

How can a 6-Day Creation Event Last 14 Billion Years?

The Creation of our Universe was a singularly meaningful event for us humans. The Universe was created and configured in such a way so as to produce and form the Earth, which provides the environment for our physical existence. The Earth was seeded with life forms, including highly intelligent human life. The fact that the Universe and the Earth support creatures like us, who can understand and prove the existence of meaningfulness, is an amazing accomplishment. The power, orderliness, intelligence and caring required to do this is far beyond our comprehension. Indeed, the existence of our Universe, our Earth, all life on Earth, and our own intelligence is powerful evidence for the existence of God.

Unfortunately though, details about the facts of the creation of our Universe often cast doubts into the minds of Bible believers and Bible searchers. This is because the account of Creation in the Bible's Book of Genesis appears to conflict with scientific evidence. The Bible describes a creation event that occurred over a period of 6 days, with humans appearing on Day 6. Almost all scientists believe that the Universe was created about [14 billion years ago](#), and that humans appeared [300 to 800 thousand years ago](#). For these scientists, belief in a six-day creation event is equivalent to belief in a flat Earth.

But facts about the geometry of the Earth are much different from facts about the creation event. The Earth exists now, and its geometry is subject to current observations and tests. The creation event occurred in the past, and is not subject to current observations. The best we can do to understand the creation event is to observe current facts that can serve as records of the event, and to analyze current processes that can be projected back in time to the theorized timing of the event. One of the records we have of the creation event is the creation account in the Bible. How can we reconcile that account with scientific observations of astronomical objects and processes that are used to characterize the event?

Some people try to reconcile the Bible creation account with science by applying non-literal symbolism to the creation terms in the Bible. For example, they interpret the Genesis creation account as poetic literature, and each "day" in the account as merely a symbol from that literature. But this is poor literary interpretation, since the writing in Genesis is clearly narrative, and is meant to be taken literally as written. In the Genesis account, each day of creation is described as having an "evening" and a "morning", words that are generally used in conjunction with 24-hour days ([Genesis 1](#)). In addition, other books of the Bible refer to the six days of creation. In ([Exodus 20:8-11](#)), God institutes the seventh day Sabbath covenant for the nation of Israel based on God's blessing of the seventh day after creation. Jesus also believed in the Genesis account of creation, and cites it in his preaching ([Matthew 19:4](#)).

But is it really that difficult to conceive that an Almighty God could create the Universe in six days? The fact that there was a creation event in the finite past is actually a stunning agreement between the Bible and science. For centuries, scientists were convinced that the Universe must have existed from eternity for it to have the incredible properties and complexities that it has. It wasn't until a few decades ago that skeptical scientists were forced to admit that the Universe actually has a finite past. The Bible had been teaching that fact for millennia. The correction that scientists made from infinity to a finite past is a much more significant concession to the Bible than the difference between a finite billions of years versus a finite thousands of years.

But still, a nagging concern often persists among some believers that, while an almighty God could in principle create a Universe in six days, why would He create it in such a way that it appears to be billions of years old? Why would a loving God create things in such a way as to fool so many people? Perhaps the best answer to this question is the same as the one that God gives to Job about why He allows good people to suffer evil: "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand" ([Job 38:4](#)). "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!" ([Job 40:2](#)). (BTW, this answer also works for other questions that doubt God.)

But, being human, we often prefer answers that we can process and relate to with our own understanding. So a number of reasons have been offered on why the six-day creation might appear to be billions of years old:

- o The Scientists are Wrong.
- o The Hebrew word "yôm" should be Translated as "age" rather than "day".
- o The Great Flood caused an Appearance of Aging.
- o God used Quantum Mechanics in the Creation.
- o God created the Universe as an Author or Playwright.
- o God used Fast-Forward.

The Scientists are Wrong

In this rationale, the scientists' observations and/or calculations of billions of years are simply wrong. After all, it wasn't so long ago that scientists thought that the Universe was an infinite number of years old. They have since adjusted their numbers to be closer to the Bible's, so maybe they're still wrong. After all, they are only human. Scientists continue to adjust their methods of dating, e.g. Carbon 14 dating. Perhaps they need more adjustments on other dating methods as well.

Also, the scientists base their methods of dating on processes as they are observed now. Perhaps these processes operated at different rates in the past. Then the scientists would be guilty of invalid extrapolations.

But at this point, the scientific consensus is pretty solid, and a number of different scientific disciplines are in substantial agreement. Cosmologists have measured the expansion of the Universe to a remarkable degree of precision, and they understand the life cycles and lifetimes of stars and galaxies pretty well. Geologists have a good understanding of Earth's continental movements. All of these processes indicate a Universe and an Earth that are billions of years old. And scientists have observed no evidence that the rates of these process were different in the past. So it's difficult to argue with their position.

The Hebrew word “*yôm*” should be Translated as “age” rather than “day”

In his book “A Matter of Days”, Hugh Ross makes a comprehensive case for translating the Hebrew word “*yôm*” in Genesis as “age” rather than “day”. Then a literal interpretation of the Genesis creation account would be that God created the Universe and World in six ages, and is now resting from His creation activities in a current seventh Sabbath age. In that interpretation, the Genesis words normally translated as “evening” and “morning” would become “end of age” and “beginning of age”.

The key point in Ross's argument is that the Hebrew word “*yôm*” specifies a fixed period of time. It cannot refer to an indefinite nor infinite amount of time. So the Genesis account definitely refutes the past scientific theories in which the Universe has existed for an infinite amount of time, and agrees with the current scientific theory of a finite history for the Universe.

When used in reference to human activities, the Hebrew “*yôm*” almost always specifies a 24-hour day (although it is sometimes also used in the Bible for other time periods, e.g. harvest “time” or a future “day”). But Ross argues that there is no reason to require that restriction when it is used in reference to God's activities.

Is Ross's argument reasonable? Young-earth creationists would tend to disagree. For example, see [here](#) for a skeptical review of “A Matter of Days” from a young-earth creationist.

The Great Flood

Could a great worldwide flood have caused a thousands-of-years-old Earth to appear billions of years old? There is no accepted scientific evidence to indicate that. In fact,

there is no accepted scientific evidence for the Great Flood itself. Granted, there is some physical evidence that massive regional floods have occurred, but nothing on a worldwide basis. So for Bible believers, belief in the Great Flood is based on God's almighty and miraculous powers.

(This brings up the doubter's question again, this time about why would God cause a worldwide flood and then miraculously remove all physical evidence for it? We refer you back to God's answer to Job above.)

Quantum Mechanics

In this rationale, God designs the Universe as a quantum mechanical wave function that proceeds through billions of years of non-observable development (e.g. in His Mind), and then uses His Word to "collapse" the wave function over the course of six days into the observable Universe. When this collapse caused humans to exist, the humans themselves were given the power to collapse the wave function into their own observables. So, after humans have been created, the Universe proceeds as we observe it today. The appeal of this rationale is that it explains the otherwise unexplainable features of quantum mechanics in which wave functions develop on their own in the microscopic world until they are mysteriously collapsed by human observers into macroscopic observables.

God as Author/Playwright

This rationale is a favorite at this site, because it presents a possible aspect of God that few people consider. What if God created the Universe and Earth in a manner similar to the way an author creates a story, or a playwright creates a play? When Shakespeare wrote *Romeo and Juliet*, he wrote lines that real actors recite on real stages in order to represent characters in a story. But he also created a conceptual history for those characters that was essential for the story plot. In a similar manner, God could have created the Universe at any point in time ([including ten minutes ago, cf. Greene p.176](#)), in which He also created a history that made sense to the creatures themselves.

Why would He do that? Well, one possible reason is to show people what it would take for humans to undertake a project of "terraforming" another planet (i.e. converting a lifeless planet like Mars into a more Earth-like planet that could support life, and then colonizing it). We can see from the scientific observations of physical records in our Universe that such a project for humans is probably impossible, and if it were possible, would take millions or billions of years. Perhaps that is meant to encourage humans like us to leave the creation of universes and earths to God.

Fast-Forward

In this interpretation, God used the forces of nature that we observe to create the Universe and the Earth, but during the pre-human times, God ran through time at a faster clip than during human times. After all, God is outside of Time, and God created Time, so God can run Time at whatever rate He chooses. The analogy is to a human watching a video with fast-forward capabilities. The human can run through certain parts of the video's story at faster rates, in order to spend more quality time and attention on the parts of the video that are of greater interest.

So in this scenario, God started the Universe with a Big Bang on the first day, and then let the course of the Universe's development run on fast-forward for one day of God's attention time. Who knows? God may have run the first day on auto pilot while he attended to other matters elsewhere. At the end of the day, God checked on the progress, which He saw was good ([Genesis 1:3-5](#)), and He set the course for the second day, and so on.

At the end of His sixth day, God saw that the progress of the Universe's development was very good ([Genesis 1:31](#)), including the creation of the Earth with two humans. God then took a break for one day ([Genesis 2:2-3](#)), after which He started spending quality time with the people He had created.

When we observe the activities of the current Universe, we arrive at certain rates of development for the Universe's processes. If we mathematically run these processes backward to an initial point of time and space, we find that the developments that occurred during God's first day of creation would take billions of years of our time, at current rates. But this is just a mathematical calculation of theoretical events that no person has ever observed. The primary lesson from the calculation is that humans have no ability to create new universes, nor will they ever. Another lesson is that a God that controls space and time such that He can create a Universe like ours also has the ability to run the creation in whatever divine time frame He chooses.

Conclusion

As interesting as these rationales and interpretations might be, they are all probably wrong. That's because an almighty God could have an infinite number of reasons to do what He does. So any explanation that He doesn't reveal to us is almost certainly wrong. In the end, we do best to humble ourselves, to accept God's answer to Job, and to exclaim with Paul, "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and how untraceable His ways!" ([Romans 11:33](#)).

Advanced Civilizations

What about an advanced civilization of finite beings in higher dimensions with higher technologies? Could they be responsible for Creation rather than God? The problem with this scenario is that the required technologies are so vast that they would require a civilization with virtually infinite spatial and temporal capabilities. If these beings were finite, then they also would have been created by an Almighty Being with the attributes we assign to God. If the advanced civilization itself is the infinite and almighty source of everything, then they have chosen to reveal themselves to us as a Triune God. This is compatible with the Biblical account, in which God reveals to humans the information needed for their salvation, but does not reveal everything about Himself. Indeed, it would be impossible to explain everything about God in a finite book ([Isaiah 40:13-14](#), [Isaiah 55:8-9](#)).