

Question: The Bible gives a detailed account of creation, especially of animals, plants, and mankind. But what about things like darkness, water, and the formless earth? When were these created, since they seem to exist *before* the six days of creation?

Answer:

To address this question, we must begin with the foundational verse of Scripture:

Genesis 1:1 (NIV)

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

This verse describes the initial act of creation, which occurred *prior to* the six days described in the rest of Genesis 1. The Hebrew phrase for “In the beginning” (*Bereshith*) signifies the very origin of time and space, marking the absolute starting point of the material universe.

What Was Created “In the Beginning”?

According to Genesis 1:1-2:

“Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”

(Genesis 1:2, NIV)

Before the six-day sequence of creation begins in verse 3, we see several elements already present: The heavens The earth (in an unformed state) Darkness Water The Spirit of God hovering

None of these are described as being created *during* the six days. This suggests they were all brought into existence during the initial act of creation mentioned in Genesis 1:1.

Theological Implications

1. Creation ex nihilo (“out of nothing”)

Christian theology affirms that God created all things from nothing (Latin: *ex nihilo*) including matter, energy, time, and space. This includes primordial elements like water, earth, and darkness.

This view is supported by:

Hebrews 11:3 (NIV)

“By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”

2. Darkness Was Not Created as Evil

The presence of darkness in Genesis 1:2 should not be interpreted as the presence of evil or chaos, but rather the absence of light, which God had not yet called forth. Darkness had a role within God’s initial creation:

Isaiah 45:7 (NIV)

“I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create

disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things.”

Thus, darkness is part of God’s design, later used to distinguish day from night (Genesis 1:5).

3. Waters as Part of God’s Raw Creation Material

The Hebrew term “*tehom*” (translated “deep”) refers to the primordial oceanic abyss. Water often symbolizes potential and unformed chaos in ancient Near Eastern thought, yet in Genesis, God is in control of the waters from the beginning, not battling them as in pagan myths.

Psalms 104:5-6 (NIV)

“He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved. You covered it with the watery depths as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.”

Why Aren't Darkness and Water Mentioned in the Six Days?

The six days of creation beginning in Genesis 1:3 focus on ordering and filling what God had already brought into being: Day 1–3: Forming (light/dark, sky/sea, land/vegetation) Day 4–6: Filling (sun/moon/stars, birds/fish, animals/humans)

Darkness and water are not recreated, because they were already present. Instead, God begins shaping them: He separates light from darkness (Day 1) and divides the waters (Day 2).

What Happened Between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2?

There is no definitive biblical explanation for why the earth is “formless and empty” in Genesis 1:2. Some scholars propose the Gap Theory, suggesting a long interval between verses 1 and 2. Others see it as a natural phase in the process of forming and preparing the earth.

However, we are assured that God did not create the world to remain empty or desolate:

Isaiah 45:18 (NIV) – “For this is what the Lord says—he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be

inhabited.”

Future Desolation in Prophecy

Interestingly, Scripture prophesies that the earth will again become desolate and uninhabitable during the time of God’s final judgment:

Isaiah 13:9-10 (NIV)

“See, the day of the Lord is coming a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it. The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light.”

2 Peter 3:10 (NIV)

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.”

Hope for the Redeemed

While judgment will come upon the world, those who are in Christ who have trusted in His atoning work will be spared from God's wrath and dwell forever with Him:

1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NIV)

"For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."

John 14:3 (NIV)

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am

This profound truth not only speaks to the sovereignty and wisdom of God but also reminds us that His work has always had a purpose to bring

life, order, and ultimately redemption.

*"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." -
Genesis 1:1*

May the Lord bless you.

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