

F. Paleontology and the Bible: A Creationist Synthesis

1. Definition of the term "Creation"

First of all, "Creation" means the bringing into being of that which did not (either in its substance or its form) previously exist. An example of this meaning would be the creation of the original matter-energy complex of the physical universe. This usage we shall call EX NIHILO CREATION (i.e., "creation from nothing").

Secondly, "Creation" means the bringing into being of that which did not (in its form) previously exist, employing previously-existing substance. An example of this meaning would be the creation of Adam's body from the dust of the ground. This usage we shall call IMMEDIATE CREATION (i.e., creation by direct action of God, using previously existing substance).

Thirdly, "Creation" means the bringing into being of that which did not (in its form) previously exist, employing both previously-existing substance and secondary causes. An example of this meaning is the creation by God, through human parents, of each child born into the world. This usage we shall call MEDIATE CREATION.

In each of these three usages -- Ex Nihilo Creation, immediate Creation, and Mediate Creation -- it is important to remember and to recognize that in the context of this discussion it is God who is the Creator. But it is also important to remember that when we speak of God's activity in Creation, we must from time to time clarify the statement, "God created such-and-such," by specifying whether God created ex nihilo or immediately, or mediately. This also means that when we read a statement in Scripture concerning God's creative activity, we must occasionally ask ourselves the question, "Which meaning of 'Creation' is intended in this usage?"

2. An outline survey of the creative events of Genesis 1-2

EVENT #1 (included in Genesis 1:1) -- God's Ex Nihilo Creation of all the matter-energy and the space of the universe, together with their properties, several billion years ago.

Although Genesis 1:1 does not specifically mention the creation of primal matter, yet it includes that creation. Since matter is not eternal, it must be created; and it is here that we learn of this creative event. In point of fact, this creation refers to God's bringing into being, from nothing, of all of the basic units of matter and energy found in the physical universe -- neutrons, protons, electrons, and various other atomic and sub-atomic particles.

It has been estimated that the entire observed universe, contains 10^{80} particles (i.e., 10 followed by 79 zeros). For most of us, this is an