



First Bible Church

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Genesis and the Creation

GLORIFYING GOD BY
HELPING PEOPLE
KNOW, LOVE, OBEY
AND EXALT
JESUS CHRIST



Position Paper
Genesis and the Creation
Council of Elders
First Bible Church of Decatur
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In the view of the Council of Elders of First Bible Church, for any interpretation of Genesis to remain within apostolic, orthodox, historic Christianity, it must retain the following elements. All Elders, Deacons, and Staff members of First Bible Church must believe these things:

1. The inerrancy and authority of Scripture alone.
 - 1.1. We believe there is no final conflict between good science and sound exegesis of Scripture. If there is a clear conflict between scientific explanations and the clear teaching of Bible, the Bible has the final authority (2 Timothy 3:16–17).
 2. While the Scripture is inerrant, our interpretations of Scripture can err. We recognize that many parts of Scripture are “hard to understand” (2 Peter 3:16).
 3. Because of these difficult passages, faithful and intelligent Christians will disagree on many issues that are non-essential to salvation, but must avoid dividing the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:25; Romans 14; 2 Corinthians 8 and 10; Titus 3:10).
 4. “We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, written by men by God’s control, inerrant and infallible in the original manuscripts, and the final authority in faith and life.” (First Bible Church Constitution, Article III, Section 1)
2. The historicity of Adam and Eve.
 1. All of the genealogies referring to Adam consider him to be historical (Luke 3:37).
 2. Paul refers to Adam as the one from whom “every nation of men” descended (Acts 17:26).
 3. Paul compares Jesus to Adam as real, historical person (Romans 5:12–17; 1 Cor. 15:21–22).
 4. Paul argues for male headship based on the order of creation, treating Adam and Eve and real, historical people (1 Corinthians 11:8–9; 1 Tim. 2:13)
 5. Jesus teaches on marriage based on the literal creation of Adam and Eve, treating it as a real, historical event (Mat. 19: 4–6).
 6. “We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God in innocence and without sin, but that in Adam’s sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, became spiritually dead and alienated from God, and now man of himself is incapable of remedying his lost and depraved condition.” (First Bible Church Constitution, Article III, Section 3).
3. God created all things out of nothing (*ex nihilo*).
 1. God is the uncreated Creator. To ask, *Who made God?* is to ask a nonsensical question, for God is not made. He is the eternal uncaused Cause (Acts 17:24–25; Colossians 1:16–17).
 2. God spoke creation into existence (Psalm 33:6).
 3. What now exists did not exist prior to God’s command (Hebrews 11:3).
 4. This creation bears witness to the power, majesty, morality, and sovereignty of almighty God, leaving all the world without an excuse in judgment (Romans 1:20; Psalm 19:1; Revelation 4:11).

5. The First Bible Church Constitution does not directly speak to this and many other pertinent subjects. Therefore, the Council of Elders periodically produces position papers as the need arises. Position papers are not binding and do not require congregational approval, but rather reflect the prayerful and studied consensus of the Elders at that time. Current position papers available: Speaking in Tongues, The Role of Women in the Church, Marriage and Divorce, and The Sovereignty of God.
4. The sovereignty of God over all creation.
 1. God made “all things for himself” and therefore, he can manage, direct, destroy, and sustain his creation (including people) any way that pleases him, and in this he will not be thwarted (Rev. 4:11; Proverbs 16:4; Isa. 40:17–18; Isa. 14:27; Psalm 115:3).
 2. God is sovereign over (to name a few created things) sun, moon, stars, land, earthquakes, tectonic plates, flood, drought, sea, sky, weather, plants, animals, disease, death, and humans made in his image (All the Bible, but see especially the ministry of Jesus in the Gospels, Job, and Revelation).

3. Have all OECs committed a cowardly compromise?

1. Some Young Earth Creationists (YECs) make a young earth and 24-hour days a test of orthodoxy, believing any other interpretation is a sign of compromise with the world.
2. We concede that many Old Earth Creationists (OECs) have adopted an old earth position because they are embarrassed of the YECs’ reputation for anti-intellectualism and want to be accepted by the world.
2. But not all OECs are motivated by love of the world. Rather, they are earnestly seeking to love God with their minds.
4. OECs recognize that Christians debated the interpretation of Genesis long before Darwin, when different interpretations could not have been driven by an unholy and cowardly compromise with naturalistic evolution. Some examples:
 1. Origen (c. 185–254): “[Gen. 2:4 refers to] the day in which God made the heaven and earth...In what we said earlier, we criticized those who follow the superficial interpretation and say that the creation of the world happened during a period of time six days long...” (See *PCA Creation Committee Report*).
 2. Augustine (354–430) on Genesis 1: “What kind of days these were it is extremely difficult, or perhaps impossible for us to conceive.” (*City of God*, c. 425 A.D.)
 3. Calvin (1509–1564) on Genesis 1:5: “Here the error of those is manifestly refuted who maintain that the world was made in a moment...Let us rather conclude that God himself took the space of six days...” (Commentary).
5. OEC’s recognize that throughout the history of the church, the growth of our knowledge of God’s glorious creation through science has caused Christians to re-evaluate interpretations of the Bible they previously held. In this, they are not revising God’s Word but rather man’s interpretation of it.
6. Though church members may disagree on these matters, within the parameters described above, each church member is bound by the Word of God and the church covenant to discuss and debate in a civil and courteous manner, respecting the leaders of the church, and carefully guarding the peace and unity of the church family.