

How Did it All Happen?©

Genesis 2

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Share theme song from the Big Bang Theory and pop balloon at the end.

So there you go. That's how it all happened. End of story. Right?

Well maybe.

One of the questions some of you had from the things you doubt about the faith is whether or not Adam and Eve were real people and how did creation really happen. Is it the way the Bible tells it? Or is it the way scientists tell it? Or, can it be both?

You know that there are different ways of interpreting Scripture and what you believe can be influenced greatly from your interpretation. A person who interprets every single thing in the Bible as literally happening, would definitely hold the belief that the creation story happened exactly as it is written in Genesis. For a literalist, scientific theories are basically a way to discount our faith – to try and prove that what we believe about God and Jesus and all the stories in the Bible are just a lot of Hooey.

I have to tell you I love this creation story in Genesis 2. If you read both chapters one and two, you will find a little difference in how it is written, although basically it says very similar things.

I love the story of the first man and woman – Adam and Eve. My wonderful Old Testament professor, Dr. Elizabeth Platt, was so great at painting visual pictures for us from the Bible stories. She called the creation story of Adam and Eve the “Clay Baby” theology.

She imagined God walking along that river bank looking at all the beauty he had made. And then bending down, he scooped up a handful of the rich, moist, red clay and began forming a human.

And once this human was made God breathed his own breath into the nostrils of the clay human and suddenly he came alive and started breathing. And God named him Adam. Or *A-dam*' . . .

The *A dam*' wasn't necessarily an actual gender though. That word comes from the Hebrew word *A dam ah*, which means the red dirt, or clay.

And the story goes that God saw that the *Adam* needed a helper and companionship. So God creates other living beings – birds and fish and animals – and God lets *Adam* name each of them. But it was not enough for the human.

So then, God caused Adam to go into a deep sleep and he took a rib from Adam - *A dam ah* and out of that rib he created a woman. We don't learn what he named her until chapter three where it says in verse 20: ²⁰“And Adam called his wife's name *Eve*, because she was the mother of all living.”

But the Hebrew word for woman is *ishah* and the word for man is *ish*. So now we have gender – male and female, man and woman, *ish* and *ishah*.

And they were placed in the Garden of Eden – Paradise. And Adam had his helper and companion and they lived in complete happiness, stark naked and proud of it.

Until everything fell apart. Literally, it is called The Fall. They fell from Paradise into sin as Eve was tempted by the serpent (who was really the Satan) to eat the fruit from the one tree they were forbidden to eat from – the Tree of Knowledge. “You will have all the knowledge God has. You will be like God.” Said the serpent. And Eve took the first bite and convinced her husband to do the same.

And suddenly being stark naked was an embarrassment. They hid from God but God called them out. He dressed them with fig leaves and he ordered them out of Paradise. And that’s how we came to have sin today. And that’s why Jesus had to come to save us from sin. Which he did. And someday Paradise will be once again, here on earth.

So, that’s the story of creation, according to Genesis. At least it is the story according to the New King James Version. The other, newer translations tell it much like that but they don’t even name the man and woman Adam and Eve. So, even different translations of the Bible are interpreted different. No wonder many people claim that the King James Version is the only correct version. Right?

That’s right if you are a literalist. But there are other ways of interpreting the Scriptures as well. By very serious Bible scholars. Who are very strong, faithful believers.

Those scholars see a difference in the stories written in chapters 1 and 2. They have come to believe these are accounts from two completely different writers, probably from different geographical areas and different times.

They believe that, while creation and humans may not have happened exactly as these two chapters say, it is amazing how these two accounts are so similar. For there to be people in entirely different areas to have such a strong belief in one Creator God – in a time when many primitive people believed in many gods, it really says something powerful about the faith.

Two different, but similar accounts, written to claim that there is a God who is powerful and who has made all things. It may be a creative story on just how God did it all, but nevertheless, they are claiming God gets all the credit, however it happened.

And for people who live in the 21st century, who have come a long way from the primitive believers of so long ago, we have to figure out how the scientific proof of things fits together with our faith in God as creator.

It’s pretty hard, these days, to deny that prehistoric people and animals were here on earth. There is too much truth for us to bury our heads in the sand and claim none of that happened.

So, which is it? Creation story or science? Who you gonna believe?

When I went back to college at the age of 40 I took a class where the professor was claiming that the creation story in the bible was false. That it could not have happened the way it was written. I was so naïve back then and I was devastated to think that people were saying the bible wasn't true.

I remember Fred was taking a bath and I barged in on him and put the toilet seat down, sat there crying and saying what I am supposed to believe?

But here's the thing I do believe. I believe in a powerful, loving, creator God. I believe God did ultimately make everything – all things living – animals, birds, fish, plants and humans – man and woman. *Ish* and *Ishah*.

Did he do it using the Clay Baby theology? Did he do it with a big bang – all the molecules and matter coming together at just the right time to create this big bang and start the world turning? I don't know for sure. And neither does anyone else.

But if God is a powerful God; a loving God; a God who creates – then what difference does it make how creation happened? God is just as able to create through scientific means as he is any other way. And it is just as powerful and just as meaningful.

In the same way that Jesus told stories to paint pictures for people so they could believe, the writers of Genesis did the same. They are faith stories about a God who is almighty and sovereign over all things. God still gets the credit. We get beautiful stories that stay in our minds so we don't forget who is in charge over all things.

The fact is, there truly was a first man and a first woman. Their names make sense – Eve the mother of all. Adam – taken from the dust, from the clay – from molecules in a big bang. He was still formed and so was she.

We, who are people of faith, do not take away anything from the faith when we study and look at all possibilities. In fact, we are faithful to do so. But in the end – God is still God. Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer. Amen.