

Heaven and Earth in Six Days

Introduction

Science teaches us that the universe is billions of years old, but the Bible and the Quran say God made the Heavens and the Earth in six days. Science uses different language to describe the age of the universe, but does it challenge the accuracy of the Biblical account? It is easy to believe one side must be right and the other wrong, but instead of taking sides, we may be able to come to a better understanding in a consensus.

As scientists observe, measure and record the world around them, they are exploring the world that God created. As they identify and name the creatures who share this world, they continue the work assigned to Adam. The sciences build our knowledge and advance our understanding of our physical and natural environment, yet science is an imperfect art. Scientific theories are often little more than speculation since its theories are based on limited evidence and are continually revised and rewritten. Even theories such as the Big Bang Theory that has gained wide acceptance, continue to be developed and corrected as new evidence and research points out gaps in many of these theories.

Theology too is an imperfect science for although theologians base their understanding on the truth found in the Biblical writings, often their theories and doctrines are based on assumptions and align more with traditions than the evidence presented. Unfortunately, as in the case of the creation story, when there is no strong tradition to explain the story, theologians have had to make assumptions about its meaning and the intended definition of terms such as the meaning of "day". The Bible and Quran say that God created our universe and formed it in six Days. It is only theory and assumption that these are six 24-hour days.

While some see no solution to this debate and treat science and theology as separate subjects, ignoring the other or casting doubt on the accuracy of scripture is not a solution that helps any side. The best way to understand the origins of our universe may be by listening to all the evidence presented. The assumption that the creation of our universe was a random event that continues in chaos, is a not scientific fact and such beliefs should not dictate how science interprets the evidence.

The Bible and the Quran describe creation as an extended process that continued for six days, so let us see if science can tell us of the events that shone a light in the darkness of creation and describe what determined the length of each day.

In the Beginning

The Old and New Testaments, and the Quran all agree there is a God (The God), who brought all matter into existence, both visible and invisible (Colossians 1:16). These three witnesses speak of a God who is before all things, the 'ancient of days' who is greater than his creation.

The Scriptures tell us that God cannot be seen, he is spirit (John 4:24), invisible, infinite, endless, without limits or boundaries. We are told God is the creator and the source of all life. He is the living one who gave life to a dead world.

The Heavens declare the glory of God (Psalm 19:1), and his Son has made him known (John 1:18). As the Quran says, how can you disbelieve in God when he is the one who has given us life? (Surah 2:28)

The Bible and the Quran tell us that our universe has a beginning and also an end. (Psalm 102:25-26, Matthew 24:35, Surah 33:63). We hear that creation did not begin as a random event but was a planned event from its beginning and its end is already known. Should we not marvel at the precise way God has placed the earth, so its seas remain liquid and not freeze. Can we not be amazed by the way it hurtles through space, spinning on its axis. The earth maintains a balance; never going too close or too far from the sun forming our seasons. Cycles are formed as water evaporates and returns to the earth. The earth is unique; the fact that the earth has any atmosphere at all is only because its gravitational and magnetic fields are strong enough to hold it in place. We can look in awe at the precision of God's work that we see around us and be amazed by what the sciences have shown us. Science is simply a formal method we use for observing, measuring, recording and understanding God's creation and the underlying laws that shape it.

Old Testament scriptures, the New Testament writings and the Quran all agree that God made the heavens and the earth in six days (Exodus 20:11, Hebrews 4:4, Surah 7:54, 10:3). The Bible begins with the words "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). We understand that God created everything and continued for six days, forming matter into stars and planets and setting the heavenly bodies in motion. The position of the sun, moon and earth enables life to grow and multiply.

We are given an outline of how the universe was created, but not the length of time it took. We do not know the length of each day or whether each of the days were even the same length.

The apostle Peter speaks of the old age of the heavens (2 Peter 3:5) and repeats the words of Moses (Psalm 90:4), telling us, not to forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day (2 Peter 3:8).

The Quran also uses the term day but gives varying definitions of the length of time. In Surahs 22:47, 32:5, a day is also described to be like a thousand years, but Surah 70:4 suggests that a day is fifty thousand years long.

The Bible and the Quran indicate that creation occurred over an extended period, so maybe we should not be surprised that science suggests the universe is possibly billions of years old.

There is no justification in imagining that each day of creation was 24 hours in length for God's work is not limited or dictated to by his Creation. Theories such as the young earth theory present theological, as well as scientific problems.

Today we count twenty-four hours days in the day because this is the approximate time it takes for the earth to rotate on its axis. However, God defined a day before He formed the earth or the sun or any heavenly bodies. Long before they were fixed their orbits and rotations. To say a day has always been defined as a twenty-four-hour period, suggests that God's timetable was dictated by his Creation; making God a servant, controlled by the timing of the earth's rotation. Then there is also the problem that 24 hours is only an approximation as the earth's rotation. The earth's rotation is not a fixed period but is continually slowing. The earth's rotation has changed from a fast 6 hourly rotation to a rotation every 23 hours, 56 minutes and 4 seconds. It was only in the year 1820 AD that the earth's rotation and the length of a day was exactly a 24-hour period. The length of a day also depends on where you are standing on the earth. If you stand at the north or south pole, you will experience six months of darkness followed by six months of continuous daylight, making a day appear as a year in length.

God made the world in six days, but creation is God's work. He started counting before He had even breathed his spirit into man. So, before attempting to argue the length of each day of creation, remember God challenged Job, asking, where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth and set it measurements (Job 38:4-5)? Job did not know, nor could he even assume to know any measurements relating to the creation of the universe. Even today, when our sciences attempt to estimate either the age, width, length or mass of our universe, these are only approximations, and the measurements are continually being revised and updated.

God does not tell us of any measurements of the size of the universe, except that counting the stars is like counting the sands of the seashore (Genesis 22:17). God invites us to observe his work, and we see is that no birth is instantaneous. The universe, like each new birth, has taken time to form.

The following discussion attempts to show that the six days of creation are not counted in hours or years but based on the changing pattern of darkness and light. God has not given us an incomprehensible abstract text than conflicts with our observations. God wants to make himself known and wants us to put our trust in Him and his word. It makes sense that we can look for logic and truth in God's creation for the responsibility is on us to seek the creator of the universe. We are responsible for our salvation, so we can expect that God has made his creation observable and has described the process of creation in words that we can trust.

Day One

The disciple John began his letter to the Believers with the words. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1).

In the beginning there was only God; only the Spirit of God. There was no matter, no gravity and no light. The author of life began in darkness; like an artist without a canvas, a potter without clay. God was a gardener without soil, who began by creating the materials that he would use.

The pattern was set from the beginning; darkness followed by light. God established this cycle and will continue it until the Last Day. Day One began in darkness and ended like all days with the passing of the light. The definition of a day has not changed. God called the light "Day" and the darkness he called "Night" (Genesis 1:5). Man has been defining the length of a day for thousands of years by the presence and absence of light. The counting of days occurred long before the invention of the clock and the counting of hours. While today, our day officially begins at midnight, the Israelites counted their days by the fading of the light. Their day began around 6 pm with the setting of the sun and continued until evening the next day when the light faded, and darkness returned. This pattern follows the example set in the book of Genesis, where each day began in darkness and ended when the light had passed.

The Bible says that God created the Heavens and the Earth, all things, the entire universe by his Word. Science, however, has put forward other theories. In the early 20th century, matter was thought to have always existed, and the universe was believed to be in a steady-state with no beginning or end. This steady-state theory, however, presented some problems. The law of thermodynamics suggests that the stars will not continue in endless cycles of birth and death. Instead, as the universe cools, energy will dissipate into a state of thermal uniformity. The steady-state theory began to lose support after Georges Lemaitre, a Belgian astronomer and Catholic theologian, presented a new idea in 1927. He believed that the universe was expanding, and galaxies were moving further apart. Lemaitre theorised that in the past, matter must have been closer together in a compressed state.

The theory that the expanding universe can be traced back in time to a single event was given the name in 1949, the "Big Bang" theory. This theory gained general acceptance with the discovery of cosmic microwave background radiation in 1965.

While many today might view the Big-Bang theory as evidence against a God of creation, the Big Bang theory and the Biblical story of creation are similar. The Big Bang theory recognises that the universe has not always existed. It speaks of a single universe that had a beginning at a single point in time.

Where the Big Bang theory differs from the creation account is in how matter came into existence. The Big-Bang theory speculates that matter was created out of nothing in a random explosion billions of years ago.

The Biblical account says the universe was formed at God's command. The pre-existent God was the force that made what is seen from what was unseen (Hebrews 11:3).

The eternal God (Allah), the spirit, brought all matter into existence by his Word. Atheists view creation as a random event that continues in the chaos of randomness. Believers see order and

design in the apparent chaos of creation. They see the unfolding of the universe as a part of God's predetermined plan.

The Bible and Quran describe creation as an ongoing process that has continued for six days. All matter brought into existence on day one when God laid the foundations of the heavens and the earth. The Bible uses two different Hebrew words, *bara* meaning created, and *asah* meaning made. God **created** (*bara*) Heaven and Earth in the beginning (Genesis 1:1) then **made** (*asah*) Heaven and earth in six days.

When God spoke matter into existence and created Heaven and Earth, there were no stars or suns, no planets, or solar systems or galaxies. Matter had no form, and nothing set in motion. Initially, heaven and earth were void and without form; a static, unmoving mass. The unformed earth just a tiny cloud within a greater unmoving cloud. Creation began in darkness and matter existed seemingly as a dark liquid mass. Above which the Spirit of God (Genesis 1:2), the hand of God (Hebrews 1:10), hovered over its surface.

However, the first day did not continue in darkness and matter did not remain an unmoving mass. God said, 'Let there be light: and there was light' (Genesis 1:3), but the Bible does not say that God created light or how the light was made. So, the question we ask is, what was this light? Our sun did not emit light until the fourth day. A standard answer is that this was the light of God, but can this be correct? Does the light of God switch on and off? The light of the first day came and went. If the light of God remained, then the first day would have continued forever. We understand that we will see the Light of God, but it will come on the last day (Revelation 22:5). The last day will be a day that has no end for on that day for there will be no more darkness. Another theory says that the firmament of Heaven blocks the light of God, but this does not explain the light on day one because the universe began in darkness and the firmament did not exist until the second day.

The light seen on Day One may have been a result of the collapse of the early universe. Once God brought all matter into existence, gravity would have pulled at God's creation from the vast stretches of space, pulling it into an ever-growing ball or multiple balls of super-heated material. Matter has mass, and as it accelerated and condensed, it would have produced an ever-glowing fusion of intense heat and energy. The collapse of the initial universe could have resulted in a massive explosion. Science speaks of a big bang where light, energy and matter radiated out in all directions. As matter travelled outwards, it would have collided with matter still racing inwards, creating an expanding universe with swirling clouds of matter spreading out in all directions.

The Bible seems to support the idea of an expanding universe. Different prophets have spoken of the stretching out or expanding of the universe at various times (Isaiah 40:22, Job 9:8, 26:7, Zechariah 12:1). The Quran describes heaven and earth as one entity which God (we) split apart (Q: 21:30). "And heaven -We built it with might, and We extend it wide" (Q 51:47).

The expansion of the universe is a miracle in itself.

Stephen Hawking wrote; "If the rate of expansion of the universe was smaller by one part one part in 100,000 million it would have re-collapsed before it reached the present size." (Hawking A Brief History of time pp121) Too large an explosion by the smallest factor and matter would not have collected together to form and reform into the stars and planets of multiple galaxies.

The story of creation appears to fit well with the current Big Bang theory. Both speak of a single creation event with matter created from nothing. Both describe the universe as limited and finite in size.

Logic tells us that if the universe were infinite, we would see an infinite number of stars as there would have been infinite time for their light to reach the earth. The night sky of an infinite universe would appear as bright as the sun. The Bible tells us that Heaven is God's creation. God and the spirit of God hovered over the surface of the waters (Genesis 1:1-2), so there was a limit or boundary to God's creation. The number of stars can be counted and named (Psalm 147:4). We understand that God is infinite, and the universe is finite.

Science even gives us an estimate of the maximum size to God's initial creation, theorising that if matter had been greater than 300,000 light-years ago across, the immense gravitational field would have prevented its collapse (ref pp 45 Krauss, Lawrence M., 2012 *A Universe from Nothing : Why There Is Something Rather than Nothing*. New York: Free Press).

If God had created an infinite universe, then matter would have remained a dark unmoving mass forever and would never have collapsed to create an initial Big Bang. Though we do not need to imagine creation beginning as a huge perfect sphere of matter which collapsed uniformly to a single point since the distribution of the billions of galaxies is far from homogeneous.

The Bible describes the unformed earth and heavens in Genesis 1:2 as "water", dark and deep. This description is a little puzzling; while hydrogen and oxygen are abundant in the universe, they are not the only elements present. Water is a necessity for life, and the earth surface is covered by seventy percent with water. One of the mysteries of creation, is how the earth, alone among the planets, came to have an abundant supply of water. There are vast amounts of water vapour in the atmosphere and water stored in icecaps and glaciers, as well as the water in the soil and underground reserves.

Did all matter initially existing as a fluid mass or maybe a plasma cloud or is God simply stressing the importance or necessity of water in the creation process; reminding us that all life begins in a liquid?

Creation needed to be liquid or fluid, since a solid mass would have remained static, and even a large gas cloud in the vacuum of space will not condense if the gravitational attraction of the particles is not strong enough. A gaseous universe may have remained a dark, unmoving cloud forever.

*And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.
And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. Genesis 1:3-5*

A Second Day

The light of the first day could have passed very quickly. A flash of light then darkness returning to an expanding universe.

A Big Bang would have set the universe in motion again, this time forcing matter and energy outwards in swirling clouds which continue still to this day. The theory is, these clouds condensed to form galaxies of stars and planets throughout the vast reaches of the universe.

The Bible gives little detail of the events of the 2nd day, yet it is a significant day for it is the day the earth formed into a solid sphere. The Quran says that God turned to heaven when it was smoke and to the earth and said Come both of you (together), willingly or unwillingly. They responded: We come, willingly (Surah 41:11).

The 2nd day is also the day that God separated the earth from the Heavens. The Bible says that God created a firmament in the midst of the waters, dividing the waters above from the waters below (Genesis 1:6-8). God divided heaven and earth and 'hanged the earth upon nothing' (Job 26:7). God stretched out the heavens and trampled down the waters of the sea (Job 9:8).

Of all the planets in the universe, only one was made to support life. As the prophet Isaiah wrote, God chose the earth and formed it to be inhabited (Isaiah 45:18), making it the home for all life. The earth is unique and is the foundation of God's work (Amos 9:6), but the earth is not the largest planet in the universe or in our galaxy or even in our solar system. The earth appears as an insignificant planet, a tiny speck of dust in a vast universe.

The earth is not at the centre of our solar system or the centre of our Milky Way galaxy, but the earth did not remain insignificant. The earth may or may not be at the very centre of the universe, but it is the prize of God's creation, for it alone is called "*very good*" (Genesis 1:31).

On the second day, God continued working in darkness, and again the Bible does not mention the source of the light that marked the second day. However, as the earth formed it too would have been a source of light. We are told that the earth was initially without form, a shapeless mass. Then as gravity pulled the waters of the earth together, the energy produced from this forming ball would have produced great heat and light. The molten rock in the earth's core and mantle is a testament to a once molten crust, and the glow of this once white-hot molten earth would have been a beacon of light. When the earth cooled and no longer gave off light, the second day would have come to an end.

The Quran reminds us that God created the earth in two days (Surah 41:9), forming a solid sphere on which God continued to work on over the following four days to shape its surface (Surah 41:10) into what we see today.

Note: While the sun and the earth are believed to be a similar age and formed around the same time, the Bible says that the sun did not give off its light until the 4th day.

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

And God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

Genesis 1:6-8

A Third Day

As the earth cooled and its crust solidified, its glow would have changed to a dull red and then to black. Darkness would have slowly returned to this seemingly dead universe. The cooling of the earth would have allowed water vapour to condense and become liquid, and as the droplets gathered together, water and land separated. God called the waters “seas” and the dry land he called “earth” (Genesis 1:10).

The dark cooling earth with its pools of water would have been unrecognisable as the blue planet we know today. Yet, even before the sun gave off its light, life began to appear and multiply. Life is unique to our earth and is not found anywhere else in God’s universe. The fact that the earth supports life and supports it in all its abundance and diversity is the central miracle of God’s work.

We could imagine that probability alone suggests that life must exist elsewhere in the universe, but the probability of life on other planets is very low high. The probability that life could exist without God is zero for life can only come from life. The universe is not infinite and the probability of finding a similar solar system to ours or any planet in the universe with the conditions to support life is also very low.

On the third day there was water, heat and light and life appeared on earth, but we are not told the source of light that enabled the establishment of plant life on our planet and what light marked the end of the third day. Possibly the most apparent source of light to support life on earth would have been the newly forming moon. Today, the surface of the moon only reflects the sun’s light and does not give off light itself, but the moon was once covered with an ocean of molten magma, a glowing ball of that would have given off light until it cooled.

The understanding that the moon once a source of light is stated in the Quran and confirmed by the presence of **anorthosite** on the moon’s surface. The Quran states that God “*appointed the sun a splendour and the moon a light*” (Q 10:5, 25:61, 71:16).

Anorthosite is an igneous rock that forms from cooling lava or magma, being less dense than other rock it forms on the surface as the rock cools and crystallises. The molten rock of the early moon would have made it a source of light and heat.

There are several theories on how the moon may have formed, the generally accepted theory is that the moon was created from a massive collision when a Mars-sized asteroid or planet hit the earth. It is believed that the molten material ejected from the earth then coalesced, forming the moon. Science shows that the moon is a similar age to the earth, between 4 to 4.6 billion years old and made of the same material as the earth. We are also told that the moon was initially much closer to the earth and that it has been moving away from the earth since its formation by a distance of 3.8 cm per year.

The moon has had a significant influence on the earth and its ability to support life. The collision would have also given the earth its rotation. The rotation of the earth is essential to the diversity of life that we now see and together with the close proximity of the moon, causes the ocean’s tides. The moon also continues to slow the earth’s rotation.

As the moon cooled, it would have ceased to give off light; however, the newly established plant life did not end with the passing of this light at the end of the third day. Plants need light but life can suffer a period of dormancy because God has established a seed within. A miracle of life is not only its existence and its ability to sustain itself, but amazingly, life can bring forth new life and replicate itself. Life can die but continues from a seed within. Even after long periods of dormancy, a seed can sprout new life. The dates seeds found in the 1960's at Masada were two thousand years old yet were able to be germinated in 2005.

The third day would have ended as the moon ceased to give off light, but life was able to survive the darkness of the new day. Studies also indicate that the moon today, still has beneficial effects on plant growth.

There appears to be much symbolism in the Genesis creation story. We see the symbolism of life appearing on earth on the third day from the 'seed within', which is symbolic of Jesus death and resurrection. Jesus is called the seed (Galatians 3:16), and like a seed that sprouts, Jesus rose from the dead on the third day to new life.

And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas: and God saw that it was good.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

And the evening and the morning were the third day. Genesis 1: 9-13

A Fourth Day

The fourth day began as the light passed, and darkness returned to the earth. The newly forming planet earth must have been a harsh environment with violent earthquakes, volcanoes, meteor strikes, great storms and massive tides carving and shaping the earth's surface. Under the gravitation force of the young moon, the earth's continental plates would have divided and moved, forcing the earth's surface to crack and buckle, causing the surface of the earth to move. The continental plates shifted, forming great mountains and valleys and divided the earth into multiple continents with multiple seas.

However, the plant life that had sprouted on the third day survived the darkness and the harsh extremes of the young planet until God again made another light to shine.

“Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:” Genesis 1:14

The fourth day is characterised by light. An enduring light that divides the night from the day. The Bible speaks of two lights, our sun as the great light to mark the day and the moon as the lesser light to rule the night (Genesis 1:16),

While we assume that light from the billions of stars also began to shine on the fourth day, the Bible does not specifically mention these stars. Science suggests that stars began to appear early on the second day, about 13 billion years ago.

What we are told is that the sun marked the beginning of the fourth day and with the cooling moon, became the two signs marking the seasons, days and years. God saw the light and said it was good.

The creation story does not distinguish between planets and stars but describes the heavenly bodies as sun, moon and stars (Psalm 148:3). The planet Venus for example is called “the Bright and Morning Star” (Revelation 22:16). While stars are defined as heavenly bodies that give off light and planets as objects that reflect light, planets and moons, have also emitted light when they were first formed.

The fourth day is symbolically the mid-point of a seven-day week. It sits in the centre of a week that began in total darkness and will end in perfect light. We could imagine that the fourth day was shorter in length than some other days, though the Quran suggests that the later four of the six the days of creation are equal in length.

Again, we do not know what signalled the end of the fourth day for the sun has continued to shine, though a possible sign may have again been the moon.

As the moon cooled, its surface would have also continued to change. Initially emitting light, it cooled to a dark sphere and continued to cool until its surface began to reflect the sun’s light. The end of the fourth day may have occurred when moon began to reflect the sun’s light. Today the moon’s grey surface appears luminous and can be seen even during the day. The moon is one of only three heavenly lights that can cast a shadow, although it reflects at most, only around 12% of the sun’s rays.

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

And the evening and the morning were the fourth day. Genesis 1:14-19

A Fifth Day

Since the fourth day, the universe has remained illuminated by light, but darkness continues to return to the earth. We might imagine that the setting and rising of the sun has set the length of each the following days, however, at the beginning of the fifth day, the world was still very different to what we see today.

The fifth day is marked by the appearance of animal life. The 'waters' that created on day one, were able to sustain life and bring forth life (Genesis 1:20, Surah 21:30), and life appeared, from the greatest to the least, from the great whales to smallest things that move (Genesis 1:21).

With the sun providing light and warmth and the moon causing the movement of the tides, life multiplied. The waters and the seas were able to support life in great diversity and abundance, and life multiplied greatly and filled the seas and the air.

The Genesis creation story presents a very brief account of this process and does not name the first creatures that roamed the earth or give a detailed chronological listing of all creatures.

Instead the Bible only mentions the later animals such as the birds and cattle.

The Bible suggests that life began in water and that it was abundant in the seas before becoming abundant on land. God blessed the creatures on the fifth day, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth" (Genesis 1:22).

We might ask how long was the fifth day, and which sunset marked its end? The fifth day may have been 1000 years and possibly much longer. What is important is that the fifth day ended with a sunset when the earth was ready to support the final part of God's creation, which is man.

A possible cause for the darkness that marked the end of God's fifth day may have been the earth's atmosphere blocking out the sun's light.

Water vapour obviously would have formed in the atmosphere, but the Bible suggests that rain did not fall until the sixth day. The first rainbow is only mentioned after the flood, and the Bible says that it was not rain that supported the first plant life, but groundwater and mist that first supported life on earth (Genesis 2:5-6). Water vapour would have built up in the newly forming atmosphere but would not have condensed and fallen as rain until the new earth had cooled sufficiently. It may be the early atmosphere was so thick that it blocked out the sun.

And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. Genesis 1: 20-23

The Sixth Day

The creation story is very symbolic; it presents a pattern of six days of work followed by a day of rest, a sabbath rest. The number six is symbolic of Man for God created Man on the sixth day. Today is the sixth day because the sixth day still continues and we are still in the sixth day.

Man continues to work, and God continues to work. All mankind is born on the sixth day because the sixth day has not yet ended. It is the day of our birth and our death.

We know that God continues to work and has not rested because Jesus said to the Jews who accused him of working on the sabbath: "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working (John 5:16-17).

We are told that God will rest on the seventh day, but he will not rest because he is tired. The Bible and Quran both point out that God has not wearied or tired of his work (Isaiah 40:28, Surah 46:33, 50:38).

The sixth day continues, work continues, and creation continues. God is our sustainer (Psalm 54:4, Surah 2:255). He causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45).

Creation continues and will continue until the last day. We see creation in the cycle of life and death, with every new-born child and with every new seed that opens. The earth continues to move, forming new mountains and valleys. Creation has not ended for God is still to create a new Heavens and new Earth. New Believers are being born again, becoming new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), and we continue to be renewed in the spirit of your mind (Ephesians 4:23).

The Bible makes it very clear that we are still in the sixth day. The Israelites were told that the heavens and earth and all their host would not be completed until the seventh day (Genesis 2:10). The Israelites were also very aware of the warning that God gave Adam about eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, saying "*on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die*" (Genesis 2:17).

The prophet Isaiah spoke of the fatalism of unbelief of those facing death, with the words, "*Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.*" (Isaiah 22:13)

God said to David, "You are my son; **today**, I have become your father." Psalm 2:7

Paul's wrote to the Roman church, reminding them that creation was continuing. He described all creation as groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now (Romans 8:22).

The Apostle Peter also spoke of creation as having not ended. He said, "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter 3:4).

The Quran also reminds us that God continues to sustain his creation and has not yet rested. "... Allah made day everlasting for you till the Day of Resurrection." Surah 28:72

"We created the heavens and the earth and all between them in Six Days, nor did any sense of weariness touch Us. (Surah 50:38 ,46:33)

The understanding that we are still in the sixth day is not a new teaching. Jesus also, at times, spoke of a day as an extended period. He spoke of the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow, thrown into the furnace (Matthew 6:30, Luke 12:28). Then on the cross, Jesus told the thief beside him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Also, in the book of Hebrews 3:13; every day is called "Today".

The sixth day is unique; when it ends, there will not be another day like it. At the end of the sixth day, God will look at his finished work and be able to say that it is very good (Genesis 1:31). At the end of the sixth day, the bridegroom will come, like a deer leaping across the mountains (Songs 2:8-9), then and only after the creation of a new Heaven and a New Earth, will creation have been finally completed.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Genesis 1:24-31

The Seventh Day

For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that in them *is*,
and rested the seventh day: Exodus 20:11

While the Bible speaks of the seventh day in the past tense, the seventh day is yet to come. It is the Sabbath-rest that still “remains” for the people of God (Hebrews 4:9). It will be an unending day of rest where man will cease from his own works as God ceased from His works (Hebrews 4:10).

It is the day that God has blessed and sanctified and made Holy (Genesis 2:2-3). But not all people will enter God’s rest (Psalm 95:11, Hebrews 3:11, 4:5), only those who believe have the promise of entering into God’s rest (Hebrews 3:19,4:3).

Like all days, the seventh and last day will begin in darkness but it will be a day of never-ending Light. The light will be the light of God and when it comes it will not fade for the last day will continue forever. Genesis repeats the words “evening and morning” at the end of the first six days, but the seventh is unlike all other days for it has no end.

We see this same pattern in how Jesus continued to work on the earthly Sabbath; healing the sick and giving life to the dead. The Jews attacked Jesus when he continued to work, not realising that Jesus was simply continuing to work as his father continues to work (John 5:17). To explain why Jesus worked on the Sabbath, some imagine there is a division between God’s redemptive work and His creative work. Others teach that creation has ended and God that has already rested, others say that we are now in the seventh day. However, the Bible makes no divisions between creative and redemptive work, the Sabbath was meant to be a day of rest, a day God rested from **all** His works (Genesis 2:2, Hebrews 4:4).

God has not altered his creation, its destiny or its purpose. When Jesus healed the lame and the crippled, he was working as is his father. It is God’s purpose that we are born again and live forever with God in a new Earth and a new Heavens. So how can we be in the seventh day which God has blessed and sanctified if there is still evil and death? Is not Man still toiling?

The day of rest is preceded by six days of work, this was presented as a pattern that the Israelites were to follow. Their day of rest was to be a sabbath like God’s rest. It was to be a universal rest for all, Israelites, visitors, aliens and even animals. The sabbath was defined as the last day of the week, a day set apart, a day the Israelites were to prepare for and make themselves ready. The Israelites were not resting because of tiredness or because their work was finished, but in recognition for what God has done.

The Quran reminds us that God has not rested, nor has He wearied or tired (Surah 46:33, 50:38).

There are no verses in scripture that say God rested every seven days or that God recommenced working after his rest, but it is puzzling why Genesis used the past tense to suggest that God had already rested?

The reason could have been because the six days of work and the day of rest presented as a summary of God's work since his works had been finished from the foundation of the world (Hebrews 4:3), yet we are also told God has not rested but continues to work; sustaining his creation.

While we understand that God's work was completed when he made Adam, we also know that God continues to work for our benefit, because of his grace. God is ready, but man who is not ready because of sin. It may be that God spoke of his rest in the past tense because he was using the pattern of week as an example for the Israelites to follow. If God had declared that he would rest in the future, the Israelites may have been tempted to continue working and rest only when God rests.

However, the reason that God's rest is spoken of in the past tense is more to do with the prophetic use of the Hebrew language where future events are described using past tense. For example, when Isaiah wrote *"My people are gone into captivity"*, he described a prophetic certainty that was yet to come (Isaiah 5:13). Then when Isaiah wrote: *"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities"*, he again used past tense to describe what is understood to be a messianic prophecy of Jesus' death.

God declares the future using past tense.

- *"Unto thy seed I have given this land;"* (Genesis 15:18).
- *"and thou hast become a father of a multitude of nations".* (Genesis 17:4)

Paul wrote: *"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,"* (Ephesians 2:6).

"So if you were raised along with the Messiah, then seek the things above," (Colossians 3:1)

The Old and New Testaments repeat the promise that we can enter into God's future rest (Psalm 95:11, Hebrews 4:1). When God prevented the faithless generation of Israelites from reaching their destination after leaving Egypt, they were not just denied entry into the Promised Land but suffered the greater loss in being denied entry to God's future rest.

The following diagram shows the chiasmic structure of the first two chapters of Genesis, a structure that climaxes with God's rest on the seventh day. This literary structure, as presented by Klaus Potech, helps us to see that the seventh day is not merely the end of the first week but the culmination of God's entire creation. Verse 2:3 is the high point of the story, followed by verse 2:4 which is a one verse chiasmic summary stating that God created the heavens and the earth and then reversed the order as earth and the heavens.

a 1:1-3 bareness of matter

b 1:4-5 separation of light and darkness

- c 1:6-8 separation of the waters above and the waters below
- d 1:9-10 separation of dry land and the sea
- e 1:11-13 fulfilling of the earth
- f 1:14-19 filling of the sky with lights to govern and to measure time
- g 1:20-23 filling of the waters below and the waters above with animals
- h 1:24-25 filling the land with animals (living beings)
- i 1:26 God's concept of mankind
- j 1:27 creation of mankind, transfer of image
- k 1:28 mankind's habitat - the earth
- l 1:29-30 the basis of food for the living creatures
- m 1:31 the heavens and earth made, day 6
- n 2:1 God creation completed in content
- o 2:2a God's creation completed in time
- p 2:2b God rests on the 7th day
- x 2:3a THE HOLY GOD BOTH BLESSES AND SANCTIFIES
- p' 2:3b God rests on the 7th day
- o' 2:3c God's works created and made
- n' 2:4a the heavens and earth created (finished, completed)
- m' 2:4b the earth and heavens made in a timespan
- l' 2:5-6 basis for life in the garden plants, moisture
- k' 2:7a man's origin = dust
- j' 2:7b man's creation, transfer of life
- i' 2:8 man's place = the garden
- h' 2:9 filling the garden with plants (tree of life)
- g' 2:10-14 filling the garden with water
- f' 2:15-17 filling the garden with a caretaker + measure for good and evil
- e' 2:18 fulfilling Adam's life
- d' 2:19-20 separation (discerning, naming) of the animals
- c' 2:21-23 separation of man and woman
- b' 2:24 separation of parents and children
- a' 2:25 bareness of man

It is thought that our solar system began forming from the cosmic dust around 9 billion years ago, science says that stars outside our solar system were formed before this date. The end of the 3rd day on this timeline corresponds with the current scientific understanding that life originated on earth around 3.5 billion years ago.

The timeline also points out a very significant problem, which is that science can only see the observable universe. Science has no way of proving the existence of time or matter or measuring any dimension the other side of the big bang.

We can only attempt to measure time and events from the big bang onwards, that is, from the start of a second day. So, this leaves us with the question of when did time start?

This timeline begins on Day One when God spoke all matter into existence by his Word and created the heavens and the earth. The length of Day one cannot be measured because creation began in infinite or a timeless darkness.

We do not know whether matter appeared instantaneously, nor do we know how long it may have taken for the matter to collapse to produce light and a big bang.

It is interesting how the Bible does not describe Day One as the first day; instead, it uses the cardinal number one and only begins to count the days from the end of Day one. The Bible described the following days using ordinal numbers, a 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and a 5th day, without the definite article. The "the" only appears to define "the" sixth and "the" seventh day.

Conclusion

We cannot see God for God is Spirit, invisible and unseen, yet as the Apostle Paul has reminded us, the responsibility of belief rests with each of us for God has created the universe in plain view (Romans 1:19). The Heaven declares his glory, the skies his handiwork. Should we not praise and worship a God who has spent millions/billions of years working; creating and sustaining his creation so that we might know him, so that we might seek him, to be near him.

God has given us light and has given us the tools and the wisdom to observe his creation in detail. Paul tells us that His invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature can be clearly seen and understood from what He has made so that people are without excuse (Romans 1:21). Paul also tells us that all Scriptures to be divinely inspired and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness (2 Timothy.3:16).

It is amazing how the universe and its earth is fine-tuned to support life. Science cannot calculate this infinite improbability, let alone answer the question of how life was created. To justify the possibility that a series of random events lead to the formation of the earth, many look for something outside the universe, but instead of finding God they image "a multiverse" or parallel dimensions. Unbelievers assume that by increasing the probability of creation occurring, increases the likelihood of life beginning from nothing.

Fantasy and imagination do have a place, even in science but those who continue to reject the reality of a God may one day see the "*blackness of darkness*" (Jude 1:13) that existed before Day One. Those who believe, have the hope and assurance of experiencing a new life. Believers will not see the never ending darkness but will see the light of a new creation.

Reality is not so hard to grasp because scientists and theologians agree on many things. There is agreement that the universe has a beginning and that the present creation will pass away. However, people will dismiss God and dismiss the Bible's creation story for the least of reasons, but there is no factual reason to imagine that science and faith are in opposition to each other. Scientific theories change as does our understanding of the Bible, so do not put faith in temporary theories but look for the actual knowledge that does not change.

It is God who has given us life; we have no excuse not to continue to seek his face for as many people of science have realised, there is intelligence and design in what we observe. In a cell's DNA and the stars in the Heaven. Seek the truth found in the word of God, written by the pen of scribes (Surah 68:1).

We cannot add to God's word or reinterpret any words. Neither should we attempt to impose our interpretation of the Bible.

We should preach that God has created the world in six days, but there is no reason anyone can dictate it occurred in six 24-hour days. Attempts to dictate meaning have only created division and caused many to doubt the accuracy of scripture and look elsewhere for the truth.

The Bible tells us that creation has not ended; we do not need to invent a fictitious mother-nature, who is not God. God is not a magician that creates illusions; creating a world that only appears to be old. Creation is not an instantaneous event; instead, the Bible shows us that creation is the on-going process, a growing work that is still occurring.

God is called a potter who carefully shapes each bowl, a gardener who continues to plant and prune the vines. God has not rested, nor has He stopped and restarted his work again. What we need to appreciate is that God's day of rest has not yet come. The Bible and the Quran agree; we are still in the sixth day of creation and are awaiting the seventh and final day of rest, which is yet to come.