

John Reagan's Notes on Genesis Chapter 1

These notes are just that – notes. They aren't by any stretch a complete commentary. As you are reading please keep the following in mind. **Red** headings flag notes that are still in-process. They need both more thought and editing. **Green** headings flag notes that have been edited and thought through more, but still need more. (You may find some references that still need to be looked up and entered.) The rest are in pretty good shape.

Chapter 1 -- Introductory Note

It is common to hear the claim made that there is a conflict between "true science" and what is written in the Bible. Nothing could be further from the truth. Often you will hear people say, "The Bible wasn't written as a scientific text, it was written as a religious text," and then try to use that assumption to discount the science that the Bible discusses. Of course, that statement begs the question of how the description of creation contained in the Bible fits into the currently popular scientific model. The truth is, that *there is no conflict between observable scientific evidence, and what is set forth in the Bible!* The conflict comes when unproven theories are advanced by anti-religious men and then those theories are presented as if they were fact. The Bible deals with truth and that truth most certainly does conflict with false theories and false assumptions that have no scientific basis. In [1 Corinthians 1:17-31](#), the apostle Paul lays out how the "wisdom" of men is actually "foolishness". Nothing illustrates that better than the supposed conflict between what is written in the Bible and the pseudo-science with which we are inundated in today's world.

When reading [Genesis 1](#) it is important that we not get stuck on the word "**day**". The account gives us a chronological listing of God's creative work, but the concept of time really has no meaning as we watch God's handiwork unfold. Time has no effect on God and places no limits on Him ([2 Peter 3:8](#)). How can the thing created (time) place any limitation on the Creator who made it? We also have to remember that time, even here where we live in the completed creation, is *not* a constant – time slows down the closer one gets to a gravity source. (This was predicted in Einstein's Theory of Relativity and has since been proven through scientific experimentation.) So, the term "**day**", as used here in Genesis Chapter 1, simply denotes the divisions of God's work period.

More Study: Insert discussion of the meaning of the original Hebrew for "day".

Please don't mistake what I am saying – in no way am I advocating the "each day represents billions of years" theory. The scriptures do **not** support that assertion. But neither do they mandate that the word "day", as here used, means 24 hours.

I have been heavily influenced by the cosmology put forth by Humphries in his book ***Starlight and Time***. (Insert citation.)

Genesis 1:2

hovering – I love that word. It presents me with an image of God lovingly caressing and delighting in Creation. He was anticipating the completed work, savoring each moment. He was like a mother who, beginning with the conception of her precious child, savors every stage of her baby's growth. God was savoring this beginning moment when the universe was conceived.

More Study: I used the phrase "*He was anticipating the completed work*" but can we really talk about God that way? God is eternal and as such stands outside of time. Time is His creation and He is not subject to His creation. Then, too, God does all things by faith (Hebrews 11:1,3). Faith is the substance of things not seen, but then, is anything not seen when it comes to God? There's a lot more studying to do here.

More Study: Look up the word "waters" here – could "matter" be inserted?

More Study: Buying into the "gap" theory is a common error many people make. Do some digging and cover it here.

Genesis 1:3

Let there be light – The world was founded on light! Imagine, if you will, this formless blob of matter, floating in space with no definition, no lines, no boundaries, no identity. Even if there had been some kind of definition to this formless and void blob of matter, there was no light by which it could have been seen. So God's first act was to bring light to the universe! Light allows us to see definitions, to see form, to see boundaries. Light allows us to assign identity and interact with our world.

There is far more truth to be seen here. Whenever we read this passage we always think of physical light – that by which we see the greens of trees, the brilliant colors of the Goldfinch and joy on the faces of our loved ones. But the light in this physical world – photons moving in sine waves at incredible speed – is just a reflection of the light that is found in Christ. The Gospel of John also starts with the words, "In the beginning ". "In the beginning was the word ...". "In the beginning was the Logos ...". "In the beginning was the Son – Jesus – the Messiah – the second member of the Godhead!" Jesus said in John 9:5 that he was "the light of the world." Far more was happening here, at the beginning of creation when God said "let there be light", than the mere

creation of photons. John says, again at the beginning of his gospel, that , "through him all things were created ." Through Christ all things were created! Through the light of the world all things were created! The foundation of the universe is the spiritual light of Christ! He is the light of the world! So when we read here in Genesis that God said "Let there be light", that light is far more than photons moving in sine waves. That light is the light of Christ that illuminates the soul and connects us with God.

There is also this: Before Christ came at Bethlehem, this world was dark, formless and void of life. Then God said, "Let there be light" – and Christ was born! Ponder on that one for a while.

Genesis 1:4

God caused there to be a separation between the light and between the darkness

– There is a lot more going on here than simply a line being drawn between light and darkness. Here are some things to think about and research:

- If light and dark were not separated, were they mixed? It is hard to conceive, in the physical sense, of light and dark being mixed in any way. The world simply isn't built that way. Of course, that's the point. This is where God was establishing the laws of physics as they operate in our universe today. Light and darkness don't mix because the laws of physics forbid it.
- God is forever a teacher. It is possible, even probable, that God was giving the sons of God – the angelic majesties who sat on his council – an example of what it means to walk in the light, or walk in the dark (references). In giving the angels free choice, rebellion became possible and God knew that some would choose to follow that path. Certainly Lucifer did just that. Yet he didn't do it blindly. Lucifer knew, because he had watched this creation , that there was a separation between that which is light and that which is dark.
- The division between light and darkness has much deeper meaning than the simple physical separation between light and dark and the establishment of the laws of physics. If you look at the history of ancient Israel, you will see that God deliberately built into their culture, into their law and into every aspect of their way of life, a separation between that which is good and that which is bad. Every Hebrew was acutely aware of the distinction between that which was unclean and that which was clean, between that which is sin (i.e. any behavior that is contrary to the nature of God) and that which is righteous.

- The metaphors go a step further. The separation between physical light and darkness, between clean and unclean and between sin and righteousness, all point to a separation between that which is spiritually alive (the light), and that which is spiritually dead (darkness). In the first few verses of John's Gospel the apostle points out that Jesus *is* the light (reference). So, here at the beginning of the Bible, we see that all things point to Christ. This point is extremely important for every Christian to grasp and every Bible student to understand – *the Son is the nexus of everything that exists* (References)!

Genesis 1:5

Evening...morning –

- 1) The day/night division spoken of here in Genesis 1 does not depend on spin since planets & stars don't exist yet.
- 2) The light of the universe is a reflection or extension of the light of God. Light in the physical is a metaphor for (or possibly a three-dimensional extension of) God's light.
- 3) God is light and the light of the first day is God Himself.
- 4) Darkness is the absence of light and has no substance of its own. Where God isn't, it is dark.

More Study: Can you find some references to go along with the points you made above.

the first day – It is important to understand that this phrase refers to the beginning and end of God's activity, rather than denoting a period of time determined by a planet's spin beneath a stationary light source (like the earth spins beneath the sun creating the day/night sequence we are all so familiar with). To insist, as so many creationists do, that each day in Genesis 1 refers to a 24-hour day, is foolishness. Certainly we can't apply a twenty-four hour requirement here on the first day – there was no such thing as the spin of a planet beneath a sun. No planets existed, no stars existed. The very concept of "hour" is meaningless here at the very beginning of creation on the first day. So, when the text refers to "first", "second", "third" and so on, it is referring to the *completion* of God's activity that is specifically described in the verses above.

Note: Be careful that you do not take my words above any further than what I have said. The universe was not created in six "eons of time" during which the stars came to be and life evolved. Such an assertion is utter foolishness and does not fit the biblical record in any way.

Genesis 1:6

Let there be an expanse between the waters – Verses 6-8 – Imagine, if you will, a massive blob of matter, multiple light years in diameter, hanging in the midst of nothingness. It hangs in the midst of nothingness because, as far as the physical universe goes, it is all that is. All the matter of the universe is contained in that big massive blob. There is light shining on one side of this blob but it does not emanate from any physical source – the light comes from the Spirit of God who is hovering over the surface of this massive blob of matter ([Gen 1:2](#)). According to the laws of physics that exist in the world now, a blob of matter this large would immediately begin to collapse in on itself, forming a black hole of immense proportions. However, instead of letting that happen, God reaches down and tweaks a number – Einstein called that number the "cosmological constant". Because that number was changed, instead of collapsing into a black hole, our blob of matter becomes a "white hole", causing the matter to move outward instead of inward. Soon most of that matter has expanded billions of light years into the surrounding nothingness, leaving a comparatively tiny handful hanging in the center. Then God once again tweaks that "cosmological constant" and the expansion we have been watching slows to a comparative crawl. Suddenly, we see that we have a universe that is billions of light years across with a small handful of matter, cradled in the hand of God, at the very center. An "expanse" has been created between the "waters above" and the "waters below" ([Gen 1:7](#)).

Genesis 1:13

the third day – See [Gen 2:5](#). It is significant that the plants did not begin to grow until *after* Adam had been created.

Genesis 1:14

lights in the firmament – The contrast between light and dark in the physical extends into the spiritual. When God put "lights in the firmament" He was showing us that even when life is dark and we can't see, there is still light. It might be only the pinpricks of stars in the night sky, but those pinpricks are still shining on us. No matter how dark it is there is always hope.

Genesis 1:19

the fourth day – It seems like God treats the fourth day almost as an afterthought. He brought structure & life to the planet on the third day and then said, “I guess I better do something with the ‘*waters above the firmament*’ ” (vs. 6 KJV). So He threw the galaxies together, gave them a quick spin, and then got back to work on His first love – the planet Earth and the race of mankind He would create there.

Genesis 2:1

When reading the Bible we need to remember that the divisions of chapters and verses are not there in the original text. The chapters and verses were placed there by translators as an aid for navigating one's way through the Bible. Often they are quite arbitrary and sometimes they cause us to break our thoughts in ways that make us miss the continuity and flow of the scripture. This is the case with the break between Genesis chapters 1 & 2. The first three verses of Chapter 2 really belong at the end of Chapter 1. Chapter 1 covers the first six days of creation and these three verses in chapter 2, the description of the seventh day when God rested, are a continuation of the thoughts and story covered in Chapter 1. Please note that because of this the introduction to Chapter 2 has been placed with verse 4.

Genesis 2:3

More Study: God blessed the seventh day and made it holy. Because He rested on the seventh day, therefore it is holy. This needs more study, both on God's motivation for blessing the 7th day and on what holiness truly means. One clue may be found in the concept of the Sabbath (see [Exodus 31:16,17](#)). It was one of the ten commandments. The Israelites had to keep the Sabbath - - the seventh day - - and the reason given is because God rested on the seventh day and was refreshed. There's a lot to that concept. There also may well be a connection between the 7th day rest and how Jesus has now become our Sabbath rest. We are refreshed in Him and we no longer have to strive to be holy, to be righteous. He has become our righteousness and our rest. Lots to look up and study out here.