

Genesis 1 & Lessons from Space: The Special Nature of Earth

Synopsis

How do the facts learned from the exploration of our solar system affect various views of how we got here?

Much of the academic motivation for the U.S. space program has been to search for life on the other planets of our solar system—to see if we are indeed alone in the universe. Those who embrace the concept of the organic evolution of life were quiet sure that we are not: that the generation of life does not require any help from God but is, rather, an unguided and necessary result of favorable environments and, therefore, must have occurred many times, at many places, and under a variety of conditions in nature.

The purpose of the first chapter of Genesis, on the other hand, is to tell us that God created everything that exists - and that he prepared Earth for life. The creation of other heavenly bodies is also recorded, but there is no indication in scripture that God prepared them for life like He prepared the Earth. Accordingly, we would expect to find the Earth to be a unique haven for life in a hostile universe.

How do the facts we've learned from our 50+ years of space exploration relate these two views? Despite touting mind numbing probabilities, those who expected to find life on other worlds have been disappointed. Not only has our exploration of the solar system shown it to be devoid of life (with the single exception of our own planet), but it has shown just how special our planet is. It is this point on which this presentation will be focused. We will tour our solar system as we peer through the most powerful telescopes man has ever made, look down on the planets from orbiting probes, and peer out at strange and awesome panoramas that stretch out before landers sitting on the surfaces of distant planets. Against this backdrop, we will look at the very special nature of the Earth and the environment that it provides. Then we will ask the question, "Is this what we would have expected, having read Genesis chapter one?"