

We live in and are a part of an amazing universe.

It was all **created by God**. Every part of it is **declaring the Creator's glory and power** all the time.

God's Creation holds mysteries that have intrigued humans ever since God put us here.

It's so vast that we have only seen a tiny part of all he made. Yet, what we see is awesome.

Distant things in our universe totally **unknown a century ago** have been **declaring God's glory for eons**.

- **Pluto** has been **demoted** from planet to "dwarf planet" or "planetoid", I has 5 moons orbiting it.

- Now we know there are **volcanoes** erupting on the planet Mercury, **ice** on Mars,

and **distant white dwarf stars** that are changing our understanding of how stars mature.

- With the help of telescopes and spaceprobes we've discovered **many more stars** and **entire galaxies** out there.

- There are **many things we haven't seen yet**, and many of them we will probably never see.

Never the less, they are **there evidencing God's glory** in wonders beyond our present comprehension.

The most basic fact is that God made everything. Genesis 1:1-2

1. In the beginning, **God created the heavens and the earth**.

2. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep.

And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

All three persons of the Trinity were involved in the work of creation.

In the Apostle's Creed we confess that the Bible teaches that **God the Father** is the Creator.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth".

God the Son also was involved in creation.

John 1:3 when it describes Jesus as **the Word**. It says,

"All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made."

Colossians 1:16-17 is talking about Jesus when it says, "For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth,

visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things

were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

God the Holy Spirit worked in creation too.

Genesis 1:2 "the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."

These three persons, the One True God, created everything out of nothing.

When we make something, a table, a fence, a radio, a table decoration, or a meal, we first need to get the raw materials.

However, **what did God start with** when he made this universe? What **ingredients** did he have?

That's the amazing thing -- he had **nothing outside of himself**.

Psalms 33:6, "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host."

God had **his eternal intention and his infinite power** -- nothing more. He made all things **out of nothing**.

God's creation was organized into work done in six stages.

Each stage is marked out by a day when God declared that each stage was completed and good.

The Hebrew word translated in Genesis One as "**day**" is "**yom**" (יום). It's **used several different ways** in the Bible.

The word occurs over **2,000 times** in the Old Testament.

There are **four basic meanings** for the Hebrew word **yom**.

1) **The lighted portion of a calendar day** -- about **12 hours long**, longer in the summers, shorter in the winters.

It differentiates the **period of light** from the **period of darkness** we call **night**.

In **Genesis 1** the word **twice** takes that meaning: Genesis 1:5, "God called the light **day**."

In Genesis 1:16 it says the sun was to "**rule the day**."

2) **A 24-hour period of time** -- The time it takes **between sunsets**

We now understand that this represents **one rotation of the earth on its axis**.

Exodus 20:8-10 says a full 24 hour period should be set aside for remembering the weekly Creation Sabbath

"Remember the Sabbath **day**, to keep it holy."

3) **A specific interval much longer than a 24-hour period**.

In the immediate context of the record of creation in **Genesis 2:4** it says,

"These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created,

in the **day** that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens."

Here it clearly stands for **the whole era of creation**.

Exodus 13:10 "year-to-year" (yom ro yom), **Proverbs 25:13** "the time (yom) of harvest"

4) **An indefinite period of time.**

Genesis 35:3 "in the **day** of my distress"

Proverbs 31:25 "she laughs at the **time** (yom) to come.

Even in English word "**day**" shows the **same broad categories.**

We mention how things were "**back in my day**" or "**in the day of Moses**".

We say we would rather do our **work "during the day"** obviously meaning we would rather do it in **daylight**.

We are left with **each context to determine** what is meant in any given case.

In **most contexts** there is **little doubt** as to what is meant.

Which of these allowable meanings for the word "**day**" is **most consistent with its use in Genesis one?**

Each of the six is designated by the expression "**there was evening and there was morning**".

It appears that the **24-hour meaning** of the word **yom** is the **most reasonable** in this context.

We need to examine the structure of the "day passages"

Creation occurred in **various periods** which were completed **chronologically in the order reported** in Genesis one.

Each of the six segments **begins with God's decree** relating to a specific part of his plan to create everything.

Next, God **brings into being** what he commanded to exist.

Each segment **climaxes with God's observation and announcement** that the stage was **essentially completed.**

It's this final approval that took place on one particular 24-hour day.

The first thing God made was light. He simply **willed it into existence.**

There are **six general elements** associated with the first creative period in **Genesis 1:3-5.**

3. And God said, "**Let there be light,**" and **there was light.** (יאמר אלהים יהי אור ויהי־אור:)

4. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.

5. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.

And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

First: God's declaration

The **first** of these announcements is recorded in **Genesis 1:3a**, **God said, "let there be light."**

In Hebrew he said **just two words**, "**yehi 'or**" (יהי אור), which most simply stated means "**be light**".

Second: the work of actual creation

This is the act of **actual bringing into being** what God had declared.

Genesis 1:3b uses the exact same Hebrew expression used in the decree "**yehi 'or**" (יהי אור), "**and there was light.**"

Though a bit awkward in English, we could **more accurately** translated it, "**God said be light, and there be light.**"

Third: God's preliminary observation

There was **a moment of divine observation** of that which he had created up to that point.

1:4a "**God saw that the light was good.**" The word for "**good**" here is **tov** (טוב).

It was seen to **conform precisely** to what the **Creator intended.**

Fourth: God did some modification

Genesis 1:4b says, "**God separated the light from the darkness**"

Fifth: God's final declaration

When this part of his decree was essentially complete, **God gave names** to these two things.

Genesis 1:5a, "**God called the light day and the darkness he called night.**"

Naming these elements of creation was a **pronouncement** marking the **success of his work.**

Sixth: There is a day-marker

Genesis 1:5b says, "**And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.**" (ESV)

(va-yehi-`erev va-yehi-boqer yom 'ekhad) ויהי־ערב ויהי־בקר יום אחד

Each stage ends this way marking the essential completeness of what God had declared to make.

The **completion of each creation period** is marked out by an **evening and a morning.**

This is the usual Hebrew way of **reckoning a standard calendar day.**

The **final act of approval (approbation)**

This observance by God occurred on a **particular and literal 24-hour day.**

Here it's designated "**Day One**" [yom 'ekhad (יום אחד)].

It's helpful to note that **it does not actually say "the first day."**

It uses the Hebrew **cardinal number 'akhad** (one), **not the ordinal number rishon** (first).

This is the **day of completeness "number one"**.

It's the day that **marks off each period of creation as being completed.**

Each of the "day passages" uses the same basic structure.

1. God **decrees** something into being.
2. God **created** (brought into existence) what he had decreed.
3. God **observed** that what he created had essentially become what he intended.
4. God **modified** what he created into the full form he intended.
5. God **pronounced** that what he had decreed was completed.
6. What he decreed and made was **approved** on the numbered day **marking its completion.**

This interpretation of Genesis one is sometimes called the *Inspection Day View* or the *Approbation Day View*.

There appears to be an overlapping implied in the stages of creation.

In the first period of creation God not only created **light**. He also separated it from **darkness** (1:4).

Something blocked out the light in some places.

The completion of this first period was marked out by an "evening" and a "morning"(Genesis 1:5).

We think of this as the setting and rising of the sun as seen from here on Earth.

The decree to create the sun, moon, and stars isn't mentioned until Genesis 1:14-18,

yet we see them implied as existing during the work of what was completed on "Day #1".

In verse 8 God creates an expanse which he calls "heaven".

The word usually means **all the stars, sun, moon, and things we see filling our universe.**

Psalm 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork."

These would be the sources of light called into existence before God's approval on "day one".

The other creation segments also imply some overlapping.

There is the **dependence of animals and plants on one another**, yet approved on different declaration days..

But each decree was **completed** on a numbered "approval" day **in the order shown in Genesis 1.**

Each stage of creation is introduced after it says, "**And there was evening and there was morning**"

After each numbered day it **doesn't say "then" God said**, "let there be ...".

It **simply explains the next phase of creation**

which **could have started before the previous phase was approved.**

The days, as times of divine affirmation, are **sequential**, literal 24-hour days,

but they are **not necessarily contiguous** (immediately following one another).

We could translate the **beginning of each stage of creation** as, "**Also, God said ...**"

God may have begun his next period of creation **while the previous stage was still being completed.**

It was upon completion that God observed it, and called it "**good**" on each numbered "approval day".

There have been many ideas about the age of the earth and universe.

NASA and most astronomers have used the latest studies of the **universe**. They date it as **over 13 billion years old.**

Light from distant galaxies, stars, and nebula shows evidence confirming that age.

Its spectrum indicates it passed through gravitational fields and matter fields.

We have no biblical evidence that God added these events that never really happened.

Radioactive decay of elements on **earth** points to it being **over 4 billion years old.**

The theory that some "canopy" over the earth before Noah's flood changed decay rates is unsupported.

Radioactive decay rates are not changed by external influences like that.

If the events of Genesis 1 overlap between the 6 days of God's approval,

then the earth may be as old as it appears by our scientific measurements.

Whatever view of Genesis 1 is believed, one thing remains for us all to observe:

Psalm 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork."

The Bible quotations in this article are from the English Standard Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

(see the detailed study of the different views of Creation in our commentary on the *Westminster Confession*, Unit 2, "Theology Proper" Chapter 5, "Creation.") <http://www.genevaninstitute.org/syllabus/unit-two-theology-proper/lesson-5-the-decree-of-creation/>

Genesis 1:1-31 (ESV)

1. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
2. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.
3. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.
4. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.
5. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.
6. And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."
7. And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so.
8. And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.
9. And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so.
10. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.
11. And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so.
12. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.
13. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.
14. And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years,
15. and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so.
16. And God made the two great lights--the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night--and the stars.
17. And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth,
18. to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.
19. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.
20. And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens."
21. So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.
22. And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."
23. And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.
24. And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds--livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so.
25. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.
26. Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."
27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
28. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."
29. And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.
30. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.
31. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.