

Young Earth Creation: The Biblical Evidence

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When I first presented these talks on young earth creation it was to be along with speakers for theistic evolution and old earth creation and that we each had only 10 minutes. When I told my prayer partners about this opportunity, one of them said, “At least you only have to cover a few thousand years.”

I think that a straightforward reading of Scripture would lead to a young earth creation view if it were not for the conviction that science has proven immense ages or that evolution is an undisputable fact. I understand those feelings because I had them after completing my medical education in 1967. I was essentially a “fully competent creation” believer, considering that God threw out the first matter and knew it would spontaneously organize itself up to life and human beings, only needing the extra intervention of God adding a soul. And I was a sincere believer. In fact I was a missionary with the Evangelical Free Church in Hong Kong.

I became convinced of intelligent design in the 1970’s by A. E. Wilder-Smith’s book, *The Creation of Life*,¹ with his clear demonstration that information does not occur by chance and that long periods of time actually degrade information. But it was only some time later that I began to also see the scientific evidence for a young earth. I then personally evolved into a young earth creationist.

Views on origins are not essential to salvation or spiritual growth. We can be wrong about many things and still be warm-hearted, Spirit-filled workers in God’s Kingdom. Yet if our faith is illogical, the next theological generation may think it through and walk away.

So my second talk is crucial, showing the scientific evidence for both creation and a young earth. But there is precedent for sticking with a clear reading of the Bible even when science seems to contradict it. For decades, archaeology seemed to have proven that there was no Jericho at the time of Joshua, implying that the story of the walls coming down was just a good story. But those who held to the historicity of the account were not idiots or ignoramuses. They were actually right, because when the data were properly analyzed, it was all as the Bible states it to be.²

What does the Bible say? First of all, there is the description of the first day of creation, followed by the statement, “And there was evening, and there was morning— the first day.” This formula is repeated at the end of the description of each day. Now it is commonly stated that the Hebrew “yom,” like the English “day” can also refer to a longer period of time, such as “in the day of the pioneers,” but the mention of evening and morning as well as the ordinal designation, “first,” “second,” etc. clarifies that the meaning is an ordinary day. And appealing to 2 Peter 3:8, “With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day,” is not really to the point because although God does not see time as we do, the real issue is not the length of the days but the whole fabric of Scripture. Exodus 20:11 indicates that God took a whole day for each phase, not because He needed the time but as an example for us in our sub-creating. “For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

Some insist that a young earth view is a modern invention and the ancients believed in long ages. Certainly many of the Greeks and Romans held evolutionary views including an eternally existent universe, which is why Paul's creation evangelism of the Athenians produced such a startled reaction. The rabbis in the Talmudic literature never question creation in six normal days. Of the church fathers, only Origen and Clement of Alexandria believed in long ages and they were allegorizers of all Scripture. Irenaeus and Justin Martyr did not believe in a "Day-Age" theory but only proposed that as creation took 6 days, human history would take six thousand years, with the Millennium beginning about the year 2000.³

But the most serious defect with both theistic evolution and long age creation is the damage to the authority of Scripture and the nature of God. Interspersed through the whole creation account is the phrase, "And God saw that it was good." The only exception is the comment in Genesis 2, "It is not good for the man to be alone." But after creation is complete, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." Yet if Adam and Eve were standing on thousands of feet of sedimentary rock recording disease, predation, and death, what does God mean by "very good?" Further, Romans 5:12 says, "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men..." And Romans 8:22 states that everything changed with human sin. "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time."

But what of the objection that Romans 5:12 refers only to spiritual death? Of course Adam and Eve lived over 900 years after their sin, but the dying process began with sin and the curse pronounced by God indicated that indeed, things had changed. All through the Bible, death is treated as an intruder, not, "just part of life." Jews were unclean if they touched a dead human body. Animal sacrifices, beginning with the animals that God slew to make the first garments for Adam and Eve when they became ashamed of their nakedness, were necessary for the covering of sin. Even the symbolism of a burnt offering demonstrates the destructive power of sin, as the blood is drained out of a wonderfully complex living being and its intricate structures are utterly destroyed by fire. And most important of all, Jesus had to suffer and die physically to atone forever for our sins. Of course a person can be a believer with incorrect or missing theology, such as the thief on the cross, but errors lead to problems transmitting the faith.

Can the Bible be trusted? Is God a poor communicator? Genesis 1:30 states, "And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground— everything that has the breath of life in it— I give every green plant for food." All animals were vegetarian! But what of the fossils of predation if they came before Adam's sin? And, by the way, tooth structure does not determine diet. Think of fruit bats and Panda bears. Were there "soulless hominids" living at the time of Adam? If so, I suspect that Adam, when naming the animals, being a man, might have said, "Hey God! She looks good to me. A soul is optional." By the way, would it have taken too long for Adam to name the beasts in a morning? Remember that it was a limited selection of the created life forms, "the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air." Also, even now we know that the original Genesis kinds were capable of great diversification, for instance all the cats seem to be related and all dog-like creatures. Adam, also, was very bright, with a perfect body and brain.

All long age scenarios have to minimize the account of the flood because they attribute the geologic column to periodic rising and falling of the land over millions of years and a worldwide flood would obliterate their strata while creating its own. Does the Biblical

description fit with a local flood? Genesis 6: 19, “And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered.” Even with lower hills than today’s mountains, since water runs down, it would not stay local. And why did Noah spend 100 years building an ark if he only had to move?

Incidentally, in Job 40 and 41, as demonstrations of His power, God describes two creatures – as if Job had seen them alive, that sure sound like a long neck dinosaur and some fearsome marine reptile.

Most damaged by these long age visions of history is our view of the nature of God. Is He really cruel enough to use competition, predation, disease and death to create? Does He take millions of years of tinkering to arrive at the crown of His creation, human beings created in His image? Is this the same God who parted the Red Sea, raised Jesus from the dead and will come back in a blink of the eye to suddenly destroy the forces of evil and create a new heavens and a new earth? If the new creation is “very good,” is that reassuring?

Finally, does the Bible allow for long ages after the creation of man. Do the genealogies have gaps? Certainly passages such as Matthew may skip some names, but we have specific numbers attached to the original records. Genesis 5:6 is a typical example, “And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos...” Whether it means that Seth was the father, grandfather or great-grandfather of Enos, we know that he was 105 when it happened. The numbers really can be added up and although partial years may add or subtract a little, there is no room for 2 million or even 200,000 years from the beginning of the human race.

Some warn that the lesson of Galileo is to never mix science and theology, but the truth is surprising. The Catholic Church had actually adopted a non-Biblical Aristotelian science, with a perfect unchangeable heavens in circular motion around the earth. The warning is actually for those who have tied their faith to a fallible theory such as the Big Bang.⁴

After I became a young earth creationist, I discussed it with several of my old professors, both Christians and non-Christians, and discovered a powerful reason why some resisted even considering it. Of course there is human pride and the unwillingness to say, “I was wrong,” but for those in academic positions, to oppose the ruling paradigm can be a career-ending move. I found that many warm-hearted Christians took on “protective coloration” and essentially said to their secular colleagues, “I believe everything you do, I just think God did it.” To which the colleague may silently think, “I see no need for the God part.” Yet Romans 1:20 states clearly, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities— his eternal power and divine nature— have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

See the website for Twin Cities Creation Science Association www.tccsa.tc

¹ *The Creation of Life*, Harold Shaw Publishers, 1970

² <http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2008/05/Did-the-Israelites-Conquer-Jericho-A-New-Look-at-the-Archaeological-Evidence.aspx>

³ <http://www.icr.org/article/164/>

⁴ http://christiananswers.net/q-eden/galileo.html?zoom_highlight=galileo