The Old Testament

The OT covers the period from creation all the way up to about 400 years before Jesus.

Books of Moses

The first 5 books that you run into when you open your Bible are called "The books of Moses."

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

These books are also known in the Greek as the *Pentateuch* (Five Books). The Jews call these books the Torah, The Law, or "The Instruction." The Jews split their scripture into The Law, The Prophets, and The Writings.

Jesus quotes from all five books and He says that Moses wrote them.

Genesis

Title: Genesis comes from the Greek Septuagint which means "beginning", and the Hebrew word for it "Barashet", which also means "Beginning." It lays the foundation for the entire Bible.

> Note: The Greek Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures. When Alexander the Great conquered the world, he made Greek the official language and wanted to create a library of the worlds written works. The library was to be in the city of Alexandria. So about 72 Hebrew scholars translated the OT into Greek and compiled it into what is known as the Septuagint.

Date of Writing: Uncertain. Best guess: 1447-1445 BC

Outline:

I. God Spoke To Creation (Ch 1-11)
   A. Uncorrupted Earth (Ch 1-2)
   B. Corrupted Earth – The Fall (Ch 3-4)
   C. Corrected Universe – The Flood (Ch 5-9)
   D. Men Scattered Over The Earth – Tower of Babel (Ch 10-11)

II. God Spoke To Abraham (Ch 12-26)
   A. Promises to Abraham – Abraham's Walk (Ch 12-20)
   B. Promise Fulfilled – Birth and Life of Isaac (Ch 21-26)

III. God Spoke To Israel (Ch 27-50)
   A. The Deceiver (Jacob)
      1. Deceives Father (Ch 27-28)
      2. Is Deceived (Ch 29-31)
      3. Receives New Name – Israel (Ch 32)
      4. Returns to the Land (Ch 33-36)
   B. Taking Away The Reproach – Joseph
      1. The Reproach (Ch 37-40)
      2. The Exaltation (Ch 41-50)

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis doesn't bother to tell you where God came from. It just says "In the beginning, God." If you can get past those four words, then the rest of the Bible is easy.

The modern physicist will say "In the beginning was *nothing* and then it exploded." Without the God of the Bible, physicists have a real difficult time answering the most basic question:

Why does ANYTHING exist instead of NOTHING?
"Why is *anything* here?"

Origin of the Universe

This question always comes up whenever you talk to an unbeliever: The Bible says the universe is young but science has proven that it's billions of years old, so how can you believe the Bible?

What's worse than unbelievers are religious people:

> In the creation story, in the creeds of Christianity, and in countless stories in the biblical drama, a nonoperative, prescientific, and clearly false view of the world is perpetuated. Those who seek to preserve these biblical understandings have to become anti-intellectual or must close off vast portions of their thinking processes or twist their brains into a kind of first-century pretzel in order to maintain their faith system. It is no wonder that they are afraid of knowledge.
>
> - John Shelby Spong, *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism: A Bishop Rethinks the Meaning of Scripture* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 26-27.

Genesis 1

Genesis lays out the creation of everything in very simple terms. There is a pattern to how God made things.

Day 1 Light, heaven and earth	Day 4 Light Bearers (sun and moon)
Day 2 Oceans and Sky	Day 5 Sea and Sky Creatures
Day 3 **Land, grass, plants**	Day 6 Land Creatures and Man

Note: On Day 3, God separates the land from the sea and says "it is good" (v10). Then the grass and plants come up and God says "it is good" (v12). Is that important? It is to the Jews. It's a day of double blessing. So if you want to do something important, like get married, and you want a double blessing, you'll get married on a Tuesday.

Relativity

About 100 years ago, Albert Einstein changed the entire physics world. He came up with the idea that time wasn't a universal thing. Everyone had their own "personal time." Time is a physical property that could be manipulated relative to velocity or mass. If something is moving super fast, time will be affected. If something is super massive, time will also be affected. Time is a physical property. If something has mass, then the thing we call "time" is attached to that thing.

This is the theory of relativity. It's the most famous equation in the world:

$$E=mc^2$$

What this equation basically says is that there is a relationship between energy (E), mass/matter (M) and time (the speed of light *c* is a function of time). If you have no energy, the equation is zero and you have nothing. If you have no matter, the equation is zero and you have nothing. If you have no time, you're dividing by zero, the equation explodes, and you still end up with nothing.

This is highlighted in the Twins Paradox - There is a pair of twins (born at the same time). One is placed on a ten year journey in a space ship approaching the speed of light. When he returns, he will find that his twin has aged significantly. The amount of time difference will depend on how close to the speed of light the first twin was traveling. The one on the spaceship will be 10 years old when he walks out of the spaceship, but he'll find his twin on Earth might be 20 or 30 years old.

That's an example of relativity using velocity, but mass does the same thing. If you lived on Jupiter, you'd age differently than on Earth. If you could balance on the edge of a black hole, you'd see a presidential election like every few minutes, because black holes are so massive.

The results of Einstein, other brilliant minds, and various experiments and observations lead physicists to understand that the universe must be expanding. This has become the standard model of creation: the big bang.

There is no physicist who can tell you how everything began because at time=0, all the equations stop working. Energy, matter and time all must come into being at the exact same moment.

The big bang theory is only a hundred years old. The Bible is over 3,500 years old, so what can it possibly have to do with modern science?

> In the *beginning* (Time), God *created* (Energy) the *heavens and the earth* (Matter).

Let's look "around" $E=mc^2$ and see what we can figure out might be behind this.

- What existed before Time? Eternity. God is eternal and literally "outside of time."
  (1 Cor 2:7, 2 Tim 1:9, Titus 1:2, Isa 57:15)
- What existed before Matter? Matterlessness – or Spirit. God is Spirit
  (John 4:24)
- What could provide energy for the whole universe? Infinite power – God is omnipotent.
  (Rom 11:36, Heb 1:3, Jer 32:17)
- Being infinite also means that God cannot change (Mal 3:6, James 1:17) and there is only ONE God (Isa 43:10) because you can't have two infinite beings.

In addition,

- God would have to be self-existent, because there was literally nothing before God - no time and no matter
  (Ps 90:2, Jn 1:1-5, Col 1:15-17)
- God would have to be omniscient and omnipresent since God is outside of time.
  (Ps 147:5, Acts 15:18, Rom 11:33, Heb 4:13)
- God would have to be transcendent over all creation for He created it.
  (Isa 55:8-9, 57:15, Jn 8:23)

And whatever started the universe also has to be PERSONAL. Whatever started the universe had to make the CHOICE to start everything. Nothingness cannot make a choice to start anything. Nothing is NO THING. God is personal and not just a cosmic force.

> *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. - John 1:1*

> *For by Him [Jesus]* ***all things were created*** *that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.* ***All things*** *were created through Him and* ***for Him****. And He is before all things, and in Him all things* ***consist****.*
> *- Col 1:16-17*

Scientists are funny because they look at atoms and subatomic particles and wonder: "Why doesn't it all fly apart?" They came up with the idea of a "glue" that keeps the quarks (subatomic particles) together to form neutrons, electrons and protons (pieces of atoms). But "super awesome atomic glue" doesn't sound very scientific, so they call it "gluons." We call the super awesome atomic glue:

Jesus (*in Him all things consist*).

What happens when you split an atom? What happens if Jesus stops gluing things together and just... "lets go?"

> *[T]he heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. - 2 Peter 3:10*

Age of the Universe

What about the age of the universe? There are basically three theories among theologians:

1. Six time periods. This theory basically says that God used billions of years to create everything.

2. Gap theory. This theory says that before verse one, or maybe between verses 1 and 2, there is a "gap" of possibly billions of years.

3. Six literal days.

Stretching the heavens

Isaiah 40:22 says that God "stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in."

Isaiah 40:24 - "I am the Lord, who makes all things, Who stretches out the heavens all alone, Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself."

Zechariah 12:1 - "Thus says the Lord, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him..."

It's like God creates the earth, then creates the universe around the earth, and stretches out the universe like a tent around the earth. Why is that important?

Remember the twins paradox? How one twin can be young and the other old? God created the earth in six literal days. He then created and stretched the universe out and placed the Earth, like a jewel, in a nice little solar system. The Earth is like the twin on the spaceship because everything else is moving around it. So, because of Einstein, I can have a young Earth according to a literal reading of scripture AND acknowledge the evidence of an old universe.

BUT, to say the Earth is the same age as the universe requires you to ignore relativity and science and just assume that everything in the universe is the same age. That's not how the science works.

Cosmologists are having a real problem with their latest creation: The James Webb Space Telescope. In the Big Bang model, the universe is expanding and with the distances involved in viewing galaxies, the light must have taken a really long time to get to us. So when you have a 10 billion dollar telescope, you're basically looking backwards in time. Using the JWST, they expect to see clumpy galaxies. Galaxies start off like a clump of dough, and as they spin, they flatten out like a pizza. But what they're seeing are nice pizza galaxies.

What is it that breathes fire into the equations and makes a universe for them to govern? Is the ultimate unified theory so compelling that it brings about its own existence? Although science may solve the problem of how the universe began, it cannot answer the question: Why does the universe bother to exist? I don't know the answer to that.

- Stephen Hawking, Black Holes and other Essays

Lastly, scientists recognize that Earth is uniquely positioned that we can observe the universe and they don't think that's super weird.

> *There is a kind of religion in science; it is the religion of a person who believes there is order and harmony in the Universe. . . A sound explanation may exist for the explosive birth of our Universe; but if it does, science cannot find out what the explanation is. The scientist's pursuit of the past ends in the moment of creation. This is an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all but the theologians. They have always accepted the word of the Bible: In the beginning God created heaven and earth. . . . For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.*
>
> *- Robert Jastrow, God and the Astronomers*