Distortion

(a) 3:1 "You shall not eat from any tree." God had not prohibited eating from "any" tree, but only from one particular tree. They were free to eat any tree but one. Satan focuses Eve's attention on the one thing that God had prohibited. His aim was to have Eve see God as restrictive and strict for this prohibition.

(b) 3:3 "You shall not … touch it." God had not prohibited touching the tree. Perhaps Adam had told Eve not to touch the tree??

(c) Eve in v. 3 refers to the forbidden tree, not by its God-given designation ("the tree of the knowledge of good and evil"), but by a more innocuous term ("the tree which is in the midst of the garden"). Thus she places it

[54] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*
[55] John MacArthur, *The Battle for the Beginning: The Bible on Creation and the Fall of Adam* (Nashville, TN: W Pub. Group, 2001), 204.

on a level with the other trees of the garden, implying her doubts about the arrangements.

(d) Eve's response in v. 2 may imply that the distortion was working. She omits the word "freely" from the original permission in 2:16, suggesting that she already has her mind on the restriction God imposed rather than on the unlimited enjoyment of the other trees. Some suggest that she further weakened God's original prohibition of 2:16 by saying "lest you die" (v. 2). God said emphatically, "You shall surely die" (2:17).

(e) Was Eve surprised to hear a serpent speak? If so, there is no indication of it in the text. Virtually every experience for the couple was new, so perhaps they did not consider a talking snake to be unusual. Thus far, they had no reason to be suspicious of anything, no reason to doubt anything they heard or saw (i.e., they were innocent).

(3) Denial—3:4 "You surely shall not die." Here the serpent is more aware of what the Lord God said than the woman was; he simply adds a blatant negation to what God said.[56] In fact, in Hebrew the word "not" comes first, emphasizing Satan's denial of what God had said. Here is the first lie in the Bible and the reason Satan is known as the "father of lies" (Jn 8:44).

2. The means (3:5-6)

Satan used various means to press his temptation on Eve. He used the same means later with Jesus and uses it today on believers.

a) an appeal to exclusive knowledge

"You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Satan seems to be suggesting here that God is holding something back from Eve. God has forbidden this

[56] Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 3:4.

knowledge because of jealousy; he does not want humans to be like him. In essence, Satan is asserting that Eve could become "as gods" by disobeying God.

The sinful desire to "be like God" seems to be innate in human nature (since the fall). The desire for god-like autonomy (self-rule, independence) is just about universal in mankind and leads to all manner of sin. Satan seems to be using the same desire he had to tempt Eve (read Isa 14:12-14).

b) an appeal to human freedom

Temptation often plays on the human desire for freedom and self-interest. God's rules seem overly strict and narrow. God limits human freedom and prohibits what would seem to provide pleasure and fun. God is a cruel killjoy. If God really loved you, he'd fulfill your desires. When we start thinking like that, "sin is crouching at the door" (Gen 4:7).

c) an appeal to physical appetite

"Good for food." No one knows what kind of fruit this was (probably not an apple). Cf. Satan's temptation of Jesus: "Command that these stones become bread" (Mt 4:3). This temptation is also generalized as "the lust of the flesh" (1 John 2:16). Physical appetites are natural and normal, but the means and manner in which we fulfill them can be either moral or immoral.

d) an appeal to aesthetic appreciation

"A delight to the eyes," i.e., attractive, desirable, emotionally appealing. Cf. Satan's temptation of Jesus: "he showed him all the kingdoms of the world" (Mt 4:8). This temptation is generalized as "the lust of the eyes" (1 John 2:16).

e) an appeal to social acceptance (or perhaps intellectual appetite)

"Desirable to make one wise." Cf. Satan's temptation of Jesus: "Throw yourself down" (from the pinnacle of the

temple, Mt 4:6). This temptation is generalized as "the boastful pride of life" (1 John 2:16).

Doubt, unbelief, and pride were the roots of the sin of our first parents, as they have been of all the sins of their posterity.[57]

The satanic tactic of pointing out and emphasizing what is forbidden is still effective today. Instead of appreciating all we have, we tend to focus on what we want and cannot have. The desire/lust for forbidden fruit continues to ruin individuals, families, and nations. Satan continues to proclaim his original lie—"you shall not surely die."

The reptile's false promise ("you will be like God") is the seed of all false religion. Numerous cults, ranging from Buddhism to Mormonism, are based on the same lie. It is a twisting of the truth. God wants us to be like Him, in the sense that we share His communicable attributes—holiness, love, mercy, truthfulness, and other expressions of His righteousness. But what Satan tried to do—and what he tempted Eve to try doing—was to intrude into a realm that belongs to God alone and usurp His power, His sovereignty, and His right to be worshiped. And those things are forbidden to any creature.[58]

3. The deed (3:6-7)

   a) Eve had a choice to make—believe her Creator, or believe a contradictory claim. Satanic doubt and suspicion had done its work on Eve's mind and affections. The sin conceived in her heart had an immediate effect.

   b) "She took and ate." Distrust of God led to disregard of his command. Satan elicited an inappropriate desire in Eve's heart for something prohibited, and she pursued her own will over that of her creator. God had said, "Do not eat," and Eve ate.

   c) "She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate." The text does not tell us how she convinced Adam to eat of the fruit. Perhaps she simply related to him what the

[57] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*
[58] John MacArthur, *The Battle for the Beginning: The Bible on Creation and the Fall of Adam* (Nashville, TN: W Pub. Group, 2001), 208.

serpent had told her. It's easy to speculate about Adam's reaction and reasons for joining his wife in her sin.

It is ironic that the one whom God had given to Adam to be his *helper* became the instrument of disaster and death to him.[59]

d) In the NT, Paul attributes Eve's sin to deception; she did not fully understand what she was doing (1 Tim 2:14). Satan tricked her into sin. Adam, it seems, knew perfectly well what he was doing; he was not deceived; he sinned deliberately. Scripture uniformly holds Adam responsible for the original human sin (cf. Rom 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:22).

e) Whatever the motivations for her actions, the deed had monumental and immediate effects on herself, her husband, her life, and the entire created order.

4. The effects (3:7-21)

This part of the text is both a sad end to a perfect creation and also the beginnings of God's plan to redeem his fallen creatures. Adam's sin sets the stage on which God's plan to save his people plays out. Everything after this point tells the story of God's gracious dealings with his people and the outworking of his plan to save them.

a) On Adam and Eve

(1) Experiential knowledge (.7a)—The immediate results of their disobedience was just as Satan had promised: "the eyes of them both were opened." The couple immediately knew evil in the sense of personal experience; they had disobeyed their Creator and thus knew what it was like to do wrong. For the first time, they had evil thoughts and evil desires. For the first time, they sensed separation between themselves and God.

Satan had told them the truth—their sin had resulted in a direct knowledge of good and evil. They had now experienced for themselves what

[59] John MacArthur, *The Battle for the Beginning: The Bible on Creation and the Fall of Adam* (Nashville, TN: W Pub. Group, 2001), 210.

they knew only in theory. In their experience with sin (i.e., their lust, pride, and disobedience), they became more like Satan than like God.

(2) Guilt and shame (.7b)—Their innocence was removed—"they knew they were naked." Guilt, shame, and separation from God replaced their innocence and their close fellowship with God.

The first act of dealing with sin was to cover themselves. They had a new sensitivity to their nakedness, so they took it upon themselves to cover up by sewing fig leaves together to make rudimentary clothing. This does not suggest that the human body itself had become sinful, but that man's perception of himself had changed. He was no longer innocent; sin had affected his self-image.

Note: Since the original sin, it has been proper for humans to cover themselves with clothing. Lack of clothing is normally regarded as shameful in the Bible. God demands people to dress modestly.

Man's hopeless attempts to solve his own problems is nothing new. In spite of the fact that they had covered themselves with fig leaves, their continuing feelings of guilt and shame led them to avoid contact with God.

The fact that God was walking in the garden and making noise (.8) suggests that God inhabited some kind of physical presence/body/shape. Some suggest that this was a pre-incarnate appearance of God (a Christophany or Theophany). God takes a shape/body that can interact with man on his level (prefiguring the incarnation of Christ).

(3) Fear and hiding (.8-13). Guilt and shame led the couple to hide from their creator. God's questions are clearly rhetorical; he already knows the answer.

God's question, "Where are you?" (.9) does not imply that God did not know where they were. It was more of a request for an explanation—"Why

are you hiding?" This seems to be an opportunity for Adam to confess his sin (and seek mercy for it).

God had not changed. He comes to the garden in the cool of the day as he had done previously. But now, the couple hides from him. Fear had replaced fellowship.

Note that Adam and Eve are hiding from God, not God from them. The sinners have fled from God's presence, and God actively seeks them out, apparently to give them an opportunity to restore proper fellowship. God is seeking them while they are hiding from him. Cf. Rom 3:10-12 and Luke 19:10.

God does not approach them in fiery vengeance but gently and graciously. He seeks to restore fellowship with them. Cf. Ex 34:6-7.

God addressed Adam, not Eve, in his communication. This suggests that God saw Adam as the head of the relationship and held Adam accountable for what was done within his family.

In Adam's answer, he emphasizes his fear and shame rather than his violation of God's command. He's more concerned about the effects of his sin than he is of the sin itself. Self-centeredness is a result of the fall.

Although both Adam and Eve confess to disobeying God (.12-13), they do not repent of their sin or ask for mercy. The first human impulse when exposed as guilty is to shift the blame to others and portray oneself as the victim. Adam claims that he ate only because Eve gave the fruit to him, and Eve ate the fruit only because of one of the creatures God had made. They both deny responsibility for their own action and subtly shift the blame to God. Blame-shifting evasion is still a common response by those who are caught in sin.

(4) Spiritual death—They experienced separation from God spiritually, i.e., from spiritual life, fellowship, and a loving relationship with God. This is the sense in which they died immediately upon eating the fruit.

(5) Physical death—The seeds of mortality were sown in their bodies. Humans will eventually return to the ground from which they originally came.

Gen 2:17 "you shall surely die" is literally "dying, you shall die." This seems to imply that in the fall, Adam and Eve became mortal—subject to death. The couple did not fall over and expire physically when they sinned, but they died spiritually (i.e., were separated from God) and began the process of physical death (i.e., returning to dust).

(6) Change in anatomy (.16)

Eve's pain in childbirth would be multiplied, suggesting a structural change in her body that resulted in severely painful childbirth. Further, the word choice here seems to imply both emotional and physical pain/distress associated with childbirth. Such pain is a reminder of the sin that Eve helped bring into the world and of the sin that passes down from one generation to the next.

Childbirth itself is not part of the curse. God's intent from the beginning was that Adam and Eve "be fruitful and multiply." The "sorrow" here suggests the pains of childbirth and all the accompanying stresses of motherhood.

The woman had also broken through her divinely appointed subordination to the man; she had not only [freed] herself from the man to listen to the serpent, but had led the man into sin.[60]

(7) Exhausting labor (.17-19)—Prior to the fall, Adam's job was to tend and care for the garden, but that task was not a difficult one—it was "no

[60] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*

sweat." After the fall, Adam would make his living through strenuous toil and by the sweat of his brow.

Vs. 17 is the first occasion where the proper name "Adam" is used (it's the same word for "man" but without the article—not "the man," but "Adam").

By listening to his wife, when deceived by the serpent, Adam had repudiated his superiority to the rest of creation. As a punishment, therefore, nature would henceforth offer resistance to his will. By breaking the divine command, he had set himself above his Maker, death would therefore show him the worthlessness of his own nature.[61]

Vs. 20—Adam named the woman "Eve" ("Havah" in Hebrew), literally "life." The assertion that she was the "mother of all living" implies that she is the first woman, the one from whom all other human life forms spring.

Vs. 21—In clothing the fallen couple, God affirms that it is proper for people to cover themselves. Nakedness is not proper for public display; people should be modestly covered. Further, the skins required the death of animals, which prefigured the sacrificial system—the death of an innocent victim to cover the sins of the sinner.

(8) Expulsion from the Garden—3:22-24

God affirms that mankind now had become "like one of us" in the sense of knowing good and evil.

The expulsion appears to be for the purpose of preventing them from gaining access to the tree of life, the eating of which would confirm them in a sinful physical condition and in eternal spiritual death forever.

Had he continued in fellowship with God by obedience to the command of God, he might have eaten of [the tree of life], for he was created for

[61] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*

eternal life. But after he had fallen through sin into the power of death, the fruit which produced immortality could only do him harm. For immortality in a state of sin is not the eternal life which God designed for man, but endless misery, which the Scriptures call "the second death."[62]

The "cherubim" (plural of "cherub") are angelic creatures who typically gather around the throne of God (Ezek 1:22). These may be the highest order of angels. The flaming sword represents the fiery judgment of God's wrath against sin.

What happened to the garden of Eden? It was no doubt wiped out in the flood. No one knows for sure where it was; no physical evidence of it has been found.

(9) Loss of Dominion

This was a loss of the ability to rule the planet for God and be his viceroy over the created order. Judicially man still has this dominion but practically he can't exercise it (Heb 2:8b).

[S]ince man has sinned, he is certainly not as fully like God as he was before. His moral purity has been lost and his sinful character certainly does not reflect God's holiness. His intellect is corrupted by falsehood and misunderstanding; his speech no longer continually glorifies God; his relationships are often governed by selfishness rather than love, and so forth. Though man is still in the image of God, in every aspect of life *some* parts of that image have been distorted or lost.[63]

(10) A change in relationship between Adam and Eve

Upon being discovered, Adam immediately blames Eve for his sin (.12). He also indirectly blames God for providing the woman—"whom you gave me." Eve, in turn, blames the serpent (.13).

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[62] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*

[63] Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004), 444.

Apparently the natural headship that Adam had over Eve gave way to a tension between them resulting from the woman's tendency toward independence and freedom from her husband and the man's tendency to be authoritarian and harsh with his wife (.16).

The word "desire" seems to mean something like "desire to conquer," and implies that the woman would seek to usurp the authority of her husband.

In any case, the implication here is that pain and conflict would replace harmonious relations between husbands and wives.

This passage is a judgment oracle. It announces that conflict between man and woman will become the norm in human society. It does not depict the NT ideal, where the husband sacrificially loves his wife, as Christ loved the church, and where the wife recognizes the husband's loving leadership in the family and voluntarily submits to it. Sin produces a conflict or power struggle between the man and the woman, but in Christ man and woman call a truce and live harmoniously (Eph 5:18–32).[64]

b) On the Serpent (.14)

The curse is a punishment or banishment imposed as judgment on the creature. This curse set apart the serpent (and all following serpents) as a special object of degradation and contempt.

Some believe that the serpent underwent an anatomical change, going from an apparently upright creature to one that crawls on its belly. To "eat dust" does not mean that snakes eat dirt, but that they crawl/slither in the dirt (and probably ingest some of it). To "eat dust" is still an expression of falling to a low degree (i.e., humiliation).

c) On the animal kingdom—carnivorous instincts arose. The serpent was more cursed than other beasts, but all living creatures feel the effects of the curse.

[64] Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 3:16.

d) On the plant kingdom—weeds, thistles, and thorns will spring up; the ground will no longer produce as bountifully and easily as before.

e) On creation as a whole—the whole creation groans under the "bondage of corruption" while it awaits redemption (Rom 8:19-22).

The creation was drawn into the fall of man, and compelled to share its consequences, because the whole of the irrational creation was made for man, and made subject to him as its head; consequently, the ground was cursed for man's sake.[65]

It seems reasonable to believe that before the curse, there was no animal or human death. Death originates in sin (Rom 5:12), and before sin, there would be no cause of death. This obviously means that no human death occurred before the fall; and since all creation was "very good" before the fall, it also seems unlikely that animal disease or death occurred. This fact rules out evolution, which requires billions of years of death and decay long before the arrival of the first humans.

Also, remember that animals and humans are described in the Bible as "living souls/creatures," but plants are different. Plants are not alive in the same sense as humans are; they don't breathe or move like living creatures do, and their death is not the same as human or animal death. Plants died when humans and animals ate them before the fall (cf. 1:29-30), but that's not the same kind of death Paul is referring to. The same would be true of other forms of biological life like bacteria, viruses, and fungi.

Harmful germs and viruses, disease, disaster, and decay of all kinds also stem from the divine curse. Calamity, sorrow, strife, and other difficulties have become an unavoidable part of human life. Insects and other creatures have overstepped their original beneficial purposes and become annoying pests. Nature itself often

[65] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*

becomes destructive, with floods, earthquakes, droughts, famines, and other natural disasters.[66]

f) On the human race

(1) Sin—Romans 5:12, 19.

This is moral pollution, including the loss of original righteousness. It is corruption and depravity, that which is passed on by inheritance.

(2) Condemnation—Romans 5:16, 18.

This includes guilt, the liability to punishment; the obligation to satisfy justice. It also includes condemnation in the sense of the penal consequences of guilt, the sentence of death. This is the guilt of Adam's first sin that is passed on by imputation, resulting in the sentence of death on all.

(3) Death in all forms—Romans 5:12, 15, 17; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22.

(a) Physical death—the temporary separation of the soul/spirit from the body

(b) Spiritual death—the spiritual separation of the person from fellowship with God

(c) Eternal death/the "second" death—the irrevocable confirmation in the spiritual death along with the suitable punishment for sin

(4) The hope of salvation—3:15

Many Bible students see 3:15 as the first mention of the Gospel (*protoevangelium*) because it seems to be a prophecy of Jesus' victory over Satan. While some see it as a general statement of humanity's battle against snakes, many see the text as a prophecy of the battle between Jesus and Satan.

[66] John MacArthur, *The Battle for the Beginning: The Bible on Creation and the Fall of Adam* (Nashville, TN: W Pub. Group, 2001), 216.

The serpent can only seize the heel of the man, who walks upright; whereas the man can crush the head of the serpent, that crawls in the dust.[67]

It's interesting to note that the fall of man and the curse came about through the failing of a woman, and the solution to this problem will also come about through a woman's "seed"[68] – Christ, the one who would destroy the serpent.

In the midst of the curse passage, a message of hope shone forth—the woman's offspring called "He" is Christ, who will one day defeat the Serpent. Satan could only "bruise" Christ's heel (cause Him to suffer), while Christ will bruise Satan's head (destroy him with a fatal blow).[69]

Christ is the seed of the woman, who tramples Satan under His feet, not as an individual, but as the head both of the posterity of the woman which kept the promise and maintained the conflict with the old serpent before His advent, and also of all those who are gathered out of all nations, are united to Him by faith, and formed into one body of which He is the head (Romans 16:20). On the other hand, all who have not regarded and preserved the promise, have fallen into the power of the old serpent, and are to be regarded as the seed of the serpent, whose head will be trodden under foot (Matthew 23:33; John 8:44; 1 John 3:8).[70]

The hope of salvation is also a promise of Satan's ultimate <u>doom</u>. Christ will crush the serpent's head. Satan's final destiny is eternal torment in the lake of fire (Rev 20:10). The work of Christ will <u>reverse</u> Adam's fall and replace the curse with a blessing.

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[67] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*
[68] It's interesting to note that "seed" usually pertains to men, not women. This is a unique case in which a woman has "seed." Some see this language as a hint of the virgin birth.
[69] John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 20.
[70] Keil & Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary.*

It's interesting to note that Jesus, although sinless himself, experienced the elements of the curse—painful toil, suffering, sweat, thorns, and death. His resurrection proved his victory over the curse and all its elements.

(5) The hope of human persistence—3:16

Although God promised that sinners would die (Gen 2:17), he also promises that Adam and Eve would bring forth children. Eve became the "mother of all living" (3:20). Pain would accompany each birth, but through this pain, the race would persist. The first sin was not the end of the line for the human race. Adam lived for 930 years (5:5) and (likely) produced many children.