

TIME AND HOW IT'S PERCEIVED

The dictionary defines time as “the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future regarded as a whole”

Western and Middle Eastern cultures view the concept of time in very different ways. For example, Western culture views time as if it were a straight line, having a beginning and an end, while Middle Eastern cultures views time as being circular.

In addition, we know that the ancient Hebrews (Middle-Easterners) saw time as being linked to space, because the Hebrew language uses the same words for both time and space.¹ Time was viewed as the repetition and the completion of events, such as the repetition of days, with its morning, noon, and evening; the repetition of years, with its seasons of spring, summer, fall, and winter; and the repetition of life, with its births, growths, and deaths. In general, the circularity of events and their consequences disclose a general pattern which holds subtle differences within the individual cycles.

One such timeline (a very small one in terms of “time” and “space”) involves events that occur during the lifetime of a single cell. These events—like the days and the years—are repetitive and are known as a “cell cycle”.

In addition, the two cultures of East and West differ in terms of how they picture past and future events: Western cultures picture the future as being in front of them and the past as being behind them; whereas, cultures from the Middle East see the future as being behind them (because the future can't be seen) and the past as being in front of them (because one can see the past, i.e., it is known).

So, how did Moses, a Middle Easterner, view time when he wrote the first book of the Bible?

I have chosen to look at the book of Genesis with respect to circular time because:

1. circular time was familiar during the time of Moses, so it was possible that he would have thought of “time” in that way;
2. apparently, Pentecost (both the Christian one and the Jewish one) teaches us that God speaks to us in a way that we can best understand, so perhaps He spoke to Moses by making use of circular time;
3. the last patriarch listed in the Genesis timeline is Joseph, whose Hebrew name means to “add”, “increase”, or “do it again”;² and

¹ “Concepts in Time”, retrieved from the World Wide Web on September 25, 2016, at http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/articles_time.html

² There is an interesting discussion of time—as well as the pros and cons of linear and circular time—which can be found on the online “Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy”. [IEP] Further discussion on the topic of “time” can also be found in Chapter 20 of this paper.

4. by assuming circular time in the book of Genesis, I've noticed many different times lines in Genesis, each of which bears an uncanny resemblance to scientific date.

Thus far, I've seen:

- an agreement between the Biblical and scientific age of the solar system (i.e., 13.7 billion years, using Psalm 90, the only psalm believed to be written by Moses),
- an agreement on the divisions of the Precambrian time periods and the Super-Big Days of Creation,
- an agreement of the occurrences during these time periods and the occurrences during the first 5 Super-Big Days of Creation, (including the 4th SBD's development of a timeline that uses the dating of the Big Bang to look at a timeline that involves the life and death of our sun.)
- the coincidence between the fruit in the Garden of Eden and mitochondria,
- an agreement between the timing of Adam and Eve and the first animal fossils,
- an agreement of the alignment of Adam and Eve with the development of sexes for plants and animal,
- an agreement of the number of chromosomes in a human male sperm and the number of ancestral names found in the book of Genesis. (i.e., 23)
- an agreement of the Y chromosome changes and the ancestral lifeline changes,
- the alignment of Noah and his wife with the development of the X and Y chromosomes, and thus in the development of mammals,
- the alignment of Nephilim (i.e., giants) with dinosaurs,
- an agreement between the evolution and timing of the 3 types of Mammals and the Noah's 3 sons Ham, Japheth, and Shem,
- an exact match between the packing of DNA into the nucleus of a cell and the packing of animals into Noah's ark,
- the agreement of the first mention of bird during Noah's time with the existence/appearance of the archaeopteryx (or the first known bird, "ancient wing from the printing stone") in evolution,

- an agreement between Peleg (whose name was given because “in his time the earth was divided”) with the final splitting apart of Africa and South America in the breaking apart of Pangaea.
- the agreement between Nahor (whose name means “to snort”) and the evolution of pigs, cattle and horses,
- the agreement of the development and timing of the evolution of bipedalism with Abram’s journey at age 75 and the meaning of Abram’s name (from a prime root “to rise up”),
- the agreement of the time of Abram’s name change to Abraham (meaning “father of a multitude”) and the evolution of Chromosome 2,
- and finally, the inability for any of the above observations to be known to a man (“Moses”) living some 3000 to 4000 years ago or for that man to put down the words that allow for these comparisons to be made in this day and age without the help of some omnipotent being, no matter by what name this being is called...thus, giving reason for the time-comparisons, to begin with.

The book of Genesis reminds me of a parable. It can mean different things to different people...and, according to Jesus, who only spoke to the crowds in parables (Matt. 13:34)...isn’t that how God the Father speaks to us?

There is much that still needs to evolve in the fields of science, just as there is much more to learn about Genesis, so who knows what will happen to all of this as the future unfolds. The fact is, I can’t prove the existence of God; I can only present information.

But, for now, I am content to believe that meaningful discussions on the topics of creation and science can take place between reasonable individuals; and that, perhaps, someday... some “time”...there will be peace between those with seemingly different points of view.