

A statement on Genesis

There are a number of ways to interpret Genesis 1 & 2. First and foremost, it must be understood in its original context. Genesis is a 14 hundred year old book which drew a new picture of God, and humans, and their place in the universe. It was written using language and ideas that the people at that time understood about their world.¹ Genesis re-tells stories that were popular at that time, but it radically transforms them to give us truth about who God is and who we are.² (1) There is one God, and he is all powerful, and he is moral. (2) God is a creator, he is the source of all life and the universe itself. (3) Humans (and all creation) are loved and valued by God. (4) God has put humans in charge of the earth, and we have a responsibility to care for it as God would. (Love God, Love others)

The purpose of Genesis is not to teach geology or biology but theology. The bible is true. There is also truth outside of the bible (eg. in science). Our God is the God of all truth, wherever it is found.

- “In answering the question, why is the kettle boiling, one can speak of the striking of a match, the kindling of the gas flame, the increase of the temperature of the water and so on. The chain of cause and effect can be complete. But it is also possible to answer the question by saying, “because I want a cup of coffee.” The second answer is just as true as the first. ... The scientific explanation while true is not the only one. And it may be argued that it is not the most significant one.” (Leon Morris, “God’s Dice or God’s Purpose”, 42.)
- The creation poem should not be pressed to answer scientific questions about physical processes (e.g the age of the earth), but to answer theological questions about who God is, who we are, and what our purpose is.

A statement on Dinosaurs

If you take a 6 day understanding of creation as a real 6 days of 24 hours, then you could view dinosaurs as being created on the 5th and 6th days. They could be included in the winged creatures, and land creatures. This would mean that dinosaurs and humans lived at the same time. However, if you think the earth/ universe is much older (as scientists’ suggest), you can interpret Gen 1 more like you would a 12C BC origin story, than a science textbook. In this interpretation you could view the highly structured poem of Gen 1 as ordering and describing the visible world in such a way as to teach truth about who God is, and who we are. In this interpretation Dinosaurs could have lived and died out long before the first humans.

A statement on Evolution

Evolution relies on the random mutations of cells. Each time a beneficial mutation occurs, the species has an advantage, and therefore will be more competitive, and survive longer. This is evolution within a species. There is a lot of evidence that this happens today. The other kind of evolution is evolution from one species to another. This relies on a large number of minute incremental beneficial mutations. Evolution, just like any other theory has strengths and weaknesses. If you believe in God as a creator, perhaps you can (a) see God creating through a process like evolution, or (b) suggest you find the theory of evolution unpersuasive, and hold out for a better theory. If you believe in God as a creator, it’s probably best **not** to (a) reject the theory of evolution out of hand without having tried to fully understand it, and (b) reject Genesis as wrong, or outdated, without first having tried to understand its function in its original time frame and history.

¹ Genesis is pre-scientific. How would you explain how a Helicopter is built (let alone how it works) to a tribe receiving food-aid via helicopter in a remote village in Africa?

² How could you re-tell the current prevailing stories about how the world/ life began, but transform them to teach truth about God? – E.g ‘The Big Bang’ or ‘The Theory of Evolution’