

CREATED vs. MADE

Does Genesis chapter one contain evidence of a gap of an undetermined amount of time between verse one and verse two? Biblical scholars like the Dutchman Episcopius wrote about such a gap of time as far back as the late 1500s. New Earth Creationists, like Ken Ham of Answers In Genesis, do not believe in any gap, and believe the universe and our earth is only about 6000 years old.

One of the major disadvantages one has when trying to understand what the Bible says, is the inability to interpret what the text means. I'm not talking about a difficulty in understanding the old English style of writing. I'm talking about a total lack of knowledge concerning the meaning of the original Hebrew and Greek text.

I am going to try to explain why I believe two words are critically important in interpreting what Genesis one teaches. I've found that the King James Version of the Bible is the most reliable in translating the original language into English that we can all understand. But even the King James Bible sometimes fails to translate the old language into terms we are familiar with today.

One example occurs in Matthew 18:6, which reads *"But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."*

I was asked about this verse by a parent during one of my lectures on parental authority and the disciplining of children. The father challenged me on my stance on spanking, and claimed that the Bible condemned such action by a parent. The dad stated that he had never spanked his child, and he used Matthew 18:6 as his evidence to prove his point. He stated to me, at the same time proclaiming to the audience, that spanking a child is "offensive" to the child and that the Bible teaches a parent who offends their child should be tossed into the ocean with a rock around their neck.

Now it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that something is wrong with this theory. Every parent knows that it is impossible to "train up a child" responsibly without offending the little unhappy creatures on occasion. A child will be offended if you make them eat their vegetables. So something is not right here!

Perhaps it's the way the father is interpreting what the verse actually says. And in this case, it's not all the dad's fault that he doesn't understand what Matthew 18:6 really says. We have to look at each word in it's original context to determine what the true meaning is.

It's when we get to the word "offend" that we discover what the problem is. The original Greek word that was translated into "offend," is **σκανδαλιζω** "skandalizo." It's where our English word "scandalize" comes from. It means to "cause to stumble" or "entice to sin." It actually means to cause one to offend, or cause one to be an offender. This is the original meaning of someone "contributing to the delinquency of a minor."

So the dad was quickly advised in front of the crowd that he was wrong in his assumption simply because he misunderstood what the Bible was actually saying. He was advised that the original Greek text was talking about someone who would lead a child astray, not a prohibition on spanking the child. I suggested to dad that perhaps the reason his child was becoming incorrigible was because he had never been spanked, and that it might be best if dad followed other instructions in the Bible to use the “rod and reproof” method of child rearing in order to solve his problem.

The ability to interpret what the original Hebrew and Greek text in our Bible really says greatly enhances our chances in making an accurate conclusion about what the text is telling us. I have been told by some people, “I think you’re making too much out of two simple words.” Some people will at least consider the complexities in the original text and will make their conclusion based on an interpretation of that text. There are others who think that if there was a gap of time between verse one and verse two, God would have made it much clearer in His Word. But there are other subjects that are shrouded in mystery, like the rapture, and whether the saints will be taken from this world before, during, or after the tribulation. Why God has hidden much of the meaning in His Word is puzzling, but I believe He has given us enough clues to draw accurate conclusions.

One of the best examples of this inability to discern what the Bible text is saying is in Genesis chapter one. If a person reads this chapter quickly for the first time, they will probably draw several conclusions based on the story. First, that in the beginning God created the universe and the earth. Second, that in six days God divided the land from the water, made the lights to rule the day and night, made the animals, and man. Third, that God saw everything that He had made, and concluded that it was “very good.” Based on the Biblical timeline we are given of man’s history on this earth, we can safely conclude that God created man approximately 6000 years ago. To a simple person, the conclusion drawn from reading Genesis chapter one would be that God created the universe 6000 years ago. I mean, “If the plain sense makes sense, seek no other sense,” correct?

It’s not that simple. Genesis chapter one is a complicated portion of the scriptures. Much like Matthew 18:6, we need to “*search the scriptures*” in order to see “*whether those things were so.*” A failure to do so results in a total ignorance of what God is telling us. I am going to use an analogy in order to make clearer the meaning of the two separate words in Genesis chapter one. I like to use examples of my experiences as a police officer, and find that many instances I encountered on the job fit quite nicely into my explanations.

One night at about 2 AM while on patrol I received a call from dispatch regarding a house fire in the southern portion of my city. I responded to the location, arriving prior to the fire department. It was in a new development with many new homes under construction. Most of the homes were built but were not yet occupied. As I drove down the street, I observed the unoccupied house emitting an orange glow from inside with thick smoke billowing from the windows. The fire department arrived, and within

minutes, had the flames extinguished. The owner of the house being built was contacted and upon his arrival, he and I, along with the fire inspector, walked through the charred interior looking for the source of the fire. It was discovered that a space heater had been left on by the construction workers and some rags had ignited and spread through the kitchen.

The fire inspector advised the owner that fortunately there did not appear to be any structural damage. The wooden frame had not been affected, and most of the damage appeared to be contained to the wooden cabinets in the kitchen. The owner was advised that once the smoke damage was taken care of, a simple remodeling of the kitchen area would put him back on the right track.

Several weeks later I was on day shift, and as I patrolled past the house, I noticed the owner working in the garage. I stopped to talk and take a look at his progress. He had already completed the remodeling in the kitchen and had installed new wooden cabinets. The place looked brand new.

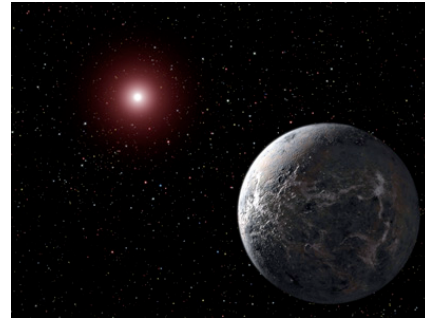
There are two specific words I have used in this example that are sometimes confused as the same but very distinct in meaning. The word “built” is used to describe the original construction of the home. The word “remodeled” is used to describe the repair of the kitchen. In Genesis chapter one, there are two words that are often confused as meaning the same thing, but have two very distinctive meanings.

Genesis chapter one and verse one reads, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” In this verse, the original Hebrew word for “created,” is **בָּרָא** or “bara.” This word, in its original context, means to **bring into existence**, or to **make or create something from nothing**. I think both Young Earthers and Old Earthers agree on this fact. God spoke, and “*it was so.*” From nothing, there appeared galaxies, stars, planets, and earth. The laws of nature sprang into existence. Everything was perfect.

But then something terrible happened to our planet.. Verse two says “*And the earth was without form and void.*” No matter how hard you try, you will have a hard time convincing anyone that God created something that was imperfect. The original Hebrew word that is translated into the “without form” is **תֹהוּ** or “tohuw.” This word means “complete **desolation**,” or “in a state of **confusion**.” The word “void” comes from the Hebrew word **בוהו** or “bohuw.” This word means “emptiness or waste.” We now have an earth that is completely desolate, empty, and in a **state of confusion**. God did not create the earth in this condition. The Bible says in Isaiah 45:18, “*For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he **created it not in vain**, he formed it to be inhabited.*”

Everything that God creates is perfect. Deuteronomy 32:4 reads, “*He is the Rock, **his work is perfect**: for his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.*” There is absolutely no possibility that God created the earth in desolation and in a state of confusion.

I'm going to refer back to my house fire. What began as a perfect structure has now been gutted by fire and is in a state of desolation. The builder who "built" the house did not construct the house in such a condition. God, who "created" the earth, did not create it in a state of emptiness and confusion. Something terrible happened to the earth between verse one and verse two.



If you believe what God has written about the earth being in a state of confusion in verse two, you have to believe that God created something imperfect. I have yet to hear another plausible theory to explain the meaning of the words in verse two. Some people have chosen to totally ignore this important piece of evidence.

What happened during this period that caused this devastation? I believe God gives us the answer in several other portions of the Bible. I believe Ezekiel 28:13-18 is talking about that event when God is addressing Lucifer, "*Thou hast been in **Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering... Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and **I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty...*****"

One of the most compelling portions of scripture that describes this event is in Jeremiah 4:23. "*I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was **without form, and void**; and the heavens, and **they had no light**. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, **they trembled**, and all the hills moved lightly.*" There is no other time in history that fits into this description of the total devastation described in Genesis chapter one and verse two, past, present, or in the future. God also chooses the same words found in verse two, "*without form and void.*"

But what I believe is much more compelling evidence is the very different meaning of the two words used in the remainder of the chapter, the words "created" and "made." The failure to understand the specific meaning of these two words causes a total misunderstanding of the meaning contained in the remainder of the chapter.

We've discussed the meaning of the word "created," that it means to **bring into existence** or to **make something out of nothing**. There were no existing materials. God spoke, and the universe came into existence. The word "made" has quite a different meaning.

In the original Hebrew text, "made" is **עָשָׂה**, or "asah." It means "to dress or to furnish." It also means "to put into place." This word is describing the action of **dressing something with materials that already exist**. The exact same word is used in Genesis 8:6, describing the ark Noah had built. It reads, "*And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had **made** (asah).* Noah built the ark with materials that already existed.

The word "created" is used four times in Genesis chapter one. Verse one says, "*In the beginning God **created** the heaven and the earth.*" Verse 21 reads, "*And God **created** great whales, and every living creature that moveth...*" and in verse 27, "*So God **created** man in his own image, in the image of God **created** he him, male and female **created** he them.*"

The word "made" is used five times in Genesis chapter one. In verse seven we read, "*And God **made** the firmament...*" in verse 16 we read, "*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,*" in verse 25, "*And God **made** the beasts of the earth...*" and in verse 31, "*And God saw everything that he had **made**, and, behold, it was very good.*"

Another important clue that demonstrates the distinct difference in the meaning of these two words occurs in Genesis 2:3. That verse reads, "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God **created** and **made**. God uses two separate distinct words in Genesis 2:3, "created and made," (**בָּרָא** bara and **עָשָׂה** asah). If the two words mean the same thing, God would not have placed both words in the same sentence! If they meant the same thing, it would read "which God **created** and **created**."

There is a third word used to describe the action taken by God in Genesis. That word is "formed." In Genesis 2:7 we read, "*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*" In the original Hebrew text, the word is **יָצַר** or "yarsar," and it means "to squeeze into shape, to mould." Another word for yarsar is "potter." This is where we get our English word "pottery." A potter shapes a piece of clay into a formed piece of pottery.



God makes it clear that the three words in question in Genesis are separate and distinct. In Isaiah 43:7, God says, “*Even every one that is called by my name: for I have **created** him for my glory, I have **formed** him; yea, I have **made** him.*” How much clearer could God be that these three words have different meanings?

One of the talking point from Ken Ham is scripturally incorrect. In his lectures, he states, “**In Genesis chapter one and verse 31, we see that God saw everything that he had created and it was ‘very good.’ Now it could not be very good if there were dead dinosaurs under the ground, could it?**” But that is **not** what God says!

I’m not sure if Ken Ham is ignorant of what the Bible says or if he is deliberately trying to deceive his followers. What verse 31 says is “And God saw everything that he had **made**, and behold, it was very good.” **The word “made” is not the word “created.”** I have never seen Ken Ham use the word “made” in his statement, it is always “created.” And that is wrong!

Judges 18:9 uses the same phrase, it was “*very good,*” that Ken Ham uses to try to prove that the earth was perfect in Genesis 1:31. It reads, “*And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and behold, **it is very good:** and are ye still? Be not slothful to go and to enter and to possess the land.*” Here, God is giving his people something “*very good.*” Does that mean that everything else in the world at that point was very good? Of course not! God is specifically referring to just the land that the Israelites were about to enter.

The same rule applies in Genesis chapter one when God says “*And God saw everything that he had **made**, and behold, it was **very good.***” The things that God was looking at that were “*very good,*” were the things **he had dressed and furnished from pre-existing materials.** The word “made” is specifically referring **only to the things that were positioned and shaped during the six day account** given in Genesis chapter one, from verse two to verse 31.

In the beginning, God created the universe in a perfect state. Judgment struck the earth when God cast Lucifer out of heaven. God then brought order out of chaos 6000 years ago and restored the earth to it’s present state. The rest is history.

Psalms 8:3 says, “*When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou are mindful of him?*” The original Hebrew word for “consider” is **ראה**, or “ra’ah.” It means to “learn about” or to “find out.” To completely ignore modern science is not Biblical. God gave us the intelligence to “learn about” and “find out” about our universe and our earth. Good science has consistently substantiated God’s Word. There is overwhelming evidence in our earth and the heavens that our universe is more than 6000 years old. Placing a gap of millions of years between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 does not damage the Word of God! We just have to look for the evidence.