

## Genesis Chapter 1 Notes (Defenders Study Bible by Henry Morris)

**1:1 God.** This opening verse of the Bible is unique, the foundation of foundations, probably the first words, ever written down, either revealed to Adam, or even written directly by God Himself. One who really believes Genesis 1:1 will have no difficulty believing the rest of Scripture. God (*Elohim*) is eternal, existing before the universe, and is omnipotent, having created the universe. Therefore, nothing is impossible with God, and He alone gives meaning to everything. No attempt is made in this verse to *prove* God; it was recorded in the beginning when no one *doubted* God.

**1:1 created.** No other cosmogony, whether in ancient paganism or modern naturalism, even mentions the absolute origin of the universe. All begin with the space/time/matter universe, already existing in a primeval state of chaos, then attempt to speculate how it might have “evolved” into its present form. Modern evolutionism begins with elementary particles of matter evolving out of nothing in a “big bang” and then developing through natural forces into complex systems. Pagan pantheism also begins with elementary matter in various forms evolving into complex systems by the forces of nature personified as different gods and goddesses. But, very significantly, the concept of the special creation of the universe of space and time itself is found nowhere in all religion or philosophy, ancient or modern, except here in Genesis 1:1.

Appropriately, therefore, this verse records the creation of space (“the heaven”), of time (“in the beginning”), and of matter (“the earth”), the Tri-universe, the space/time/matter continuum which constitutes our physical cosmos. The Creator of this tri-universe is the triune God, *Elohim*, the uni-plural Old Testament name for the divine “Godhead,” a name which is plural in form (with its Hebrew “*im*” ending) but commonly singular in meaning.

The existence of a transcendent Creator and the necessity of a primeval special creation of the universe is confirmed by the most basic principles of nature discovered by scientists:

(1) The law of causality, that no effect can be greater than its cause, is basic in all scientific investigation and human experience. A universe comprising an array of intelligible and complex effects, including living systems and conscious personalities, is itself proof of an intelligent, complex, living, conscious Person as its Cause;

(2) The laws of thermodynamics are the most universal and best-proved generalizations of science, applicable to every process and system of any kind, the First Law stating that no matter/energy is now being created or destroyed, and the Second Law stating that all existing matter/energy is proceeding irreversibly toward ultimate equilibrium and cessation of all processes. Since this eventual death of the universe has not yet occurred and since it will occur in time, if these processes continue, the Second Law proves that time (and, therefore, the space/matter/time universe) had a beginning. The universe must have been created, but the First Law precludes the possibility of its self-creation. The only resolution of the dilemma posed by the First and Second Laws is that “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” The so-called big bang theory of the origin of the cosmos, postulating a primeval explosion of the space/mass/time continuum at the start, beginning with a state of nothingness and then rapidly expanding into the present complex universe, contradicts both these basic laws as well as Scripture.

**1:2 the earth.** In an attempt to accommodate the supposed evolutionary geological ages in Genesis, certain theologians postulated a long gap in time here between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2, in which it

was hoped these ages could be pigeon-holed and forgotten as far as Biblical exegesis was concerned. This gap theory, however, requires a worldwide cataclysm at the end of the geological ages, in order to account for the globally inundated and darkened earth described in Genesis 1:2. The cataclysm, in turn, is hypothetically connected with the fall of Lucifer in heaven (Isaiah 14:9-14) and his expulsion to the earth (Ezekiel 28:12-15), though such a cataclysm is nowhere mentioned in Scripture. However, in addition to its obvious contradictions with other important and clear Bible passages (e.g., Genesis 1:31; Exodus 20:11), the gap theory is self-defeating geologically. The geological age system (which is the necessary framework for modern evolutionism) is based entirely on the principle of uniformitarianism, a premise which precludes any such worldwide cataclysm, and requires the interpreting of earth history by the extrapolation of present geological processes into the remote past. The concept of geological ages is based entirely on a uniformitarian explanation of the fossil beds and sedimentary rocks of the earth's crust, which would all have been destroyed by the postulated pre-Adamic cataclysm. Thus, any attempt to ignore or explain away the supposed great age of the earth by appeal to the gap theory makes an unnecessary and abortive compromise with evolutionism, and displays a lack of understanding of the geological structures and processes to which evolutionists appeal in postulating their long ages.

The real answer to the geological ages is not an imaginary pre-Adamic cataclysm, but the very real cataclysm of the Noahic Deluge (see comments on Genesis 6–9), which provides a much better explanation of the fossil beds and sedimentary rocks, eliminating all evidence of geological ages and confirming the Biblical doctrine of recent creation.

**1:2 was without form, and void.** The verb “was” in Genesis 1:2 is the regular Hebrew verb of being (*hayetha*) and does not denote a change of state unless the context so requires. It only rarely is translated “became,” as the gap theory postulates here. Neither does the phrase *tohu waw bohu* need to mean “ruined and desolated,” as the gap theory requires. The King James translation “without form and void” is the proper meaning.

**1:2 was upon the face of the deep.** The universe as first called into existence by *Elohim* was in elemental existence, still “unformed” and unenergized, not yet ready for habitation, “void” (see notes on Psalm 33:6-9; Proverbs 8:22-31; Isaiah 45:18; II Peter 3:5). It would not be perfect (i.e., finished) until the end of creation week, when God would pronounce it “very good” and “finished” (Genesis 1:31–2:3). The “earth” material was suspended in a matrix of water (the “deep”) completely static and therefore in “darkness.”

**1:2 And the Spirit...moved.** However, this condition prevailed only momentarily. Then, the “Spirit” (Hebrew *ruach*) of “God” (*Elohim*) proceeded to “move upon the face of the waters” (literally, “vibrate in the presence of the waters”). Waves of gravitational energy and waves of electro-magnetic energy began to pulse forth from the great “Breath” (another meaning of *ruach*) of God, the *Prime Mover* of the universe. The unformed “earth” material (Hebrew *eretz*), as well as the “waters” permeating it (Hebrew *shamayim*) quickly coalesced into spherical form under the new force of gravity, and the first material body (Planet Earth) had been formed at a point in space.

**1:3 God said.** As the “Spirit” of God “moved” (Genesis 1:2), so now the Word of God speaks in Genesis 1:3. The result is light, the energizing of the vast cosmos through the marvelous electro-magnetic force system which maintains all structures and processes in matter. These varied energies include not only visible light, but also all the short-wave radiations (ultra-violet, x-rays, etc.) and the long-wave radiations (infra-red, radio waves, etc.), as well as heat, sound, electricity, magnetism, molecular inter-actions, etc. “Light,” the most basic form of energy, is mentioned specifically, but its

existence necessarily implies the activation of all forms of electro-magnetic energies. Light was not created, since God Himself dwells in light. On the other hand, He created darkness (Isaiah 45:7).

The existence of visible light prior to the establishment of the sun, moon and stars (Genesis 1:16) emphasizes the fact that light (energy) is more fundamental than light givers. God could just as easily (perhaps more easily) have created waves of light energy as He could construct material bodies in which processes function which generate light energy. The first is direct (since God *is* light!), the second indirect. For the creation of such light generators, see note on Genesis 1:14

**1:4 *darkness.*** That these rays of light energy included the visible light spectrum is obvious by its separation from the newly created “darkness.” That most of this visible light emanated from one direction in space and, further, that the newly-sphericized earth began now to rotate on its axis, is shown by the establishment of a cyclical succession of “Day” and “Night,” which has continued ever since..

**1:5 *Day.*** The use of “day” (Hebrew *yom*) in Genesis 1:5 is its first occurrence in Scripture, and here it is specifically defined by God as “the light” in the cyclical succession of light and darkness which has, ever since, constituted a solar day. Since the same word is used in defining all later “*yoms*” as used for this “first” *yom*, it is incontrovertible that God intends us to know that the days of creation week were of the same duration as any natural solar day. The word *yom* in the Old Testament almost always is used in this natural way, and is never used to mean any other definite time period than a literal day. This becomes especially clear when it is combined with an ordinal (e.g., “first day”) or with definite bounds (e.g., “evening and morning”), neither of which usages in the Old Testament allow non-literal meanings. It is occasionally, though rarely, used symbolically or in the sense of indefinite time (e.g., “the day of the Lord”), but such usage (as in English or other languages) is always evident from the context itself. Thus the so-called day-age theory, by which the days of creation are assumed to correspond to the ages of geology, is precluded by this definitive use of the word in its first occurrence, God Himself defining it!

**1:5 *evening and morning.*** The use of “evening and morning” in that order is significant. As each day’s work was accomplished during the “light,” there was a cessation of God’s activity during the “darkness.” Consequently, there was nothing to report between evening and morning.” The beginning of the next day’s activity began with the next period of light, after the “morning,” or better, “dawning.” The literal sense of the formula after each day’s work is: “Then there was dusk, then dawn, ending the first day.”

**1:6 *firmament.*** The “firmament” is not a great vaulted dome in the sky, as liberals have interpreted it, but is simply the atmospheric expanse established between the waters above and below. The Hebrew word, *raqiya*, means “expanse” or perhaps better, “stretched-out thinness.” Since God specifically identified it with “Heaven,” it also can be understood simply as “space.” Thus, on the second day, God separated the primeval deep into two deeps, with a great space between. The waters below the space retained the elemental earth materials which would be utilized on the following day to form the land and its plant cover. The waters above the firmament had apparently been transformed into the vapor state in order to be separated from the heavier materials and elevated above the atmosphere, where it could serve as a thermal blanket for the earth’s future inhabitants.

Such a vapor canopy would undoubtedly have provided a highly efficient “greenhouse effect,” assuring a perennial spring-like climate for the entire earth. Water vapor both shields the earth against

harmful radiations from space and also retains and spreads incoming solar heat. A vapor canopy would thus provide an ideal environment for abundant animal and plant life and for longevity and comfort in human life. Water vapor is invisible, and thus would be translucent, allowing the stars to be seen through it. This would not be the case with a liquid water or ice canopy.

**1:7 above the firmament.** The “waters which were above the firmament” are clearly not the clouds or the vapor which now float in the atmosphere. The Hebrew word *al*, definitely requires the meaning “above.” Furthermore, the absence of rain (Genesis 2:5) and the rainbow (Genesis 9:13) is not only explained but required by a vapor canopy, not by an atmosphere like that of the present. Furthermore, these waters extending far out into space eventually condensed and fell back to the earth at the time of the Great Deluge, providing the source of the worldwide rainstorm that contributed to the Flood. Although the exact extent and structure of this canopy is still being researched by computer simulations, there are no insuperable scientific problems with the concept.

**1:9 dry land.** The work of the third day began with the laying of the foundations of the earth (see notes on Job 38:4; Proverbs 8:29; Psalm 33:7) by the power of God’s spoken Word. The waters “under the firmament” apparently still contained all the material elements of the earth in solution or suspension until the energizing Word initiated a vast complex string of chemical and physical reactions, to precipitate, combine and sort all the rock materials and metals comprising the solid earth. The “earth” (Hebrew *eretz*) thus formed was the same “earth” which had initially been “without form” (the same word *eretz* is used in Genesis 1:1,2,10), but it was now “dry land,” no longer mixed in the initial watery matrix.

**1:10 Seas.** As the solid materials precipitated and then moved down and around under the forces of gravity, internal heat, and other electro-magnetic energies (not to mention the outflowing energy of the divine Word), great basins opened up to receive and store the waters. Some of these waters were trapped and stored in the “great deep” (Genesis 7:11), subterranean chambers beneath the earth’s crust. Others accumulated in surface basins. However, all were evidently interconnected through a network of subterranean channels, so that they were both singular and plural—gathered together into “one place,” yet called “Seas.”

Thus were established the primeval continents and primeval oceans. We do not now know the original geography, however, since all was cataclysmically changed at the time of the great Flood. We can infer that the topography was gently rolling and the waterways were relatively shallow and narrow, since all was “very good” and was made for man’s enjoyment and utilization (Genesis 1:26-28,31).

**1:11 bring forth grass.** The ability of the earth to begin immediately producing abundant plant life everywhere, on the very same day as the forming of the land surfaces, shows that the upper portion of the crust was a rich soil, fertile in chemical nutrients and retaining adequate moisture to sustain the lush vegetation. This fact illustrates an important principle. True creation necessarily involves the theory of a “creation of apparent age,” or better, “creation of functioning maturity.” That is, the soil did not gradually form over hundreds of years by rock weathering and other modern uniformitarian processes. It was readied instantaneously by divine fiat. The plants did not develop from seeds; rather the herb was formed “yielding seed.” Similarly, the fruit trees were “yielding fruit,” not requiring several years of preliminary growth as do modern fruit trees.

**1:11 seed.** The “seed” which God designed guaranteed reproduction of each plant “after his kind.” This phrase, repeated nine more times in Genesis 1 after this first occurrence, obviously precludes

transmutation of one kind into another. The “seed” was programmed for stable reproduction of each kind, through a remarkable system known today as the “genetic code,” the complex information program in the DNA molecule. This system allows wide “horizontal” variation within the kind, but no “vertical” evolution from one kind into a more complex kind. It is significant that, despite widespread belief in evolution, no scientist has yet documented a single instance of true vertical evolution occurring today. The modern taxonomic equivalent of “kind” is probably broader than the “species” in many cases, since the latter term is an arbitrary man-made category. That is, the many varieties of dogs are all part of the created “dog kind,” just as all tribes and nations of men constitute one “mankind” (Acts 17:25,26).

**1:12 grass.** It should also be noted that plant life, in all its forms, was created before animal life, thus contradicting the order postulated by evolutionists. There are over twenty such contradictions between the order of creation in Genesis and that in evolutionary paleontology.

**1:14 lights.** On the first day, God had said: “Let there be light” (Hebrew *or*). Now He says: “Let there be lights” (*ma-or*). Light energy was activated first, but now great masses of material (part of the “earth” elements created on the first day) were gathered together in one of the firmaments, or spaces, of the cosmos—the space beyond the waters above the space adjacent to the earth. These great bodies were set burning in complex chemical and nuclear reactions, to serve henceforth as “light-givers” for the earth.

**1:14 signs.** The Hebrew word for “signs” is the same word (*oth*) as used for Cain’s “mark” (Genesis 4:15) and for Noah’s “token” (meaning the rainbow—Genesis 9:12). Evidently the stars were arranged by God to “signify” something to those on the earth, not just scattered evenly or randomly around in space. God even named the stars and their constellations (e.g., Job 38:31-33; Isaiah 40:26). For their possible significance, see notes on Amos 5:8; Job 9:9; 26:13; 38:32.

**1:14 seasons.** The establishment of “seasons” (and these were not simply religious seasons, but actual climatological seasons) indicates that the earth was formed with an axial inclination from the beginning, for this is the basic cause of its seasons.

**1:16 the stars also.** These stars were scattered in tremendous numbers throughout the infinite recesses of the heavens (note Isaiah 55:9). The light energy emanating from them would henceforth traverse space to “give light on the earth,” providing patterns and movements which would also enable man to keep records of time and history. In order to serve these purposes, however, light energy trails would need to be established already in place in space between each star and earth. Thus, men would have been able to see stars billions of light-years away at the very moment of their formation, in accordance with the principle of mature creation, or creation of apparent age.

**1:17 light upon the earth.** The establishment of the sun and moon in their light-giving functions for the earth half-way through creation week is obviously inconsistent with the day-age theory. This is compounded by the fact that plant life on the earth was made one day before the sun, a situation which would be absurdly impossible if this “day” was an “age.” Furthermore, these “lights” were to be used to measure days and years. This is the plural (*yamin*) of the Hebrew “day” (*yom*). They were also to “rule over the day and over the night,” and all this was done on the fourth day. This repeated use of the same word in the passage requires the meaning in each case to be the same. The fourth “day” was thus obviously a solar day like all the rest.

**1:20 open firmament.** Both the “lights” (Genesis 1:15) and the “fowl” are said to be in the “firmament of heaven.” However, the fowl were to be in the “open” (Hebrew *pene*) firmament of heaven, or better, “the *face* of the firmament of heaven.” Thus, birds fly only in the lower reaches of the vast spaces of the heavens. Or, it may be that there are two different “firmaments of heaven.”

**1:21 great whales.** Fish and other marine organisms were created simultaneously with birds and other flying creatures, in obvious contradiction to the sequence imagined by evolutionists. The “moving creature” (Hebrew *sherets*) of Genesis 1:20 is elsewhere always translated “creeping thing,” and here evidently refers to marine invertebrates and marine reptiles, as well as the fishes. The word translated “great whales” (Hebrew *tannin*) is elsewhere the regular word for “dragons,” and most probably refers to the great marine reptiles often called dinosaurs.

**1:21 living creature.** It is significant that the word “create” (Hebrew *bara*) is applied to the introduction of animal life, but not to plant life. Plants are highly complex replicating chemical systems, as are animals, with reproductive programs based in the remarkable DNA molecule in both cases. However, animals possess another entity—that of consciousness—which plants do not possess, and this required a second act of true creation (the first was in Genesis 1:1, the creation of the basic space/mass/time universe). Such “consciousness” is the essential meaning of the Hebrew word *nephesh*, commonly translated “soul,” but in Genesis 1:20 (its first occurrence) translated “life,” and then in Genesis 1:21 “living creature.” In Genesis 2:7, referring to man, it is rendered “living soul.” Thus, both men and animals possess the specially-created *nephesh*.

**1:24 earth bring forth.** The land animals were brought forth (no need for a further act of creation, since the *nephesh* principle had already been created) in the early part of the sixth day. There was a natural three-fold categorization (no correlation with the arbitrary classification system used by modern biologists) consisting of cattle (domesticable animals), beasts of the earth (large non-domesticable animals) and creepers (small animals that crawl or creep close to the ground). The reversal of the sequence in Genesis 1:24-25 indicates that all were formed simultaneously. The bodies of these animals, like that of man (Genesis 2:7) were all formed from the basic elements of the earth.

**1:24 it was so.** Note the logical order of God’s formation of things. On the first day, He made the earth’s atmosphere and hydrosphere, on the second day its lithosphere and biosphere. On the central day of the week, the heavenly astrosphere was formed. Then, on the fifth day living creatures were formed for earth’s atmosphere and hydrosphere, and on the sixth day for its lithosphere and biosphere. On the first day God had created and energized His elemental universe; on the last day, God blessed and sanctified His completed universe.

**1:25 after his kind.** The phrase “after his kind” occurs repeatedly, stressing the reproductive integrity of each land animal kind, of the same sort as that of each plant kind (Genesis 1:11-12) and each air animal and water animal (Genesis 1:21). All of these reproductive systems are programmed in terms of the biochemical genetic code, utilizing the basic elements of the earth. Both plants and animals are formed from the created *eretz* (“earth”), only animals from the created *nephesh* (“soul” or consciousness).

**1:26 in our image.** God is, as it were, taking counsel here with Himself, not with angels, since man was to be made in the image of God, not of angels. “Our image,” therefore, implies human likeness to the triune Godhead. Plants possess a body, and animals a body and consciousness. Man was not only to have a body (of the created “earth”) and a consciousness (of the created “soul”), but man was also to

possess a third created entity, the image of God, an eternal spirit capable of communion and fellowship with his Creator.

**1:26 likeness.** Man was not only created in God's spiritual image; he was also made in God's physical image. His body was specifically planned to be most suited for the divine fellowship (erect posture, upward-gazing countenance, facial expressions varying with emotional feelings, brain and tongue designed for articulate symbolic speech—none of which are shared by the animals). Furthermore, his body was designed to be like the body which God had planned from eternity that He Himself would one day assume (I Peter 1:20).

**1:26 dominion.** The “dominion” man was to exercise was to be over both “the earth” and also all the other living creatures on the earth. Such dominion obviously was under God as a stewardship, not as autonomous sovereign. Man was to care for the earth and its creatures, developing and utilizing the earth's resources, not to despoil and deplete them for selfish pleasure.

**1:27 male and female.** Note that “man” is here (and often in Scripture) used in a generic sense to include both man and woman. Both male and female were created (the details of their physical formation being given in Genesis 2) in God's image. Thus both possess equally an eternal spirit capable of personal fellowship with their Creator. Shared equally by man and women are all those spiritual attributes not shared by animals—moral conscience, abstract thought, appreciation of beauty, emotional feelings, and, especially, the capacity for worshipping and loving God.

**1:28 replenish.** God's first command to man was that of producing abundant progeny sufficient to fill the earth (not “replenish,” a misleading translation of the Hebrew word *male*). Perhaps the animals had been created in large numbers of each kind, but the human population began with only two people. The function of subduing the earth and having dominion over it would necessarily require a long time—first, for the growth of a large enough population to fill the earth, and second, for the acquiring of enough knowledge and skill to enable man to bring it under full control and development.

**1:28 have dominion.** This primeval commandment to conquer and rule the earth has been called the dominion mandate, though a better term might be the primeval commission to mankind. It has never been abrogated, but was specifically renewed and extended after the Flood (see notes on Genesis 9:1-7). The military terminology in no way implies hostility and resistance from the earth, for it was all “very good” (Genesis 1:31). It suggests, rather, intensive study of the earth and its creatures (that is, “science”) and then application of that knowledge (that is, technology and commerce) for the optimum benefit of mankind and the animals, and for the glory of God.

Note that no instruction was given to exercise dominion over other men, but only over the earth and the animals. Had man not rebelled against God's Word, all would have remained in perfect fellowship with God and, therefore, with one another. There was no initial need for the so-called social sciences and technologies, but only the natural sciences and their implementation. This situation was radically changed at the Fall, and God's commandment accordingly expanded officially after the Flood.

**1:29 given you every herb.** It is plain that both men and animals were originally intended to be vegetarian and herbivorous in their appetites. There was adequate nourishment and energy value available in the fruits and herbs to enable both to accomplish the work God had given them to do. The supply could not be exhausted, since these plants were designed to replicate themselves through the seeds they produced.

**1:29 *all the earth.*** The fact that their food would be available everywhere, “upon the face of all the earth,” shows that in the originally created world there were no deserts or other uninhabitable regions, no frozen tundras or ice caps, no rugged high mountain ranges. With lush vegetation everywhere, the animals no doubt soon had populated all the earth.

**1:29 *be for meat.*** The question as to how or when some of the animals became carnivorous is not definitely answerable at this late date, since the Bible does not say. In the future kingdom age, there will again be no predation or struggle between animals or between animals and men (Isaiah 11:6-9; Hosea 2:18; etc.). Even today, both animals and men can (and do, on occasion) live on a strictly vegetarian, herbivorous diet. The development of fangs and claws, as well as other such structures and practices, may be explained as either (1) recessive created features which became dominant by selection processes as the environment worsened following the Fall and Flood; (2) features created originally by the Creator in foreknowledge of the coming Curse; or (3) mutational changes following the Curse, converting originally benign structures into predatory and defensive structures.

**1:31 *very good.*** This one verse precludes any interpretation of Genesis which seeks to accommodate the geological ages in its system. The “geological ages” are identified by the fossils found in the sedimentary rocks of the earth’s crust, which supposedly depict a billion-year history of the evolution of life on the earth. In this case simple fossils are found in ancient rocks and more complex fossils in younger rocks. But fossils really depict a world in which death reigns! Fossils are the remains of dead organisms, from amoebae to man, and thus represent a world full of suffering and death, *not* a world pronounced by God as “very good.”

Six times before in this chapter, God had adjudged His work to be “good.” Now, after completing everything (even the “host of heaven”—see Genesis 2:1), He declared it all to be “*exceedingly good*” (literal meaning of the Hebrew word rendered “very”). The evolutionary ages of geology represent a billion years of wasteful inefficiency and profound cruelty if they were, indeed, a part of God’s work. They would completely discredit God as a God of order, intelligence, power, grace and love. Death represents “the wages of sin” (Romans 6:23), not of divine love.

Thus, the “gap theory” (placing the geological ages *before* creation week) and the “day-age” or “progressive creation” theory (incorporating the geological ages *during* creation week) in effect imply that the Creator is either a bumbler or a monster. In reality, the geological ages are nothing but evolutionary delusions; the fossils are much more realistically explained in terms of the flood.

Even Satan himself (with all the “host of heaven” who later followed him in rebelling against God) was still “perfect in all his ways” (Ezekiel 28:15) at the end of the creation week. His fall from heaven to the earth could only have been after God’s universal “very good” proclamation.