

What are the different views on the “origin of life”?

Well, there are a whole lot of them. Let us focus on some of the more popular views among Christians:

#1 Creationism

In this view God created the entire universe in six literal 24 hour days. This view is almost always accompanied with a belief in a young earth as it seeks to be faithful to the Biblical text while not giving much credence to the scientific claims of such things as an old earth.

#2 Historic Creationism

In this view Genesis 1:1 records the making of all of creation by God out of nothing (“ex nihilo”), through a merism of “heavens and earth” which means the sky above and land below, or totality of creation. Since the word used for “beginning” in Genesis 1:1 is “reshit” in Hebrew, which means “an indefinite period of time”, it is possible that all of creation was completed over an extended period of time (from days to billions of years). Then Genesis 1:2 begins the description of God preparing the uninhabitable land for the creation of mankind. The preparation of the uncultivated land and creation of Adam and Eve occurred in six literal twenty-four hour days. This view leaves open the possibility of both an old earth and literal six days of creation.

#3 Gap Theory

In this view Genesis 1:1 explains a first creation that happened perhaps billions of years ago. Then, a catastrophic event, likely the fall of Satan from heaven, left the earth in the destroyed condition of Genesis 1:2. God responded to this disaster by recreating the earth again a few thousand years ago in six literal days and repopulating the earth as is recorded in Genesis 1:3-27. According to this view the earth is old from the first creation, and mankind is young because of the recent creation. The problems with this view include the fact that nothing in the Bible speaks of two creations, and at the end of the six days of creation God declared all that He made “very good” which does not correlate with the claims that the earth had been destroyed and made “very bad”.

#4 Day Age View

In this view God created the universe, including Adam and Eve, in six sequential periods of time that are not literal 24 hour days. The problem with this view is that the six days of creation are seemingly literal days. Exodus 20:11 clearly states that the six days of creation are literal saying, “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

#5 Theistic Evolution

In this view God essentially began creation and then pulled back from working directly in creation to instead work through the process of evolution. The only exception would be God involving Himself again directly in the making of human life. For the most part, this view accepts the hypothesis of evolution but seeks to insert God as the creator of matter and overseer of the evolutionary process. The Biblical problems with this view are many but we’ll just give two. First, Genesis 1 repeatedly states that creation and its species came into existence because “God said” and not because of evolutionary process. Additionally, Genesis 1 also continually states that God commanded creation to come into existence “and it was so” which shows that God’s commands brought about the instantaneous response of creation coming into being and not through a long evolutionary process detached from God. Second, evolution teaches that one species evolves into other species while Genesis 1 says that each species had offspring “according to its kind” (ex. 1:21, 1:24, 1:25) and not another kind as evolution postulates.

(Most of this material was taken from Mark Driscoll’s Genesis: Meditations on Moses’ Mosaic)

Does Genesis give two different accounts of creation?

Among some critics of the Bible there is an argument that the creation account in Genesis chapter one is a different account from Genesis chapter two. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Later, in Genesis 2, some people would want you to believe that a second story of creation begins. If someone were to read these two different chapters completely isolated from one another, then maybe they would see them as two different accounts. But reading these two chapters in sequence it is rather easy to see they are describing the same creation event.

These two chapters do not disagree as to the order in which things were created nor contradict one another. Genesis one describes the "six days of creation" (and a seventh day of rest). Genesis two covers only one day of that creation week, the sixth day and there is no contradiction. In Genesis chapter two it appears to be the authors intention to focus more on God's creation of mankind. The creation of man is certainly without question God's pinnacle creation. The earth and all that roams it and swims in its oceans were also created by God, but for man to rule over and manage. It was only man that was created in the image of God for God's pleasure. If anything, Genesis two is written more as a means of setting up the scenario for sin to enter the world rather than a continuation of the creation account. So how does misinterpretation like this take place? Certainly reading over scripture too fast or without following the rules of interpretation and contextual integrity are factors that usually lead to misinterpretation. This passage like the one stating that the word "day" means a long period of time is purposefully meant to steer individuals toward a belief in evolution as opposed to the biblical record of creation. Having two different accounts of creation is the main premise for what is referred to as "The Gap Theory". This theory states that Genesis 1:1 may have taken place millions of years ago which would allow for a the geological and evolutionary process to have taken place. Genesis two is considered the state of the earth after this process had taken place. Ideas do have consequences. Unfortunately man's ideas often times lead us farther from God instead of nearer to Him.

Is a day in the creation account a 24 hour literal day?

The word "day" in Hebrew is *yom*. The term can be used for a solar day, daylight, and/or an indefinite period of time. The term "yom" occurs 2291 times in the Old Testament and almost always means a 24 hour literal day. As a good student of the Bible, though, we should examine the context in order to conclude what exactly the writer had in mind.

In Genesis 1:3-5, God actually gives us the definition, or the defining attributes, of day. He created light and separated the light from darkness. He defined the light as "yom", distinguishing it from darkness or night.

After separating the day ("yom") from night, He had completed His first day of creation work. "And the evening and the morning were the first day." This phrase, "And there was evening and morning the second day", etc., continues throughout the creation record. To Moses, yom in this context is undeniably used in the sense of a twenty-four hour literal day.

There are a total of at least ten other Hebrew words Moses could have used that translate into a long period of time, or a duration of time and not a literal day. Moses however did not use those words; he chose to use the word yom which most accurately depicts what took place.

So where did this idea come from that yom does not mean a literal day? The theory of evolution necessarily relies on millions and millions of years of which the Bible and the creation account simply cannot give it. Therefore two camps have developed: Old earth creationists and young earth creationists. The old earth creationists believe that

science proves an old earth and therefore they attempt to make the account of creation fit their beliefs. They do this by stating that yom means a period of time.

Creating in six days and resting on the seventh day was also a model for mankind's work week. No other adequate explanation of the work week exists.

One last bit of information that needs to be considered is God's power. Why did God take six days to create when six seconds could have sufficed? An "old earth" creationist is also what is called a theistic evolutionist. They believe that God used evolution as His means of creation and that over the course of millions of years through trial and error and death and destruction God finally and "successfully" completed His work. Theistic evolution and not believing in a six literal day creation denies the power of God.

How was there "light" on the first day if God didn't create the sun until the fourth day?

This is only a problem if we fail to take into account an infinite and omnipotent God. God does not need the sun, moon, and stars to provide light. God is light! First John 1:5 declares, "This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all." God Himself was the light for the first three days of Creation, just as He will be in the new heavens and new earth: "There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 22:5). Until He created the sun, moon, and stars, God miraculously provided light during the "day" and may have done so during the "night" as well (Genesis 1:14).

How did all the different "races" arise?

According to the Bible, all humans on earth today are descended from Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives, and before that from Adam and Eve. It is obvious that we have many different "people groups" with what seem to be greatly differing features. The most obvious of these is skin color. Many see this as a reason to doubt the Bible's record of history. They believe that the various groups could have arisen only by evolving separately over tens of thousands of years.

However, modern knowledge of how features such as skin color are inherited shows that it would have taken only a few generations after an event such as the Bible records as having happened at the Tower of Babel to produce many different groups with distinct characteristics. And there is good evidence to show that, in fact, the various groups of people we have today have not been separated for huge periods of time.

There is really only one race—the human race. The Bible teaches us that God has "made of one blood all nations of men" (Acts 17:26). Scripture distinguishes people by tribal or national groupings, not by skin color or physical appearance. Clearly, though, there are groups of people who have certain features (e.g., skin color) in common, which distinguish them from other groups. We prefer to call these "people groups" rather than "races," to avoid the evolutionary connotations associated with the word "race".

*(For a much more thorough answer to this question go to:
<http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/cm/v21/n3/inter-racial-marriage>)*

What is the significance of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?

Genesis 2:16,17 says “And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.’” If God had not given Adam and Eve the choice, they would have essentially been robots, simply doing what they were programmed to do. God created Adam and Eve to be “free” beings, able to make decisions and able to choose between good and evil. In order for Adam and Eve to truly be free, they had to have a choice. There was nothing essentially evil about the tree or the fruit of the tree. It is unlikely that eating the fruit truly gave Adam and Eve any further knowledge. It was the act of disobedience that opened Adam and Eve’s eyes to evil. Their sin of disobeying God brought sin and evil into the world and into their lives. Eating the fruit, as an act of disobedience against God, was what gave Adam and Eve knowledge of evil (Gen. 3:6,7).

Love demands that there be a choice between something and something else. If my wife were the only woman on the planet, saying I loved her wouldn’t mean much. In the same way, love is not to be forced. If love is forced it ceases to be love. God has given us a free will to choose to love Him or to choose not to love Him. The tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was placed in the center of the garden. Every time Adam and Eve walked by that tree and did not eat from it, they were in essence choosing to obey and love God.

In the same way today, every time we walk away from sin and choose to obey God, we are choosing to love God more than ourselves. We are trusting in God to provide for our needs and in doing so building stronger the relationship He has established with us and has desired since the garden.

God did not want Adam and Eve to sin. God knew ahead of time what the results of sin would be. God knew that Adam and Eve would sin and would thereby bring evil, suffering, and death into the world. Why, then, did God allow Satan to tempt Adam and Eve? God allowed Satan to tempt Adam and Eve to force them to make the choice. Adam and Eve chose, of their own free will, to disobey God and eat the forbidden fruit. The results—evil, sin, suffering, sickness, and death—have plagued the world ever since. Adam and Eve's decision results in every person being born with a sin nature: a tendency to sin. Adam and Eve's decision is what ultimately required Jesus Christ to die on the cross and shed His blood on our behalf. Through faith in Christ, we can be free from sin's consequences, and ultimately free from sin itself. May we echo the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 7:24, 25, “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

Where did Cain get his wife?

Genesis 5:4 “Then the days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years, and he had other sons and daughters.”

So . . . Cain married his sister? BINGO! Cain and his sister were husband and wife. It sounds weird to us in our modern day and age, but we have to remember a couple things. First, if all mankind came from Adam and Eve, God’s creation being perfect had all the genetic possibilities encoded into those two individuals. In simple terms, the Gene pool was very deep! Secondly, there is no other way to populate the earth except by those that were on the earth.

It wasn’t until later in Moses’ day that God commanded that no relatives could intermarry. In the day of King David, Goliath was described as not only a giant, but that he had six fingers and toes. Goliath’s culture was not a God fearing, obeying nation and assumedly interfamily relationships were still very prevalent.

Keep in mind that the only command given to mankind in the beginning was to “be fruitful and multiply and to fill the earth”. It is no wonder then that Cain built a city and named it Enoch after his son. Maybe the question shouldn’t be where did Cain get his wife, but where are all the people coming from to build cities?

Adam had his son Seth at age one hundred and thirty after already having Cain and Abel. Adam lived another six hundred and fifty years and had other sons and daughters. If people were living this long, obeying God’s command to fill the earth, not suffering from genetically inherited bad backs and low blood sugar, having plenty of food and land, and reaped the benefits of having security in old age by having as many children as possible, we should have no problem believing in cities being developed.

How did Noah get all the animals on the ark?

Before we look at how all the animals fit on the ark, it is important to note that we are not discussing a myth or fable. This event is mentioned by many writers throughout the Bible and referenced by Jesus as well. Isaiah 54:9; Ezekiel 14:14,20; 1 Chronicles 1:4; Luke 3:36; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5; Luke 17:26; Hebrews 11:7 and Matthew 24:37-39.

What is an ark? By the dimensions given, we need to think of it not as a V-bottom boat as portrayed in the movies. The dimensions given make it a rectangular cube, something like a barge you would see today. It was most definitely not built for maneuvering, but rather for stability.

How big was it? It was 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high. There are numerous different lengths of a cubit depending on the culture. Most writers believe the cubit to be 18 inches. To be very conservative, assume the cubit to have been only 17.5 inches, the shortest of all cubits, so far as is known. In that case, the Ark would have been 438 feet long, 72.9 feet wide, and 43.8 feet high.

With the dimensions as calculated, the total volumetric capacity of the Ark was approximately 1,400,000 cubic feet, which is equal to the volumetric capacity of 522 standard livestock cars such as used on modern American railroads.

Most land animals are small, of course; so this did not by any means represent an impossible task. Authorities on taxonomy estimate that there are less than eighteen thousand species of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians living in the world today. This number might be doubled to allow for known extinct land animals. Allowing then for two of each species, there might have to be a total of about seventy-two thousand animals on the Ark - say seventy-five thousand; to allow for the five extra animals in each “clean species”.

The Ark could have carried as many as one hundred and twenty-five thousand sheep, and since the average size of land animals is surely less than that of a sheep, it is obvious that no more than 60 percent of its capacity would have to be used for animals.

Therefore, it can be seen that there could have been ample room on the ark for all the animals, food and of course living space for Noah and his family.

Was the flood universal or just local?

A local flood would not require an ark being built and pairs of all living things to be brought into it to be saved.

In Genesis chapter six, we read, “Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ... The Lord said, ‘I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.’ But Noah found favor on the eyes of the Lord.”

Gen. 6:17 “Behold, I, even I am bringing a flood upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish.”

God went on to establish a covenant with Noah to save him from the flood.

Genesis 7:19-24 “The water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered. The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered. All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind; of all that was on dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died. Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to the birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were in the ark. The water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days.”

Genesis chapter ten reveals a genealogy of the sons of Noah. The genealogy ends with vs 32, “These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, by their nations; and out of these nations were separated on the earth after the flood.” There is no other mention of anyone else living on the face of the earth.

The New Testament speaks of only eight people in all being saved from the flood.

Go most anywhere in the world and you will find evidence of massive flooding having taken place at some point in history. The Woolly Mammoths that have been discovered in Antarctica have been found intact with green vegetation still in their stomachs. A massive flood, perhaps a polar shift and cataclismic event like a world wide flood, appears to be a much more logical explanation than they were caught in an ice age. Where did all the ice come from so instantaneously?

As the debate rages on between a local or universal flood ask yourself a couple questions:

1. Has God’s Word ever been proven to be wrong?
2. Have God’s promises ever gone unfulfilled?
3. If God says he is going to blot out all mankind except Noah and his family and the waters were above the tallest mountain at that time, then wouldn’t this flood have to be universal?
4. The small local flood notion is a concept developed by people who have a small concept of God’s power. The local flood concept is to appease those who believe in the theory of evolution. Do I choose to believe what is written as it was written and fit that into the world as I see it, or do I see the world as I see it and force the Bible to fit my idea?